



MODELLING WORLD AT HER FEET

By MATILDA SIMMONS

SIXTEEN-YEAR-OLD Michaela Swamy seems just like your average teenager. She's finishing off her year 11 at Cedars Christian

College in Wollongong, Australia. And while most of her peers are thinking of what career prospects they would be pursuing after high school, Michaela may have already found her niche.

The brunette beauty who has family

roots in Fiji is by no means just your ordinary teenager. She is an international model, a class above the rest. From gracing catwalks to endorsing branded products around Australia and Fiji, she can lay claim to two beauty titles to her name.

Michaela was the winner of the 2011 Miss Teen Australia and the Miss World Teen Supermodel (Under 20 Division) in Fiji. The lass has held her own, keeping up with the demanding schedule of fulfilling her contract obligations while at the same time keeping track of her studies.

The five-foot-eight model who attributes her unique looks to her Fijian heritage, has had a whole lot of work cut out for her. From being the official Australia Day Ambassador, to being the face of many products such as cosmetics, handbags, clothing and even taking part in a number of fashion parades in Australia, Michaela has taken it well in her stride.

"I have been extremely blessed to have experienced such success in modelling at such a young age," she told maiLife. "In every industry there are stumbling blocks and to keep my head in the game can be challenging sometimes, but my support team are always there to encourage me. I do have my heart in what I do which is necessary to succeed. I have been given some amazing opportunities to model for some amazing brands both on the catwalk and at photo shoots."

Michaela was born in Australia to an Australian mom and a Fiji Indian descent father who hails from Sigatoka. Her first trip to Fiji was when she was just two years old. She says she still keeps in touch with her father's family in the country.

"Fiji is my second home. We have always visited regularly and keep in close contact with family and friends in Fiji. I also spent a lot of time at Mana Island when I was little and I still go back to visit my friends there as they have become part of my extended family. Fiji is the place I go to in my mind when things are hectic, as it soothes my soul and gives me peace. I have always loved getting on the plane heading for my favourite destination."



Michaela (6th from left) at the World Supermodel Pageant held in Fiji last year.

Michaela will be gracing our shores next month when she will be the VIP guest for the Miss India Fiji Pageant. She will also be doing a photo shoot for the Tappoo Group. Speaking about her experience of taking part in pageants as well as modelling, the beauty queen said it has not been easy.

But knowing that both pageants were held in Fiji made it quite easier to adapt.

"Pageants can be very demanding and quite stressful when all the girls get together but not in Fiji. I enjoyed every minute of it. I had such fun. The natural beauty of Fiji and the friendly faces, the encouragement from the people of Fiji, the amazing beauty of the photo shoot locations, the overwhelming sense of happiness, freedom and love. Fiji is the best location for pageants."

Michaela hopes to be a great role model for other young girls like her.

The 16-year old whose parents separated when she was younger told maiLife it was life's hard road that made her stronger.

"My motivation comes from a strong foundation of family and friends. My manager Grant Dwyer of Adpro Management Group, mum, dad, my brother and best friend have become a support team for me over my time as a model. While growing up, I was always inspired by my mother and her resilient nature. Mum has taught me to try my best at everything I do and that's exactly what I am endeavouring to do."

While she knows her career is starting to take off, she is also aware of the fickleness of the modelling industry. For the time being her studies takes priority.

"The most important thing to me is boundaries. I have very clear boundaries in all aspects of my life whether modelling, academic or

social. And everyone's boundaries are different to meet our individual needs. I am a very dedicated worker and I put my mind to a task and give it my 100% and strive to keep a very professional standard.

My future aspirations are to achieve high results in my final High School exams next year, to model at a very high level both in Australia and overseas, to attend university and become a very successful business woman."

So while waiting for her trip to Fiji which she says she is very excited about, the teen tells us she's learning some Bollywood dance moves. "I'm loving it, and considering I have two left feet, I am doing great!"

"I would like to add a big thank you to all the people that supported me in Fiji." "I am very proud of my Fijian heritage. My aim is to promote Fiji here in Australia and to the world."