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By Kasey Caminti

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BEHIND THE SCENES

The Towers of the Waldorf Astoria

This New York City landmark made for a memorable photo shoot with Kat Graham

Since its opening in 1931, the Waldorf Astoria on Park Avenue has been an iconic and glamorous symbol of New York luxury. The renovation of this landmark building by architectural firm Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, will convert the exclusive all-suites Towers section of the hotel into a collection of contemporary residences. With interiors and amenities designed by Paris-based designer Jean-Louis Deniot, these 375 apartments will boast unsurpassed luxury and service. The property features 50,000 square feet of private amenities, like a private porte cochère featuring dramatic double-height vaulted ceilings with 24-hour valet service and two gracious entry lobbies, ensuring you'll want for nothing. "The Waldorf Astoria has a forever lavish aura," says Deniot. "The interiors will reflect the magnificence of the past mixed with today's great sense of energy. They will be grand and playful, all highly inviting, with many elements of surprise and excitement." Residences range from spacious studios to lavish four-bedrooms and stunning penthouses—several with expansive private outdoor space.

RESIDENCES START AT \$1.7 MILLION. waldorftowers.nyc

Bustier, \$950, blouse, \$1,200, pants, \$1,350, espadrille, \$790, DIOR, available at Dior boutiques nationwide. Rose Des Vents bracelet, \$2,000, Rose Des Vents ring, \$7,950, DIOR FINE JEWELRY, available at Dior boutiques nationwide



A living room in the one of the Residences



The Starlight Terrace



The Starlight swimming pool

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KAT GRAHAM: TIFFANY DAWN NICHOLSON

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NATURAL BEAUTY

Dress, \$10,500, DIOR, available at *leur baguette* restaurant. Rose Des Vents necklace, \$6,990, Rose Des Vents earring, \$2,250, Rose Des Vents ring, \$1,750, Rose Des Vents ring, \$1,450, DIOR FINE JEWELRY, available at *leur baguette* restaurant. Makeup Artist Georgi Samra used DIOR Ultra Rouge Creme lipstick in 848 Monopink to achieve Graham's bold red look.

Actress and singer Kat Graham shows off her natural beauty; undeniable talent and powerful point of view

BY KASEY CAMINITI
PHOTOGRAPHY BY TIFFANY DAWN NICHOLSON
STYLING BY PAUL FREDERICK





Jacket, \$2,100, DIOR, available at Dior boutiques nationwide
opposite: Blouse, \$1,400, skirt, \$2,800, DIOR, available at Dior boutiques nationwide. Rose Des Vents bracelet, \$2,230,
Rose Des Vents necklace, \$3,940, Rose Des Vents necklace, \$9,800,
Rose Des Vents ring, \$1,400, DIOR FINE JEWELRY, available at Dior boutiques nationwide



Dress, \$5,900, DIOR, available at Dior boutiques nationwide.
Rose Des Vents earrings, \$3,550,
Rose Des Vents bracelet, \$1,850,
Rose Des Vents bracelet, \$3,750,
Rose Des Vents bracelet, \$6,700,
DIOR FINE JEWELRY, available at Dior boutiques nationwide

KAT

GRAHAM IS IN HAIR AND MAKEUP PREPARING for a photo shoot at the Towers of the Waldorf Astoria residences in New York City on a gloomy November day. The actress and musician has always had a love for all things glam, but, since she's been quarantining at her home in Atlanta for most of the year, she's learned to live with less. "I've really stopped hiding everything," says Graham. "We all want to cover up and pretend like we're OK, but I think that the more honest you are about where you're at, the more beautiful you are." Discovering new beauty and hair routines on her own has been revealing and powerful for Graham, and has brought her to a new place of self-acceptance.

"Hair has been a spiritual journey for me this year," she says. "I've really learned to accept my curls, my 'fro and my African roots." Graham describes going to a hair salon at age 6 because her mother, who is white, didn't know how to style her hair's texture. "My mom would just drop me off at the salon. Emotionally, it felt like I was being rejected because my parent couldn't really handle it." After associating "manageable" hair with success in her personal and professional life for so long, she says it's freeing to feel content with her natural locks. "Whether you're Black or not, we all struggle with self-acceptance," she says, "and we all have our own individual journeys."

Graham's fashion journey has been another form of self-expression. She is a fan of Dior and regularly

attends the French fashion house's runway shows and events. "Maria Grazia Chiuri's interpretation of Dior is what I want to do in my acting," explains Graham. "She gives a voice to the voiceless." This includes incorporating traditional African textiles and fabrics into Dior's resort collection (which Graham is modeling in this photo shoot). Clearly, the feeling is mutual: "Kat is a perfect representation of the current Dior aesthetic simply because she is authentic," says Chiuri. "She wears her clothes in a natural way, thereby embodying my idea of what it is to be a woman who chooses fashion as a tool to reflect her own identity."

While Graham explores many different creative avenues, there is a common thread through it all. "I want to bring attention to the things and people that need to be paid attention to," says Graham. "With my humanitarian work, it's refugees. Through my acting, it's marginalized communities or relationships and aesthetics that people might overlook or undervalue. Maria Grazia does that with her fashion, and I think that's why I'm super devoted to her." Graham has also just been named a Goodwill Ambassador for UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, joining the likes of Cate Blanchett, Ben Stiller and Kristin Davis. She is only the fifth American to be appointed to the role.

The 31-year-old, Swiss-born Graham began her career as a backup dancer for Pharrell Williams and Jamie Foxx both onstage and in music videos

before joining the Black Eyed Peas on tour in 2007 as their supporting act. At the same time, she was branching out into acting, taking roles in *The O.C.* and, most notably, *The Vampire Diaries* for eight seasons. Graham's latest role is in the new Netflix film *Operation Christmas Drop*. It's based on the real-life U.S. Air Force humanitarian mission of the same name, an annual holiday tradition of air-dropping much-needed supplies to the locals in Guam. The film also features a biracial romance (Graham stars opposite actor Alexander Ludwig). "What Netflix does with me, and they also did this in *The Holiday Calendar*, is that they don't think twice about putting a Black girl with a white man," she says. "They normalize those things and empower young Black leads."

Following a busy year of films like *Operation Christmas Drop*, *Cut Throat City* and *Emperor*, Graham's next roles include voicing April in Netflix's animated martial arts superhero film *Rise of the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*. She also has new music slated for release early in the new year. The album will showcase a different sound from her 2017 album *Love Music Funk Magic*, which flirted with groovy disco vibes. While Graham can't reveal much, she does disclose that fans can expect a new moniker for the star that will also serve as the album's title. "It's a different genre of music. I've just gone left." But everything else she's doing feels so right. ■

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Brochette, price upon request, DIOR, available at Dior boutiques nationwide.
Rose Des Vents earrings, \$3,550, Rose Des Vents earring, \$2,350, Rose Des Vents brooch, \$1,850, Rose Des Vents bracelet, \$2,750, Rose Des Vents bracelet, \$6,700, Rose Des Vents hand jewel, \$10,300, Rose Des Vents necklace, \$3,940, Rose Des Vents necklace, \$9,800, Rose Des Vents ring, \$1,730, DIOR FINE JEWELRY, available at Dior boutiques nationwide.
Get the look with DIOR Forever Skin Glow foundation in #W03, Diorskin Mineral Nude Bronze in D06 Warm Sundown and Diorskin Nude Luminizer in 03 Golden Glow.

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