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HOW TO LOOK LIKE A TOP MODEL

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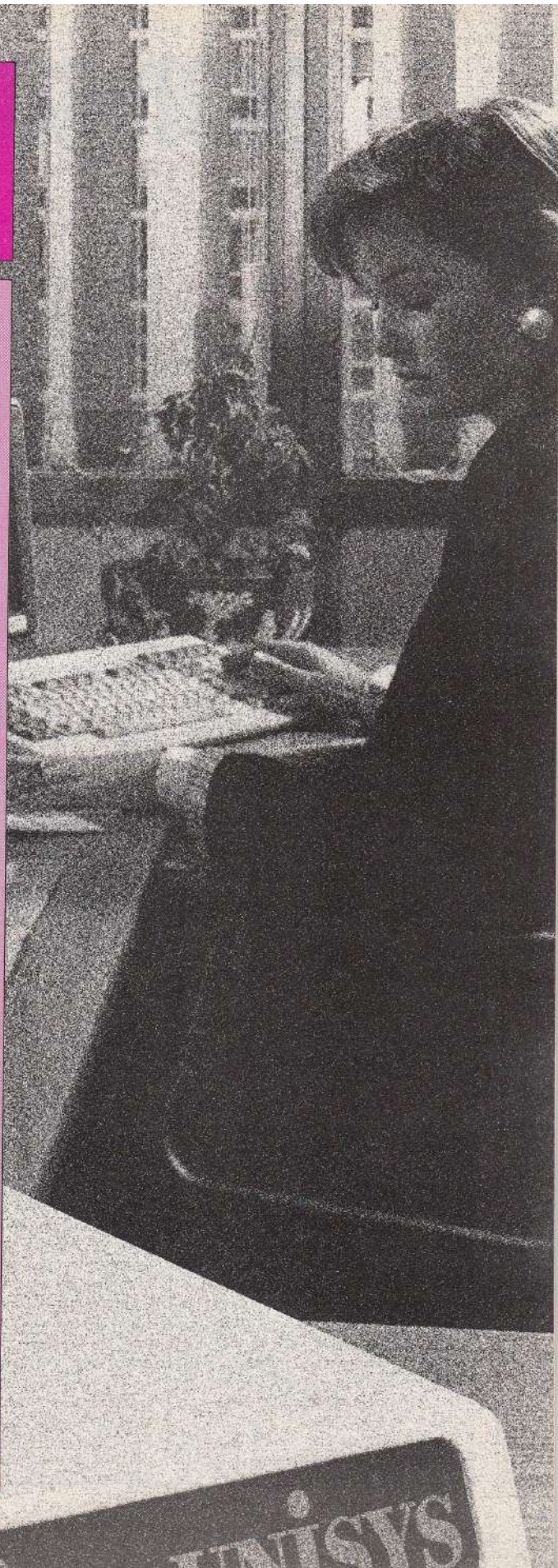
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MINISYS

HOW TO LOOK LIKE A TOP MODEL

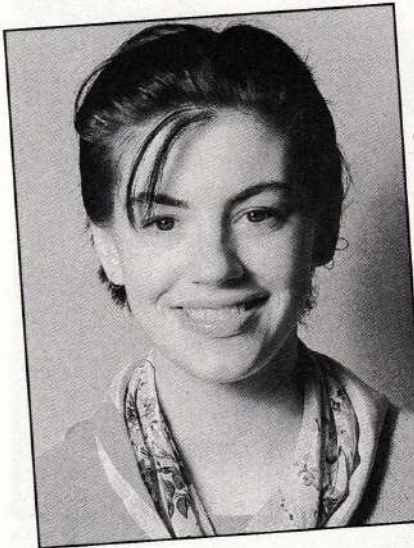
Alexander Baron reveals the secrets of the glitzy and the glamorous



Last December a four day event at London's Olympia, had people queuing in the freezing cold for up to two hours. This was The Clothes Show which was based on the popular BBC TV series. The event was a runaway success and was hosted by Jeff Banks and Selina Scott. Hundreds of stands were manned by representatives from all sectors of the clothes and fashion industry, ranging from top model agencies, to publishers, to shoe companies. One of the more unusual stands was the one called The Picture House. This is a photographic studio that was set up some 18 months previously by sisters Annabel Williams and Lucinda Hayton.

Out of the Ordinary

The Picture House is no ordinary photographic studio. Its raison d'être is to take ordinary people, (mainly but not exclusively women), and transform them into fashion models or film starlets for a day. According to Annabel, this is based on an American idea, which she borrowed and improved on.



Before and after.

At The Clothes Show they did a roaring trade and even helped out Roy Kent (editor of *The Clothes Show* magazine) and his team who were trying out a fifteen minute version on an adjacent stand. In May 1990 The Picture House booked a studio in London's Bond Street to bring a bit of glitz to the capital, but most of the time they operate from The Picture House studio in Stavely Village, near Windermere, in the heart of the Lake District.

"The change is remarkable."

Shooting

Their clients stay overnight at one of the Lakeland farmhouses at their Cumbrian hideaway, and spend an afternoon being made up by Lucinda and shot, (with a camera, not a gun) by Annabel. The sisters call this the



Our page 5 model before her transformation by The Picture House.

"Cover Girl" session, and the change is remarkable. Using make up, clever lighting and special filters they effect a fairy tale transformation. If you've



ever wondered how your favourite actress manages to look so ageless, look no further.

"If you've ever wondered how your favourite actress manages to look so ageless, look no further."

Although clients ages range from 15 to 75 the predominant age group is late teens up to about 35, and includes housewives, head teachers, businesswomen and bank clerks. Part of the attraction of the shoot is that both photographer and make up artist are women. Many women find working under studio conditions strange, surrounded as they are by futuristic camera equipment and bright lights. The fact that most photographers are men makes it doubly intimidating. At the Picture House the all-girl atmosphere makes the sessions very relaxing.

Cover girls

On the afternoon of their visits, clients are made up by Lucinda and shot by Annabel against a variety of backgrounds and wearing different outfits. The basic session costs £95, and clients will spend a further £100 or up to a thousand depending on how many pictures they want and in how many different styles. A dummy magazine cover, called Cover Girl, (hence the name) is also produced. The sisters deal with about twenty satisfied clients a week and are always booked well in advance. All clients are treated individually and are encouraged to spend at least an hour deciding on their choice of shots. Developing is done overnight by Peter Thornton who is also responsible for marketing.

Carte blanche

For the more professionally minded clients the girls offer a service called Carte Blanche. Increasingly, fashion models are using this service to build-

up their portfolios. Anyone who has seen the quality of some "professional" photographers' work will understand why.

"The basic session costs £95."

Lakeland beauty

Although it may seem a strange place to visit for a photo-session, and, for capital girls, a long trek, this is more of a bonus than a hindrance. The Lake District is one of the most beautiful areas of the country, it is both scenic and an excellent place for walkers and hikers. Many of their clients stay on for a few days and turn the photo-session into a mini-holiday.

The Picture House is open all year round and can be contacted on (0539) 821791, or write to: The Picture House, Station Road, Stavely, Cumbria, and ask for a brochure.



On reflection . . . two views of the same model.