



Isabelle

DUBLIN'S

most fierce

■ WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?

We want a girl who is healthy, has a beautiful face, can be a chameleon. We want a blank canvas we can dress. We also want a girl who has the confidence to work a catwalk, but can be humble too. Beautiful hair, beautiful skin, a girl with confidence, a silent inner confidence. I have walked into a room of 4,000 girls and one has stood out to me as she has this glow and this freshness and this healthy look about her, and that is the perfect model for me.

■ WHAT ARE YOU NOT LOOKING FOR?

We don't want a stick insect. I'm not looking for an unhealthy girl. Someone confident but not cocky. We don't want a girl who wears too much make-up and dyes her hair because she thinks that's a look. We also want a girl who is there to work. We don't want someone who thinks they know more than we do. We want someone who will grow with us.

■ IS THERE A CURRENT LOOK THAT IS IN DEMAND FOR MODELS?

Have you got what it takes to be Dublin's next supermodel? The Dublin Festival of Fashion in association with The Dubliner magazine returns this September, and we're teaming up with 1st Option Model Agency to seek out the next big thing in modelling. If that's you, fill out the application form in next week's issue. For now, JOE KEARNEY catches up with the delightful Jules Fallon, co-founder of 1st Option and model search judge.

There's a very masculine look coming in. I suppose it's androgynous meets beautiful, but a healthy look is in at the moment too.

■ DOES THE LOOK DU JOUR CHANGE OFTEN? WHAT INFLUENCES IT?

This really will come from what the designers have designed, so right now as I said, the androgynous look is in, the '60s look, big coats, textiles. So it depends on what the designers have forecast for that season, then they will look for a type of model to suit that.

■ WHICH INTERNATIONAL MODELS DO YOU MOST ADMIRE?

Because I'm an old girl myself, I love that the old birds have come back to give it a try. I love that you are seeing Linda Evangelista back again. They were never skinny, they were always the picture of health, the girls from the '90s.

■ DO YOU HAVE AN ALL TIME FAVOURITE?

Karen Elson.

■ WHO ARE 1ST OPTION'S MOST SUCCESSFUL GIRLS?

Jude Nabney is working globally every single week and has agents all over the world. She is very versatile and can work everywhere, she can do high fashion and catalogue. That's what models really want to work towards, the catalogues, because that's where the dosh is. Another girl on the up is Jess, we are just calling her Jess. She won the TV show, *The Model Agent*, she is with IMG internationally and has just returned from 6 months working in Tokyo, Paris, London and Milan. She is originally from

Coolock. God I wish we found her years ago. She is about to be a huge international superstar.

■ HOW DO YOU USUALLY FIND GIRLS? WALK-INS? DO YOU SPOT THEM ON THE STREET?

Oh, I've been known to chase young girls down in shopping centres. I stalk them [laughs], no I don't. But I do approach girls on the street and I'll say who I am and give them my card. "Go home and tell your parents what I'm offering and get in touch if you are interested."

■ WHAT MAKES A GOOD MODEL?

She needs to be healthy and she needs to look

"I could show you 10 girls from Dublin and they could all have completely different looks, but they all have a similar personality."

pure. They will stand out in a crowd. They have an incredible determination but a very beautiful modesty that goes with it.

■ HOW HARD IS THE WORK? IS IT AS GLAMOROUS AS IT SEEMS?

Oh it is hard. I know a model can be in Berlin today and then Milan and off to Tokyo, but that girl is usually travelling on her own. Take Jude for example. She might get on a flight to Miami, arrive there at 5am go straight to a shoot, work for three full days, that's 12 hours each day, and then get a flight straight to London again alone. So it can be lonely, and travelling is exhausting. Is it glamorous? Well, it does have its glamorous moments but it's exhausting too.

■ HOW ARE IRISH MODELS DISTINCT FROM OTHER NATIONALITIES?

We are loved and we are embraced. They know that Irish girls won't be prima donnas. I know when we send our girls to America they are always delighted to receive us, because they know Irish girls are willing to work and doors are opened everywhere. Look at Amanda Byram. She works all over the world, is on the BBC and is a big star, the girl is a superstar.

■ AND WHAT ABOUT DUBLIN GIRLS? DO THEY HAVE A CERTAIN LOOK?

I wouldn't say so really. I could show you 10 girls from Dublin and they could all have completely different looks, but they all have a similar personality. They are very down to earth. Northern Irish girls do have a certain look. They have incredible bone structure.

■ IS IT A TOUGH INDUSTRY FOR A YOUNG GIRL?

It is, but we have very strict rules to protect young girls. For example, if a girl is in school, we don't interrupt the school calendar at all.

We only ever once worked with a 15-year-old girl, Laragh McCann, where we did send her to Italy during the school year but we knew she was going to be huge and we sent her parents with her. When we work with such a young model it's almost as important to have a great relationship with the parents as well as the girl.

■ HAVE YOU SEEN MANY CASUALTIES OF THE INDUSTRY?

A few over the years. We had one girl who we sent to New York and she could have been huge, but two weeks later she came home as she missed her boyfriend. That meant the door was closed for that girl as although her look was in then and people wanted to book her, you never know if you'll be in vogue the following season. She did go back to modelling seven years later and she got some work, but grew nowhere near as big as she could have.

■ WHERE DO YOU STAND ON WEIGHT?

I'm looking for someone who is very trim, but we do not want stick skinny girls. We want healthy women. I know when we are working with a girl who is 16 or 17 she might naturally be a size 8, but then when girls reach their twenties they start having their curves and if I get a hint of an eating disorder I just do not tolerate it. I hate what some people say about Irish models, some gobshite celebrity chef said Irish girls are like lasagna, they are orange and full of fat. That is complete nonsense. Look at the supermodels we have coming out of Ireland. Our girls are beautiful. The likes of Jude and Isabelle, they have their curves, and they are women. They are not skinny whippets.

■ WILL CURVY GIRLS EVER BE THE NORM IN HIGH FASHION, IN ALL HONESTY?

No I don't think so. It's nice that they have a place in the market but I think for high fashion it's always going to be thin girls that work in it.

■ WHAT CAN THE WINNER OF THIS SEARCH EXPECT?

We offer them a full year's contract, and depending on who we find we might send them all over the world. We have the experience and the skill to give a potential model an entire career. We offer them everything.

Dublin Festival of Fashion runs from September 8th-11th with events across the city centre. Don't forget to pick up your model search application form in next week's issue of The Dubliner. Julian Fallon is a founder of First Option Model Agency; Istopion.ie



Linda Evangelista

Laragh McCann