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Model Claudia Schiffer becomes an International Beauty Icon (2004)

The msn-internet magazine “beautylive” recounts the stunning success story of supermodel Claudia Schiffer, who took the fashion world by storm in the early 1990s and quickly became one of the world’s most photographed faces. Together with fellow German models Nadja Auermann and Tatjana Patitz, and German fashion designer Karl Lagerfeld, Schiffer helped the German fashion industry gain new relevance and enhanced international prestige.

What the following piece lacks in sophistication, it makes up for in breathless enthusiasm. Published in 2004, thus well after the peak of Schiffer’s modeling career, the article is a testimony to her continued hold on the German imagination.

Claudia Schiffer – the Beauty Icon

She is the muse of fashion designers, the face of the nineties, one of the most beautiful women in the world.

The Claudia Schiffer era has catapulted the experience of being a model into a different sphere – it has made the girls at the top into stars worthy of veneration. Because whoever wants to be at the very top must be able to do more than just pose beautifully.

This is the story of a charismatic blonde, a German businesswoman, a mother of two – the story of a star.

The discovery: Where do we begin?

It all began with all-night dancing in a discotheque on the Kö in Düsseldorf in 1987. It was October. Claudia Schiffer was still in school back then and out with a few friends.

Michael Levaton, head of the French modeling agency Metropolitan, was sitting at the bar and watching her. He was looking for new talent, and she was in the right place at the right time.

Tall, cool, blond – a beautiful young girl

He immediately approached her, introduced himself, and gave her his business card. Naturally she was unsure at first – Test shots? Model? Paris? What did this guy want? But then she wrote down her phone number and he promised to call her at home.

Back then Claudia Schiffer was living with her siblings Stefan, Caroline, and Andreas in a house in Rheinberg, in North Rhine-Westphalia. Mother Gudrun and father Heinz, a well-respected attorney, heard about Claudia's evening encounter the following morning and responded with extreme skepticism.

Her parents' biggest priority was for Claudia to finish school. After that she could make her own decisions. . .

But with a lot of patience and persuasiveness, the Paris model scout succeeded in the end: Claudia Schiffer was photographed for the first time. Shy and insecure and only seventeen years old, she stood in front of the camera in the great Paris of fashion fame.

Today she openly recalls that she used to blush easily back then, that she had complexes as a teenager, because she was very tall and very thin at an early age.

But everything was different in front of the camera. The make-up artist's cosmetics turned her into a different person, and her own personality was also transformed – she became increasingly self-confident; she enjoyed slipping into different roles.

She surprised everyone around her – most of all herself

The days in her hometown of Rheinberg were over; now a very different life, a new life, began.

The new life

It wasn't so easy in Paris. The fashion scene received the young woman from Germany with restrained applause. "She still looks too child-like," was the most common remark. But then she was introduced to the famous Odile Sarron, the influential booking-agent of the French women's magazine *Elle*. She booked Claudia on the spot. And two weeks later the glossy magazine hit the stands. It was Claudia Schiffer's first large publication. And when Odile Sarron believes in a new talent, others do, too.

Then came Italy, England, and Germany – she had managed the breakthrough in her own country

The shy young girl was completely focused. But she still understood very little French, which didn't make things any easier and didn't exactly make her happier.

But she knew that unless she gave 100 percent, the whole thing would be over soon. She smiled, was friendly and ignored the vanities of the fashion world. After all, she wanted to make it to the very top.

And when star photographer Ellen von Unwerth photographed her for the successful American brand Guess Jeans, very sexy, à la Brigit Bardot, Claudia marveled at her erotic impact.

And she wasn't the only one:

Claudia Schiffer was catapulted to the top of the modeling business in record time. Everyone wanted to have “the new Bardot.”

Including Karl Lagerfeld. The *Fräuleinwunder* [i.e. “girl wonder”] from Germany did her first fashion show for him and became his muse. She was the face of the luxury brand Chanel for seven years, and the German designer was a kind of father-figure.

From model to star: The career setback that many had expected after the Chanel era doesn't happen – the success continues . . .

Her face is on *Elle*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *Vogue*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Vanity Fair*, and even on the cover of the renowned *Time Magazine*. *People Magazine* lists her among the “Twenty Five Most Beautiful People” and *US Magazine* among the “Ten Most Beautiful Women” in the world.

And Claudia Schiffer is number 73 on the Forbes list of the 100 most influential personalities in the world – the only German woman represented there. She does the catwalk for the world's greatest designers and is listed in the *Guinness Book of World Records* as the most-photographed face of our time.

She makes fitness videos, acts in seven movies, appearing alongside the likes of Dennis Hopper, Matthew Modine, Ben Stiller, and Robert Downey, Jr., among others. It's hard to believe that twenty-four hours a day are enough for her.

Then come exclusive contracts with Revlon, Citroën, and Otto-Versand, for which she is still working to this day and designing her own collection.

The private woman: Discipline, independence, and professionalism is Claudia Schiffer's credo. She lives by it.

Very rarely does she allow herself a break on Mallorca, her second home. She might listen to Anastacia, Alanis Morissette, or Sheryl Crow and look out at the sea. She already spent her summers there as a young girl and built sandcastles on the beach.

Today, just over thirty, she is also happy in her personal life

After a brief intermezzo with art dealer Tim Jeffries, she married the film producer Matthew Vaughn two years ago, had two children, and has been living since then largely in England on the 500-year-old estate of Coldham Hall.

Since becoming a mother she has seemed more relaxed; she likes motherhood. Yes, Claudia Schiffer seems to have achieved her dreams. And the entire Schiffer clan is very happy about that.

Source: "Claudia Schiffer. Die Beautyikon" ["Claudia Schiffer. The Beauty Icon"],
Beautylive.msn.de/look_style/schiffer

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