

LARGER THAN LIFE

NEXT BIG THING

COSMOPOLITAN

LIFE • TRAVEL & STYLE



Rana
FLORIDA

NEXT BIG THING's *COSMOPOLITAN*. Rana has a great flare for adventure. Rana travels to various beautiful cities around the world, to experience a vast majority of foreign lifestyles. Rana brings the world of *GLAMOUR & POWER* from her trips around the world.

NEXT BIG THING You have an outstanding professional profile, working with Starwood, CNN, Zappos, BMW, in diverse industries. How have you found time to still look so so fashionable?

RANA It's something I struggle with (laughs). It's a struggle to find time to shop. I wrote a column for the Huffington Post about my frustrations with online shopping in Canada. Typically I shop by skimming upon something I like in a magazine, email it to a sales person and ask for it to be shipped. Time is precious and I'd much rather spend it with my family and friends or focusing on work rather than wasting time at a department store. I love clothes and looking fashionable but the art of doing so is a huge time cost.

NEXT BIG THING Besides the fashion which we will touch on later in the interview. Lets go back a little, what was your initial career choice?

RANA I was very much into music. I wanted to be an MTV VJ. I sent MTV a letter every week asking them to let me be their VJ. I worked first at a radio station 89X in Detroit. It was the first alternative radio station. Then I worked for the recording label BMG distributors. I thought the music world was everything, my identity group were musicians. I was never into fashion as it wasn't cool to be fashionable then in the music world (laughs). I used to wear black converse and jeans and I was anti-coature. Being in the music world I quickly realized that I did have a little too much fun and less professionalism in the industry so I decided to go to graduate school to get my MBA in business and marketing.

NEXT BIG THING I'm still trying to understand how it all started. Before the success, before all of these you have today. How was life growing up?

RANA Growing up was amazing. I had wonderful support from my family. I was one of six children. My father was a hard working engineer, my mother was a stay home mom. I think I started to get my flare for fashion from my mother who always looked so put-together and so polished even with six kids. I have three sisters who my mom used to dress all the same. It was tedious because we were all the same height and were similar sizes (laughs). We were all close about a year or two apart. Growing up around my family support with lots of extended family around me were what gave me the confidence to go out there and think I can do anything. I was super shy when I was younger, but they gave me the confidence.

NEXT BIG THING From your professional achievements it clearly shows determination, drive to succeed and hardwork. What or who built these principles in you?

RANA My father expected all of us to get straight A's. He expected us to be ambitious and be expected us to go to college and graduate school. I did get straight A's two years in my high school but the more popular I got, the more difficult it was for me to get those A's (laughs). My father used to instill in me that you can do anything if you put your mind to it.

NEXT BIG THING Times are changing today where we see more women become CEOs of companies. Do you think we will see more women becoming CEOs and entrepreneurs?

RANA I think it's great and it's long over due frankly. My husband and I were just at the APEC Summit in Honolulu. Richard was the speaker following US president Obama on stage which was exciting. But the day before US Secretary Clinton spoke about the need to support women in business and in leadership positions. It's so great that someone of her caliber and her stature is putting that forward especially in front of many specific leaders. I think it's long overdue and I think it's wonderful. We need to support women through more loans to start up small businesses, support women in training, support women in leadership positions. I think it's great because women are such an amazing valuable asset to the economy. US Secretary Clinton said something that resonated, by 2028 two-third of women will control all consumer spending. In those terms women are a powerful source to be involved leadership positions.

NEXT BIG THING You make tons of decisions, some turn out bad, some turn out excellent. How have you been able to develop the instincts to make good decisions?

RANA I still make mistakes because I'm still learning all the time. But I do things where there is gut reaction to a good business idea or a gut reaction to a good business partner or a gut reaction to a good team member. A lot of it is intuition but you also have to have the capability to understand it this going to benefit a company in the long run.

NEXT BIG THING And through out your career so far, which one of your many decisions has been the best decision you've made so far?

RANA I left a great corporate job at one of the world's largest airport developers. And I took a leap of faith to join my husband in launching a company called the Creative Class Group. It was a big struggle because I finally found the perfect job. It was everything I cherished in a company. I had a great employer, I had flexibility, I enjoyed what I was doing. I got to travel around the world. The new company with my husband was a great opportunity. But it was also a big decision. At the time I was conflicted about whether I should take it. So I took the leap and I'm really glad that I did.

NEXT BIG THING When it comes to fashion, how would you rank these from your best to your least fash: Shoes, jewelry, clothes and fragrances?

RANA Shoes definitely are my number one. They are my favourite. Especially now shoes have just gotten more crazy. Great thing is you can put on an amazing pair of designer shoes or interesting shoes with a pair of jeans and a t-shirt, the outfit will look stylish. Clothes definitely number two. Jewelry will be number three and fragrances will be last. You didn't mention hand bags (laughs) because hand bags will be up there with shoes.

NEXT BIG THING Favourite shoe designers?

RANA I love Brian Atwood. I love Nicholas Kirkwood. I also like Chloe.

NEXT BIG THING What are your favourite beauty products?

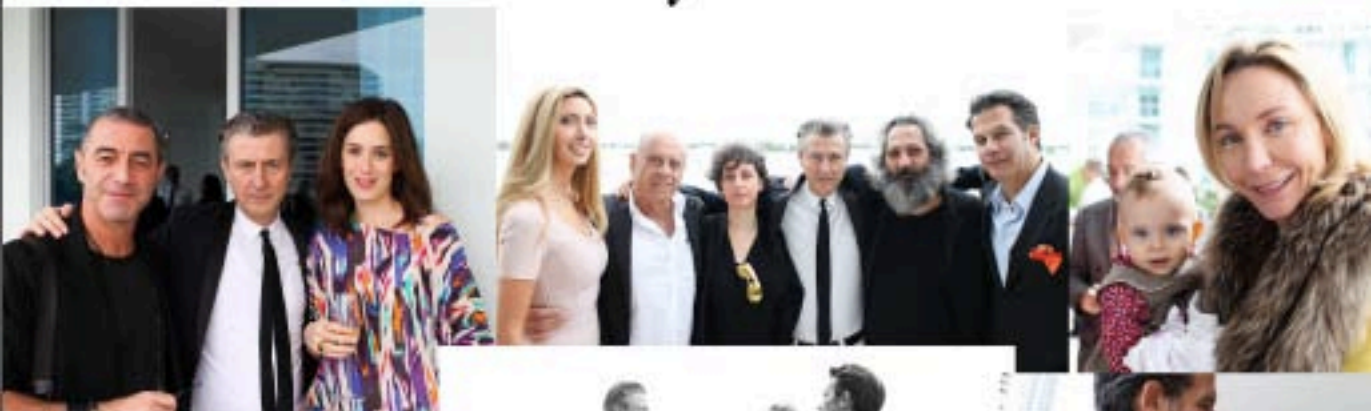
RANA My good friend Dr Tina Alster is the head of the Washington Institute of Dermatologic Laser Surgery in Washington D.C. She also happens to be a Lancome spokesperson. I stock up on everything she tells me to buy.



Photo by Tom Sandler



Simply Jordanian, a cookbook written by Rana and her sister, Ruba Alexander. The idea was an inspiration from Rana's mother who's a great cook. Rana says she woke up one morning and realized she didn't know much about cooking certain great meals. She decided to write a cookbook. (Photo credit: www.hiloblog.com)



LM100

Le Mendler has introduced LM100, a group of cultural innovators of mixed generations and interdisciplinary artistic fields, chosen from the fields of art, architecture, cuisine, and design by Le Mendler's Cultural Curator.

PLACE

Crown South Beach, Miami Beach, FL

WHO'S WHO

Richard & Ronda Ronda, Jerome Jones, Tereasa Gaydos & Paul Berry, Umberto Marz, Corina Becc, Jason Espinosa, Zoran Gostin, Sarah De Favi, Dymiro Scary, Don Tapscott, Victoria Webster, Capera Kuan, David Sook, Mike Giamberini, Lauren Goss, Victoria De Fostock





ART BASEL

Le Méridien Hotels & Resorts, Jérôme Sarrs and Richard & Rania Florida hosted an event at the Florida's home in South Beach, Miami, to celebrate Art Basel and welcome *imantalk*, NIK as the newest LMDO members.

PARADE

In the beauty, Miami weather, an eclectic blend of international art enthusiasts and collectors, notable gallery owners, artists, philanthropists and members of the cultural community mingled amongst the oceanfront home to toast to the introduction of the artists and to celebrating the *imantalk* award to Art Basel and the innovative & artistic roots of Le Méridien Hotels.