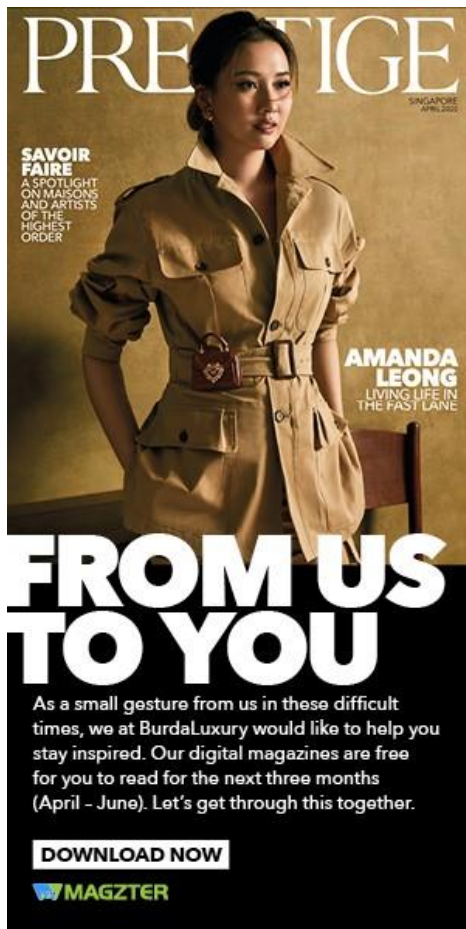


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Despite her age, Amanda Leong has already lived a very eventful life. In the last decade alone, she has gone from pageant queen to public relations professional and, more recently, a parent of two with one more on the way – all before turning 28 end of this year. In fact, she was just 18 when she plucked up the courage to take part in her first beauty pageant, Miss Universe Singapore in 2011, and emerged first runner-up. She went on to claim other pageant titles, namely Miss Cosmopolitan International 2011, Miss Singapore Tourism International 2011 and Miss ASEAN 2013, before starting her modelling career, a far cry from the reserved girl next door when she was growing up.



Thanks to her upbringing under her tough “tiger mum”, she always got good grades in school but describes herself as “quite the dork” until graduating from junior college. “I wasn’t a very confident girl growing up and I wanted to change that,” she says. “I wanted to experience something markedly different from my life up till then, so I decided to join Miss Universe Singapore before enrolling in university.” Taking that chance to try something out of her element helped Amanda come out of her shell and gave her a newfound confidence that she still radiates so clearly today. “You could say that my personality blossomed from the experience. It wasn’t so much the pageant itself, but the excitement of trying something completely new and getting to know so many people from different walks of life who I otherwise wouldn’t have met.”

Dressed for success

After completing her Bachelor’s degree in Social Science with a major in Psychology and Corporate Communication at Singapore Management University, Amanda started work at a public relations firm, which she thoroughly enjoyed. Soon after, she had her first child and decided to dedicate her time to being a stay-at-home mum.

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These days, she actively documents her life on Instagram (@missamandaleong) where she often shares her OOTDs and beauty tips with her 25,300 followers. Fashion has always been a fun form of expression for her; while she can be comfortable in a casual get-up, she also isn't afraid to go all out. "Some days I draw inspiration from the ever-timeless Grace Kelly and some days I just want to be your Beverly Hills Barbie in pink. One thing's for sure, I will always dress for the occasion!" she says.

"I love pieces that speak to me and I tend to choose those over the supposedly 'classic' designs," adds Amanda. One of her wackier purchases includes a Dolce & Gabbana Sicily bag from the brand's Viva La Mamma collection, featuring embroidery of a mother holding the hands of her two children, accompanied by a dog and a cat. The bag was the subject of controversy when it was released in 2015, with many criticising the child-like illustration on a luxury item. For Amanda, however, whose brood currently consists of three-year-old Liam, seven-month-old daughter Amelie, two dogs and five cats, it was a bag she had to have. "It is basically the story of my life!"

Well heeled

Often in the background of some of Amanda's OOTD photos, one can catch a glimpse of her enviably organised and visibly extensive shoe collection. The self-confessed shoe fiend estimates she owns over 1,000 pairs of shoes, of which she says more than 90 per cent are heels.



She appreciates her heels not just as fashionable footwear but as miniature models of architecture, with all the craftsmanship and artistry that go into making each pair. A red sole, she reveals, is her Achilles heel. "There's a certain curve under the sole of a Christian Louboutin – from the very front of the sole all the way up to the top of the heel – that is just absolutely irresistible to me," she gushes. "I have never seen that silhouette in another designer's heel."

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Her fascination with shoes started when she was a teenager and would religiously keep up with the latest designer collections on TalkShoes, a sister site of the popular designer bag blog, PurseBlog. But her love for Louboutins truly began when she bought her first pair at Harrods in London in 2014: A classic pair of Pigalle Follies in her favourite colour, baby pink. Amanda describes them as the perfect combination of the best features of two other Louboutin silhouettes— the 120mm So Kate heel and the shorter Pigalle toe box.



“They’re absolutely impossible to walk in,” she admits, “but to this day they’re still my favourite pair for its beautifully crafted, towering silhouette.” Over the years, she’s built up quite the collection of Louboutins and has acquired some so exquisite she almost cannot bear to wear them. “They make my feet look like pieces of art!”

One such pair were the clear PVC Louboutins with holographic silver butterfly embellishments that she bought last year. “When I first saw them online, my heart stopped and I immediately went to the store asking for them,” she recalls. To her dismay, the retail staff here had never seen that design and she soon found out that they were not available in Asia. Without hesitation, she placed an order with the US store. “They look just like Cinderella’s glass slippers and I’ve only worn them once, aptly, to a Louboutin event.”

Another precious pair were the nude mesh Louboutins that she wore at her wedding three years ago. “They were loosely studded with Swarovski crystals to give off a sparkly but barely-there look, and Jennifer Lopez wore the same pair to the Grammys in 2017.”

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Life in the fast lane

Another interest Amanda has just started getting into is cars, which she credits her other half Lionel Lau for. “My husband is the one that will tell you all about how each automobile was designed, why and what for, and what makes them so special in the grand timeline of automotive history,” she says. “I used to only drive our family sedan. And then I started driving his other cars and learnt to appreciate each one of them for their beauty and handling.”

With encouragement from her husband, she started a dedicated Instagram account (@heelsbehindwheels) last June to document her daily drives with his cars and provide a female perspective on them. McLarens, it seems, are favoured, with an MP4-12C Spider making several appearances on the feed.

And while heels are her first love, Amanda also enjoys collecting jewellery, largely for the fact that they are heirloom pieces. “They’ll outlast everything else in my closet and I like the idea of keeping things that my children can pass on to their own children in future,” she explains.



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Some of her favourite jewels are from Cartier, especially pieces from its iconic and timeless Panthère de Cartier and Love collections. Her most treasured piece is a Panthère de Cartier bracelet featuring a diamond- and onyx-studded panther with gleaming emerald eyes perched atop a satin and leather bracelet. "It is truly a wearable piece of art and also one that I really hope my daughter will appreciate when she's older."

Fashion direction: Johnny Khoo

Photography: Cher Him

Fashion styling: Jacquie Ang

Hair: Sean Ang, using Ouai

Make-up: Melissa Yeo, using Estée Lauder

Photography assistance: Yang Shihui

Fashion assistance: Jessica Khor