

GAG

the fashion issue

FROM ELEGANT DRESSES TO COUTURE COSTUMES

CHRIS MARCH

BEAUTIFUL, CONFIDENT SUPER-MODEL

MISS FAME

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WONDER
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Chris March is a lot of things: fashion designer, wig and hair constructor, costume creator, drag queen, author, musical show producer and star, and now a commercially successful designer and brand. But there is one thing Chris March is not: a one trick pony. After capturing our hearts with both his humor and unforgettable laugh, March has managed to do what seems impossible for most reality TV stars: outlive (and out shine) his TV persona by not falling into reality has-been status or selling his artistic integrity or soul to remain on the “IT” list by creating scandals or sex tapes.

Since his appearance on season four of *Project Runway*, he has starred in his own Bravo reality show *Mad Fashion*, designed not one, but TWO red carpet looks for the

screen goddess herself, Meryl Streep, and created for THE names in the music industry: Beyonce and Lady Gaga to name a few.

A CHRIS MARCH IS A RARITY.

In a world where the rules of fashion differ from the rules of drag and costume, Chris March defies them ALL by bridging all three worlds with his body of works. A fashion icon and couturier in his own right, March weaves fashion into costume, costume into drag and drag into fashion . . . exquisitely.

Chris marches to the beats of his own creations . . .

and we wouldn't have it any other way.

Brandi Amara Skyy sits down with Chris March to get to know the person behind his wonderland of colors, fabrics, wigs, pads, and, yes, triple digit boobs.





GAG: *In this issue of GAG, we are tackling the debate of where the lines are drawn between costume and fashion. Where do you think fashion ends and costume begins?*

CM: Costume is definitely a heightened version of fashion. As Nina Garcia once said, some great costume designers have become amazing fashion designers.

I look at it this way—if you’re wearing something to be noticed, it’s a costume. If you’re wearing something to blend in, it’s fashion.

GAG: *That’s a really great way to look at it. So how do YOU make a distinction between the two?*

CM: This is tough—people generally equate costume with cheap or poorly made. I have literally seen one Broadway costume that cost over \$60,000! It was a work of art. Fashion is less specific and less character driven than costume. Costume is an art that pertains to a world of defining character, whereas fashion is simply a reflection of the times as it pertains to daily dress for specific occasions.

GAG: *I notice on shows like Project*

Runway and RuPaul’s Drag Race that they say “costume” as if it’s a bad thing. So where is the line?

CM: First, it’s probably best not to get your design information from reality television. They say what they need to say for ratings. Like I said, they use “costume” as a euphemism for cheap or tacky . . . and definitely not chic.

GAG: *Do you have a preference as to which you like designing most?*

CM: I prefer designing anything clever so that goes more towards





costume . . . but a fabulous red carpet look slays me too!

GAG: How would you describe your design aesthetic?

CM: I have always been considered outrageous, so I guess I would say I'm perceived as humorous and over the top . . . But I personally describe it as making an "UNFORGETTABLE Impression."

GAG: Speaking about "unforgettable impressions" . . . From costumes to fashion to hair, you do a lot of unforgettable kind of looks and designs. Do you prefer one kind of design over another?

CM: It very much depends on the project and the client. I enjoy clever costuming the most. I enjoy knocking the breath out of someone with a look!

GAG: We all know that your favorite color is leopard (is it still?), but what is your favorite look that you ever created?

CM: Of course I love leopard (especially from head to foot)! But my favorite still has to be Wonder Woman . . . my costume just seemed to make people go crazy. I think they love her power combined with humor.

GAG: What has been your most outlandish outfit request?

CM: As you can imagine, I have had many outrageous requests over the years. One of which was a dress made of television sets, dresses made of fresh salad, chocolate, and even a giant dancing can of Crisco. (And yes, I made the dancing can of Crisco!)

GAG: I LOVE how elements of drag are weaved into your design aesthetic and life. For instance, last November







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you donned a bit of drag in your “Chris March’s the Butt-Cracker Suite.” Tell us a little more about your drag career.

CM: I started dressing in drag when I was three (yes, THREE). The glorification and expression of the power of the female image has always appealed to me. I started wearing drag seriously as an adult when I couldn’t find anyone else who would wear my outrageous ideas. I started winning costume contests, which led to a career in costuming. People thought I was funny, so I was invited to be in some theater shows. That led me to New York and eventually into fashion design as well. I still do drag, but most places now want me to look like me, so it’s difficult to really do it right without shaving (!). I used to dress up to be recognized, now I dress up to hide . . .

GAG: You’ve designed for some of

the hottest celebs. Has there been a celebrity request for your designs where you thought to yourself, “Holy shit! I’ve made it!?!?!?”

CM: I really thought I had made it when I did a project with Madonna, and then Beyonce, then Lady Gaga, and then I worked with Meryl Streep. She came along and blew them all away. Her white dress for the 2010 Oscars was truly an unexplainably mind blowing moment in my life. She is just SO incredible, not just as a celebrity, but as a person as well.

GAG: The dress was GORGEOUS! In addition to designing you are now an author. Tell us what your book, I Heart Chris March, is about?

CM: It’s a photographic trip through my world of wild costumes from the last 25 years. Definitely FUN!!

GAG: You’ve been SO successful at what you do. What advice would you give to an up-and-coming drag performer who creates their own looks and wants to break into the world of fashion?

CM: I would make sure you want to work in fashion (it is a less creative world—it’s called the garment “industry” for a reason) and then go out and get some practical experience.

GAG: Final question, but THE MOST IMPORTANT ONE! Do you still incorporate the words “Stevie Nicks” into your designs?

CM: ABSOLUTELY! She “blesses” everything I make (and have made for the last twenty years). A friend recently contacted her on my behalf and explained the whole thing to her and she sent me a personalized autographed poster!!



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