



Kingston Bridal Week

The Randy Fenoli Experience

“Many Jamaicans who came out to see him...”

In Jamaica for the first time as a guest at Kingston Bridal Week, Randy Fenoli, star of TLC's *Say Yes to the Dress*, *Randy Knows Best* and *Randy to the Rescue*, had an exciting two days of activities for his scheduled appearance. Greeted at the Norman Manley International Airport on September 27th by his KBW-appointed publicist Monique Solomon of IrieDiva.com and executives of the NMIA Grace Morrison and Tasty Blackman, Fenoli's first taste of Jamaica was a meet and greet over some ice-cold jelly coconuts which he sipped delightfully in one of the airport's VIP lounges, exclaiming how tasty the drink was. Never had he had coconut water straight from the nut and it would be the first of many pleasant Jamaican experiences he would come to enjoy.

Later that evening, Fenoli dined with the owners and marketing executives of the Terra Nova Hotel, his host for his stay, where he was regaled with tales from well seasoned travelers as he sipped his favourite cocktail, the Greyhound, which is a mixture of Greygoose Vodka and grapefruit juice. A grapefruit was juiced right then and there at the bar, making it one of the most refreshing and genuine kind of his favourite cocktail that Fenoli had ever had. This was another authentic Jamaican experience that Fenoli now holds dear to him as he continues to rave about the warm welcome and feel-good hospitality that he received at the Regency Bar and the Terra Nova Hotel in general.

Fenoli's first KBW event would come at the Black Tie Reception on Friday evening where he hit the stage to thank Jamaica for the warm welcome before he saw

designs presented by a number of local and international fashion designers. This would range from swimwear, to loungewear to bridal gowns. He commented on the vibrancy of pieces by Neahlis and Jae Jolly and adored the structure and boldness of menswear by Dexter Huxtable. Petals and Promises wowed with exquisite bridal gowns while Roger Gary closed with strong, contemporary yet bold swimwear and resort pieces. Fenoli finished his evening snapping pictures with the many Jamaicans who came out to see him and sampling the tantalizing treats served up by Goddard Catering Group.

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Saturday was the big day. Kingston Bridal Week came abuzz with activity as Fenoli visited each and every booth throughout the day, giving bridal advice, taking pictures with adoring viewers of his shows and signing copies of his book, *It's All About the Dress*. His presentation gave us insight into who he is and how he got started in the fashion industry. He shared anecdotes from behind the reality TV cameras and gave secrets to brides-to-be in the audience about finding the right dress. Fenoli's most popular question? What's the latest trend in bridal dresses. He quickly reminds us that it may not be pleasant to look back on wedding photos twenty (20) years down the line and see trendy. Instead we want to see timeless, classic, something that truly represents the bride, just as the wedding should share the story of the couple in each element from the décor, to the music, to the food. Randy's biggest one-liner is “always go with the dress that makes you *feel* the most beautiful.” He reminds us to think not of trends, colours or advice from others but most importantly the one that makes us feel the absolute best. In a dress that we feel beautiful in, we carry ourselves with pride.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 34>>>>>>

“It turns out Fenoli is a lover of all things spicy”

<<<< CONTINUED FROM PAGE 31

One touching moment back at the KBW Bridal Market was at the Topp In Designz booth as they presented Randy with the most thoughtful gift. It was a box filled to the brim with Jamaican spices and condiments, a model wedding dress made of paper as they are a paperie and a beautifully decorated mini wedding cake. Fenoli in turn gifted the cake to an adorable young girl who came out with her mother to see him. He was worried about shipping the entire package back and thought this would be an awesome gesture, which it was, a very heart-felt moment at Kingston Bridal Week.

Lunch brought yet another opportunity to treat Fenoli to an authentic Jamaican experience and the team decided upon Scotchies' jerk chicken and pork. It turns out Fenoli is a lover of all things spicy and was delighted in the flavourful chicken, liberally dipping it in the scotch bonnet sauce! He wasn't shy in letting us know that he could eat several more pieces of that!

The Tai Flora Luxe lounge was so beautifully decorated that Fenoli spent much of the afternoon there speaking with members of the press and signing books. It was clear to patrons of the event why they are the leading event decorators as we were immersed in plush elegance, muted colours, flora and crystals all around. It was a calming and alluring environment, well outfitted and ready to receive Fenoli and his many guests. There he took pictures with patrons lined up to meet him and spoke with some of the visitors from his presentation who wanted advice or simply to say what a wonderful time they had. His charisma and charm won over all as he greeted each individual with his opening “Hello beautiful!”

The whirlwind day ended at the KBW Taste of Kingston event where Fenoli dined on great eats from renowned chef Oji Jaja while watching designs strut down the runway. Fenoli's thoughts on his first time in Jamaica? He told me how much the people here treated him so well, “it was a warm reception every where I went. I loved being able to truly immerse myself in the culture, eating the food and learning a few of the words.” He spoke highly of his hosts, of the KBW team and of the Jamaican people in general, loving the genuine kindness extended to him at every turn. He mentioned loving the bold flair in our fashion, noting that we aren't afraid of colour and style. Fenoli truly enjoyed his time here in Jamaica at Kingston Bridal Week and I bet this won't be the last time that he journeys to our beautiful island paradise.

Written by Monique “IrieDiva” Solomon

