

# STALEY ♦ WISE

GALLERY



BEAUTY WELLNESS LATEST ISSUE ARCHIVE

SEPTEMBER 2025

BEAUTY AND WELLNESS

GO BACK



Christy Turlington.

# STALEY WISE

G A L L E R Y

BOOK CLUB

## Hot Shot

Supermodels, high heels, big jewelry, bigger hair—we're in the grip of 90s nostalgia, and Pamela Hanson's photographs celebrate the best of a charmed life



BY LINDA WELLS

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**H**ughty poses, arched brows, balletic leaps—the tropes of fashion photography have populated the pages of magazines for a century. All that drama and aspirational hoo-ha often comes at the expense of intimacy. The artificiality is the image.

In that way, Pamela Hanson isn't a fashion photographer with a capital F. You may regard her pictures as something that would seem right at home in your own album, if you were exceptionally lovely, lived in Paris, New York City, Saint-Tropez, or some equally charmed spot, and if you had a command of light and composition. In other words, Hanson makes it look easy.

It isn't easy.

Her new book, *Pamela Hanson: The 90s* (Rizzoli), and her exhibition at Staley-Wise Gallery in New York City from September 18 to November 8, burst with uncommon joy. It shows women getting dressed, lying in bed, eating room service, running down the street, yanking—and being yanked by—a dog's leash, dancing, jumping in a pool, drinking wine, coffee, a Coke, a milkshake. They brim with energy, life, and an offhand style.

“My thing was more the girls, the mood, and the environment rather than being focused on the fashion,” Hanson tells me. “Fashion was an accessory to the photograph.”

It may look idyllic; it may look unremarkable. But Hanson was taking these pictures in the 90s, the era of grunge and heroin chic. All around her, models slouched with bloodless disaffection. “That wasn't my thing,” she says, stating the obvious.

“I photographed the girls the way they were. It was like a girls' club. I was always interested in them as people.” Imagine!

When Hanson asked the models to flirt with the camera, “it wasn't creepy,” she says. They weren't trying to seduce the way they might with a male photographer. If it looks friendly, that's because it was.

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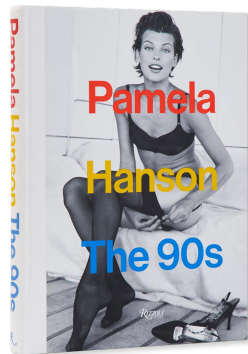
G A L L E R Y

Hanson started her career somewhat accidentally, photographing her best friend and roommate, Lisa Love, who was modeling in Paris in the 80s. "All my friends were models, and I'd shoot them getting ready, out on the street, in the clubs." She showed those early images to Arthur Elgort, the longtime *Vogue* photographer, who urged her on.

There's a cinematic quality to her pictures, as if you've wandered into a life that will continue after you turn the page. "That's what I love and respond to. I'd tell the girls to relax and look at themselves in the mirror, 'Pretend you're getting ready.' It was a way of getting them to feel more natural." The result is a portrait of a time before cellphones and selfies, when the interaction of the photographer and subject could be playful and collaborative.

Many of the models look as if they'd arrived fresh off the plane from Nowhereville. Christy Turlington, Kristen McMenamy, Milla Jovovich, Eva Herzigová, Carla Bruni, Naomi Campbell, and the gang look entirely unstudied and unselfconscious. No wonder the photographs make us feel nostalgic. "Remember how much fun we had?" Hanson asks. I do!

NOSTALGIA TRIP



## *Pamela Hanson: The 90s*

\$ 8 5  
Rizzoli

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