

The Simple Life of Cheryl Tiegs

By Ivy Gracie

America fell in love with the images of Cheryl Tiegs that have been splashed across countless magazine covers and ad campaigns over the last 40 years. And the blonde halo, wide-set blue eyes and engaging smile that catapulted her to supermodel stardom haven't changed much, nor has their radiance diminished. In fact, her glow emanates from a depth that can only come from life experience. Combining her deep respect for the environment, love of adventure, and ongoing quest for physical and spiritual wellness, Cheryl Tiegs is cultivating a balanced, meaningful life, both personally and professionally. Here, she talks about her healthy lifestyle and her efforts to lead a more environmentally-friendly life, starting with her home.

The current crop of supermodels – telephone-tossing, drug-snorting, narcissistic divas – couldn't be more different than the woman who carved the path for their success. Cheryl Tiegs, arguably the first model to rise to icon status, says she's most comfortable when she's got her feet on the ground and she's communing with nature. "I've backpacked quite a bit," she says. "I'm kind of a minimalist and I like quietude and simplicity. I like going out with everything I need to survive on my back."

Cheryl got the chance to test her survival skills when she appeared on the Travel Channel's series *Pathfinders*, backpacking in Mexico's Copper Canyon. "Copper Canyon is six times larger than the Grand Canyon," she says, "and it's incredibly beautiful. One night we slept on a mesa under a full moon. Another night we slept next to a wall of snakes, with tarantulas and scorpions nearby." Enduring intense heat, Cheryl and her traveling companions ran out of food and water. "I lost about ten pounds," she says. Nevertheless, the trip didn't douse her enthusiasm for outdoor adventure.

Last summer Cheryl made a 10-day expedition to the Arctic Circle. There she met up with explorer Will Steger, who was completing a four-month expedition to gather information about global warming.



Cheryl Tiegs at home

They flew over Canada's 3,700-mile-wide Barnes Ice Cap, where Cheryl was able to see, firsthand, the effects of climate change. "The ice cap is shrinking in width as well as depth, but then it comes back," she says. "That's the pattern, but now it's happening at an alarming rate. I'm not an expert on the area, but you can see water where there used to be ice."

HOME, GREEN HOME

It's no surprise that Cheryl's concern for the environment has influenced her home life. Luckily, Ed Begley, Jr., the poster boy for all things green, is one of her dearest friends. Cheryl credits Ed with fueling her interest in adopting a greener lifestyle. "He really walks the talk more than anyone. I would drive around in his little electric car years before anybody started getting hybrids." Ed helped Cheryl go green one step at a time. "It started with the light bulbs," she recalls. "Then the next time I bought a car I got a hybrid. I have two hybrids now." Cheryl appeared on Begley's HGTV series *Living With Ed* and recalls the final segment of the show. "I asked him, 'Paper or plastic?' and he said, 'Neither.' I said, 'Come on, Ed, I buy a lot of groceries. If I have to make a choice is it paper or plastic?'" Cheryl's eyes tear up. "He said, 'Put your groceries off to the side, run out to the car, get the canvas bag you've been using for the last year and come back in and get your groceries.' So it's gotten to the point where I have taken my coat off, put all my groceries in it, folded it up, and taken the groceries out to my car."

Now, not even her hectic travel and appearance schedules can dissuade Cheryl's green focus. "Newspapers on an airplane don't just stay in the pocket in the seat in front of me.



Cheryl Tiegs' kitchen



I hand-carry them to a place where I know they'll be recycled. Every piece of paper I write on in my home has been recycled."

Happy to lend her public persona to promoting sustainability, Cheryl is the spokesperson for Cambria, the only producer of natural quartz surfaces in the United States. Because Cambria emits no toxins and requires only soap and water to clean, she installed it in her kitchen and guest house. "I had Italian tiles that were an enormous amount of work to keep clean," she says. "Chemicals to clean it up; chemicals to seal it. It was expensive and unhealthy. So I put Cambria in my kitchen and guest house. It was a big project, but it was necessary because that's where I cook for myself and my child. My kitchen is now green. My guest house is now green. And all my appliances are energy efficient."

No wonder Cheryl Tieg continues to radiate – she seems to have it all: a satisfying family life, a rewarding and varied career, good health and inner peace... And the wisdom to preserve the balance between them. ■



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