



"I was also a lot smarter than the other girls. I came to another country, to England, looked at the industry and said, 'Where's a niche? Where can I dominate? What will make me different?' And the answer was not being part of that whole androgynous heroin chic thing."

While Caprice is adamant she's never taken heroin - "If I had, you'd sure have hell read about it in the papers" - she knows somebody who has.

"Poor Courtney Love. She's not a bad person, she's just a mess. I've never done drugs, and maybe I'm square because in my industry just about everyone dabbles. I say my industry, it's my former industry because I'm in business now. But with heroin you're fucked. And you're fucked forever. Forget about your looks - it messes with your brain, it messes with your personality. These people are doing it because it gives them confidence, and when they stop doing it they become a mess, like Courtney."

So, if she's not hanging all the time with Kate "N" Naoml, who does Caprice look to for some sisterly solidarity?

"They're not necessarily in the public eye, but in my industry, people like Jacqueline Gold, who owns Anne Summers. Fascinating woman. Karen Millen, I love her. Women who are a bit older than me and who've excelled. They're smart, they have their own business, they've created empires. They impress me, and they've inspired me. And of course, there's my Mom. She's my best friend in the world, I talk to her 5,000 times a day. I've got her, my grandma, my cousins, my uncles, we're all really close."

Along with her media work, Caprice currently designs and models her own lingerie, swimwear and nightwear for a client list that includes Tesco, Dorothy Perkins, Next and the successor to Littlewoods, Very.co.uk.

"My ambitions are just ridiculous," she reflects. "And my responsibility is just ridiculous. I'm responsible for employees, I'm responsible for their

families."

We've talked a lot about the boardroom but not the bedroom. In between running her business empire, does Caprice have time for relationships?

"I've found it hard to find an equilibrium," she admits. "I'm a strong personality, which doesn't help. I have a very big life with interesting friends all over the world. I've got a schedule that's not normal and, well, it takes a really secure guy to deal with that."

"I don't necessarily believe there's a man of my dreams. I'm a little more mature and a little more realistic. The man of my dreams is someone I want to rip the clothes off and that goes away with everyone. I want to find somebody who's solid; who I can communicate with; who makes me laugh; who I respect and who I get on with. When you're in your twenties it's more of a lust thing - 'Hey, I desire you, let's be boyfriend and girlfriend for a few months'. When you get older, you need somebody more substantial and solid."

What's Caprice's idea of a good night out?
 "Going to a restaurant with about 10 mates, having a few drinks, laughing. Then going to one of our houses and having a few more drinks! I can't be bothered going clubbing anymore, although the odd fancy event can be fun."

Does she want kids?
 "Of course I do. For women it's an issue. In our late '90s we think, 'Oh my goodness, I've been so obsessed with my job and with my work, and just having the best time of my life, I better start thinking serious now.'"

It's at this point that our chinwag starts getting a bit too personal. For me that is.

"Do you have kids?" Caprice enquires.

No, I don't.

"What age are you?"

46.

"Are you in a relationship?"

I was until recently, but sadly we broke up.

"Why?"

"I was given a pop quiz - 'Do you want to get married?' and 'Do you want to be a dad?' - and sadly failed."

"What the hell are you waiting for?" Caprice says, no, yells at me. "Your sperm are going to start swimming backwards! What are you afraid of? What's wrong with you? That's such a man thing. Get over it! Do you honestly think there's something better out there than what you had with your girl? I'm going to lecture you, Stuart! Forget about lust and, 'Oh my goodness, I want to rip your clothes off', because that eventually goes away. You need a partner. What do you want to be, 60-years-old and having your first kid?"

But enough about me. Willing it seems to give pretty much anything a go, Caprice once staged and starred in a musical version of notorious '90s skin flick *Debbie Does Dallas*.

"Funny, clever, witty - it has all the elements needed for a hit show, so I bought the rights from the people in New York and put it on in South Africa where it was a huge success. I was going to bring it to London, but the investors we had didn't work out and the plans had to be shelved. It's something I may re-visit."

Caprice was so enamoured of Jo'burg that she bought a house there.

"It's the most exciting place in the world. If the crime wasn't such a problem, I'd probably live half the time in South Africa. I had to put up barbed wire. I had to put up a wall taller than this room and install lasers in the yard. I had to get a security guard with the biggest gun you've ever seen in your life to guard my house and I was still terrified."

"I got to know some interesting people there like President Zuma's son, Dudu, who's unbelievably intelligent, very well travelled and thinks differently because he didn't go through apartheid to the degree that his father did. So I think when Duda comes to power - and he's being groomed for that role - the country's going to change."

How did Caprice end up landing her current Style War gig?

"My agent here, Tara Sinnott, heard about this search TV3 were doing to find Ireland's next fashion icon and thought I'd be perfect as one of the judges. So, she pitched me to the production company and they said, 'Himn, we're not sure if she has an opinion or not'. They realised the opposite when we met, and I got the job. For the last four years it's all been about rejigging my persona from model to businesswoman, but I want to get back into TV again."

The pinnacle of Caprice's television career so far being her appearance on *Celebrity Big Brother 2005*. "I wouldn't do it now because it's frivolous, but when I did it was perfect," she reminisces. "It was fantastic marketing. And better than that, people were able to see me for who I am, not as journalists think I am."

Plus she got to hang out with Ben! "I love Benzie! Wasn't he fabulous? And smart. There's a reason he won that show."

So, finally, what's the five-year plan?

"Expand, expand, expand! There's a big world out there that I'm determined to conquer."

You certainly wouldn't bet against her!

Canch Style Wars on Tuesdays at 8pm on TV3