

JUST AS

Beautiful

"The UK's first free lifestyle magazine dedicated to the plus-size woman"

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“You don't have to be a **size zero** to be gorgeous”

“Gok Wan is an amazing stylist and one of the most genuine people you could ever wish to meet; I absolutely adore him”

Nina Blakemore is quite a familiar face in the world of plus-size modelling, having worked for a number of high-profile names such as Ann Harvey, Evans, Simply Be, John Lewis, Selfridges, House of Fraser, ITV and Channel 4 to mention just a few. Her work includes photographic campaigns, catalogues, catwalk shows and various television appearances. As a major player in such a challenging industry, her assignments have taken her to cities all over the world including New York, Delhi, Cape Town and Frankfurt. But it is from her role as a model on the hit television programme, *How To Look Good Naked*, that many may recognise her -offering guidance to contestants on the show.

“I have been working as a plus size model now for around 14 years. I am proud of my curves and I am a great believer in promoting a healthy body image and realising that you don't have to be a size zero to be





gorgeous!"

As fate would have it, Nina did not start off with plus-size modelling. Having begun her career as a regular model, she struggled with her weight and eventually found that she could still be a model without hurting herself. "I originally started out as a straight sized model and also worked as a promotions girl doing a lot of corporate hospitality, events and exhibitions. I used to be a size 8-10. However, I struggled to keep my weight down and was relieved when one of my agents told me about plus-size modelling. I can honestly say that I have had more work as a size 18 than I ever did when I was a size 8! I found myself in a real niche market, however, I was dealing with far fewer companies and models than I was used to. I joined Hughes Models and even though I lived in the Midlands, spent an awful lot of time in London on castings and 'go-see's' to try and get myself established amongst new clients. It was hard work at first, especially when you have to keep 'testing' the whole time to get new photos for your portfolio, but I persevered and the hard work certainly paid off!"

Ever since its first series, How To Look Good Naked has remained a hit,



turning its host, Gok Wan, into a household name. Nina feels elated to be part of that success.

"I am extremely proud to be part of such a successful and inspiring programme. It really does epitomise everything that I have been working towards over the past few years - you don't have to be a size zero to be gorgeous and that beauty comes in all forms, shapes and sizes.

"The programme filming schedule is hectic; we work extremely long hours. However, it is all worth it when you see the end results. The contributors' lives are completely transformed - all they lack is confidence. No surgery or dangerous diets are used, just good advice and encouraging people to believe in themselves. In my opinion, life is too short to worry about your appearance or how other people perceive you. It is more important to be healthy and happy. I love the fact that How To Look Good Naked shows people how to work with what they already have. Gok Wan is an amazing stylist and one of the most genuine people you could ever wish to meet and I absolutely adore him."

"I have had more work as a size 18 than I ever did when I was a size 8!"

Although it has taken her a lot of hard work and drive to get to where she is today, Nina enjoys every minute of it and has undertaken quite a lot of high-profile work. "In 2005 I was lucky enough to be taken on by FORD

12+ New York Division and I regularly visited the city and stayed for weeks at a time, casting and working with some of the top photographers. Fadil Berisha was one who really stood out for me. He takes the most beautiful pictures and I remember my shoot with him was all done with natural light. Walter Chin shot my campaign for top women's apparel chain Just My Size, which was an unbelievable experience! However, it is without doubt that my appearance on Channel 4's How To Look Good Naked is one of the main highlights of my career.

"A new series of How to Look Good Naked is due to start filming in June, which is very exciting. I am not allowed to say too much but I know it will be as fabulous as ever and again, I am so honoured to be a part of the programme."

Nina has quite a lot of good things going on for her at the moment. "I am delighted to have played a part in the fittings and photoshoot for Speedo's new range of swimwear for the "real-size" market. There is also a possibility that they may name my suit after me, which would be such fun! It is due for launch summer '09. I am also very excited to be re-joining Hughes Models once more now I am back in the UK. Hopefully this will present lots more interesting opportunities for me. I am currently doing a lot of work in Europe, especially in Germany, which is always fun and also gives me a chance to spruce up on my languages!"

She is also soon to add entrepreneur to her list with the launch of an online boutique and the re-launch of her personal website: "I also have a few ideas for opening a new on-line boutique selling curvy clothes. It is all in the very early stages but it is something I have wanted to do for a long time

now. My new website (www.ninablakemore.com) is due for re-launch soon, so I am looking forward to that.

"I have also been contacted by Everetta Days who is currently writing a book on plus-size-models and she has asked me to be a part of the project which I am absolutely thrilled about. There are some plans for more television work for me too, which would be just fabulous! So really, there is quite a lot going on in my life right now. It is a very exciting time for me."

For Nina, having a strong support network has definitely played a big role in her achievements: "I have to say that I have the most fantastic support network at home. My Family have been my rock over the years, especially my Mum. I could not have achieved half of what I have done if it wasn't for her -and for that I will be forever grateful."



Just As Beautiful Magazine Plus-Size Model Awards

Coming Soon!!

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