DESIGN STAR



Mark Montano: A True Design Star

[By Robin Salisian]

"The one thing that does not change is that I'm always designing and creating," says Mark Montano, design guru and well-known TV personality of The Learning Channel's (TLC) *While You Were Out* and *10 Years Younger*.

From studying business in college to owning his own boutique to hosting and appearing on TV shows, Montano has mastered the business of design. He's done it all, or close to it, and strives to make his own way in the creative world.

And it all started at home. "It's always been a part of my life," says Montano. "My mom painted and wrote poetry, [and] my dad studied architecture." According to his website, "Montano's creative life began in his quiet childhood home of La Junta, Colorado, where at the young age of 14 he began sewing and designing clothing for his mother."

But credit for Montano's talent goes not only to his family's influence; it also goes to Montano's perseverance and drive. Graduating from Colorado State University with a bachelor's degree in business, Montano thirsted for more. He journeyed to New York, studied at the Fashion Institute of Technology, and received a master's degree in costume history.

He snagged a designer newbie's dream internship with Oscar de la Renta, where he developed an appreciation for fabrics and the gumption to start his own line. "Mark [also] [drew] inspiration from the quirky flavor of New York City, especially the East Village, where he has established his home and a flagship boutique," continues his website.

"I decided that I wanted to make my own way in the world and not deal with corporate." But running his own business was no easy feat. "All I can say is that you will work five times as hard for yourself as you would for a boss. And you will make much less money in the beginning."

Today, Montano's career has skyrocketed. In 2003, he joined three designers, four carpenters, and a host on TLC's *While You Were Out*, a show that redesigns people's rooms, well, while they are out. And as host of TLC's *10 Years Younger*, Montano helps reshape, restyle, and redefine people yearning to look and feel younger.

Q. What do you like to do outside of work?
A. I ride a Vespa and daydream.

Q. Any odd hobbies/interests?
A. I love designing jewelry.

Q. Are you married?
A. Yes.

Q. Do you have children?
A. I have a really cute cactus, does that count?

Q. What music is on your iPod right now?
A. Aria, vintage Elton John, Rod Stweart, Cat Stevens, Dixie Chicks, Panic at the Disco.

Q. What is the last movie you saw?
A. *The Bourne Ultimatum.*

Q. What is your favorite brand of jeans?
A. Oh god, too many to mention. I'm constantly looking for that perfect ass jean.

Q. Who is your role model?
A. I'd have to say Andy Warhol. I think he was...incredible.



"I deal with many...different people every day," says Montano, when asked what a typical day is like. "I might deal with a private client, a TV executive, a production company, and the cast of a show I'm currently filming." Yet, while daily activities change as often as today's trends, there *are* some things mildly typical to Montano's day. And those are his working habits.

"I keep classical music on in the background so that I don't start dancing around in my underwear[, and] [w]hen I'm working on a project I make sure I'm in a t-shirt and boxer shorts so I am at my ultimate comfort level."

And what about the dreaded writer's block? "It's a state of mind. As long as you keep filling your brain with new ideas, you'll be fine. Just put the pen to the page and go. It almost doesn't matter what happens, just start!"

continued on back

DESIGN STAR

Montano's up-beat attitude not only helps eliminate those gloomy writer's block clouds, but also harsh criticism.

"Criticism is just part of the job," Montano says like a professional. "In the beginning, I would get mean emails from people who saw me on TV, and they would really hurt. Now I write them back and say, 'Thanks for watching my show! I really appreciate it!'"

In other words, "[Have] persistence, a strong sense of self, and don't fear failure." Those are the keys to Montano's success.

ON THE NET

Mark Montano
www.markmontano.com

TLC
www.tlc.discovery.com

Fashion Institute of Technology
www.fitnyc.edu/html/dynamic.html

EmploymentCrossing is the largest collection of active jobs in the world.

We continuously monitor the hiring needs of more than 250,000 employers, including virtually every corporation and organization in the United States. We do not charge employers to post their jobs and we aggressively contact and investigate thousands of employers each day to learn of new positions. No one works harder than EmploymentCrossing.

Let EmploymentCrossing go to work for you.