

LOS ANGELES

CONFIDENTIAL

GIRL POWER!

MAD

for
CHRISTINA HENDRICKS

GENERATIONS XX! MEET OUR WOMEN OF THE YEAR // COURTSIDE WITH THE LAKERS' JEANIE BUSS

PLUS: DONATELLA VERSACE, GAME OF THRONES' ALFIE ALLEN, BETHANY MOTA, AND DISNEYLAND DELUXE!



TEEN PLAYER

WITH H'WOOD AND THE WHITE HOUSE ON SPEED DIAL, MUSIC/BEAUTY/FASHION/YOUTUBE SUPERNOVA **BETHANY MOTA** IS LA'S TECH STAR DU JOUR. **BY JULIET IZON**

Bethany Mota has over 2 million Twitter followers and over 4 million on Instagram. In the past year she has released a top-five single, "Need You Right Now," competed on *Dancing with the Stars*, interviewed President Obama, and launched her own clothing line in conjunction with teen fashion behemoth Aeropostale. Oh, and she's not even 20 years old.

So who is this wunderkind and what's her secret? One word: YouTube. Mota is the poster child for a new type of celebrity: those who have gained fans and stardom not through the traditional roads of acting or music (though she's adept at those as well), but through low-budget, single-camera, confessional-style videos on the Internet. To date, her channel on YouTube

INSIGHT

GREAT ESCAPE:

"I love Manhattan Beach. You don't really feel like you're in the city."

CAUSE CELEBRE:

"At the end of the day, I really want to use my voice to help people in difficult situations. That's what I've always tried to inspire in my viewers—to not let bullying affect them."

NOW TRENDING:

"My sister and I love Urth Caffè! It's super popular but very good. I always get their chicken quesadillas with guacamole—they're my favorite."

Mota-vation! Bethany Mota's YouTube videos propelled her to teen stardom, and now she wants to use that fan base to tackle tough subjects like politics and bullying.

has garnered over 8 million subscribers, most of whom tune in to see Mota wax knowledgeably about style, makeup, hair, and food.

What sets the dimpled brunette apart from the thousands of other "vloggers" online is, to borrow a more traditional Hollywood term, she has "It." Mota's online persona is both approachable and admirable: She's the sort of teen whose closet everyone wants to raid, but also the girl who parents wish their child would befriend. There is an honesty to all of her videos that is not often seen in our era of "reality" television.

But to the self-confessed shy girl, her fame is still shocking. The younger daughter of an electrician and a stay-at-home mom, her foray into YouTube began when the then-13-year-old was cyberbullied, leading her to retreat into the safety of her bedroom in Los Banos, in central California. "I really let it take a hit to my self-esteem," she says. "I was homeschooled, so it was easy for me to kind of shut myself out." Scrolling through YouTube videos became a welcome distraction: "I didn't have to focus on the negativity in my life," she says. "I felt like no one really understood me, so I decided to make my own videos. Suddenly, I felt like I had a voice again."

Within a matter of months, brands were contacting the teenager to feature their products within her videos. Soon she was organizing "meetups" with fans, who often wait hours to snap selfies with their idol. "YouTube and online media really build this link between people around the world," she says. Her considerable influence with the millennial generation is one of the reasons she was approached to interview President Obama. "At first, I didn't really believe that it was going to happen. I just couldn't accept that it would be a reality," she laughs. "It was great because we got a lot of the younger generation interested in politics and what's going on in the world."

Now with her recent move to Los Angeles, Mota is ready to tackle more than just the Internet. "I really want to get more into music. I want to try more of an acoustic, raw style and start writing things," she says. "Out of everything that I do, the common factor is that it all allows me to create. I just really want to be able to challenge myself and my mind." **LAC**