

From **"Dress-Up" to Paris Couture**

# Sweet Sixteen in the World of High Fashion

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**ALFRED**

August 2001

**What started out as "something to keep a teenage girl busy" has landed itself on the runways of Milan, Italy – the fashion show capital of the world.**

In just one year.

Fifteen year old Sandy Mallette of Alfred, Ontario was, well, "like any other teenager". She loved clothes, dreamt of being a fashion designer, tolerated her two younger brothers and attended high school at St. Francis Xavier in Hammond.

She was also 5'10" tall and very pretty.

The daughter of a career armed forces Dad, Claude Mallette, Sandy was also "very shy". Born on a Canadian Base in Germany, Sandy and her family moved to different postings, until finally settling in Alfred, near her grandparents who live in Wendover and the Riverside/Casselman area.

After moving to Alfred, Sandy's mother, Rita Mallette urged her shy daughter to "get involved in something".

"Actually, she told me that if I didn't there is always chores around the house", clarified Sandy. "My aunt saw an ad in the newspaper about a fashion training school in Hawkesbury and Rockland that taught make-up, fashion, how to walk, nutrition and other stuff."

Hearing the word "fashion" was enough for this fifteen-year-old to give it a try.

The fashion school, Agence Perfekto, headed by Paula St-Pierre, immediately recognized the potential in this shy teenager. "She was tall, beautiful and had an equally beautiful personality", said Paula St-Pierre. "Her beauty is superb and she is truly photogenic – all that a winning model needs."

Three months later, Agence Perfekto sent Sandy to a modeling convention in Ottawa, where along with 400 other aspiring young people from throughout North America, Sandy experienced her first "convention".

The convention is largely an opportunity for the candidates to be seen and evaluated by a number of international

agencies. If the models have "potential" they are called back for further interviews and possibly signed by an agency that will represent them in this highly competitive market.

"Ten of us at a time would simply walk down the runway and do a side-to-side profile pose", explained Sandy with a shrug. Spotted by a number of agencies, the young teen found herself constantly being asked: "When are your braces coming off your teeth?" Sandy suggested "a month" though her dentist kept them on for another five months.

An international Scout with Angie Agencies of Ottawa signed the promising young model, and Sandy entered the hectic world of runways, conventions and more conventions.

By January, the just turned sixteen

year old was off to Hollywood, California to "do the walk" with 2000 other hopefuls before 300 international agencies at the largest modeling convention in the United States.

"It was not what I expected", said Sandy of the very busy week that began at 6 a.m. every morning and didn't finish until nearly midnight.

Twenty-two agencies wanted to see

her again, stressing that Sandy had the "European look". Agencies are always searching for the "look" that matches their clients' needs. Specific models for specific tasks, which can range from hair, hands, and feet to complete runway.

Sandy had the "runway look" – the ability to create the appearance and attitude to go with the garment she was showing.

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**THE LOOK**—"The look" appears in whatever the model is wearing. The ability to change the look or attitude to suit each garment and/or each show is a talent reserved for a select few top models.