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DONNA MILLS

*The evil vamp of CBS's
nighttime soap sensation,
Knot's Landing, talks
about looking good and
keeping in shape.*

BY COLETTE BOUCHEZ

When she's hot, she sizzles. When she's cool, she's like a gulp of champagne. And when she's naughty—and, oh! can she be naughty!—she makes hearts pound, blood boil, and ratings soar through the night sky like a shooting star!

She's Abbey Cunningham, the super sexy, outrageously evil vamp of CBS's night-time soap sensation *Knot's Landing*. And the woman who each week breathes such delicious fire into the steamiest TV image around is actress Donna Mills. As they say in Hollywood, she's a pretty hot lady herself!

Giving her opinion of Abbey, Mills says, "I think the bitch character is definitely here to stay, because in a way it strengthens the image of women as individuals who are able to shift for themselves. Regardless of whether she 'gets it' in the end, the general tone of this kind of character is that she tried, and that she'll continue to try, always taking on the next challenge. And I like that!

"I'm not Abbey," she adds, "in the sense that I would ever do the kinds of things she

does to get her way. But the part is fun to play, and I have to say I admire her independence. In that respect, I'd say we have a lot in common.

"Of all the things I've accomplished in my life," continues Mills, "I think I am most proud of being totally independent, and that I've accomplished what I have all on my own.

"I don't think I was ever consciously aware of this inner need to be independent all my life, but I always knew I wanted to do things with my life. And as time went by, I also knew I didn't want to do them on the coattails of somebody else. I knew I had to do them on my own, or they wouldn't mean that much to me.

"I've always made my own way," she adds, "and when you know that what you've done is your own, no one can take it away from you and you don't owe anything to anybody. I try to bring some of that philosophy to my portrayal of Abbey. She's really a gutsy, independent woman."

Another similarity between Mills and her alter ego, Abbey, is the obvious fact that they are both terrific looking ladies! With a figure that sports designer originals with the same grace and ease as blue jeans, Donna claims

PHOTOGRAPH BY DICK ZIMMERMAN

HAIR BY ANTHONY ESPOSITO

STYLING BY JUDY B. SWARTZ



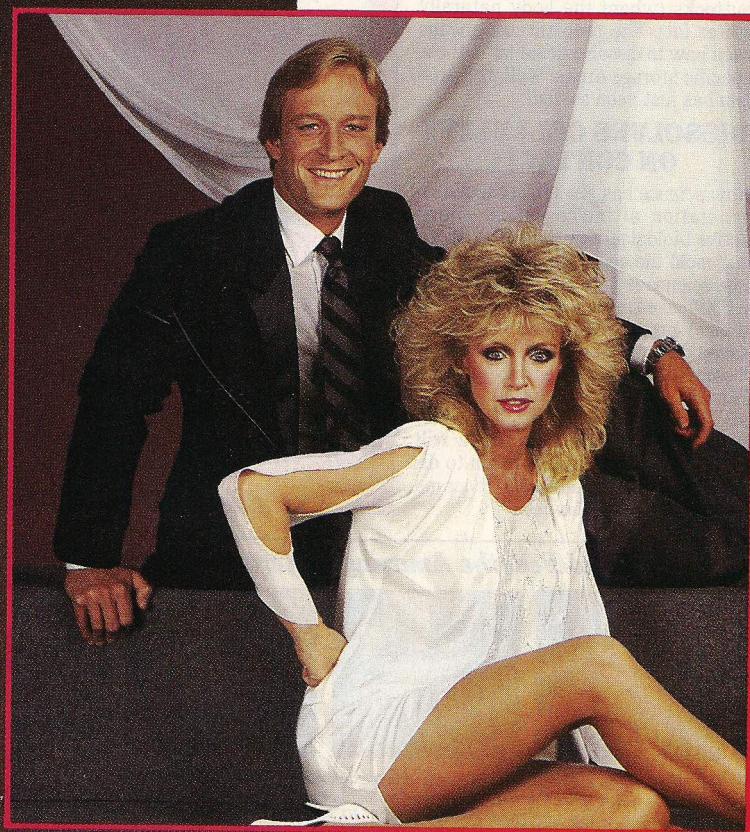


she owes it all to a combination of healthful eating and enthusiastic participation in her one consuming passion, ballet.

"Very few people know this," says Mills, "but I started out in this industry as a dancer. I had been taking lessons since I was five years old and it's really in my blood. In fact," she adds, "I always thought I would end up with a career in dance, because I enjoy it so much.

"I really keep up with it, too," she says, "and I used to go to dance class all the time. But since I'm a real workaholic and always on the go, I don't have a lot of time now to participate in organized classes; so what I've done is build a small dance studio in my home, so I can work out anytime. It's great to be able to exercise at home. But I am a firm believer in professional guidance to make sure you're doing things correctly, so you don't risk injury or waste your time. Since I've built the studio, I bring in a teacher from the Joffrey Ballet as often as possible to give me lessons and conduct classes with me."

Donna has found that by dancing she can burn calories, stay limber, and tone and develop her muscles. "In ballet," she says, "all the muscles are being used and the workout is tremendous. When you come to think of it,



PHOTOGRAPH BY RAUL VEGA

*Partners in Crime: Donna Mills with
Knot's Landing co-star and husband,
Ted Shackelford.*

have you ever seen a fat ballerina?"

Diet is also an important part of Donna's shape-up program, and because she suffers from hypoglycemia (low blood sugar), she keeps to a strict one. Excluding sweets and most starches from her daily menu helps keep her weight down and her energy level high.

"I have a small frame and small bones," says this five-foot-four-inch super-beauty, "so if I gain a few pounds, it shows up right away; I have to be very careful.

"However," she continues, "because of my hypoglycemia I have to eat lots of protein, vegetables, and fresh fruit, and avoid most starches and all sugars. If I stick to the diet faithfully, there's not too much of a chance for me to gain much weight."

Mills has also found that the time of the day she eats can make a big difference in how easily she can control her weight and, because of this, makes breakfast her largest meal of the day.

Says Mills, "I think that food taken in at night, closer to the time you go to bed, is not burned as easily and could lead to weight gain, so I try to not eat near the end of the day.

"I do eat a lot in the morning, though," she adds, "because it gives me energy to burn for the whole day. Lunch varies, depending on how big a work load I have in the afternoon, and whether or not I'll be working past my dinner hour.

"Dinner," she concludes, "is always my lightest meal, and if I want to lose a few pounds, I skip it altogether. I can do this because I have the type of hypoglycemia that is only affected by what I eat and not how many meals I eat."

When it comes to preparing those nutritious meals, Mills admits she enjoys cooking. In fact, her favorite way to spend an evening is not out at a lavish Hollywood party as you might expect, but at home, sharing one of her special recipes with close friends.

"I really like to cook," she says, "and I don't get too much time to do that anymore. So for me, a real treat is to prepare a really lavish meal from scratch, buying all the ingredients myself, and then sharing it with about six close friends. It's very personal and private and that's the kind of social life I like the best."

Because Mills does spend a lot of time in her home, it is something quite special to her. Nestled deep in a canyon in the luscious Hollywood Hills, it is her fortress, and a very personalized one at that! Not only did she decorate the entire home herself, she also helped to design it by adding on two lavish rooms and a sensational pool.

"I love to decorate," she says, "and I guess you could say it's one of my hobbies. Most of my furniture is antique and I like a real country, livable feel to my home. I love color, bright color, and lots of it! Since I spend a great



Sultry Donna Mills works her evil magic on Knot's Landing co-star, William Devane.

deal of time in my home, I like it to reflect the way I feel."

You don't have to spend a great deal of time with Donna Mills to realize that she's got to be one of the most ambitious and self-motivated women in the industry. Although she excels at almost everything she attempts to do, in her mind there are still many mountains yet to climb.

"No matter how much I accomplish, there's still many more things I want to do. My special career dream has always been to be involved in a project that I can really have full control over, and so I started that dream in motion. I began my own production company, and I'm working on two projects that I will produce and star in."

Is there anything Donna Mills can't do?

"Oh," she says, "if only I could write! I can't even put together a decent thank-you note without it being a painful experience!"

"I guess you could say my biggest problem is that I don't have enough time to do all the things I'd like to do," she continues, "and still be able to do them all well. I believe that quality is always more important than quantity.

"But if I could, I'd just stop time for about two years, leave Hollywood, and travel around the world. The part about stopping time is real important though, because I wouldn't want to miss anything while I'm gone!

"And then," she says, "if I could do that, I could have my very private, most secret fantasy come true: to visit China. I have this real passion to visit there before it becomes too Westernized. It's the one area that's been basically untouched by our culture, and I'd really like to see what that's like.

"If only," she says with a sigh, "we could stop time long enough to be able to explore our fantasies and dreams, life could be just about perfect!"