

Jodi Mallinson

Paris to New York she smiles all the way

By WILL KOTEFF

Paris was a nice place to begin, New York is turning out to be less demanding than she'd expected, and then there's the upcoming trip to California.

This smiling for the camera business is not bad. In fact, "It's fun."

Jodi Mallinson smiles. Dawn breaks.

She is 18 with her birthday on St. Valentine's Day, has a 5'10" frame which she likes to keep at about 128 pounds, has strawberry blonde hair and, according to one agency owner, "the perfect face for cover shots."

She is a model.

An honest-to-goodness real-life, on the covers of 14 major European magazines including Vogue, Elle, Vital and British Vogue in just over one year, model. A Mississauga teenager smiling for the camera.

Up there, working for and with the best of them, in that high-pressured, stylized, glamorized, stereotyped, non-stop, fashion world. Not to forget head-turning and pill-popping.

"I'm off the stuff now," says local girl made good. But "the stuff" is not drugs or booze. It is junk food, sugar.

"I get homesick a lot. I used to stuff myself with junk food so I wouldn't get lonely." If the connection there is vague, it is the only thing about this former Holy Name of Mary and Woodlands school student that is.

Behind the smile that brightens the cover of this month's issue of "FLARE, Canada's Fashion Magazine," is a well-defined self-image that has yet to be distorted by the gimmicky world in which she works.

"It's a pretty easy job if you're strong and have your head together. You have to laugh off the put-downs and not play the head games a lot of people

play. A lot of girls get caught up in it, working all day and going out all night."

Going out, of course, and making new friends is essential when home is at least one long plane flight away.

But the places frequented are not trendy, beautiful people, "in" spots.

"Me and my friends find places where there is no one from modelling. If you get caught up in just modelling you can lose yourself."

Even if you don't, the daily grind can still get to you.

"When you're working good, you're working 10-hour days."

When she isn't, when her look isn't in demand, she's making the rounds, portfolio in hand.

"Some people are really good about it, but there are others who will flip through your stuff while you're standing there, without even looking at it, then just close it up and say, 'good-bye.'"

Even a strong, young lady having a lot of fun has to recharge her batteries. So this summer, after about a year of smiling for the cameras, Jodi came home.

Shopping, swimming, horseback riding, her parents, brothers and sisters, and friends helped revitalize her for her shot at the "tough" New York market.

Her first day in the "Big Apple" was spent shooting for Macy's, THE Macy's.

"I was really surprised. It's not as bad as I was told before. In Europe they're so nervous about the model, about what's happening. In New York, they're so much more relaxed."

There is a difference too between the markets in the type of shots she does. In Europe it's mainly "bubbly, running, jumping" shots while New York clients want "sexy poses."

Jodi smiles. Whatever the client wants. This is a business and she's a professional. That attitude has her researching photographers' styles before going in for a session, so things will go that much better.

It also got her a television commercial in Holland, for a brand of Dutch toothpaste. And is getting her good feedback from television advertising agencies in New York.

And it had her working a bit when she was home again, for a few days last week.

In addition to the media interviews, she taped a segment of the "You're Beautiful" television show, shot a fashion spread for the Toronto Star and showed up for a Saturday morning session for the local newspaper after only three hours' sleep following a night partying with friends she doesn't see often anymore.

Now, slightly more than three months shy of 19, she is a top model with top agencies in France and New York.

But she still is, she insists, "herself," on camera or off.

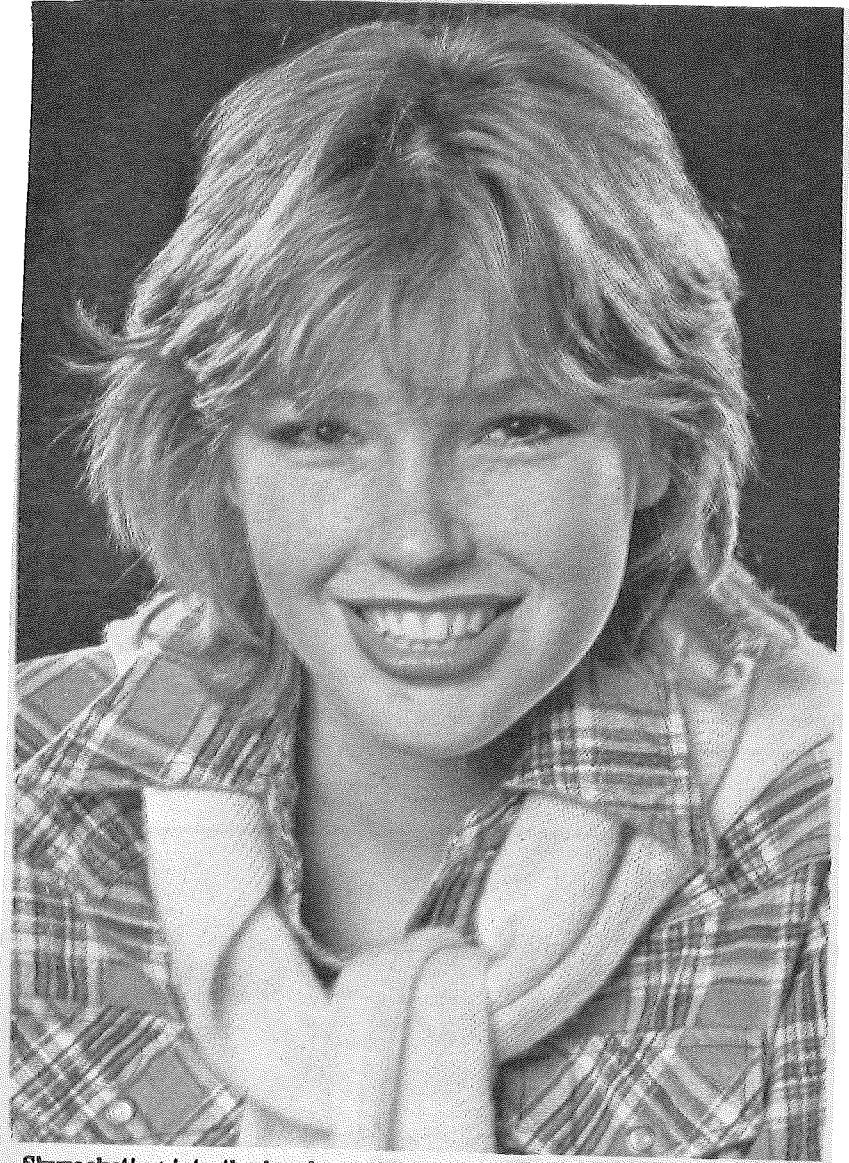
"If you know where you're at, you'll be alright." Jodi smiles.

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MALLINSON, Jodi



Skyrocketing into the heady world of international modelling, Mississauga teenager Jodi Mallinson appeared on the cover of more than a dozen major European fashion magazines in her first year of work and is currently breaking into the New York market. (Staff photo by Fred Loek)