



Naples resident April Masini proves that dreaming big and working hard are the keys to success — even in Hollywood.

# Beauty,

# Brains & Business Savvy

**A**pril Masini is as tenacious as she is beautiful. Spend a few hours with her and you realize she's always ready to take on a new challenge.

The ambitious, one-time model and actress now makes her living as a Hollywood executive, writer, producer, author, political activist and online dating coach. Her website, "Ask April" is wildly popular, and Masini's advice has reached millions through magazine interviews with *Cosmopolitan* and *Maxim*. She's even been quoted in *The New York Times*, and *The Wall Street Journal*. If that weren't enough, she votes for the Academy Awards, too. And she's not done yet.

## GETTING DOWN TO BUSINESS

"I'm one of those people, I may not out-smart you, but I'll out work you," says Masini. She keeps a dizzying daily schedule, with as many as eight media interviews a day and spends time answering the 150 (or more) emails she gets each week from the "Ask April" site. She writes content for the two political dating websites she recently launched, and on top of that, Masini is in negotiations to have her own talk show. Several major Hollywood studios are also considering a number of her 'treatments'. The short

scripts are used to pitch television shows and movies. Her favorite is the story of the United States' controversial annexation of Hawaii, which critics claim was illegal.

Masini's other TV show pitches include *Mistresses of the Rich and Famous* and a round-robin talent competition called *Fight for Fame*. Both are in the genre of television programs originated by her former husband, Al Masini, a well-known television executive credited with creating such shows as *Star Search*, *Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous* and *Entertainment Tonight*. It was through his tutelage that Masini discovered her talents and came into her own.

The couple met while April was on a date with the executive's next door neighbor. He asked her to be a model on *Star Search*. The tall, blonde was working steadily in the industry, but as she puts it "I wasn't Cheryl Tiegs." Knowing the career opportunities for models in their mid to late 20's were slim, she agreed to meet her future husband, 30 years her senior, the next day.

"I told him, 'I'd be interested in running your business,'" Masini recalls. "He had

all these television shows and I was fascinated by it. Somehow, I convinced him to start teaching me. Little by little I learned, and I loved it."

Soon, Masini was revising and re-writing scripts, and the executive was taking notice.

"That's all I need," she says. "A little bit of encouragement and in the door I go."

Eventually, her husband tapped Masini to be president, and she ran his company for 10 years. Her lack of experience raised eyebrows, but Masini proved she was up to the task. The reason, she insists, is simple: "I worked harder than anyone else."

## AN ISLAND MOVE

By 1994, the couple had moved to Hawaii. They were discouraged by the lack of television and film production on the island and with the impression in Hollywood that the state was a difficult and expensive place to work.

"We decided the only way we were going to make this work was to change the laws or offer incentives," recalls Masini. She began researching and analyzing what other popular production sites in the U.S., Canada and overseas were offering.

With friend and then - Governor Benjamin Cayetano on board, Masini "seized an opportunity" and helped draft legislation in 1997 to provide tax breaks for television productions that located in Hawaii, used Hawaiian products or workers, or added the state's name as part of the production title.

Hawaiian lawmakers enacted the bill a year later. Masini targeted the producers of the syndicated TV show *Baywatch*, which planned to move production to Australia. Masini was relentless in her pursuit to lure them to the state. They eventually gave in and added "Hawaii" to the show's name.

By Candace Rotolo

Inspire & Empower



“We really helped the industry,” Masini explains. “We employed 120 to 140 Hawaiians annually, to say nothing of the advertising and promotion. *Baywatch* is seen in 140 countries around the world.”

But Masini wasn't finished with legislation. In 2000, she helped draft another bill that offered funding, tax and other credits to TV and film productions. Act 221, as it's known, was used to encourage makers of the surfing movie *Blue Crush* to set up shop.

“It was the first time that a studio agreed to advertise and promote a location, along with the film,” says Masini of the 2002 feature film. “That had never been done before, and it was really a big deal.” The bill remains in place today, however critics question its usefulness.

### POLITICAL PASSION

Activism reminded Masini that “you can really make a difference,” she says. “It's amazing to see that you can make a direct impact.”

She's convinced her passion for politics stems from her mother, June Stride, a Ph.D. and author who specializes in exceptional children, and lives on Marco Island.

Growing up in an Army family, Masini moved around as a young girl. By her pre-teens, the family called the small town of Clarksville, Georgia home, where Masini's parents ran a home for mentally

challenged children. Her mother expected April and her siblings to keep up with current events, assigning them magazine articles to read and discuss at dinner.

“My mother always encouraged us to learn and expand our horizons,” Masini says. “She wanted us to think about the world, and not be someone who sits on the sidelines and watches life go by, but to get involved in it. That's what I did.”

Barely a teenager, Masini lobbied to get her first job at an old mansion in Clarksville. She convinced the owner that guided tours would be good for business.

By the time Masini was ready for college, the family had moved to New York. She enrolled in Hofstra University, but her desire to be a model and actress was too strong. With hard work, and perhaps blind ambition, Masini was hired for ad campaigns for Donna Karan,

Anne Klein and eventually won roles on daytime soap operas.

### THE DATING GAME

In Masini's line of work, she “met tons of models,” and other beautiful women. It's the reason workers at The Learning Annex in Los Angeles called on her to teach a course on how men could meet, attract and date beautiful women. Masini wasn't keen on the idea.

“I thought they were kidding,” she says. Now divorced, Masini thought at the very least the class would be interesting.

The course was a sell out, and her students suggested she share her advice in a book. She took their advice. *Date Out of Your League* gives men the common-sense advice that has become Masini's trademark.

Soon, a website was created, and women started emailing Masini for advice on how they could meet and marry Mr. Right. The “Ask April” website was born and the unlikely advice columnist started getting interview requests from popular magazines. In 2005,

Masini compiled much of her advice into the book *Think and Date Like a Man*.

With Masini's tell-it-like-it-is attitude and business savvy an “Ask April” talk show can't be far off. But for now, she'll enjoy her time in Naples, care for her mom, and explore new ventures that spark her never-ending passion. *B*

### WHO KNEW?

April's first major modeling job was as a spokesmodel for Matrix hair products.

She played “Nicole” on ABC's daytime soap opera “One Life to Live” and “Caroline” on “All My Children”.

Her worst date was with someone who was rude to a waitress. “It was a turn-off, and it tells you something about who they really are.”

In 1998, Hawaii's governor declared Masini Day for April and Al Masini's efforts in organizing the 1998 Miss Universe Pageant, which was held on the island, and brought the state more than \$5 million in revenue in just two months.

