



INTERVIEWS

## VANESSA TRAINA

*The Creative Director of Assembled Brands on marriage, motherhood and inheriting her mother's work ethic.*

I feel exhausted just speaking to Vanessa Traina. "I've got four photo shoots this week and then it's straight onto styling plus buying at New York Fashion Week." And, I might add, Vanessa's due date is a mere six weeks away. "I haven't felt sick or anything so I'm feeling really lucky and grateful, and its business as normal."

Born in San Francisco, Vanessa's mother is best-selling American novelist Danielle Steel. "I grew up in a house with a very strong woman as my influence. She's so driven and works tirelessly, so that's always been my example." Her hectic schedule now makes so much sense, and it's beyond impressive - but coming from a large family of nine, she's used to just getting on with it. "Honestly, because I've had such an easy pregnancy and maintained my energy I've been going full speed at work and then taking the

weekends easy. My body will tell me when it's time to slow down and at least I have the flexibility of being my own boss."



While we discuss how she's always known she wanted to work in the fashion industry, Vanessa tells me that her mother actually studied to be a designer. "We got taken to fashion shows from a very young age, so it's no surprise that myself and my two sisters all went on to work in the industry."

With a natural sense of style, Vanessa has ensured the last 34 weeks have been suitably chic. "I haven't actually invested in any maternity wear, I'm simply wearing all of my favourite designers in larger sizes. When my jeans didn't fit it was an emotional moment in the closet and my husband took me shopping to buy bigger jeans in advance – just to avoid any more meltdowns!"

Laughing at the memory, she tells me her uniform has been "Khaite jeans and cashmere sweaters with flats. If I have a work meeting I'll just throw a Chanel jacket over my outfit. I've said no to pretty much every event and formal invitation so I haven't had to worry about getting too dressed up."



In 2013, Vanessa and her business partner started [TheLine.com](#) selling brands including Acne, Tabitha Simmons and Repossi, along with their Ready to Wear collection Protagonist which launched simultaneously. “The Line was a great way of telling Protagonist’s story but we also wanted to create a world around it, so we also contacted other designers.” Next came their homeware Tenfold New York (the marbled book ends are to die for) in 2015 and in 2016 they launched their second Ready to Wear line Khaite (please believe us when we say that every woman needs a pair of their skinny jeans). “All of these brands fall under the umbrella of our parent company Assembled Brands, of which I am the Creative Director. Not everyone understood the concept of [The Line](#) to begin with but we’ve been very lucky with the support we’ve had. Those that didn’t get it initially soon came running when they saw it for themselves,” she says. With stores (or ‘apartments’ as they refer to them) in New York and Los Angeles and previous pop-ups in Chicago and The Hamptons, [The Line](#) is very much about the experience and being in close proximity to their valued customers. What does the future hold? “The direction of the company is definitely brand development and investment. We are the platform for future and existing brands.”

With her professional life flourishing, her personal life is mirroring that. While politely private, Vanessa does reveal that she recently said ‘I do’. “We got married last October and honeymooned in Rome and Venice, which was so lovely. My husband is the kindest, most generous and sweetest man, and he is so excited about becoming a father.” And while Vanessa certainly has a lot on her plate, I’m certain she’ll be a natural at making it work.

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## IN HER WORDS

### NINE LONG MONTHS OR NINE JOYOUS MONTHS?

A little bit of both.

### HIDE THE BUMP OR SHOW OFF THE BUMP?

I hid the bump until I was about 6 months and now it's a little difficult to hide it!

### HYPERACTIVE OR CHILLED OUT PREGNANT WOMAN?

Hyper at work and chilled-out at home.

### WHAT DO YOU MISS THE MOST WHILE PREGNANT?

My wardrobe.

### ONE THING YOU COULDN'T LIVE WITHOUT WHILE PREGNANT?

Moisturisers and body oil, and I've used a concoction of many. All of them are natural. I'm covering myself in oil twice a day!

### YOUR FAVOURITE DESIGNERS FOR EXPECTING?

I've worn my regular favourites in bigger sizes.

### TOP TIP FOR OTHER PREGNANT WOMEN?

Drink lots of water and, if you can, work out. Oh, and flat shoes!

### IF YOUR PARTNER COULD CARRY THE BABY, WOULD YOU LET HIM?

He would offer because he is kind like that but no, I wouldn't do that to him!

### BOY OR GIRL?

A boy! Everyone tells me that little boys love their mothers. He moves around a lot and I've been told if they move on the inside then they move a lot on the outside...

Written by Alice Manning

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