

SINGAPORE'S EMPOWERED WOMEN

WELCOME TO SIMONE'S INNER CIRCLE, YOU'RE NOW A PART OF OUR COMMUNITY, WHERE WE DISCUSS EVERYTHING FROM FINDING THAT PERFECT WORK-LIFE BALANCE TO INSPIRATION, HEALTH AND OF COURSE, FASHION.



The first of the series will feature short conversations with a few of Singapore's Empowered Women. To us, empowerment is a process and a mantra in believing you are stronger and more confident in controlling your life and your rights. It does not actively have to mean fighting for rights or equality. Instead it's being mindful, and working hard to achieve personal satisfaction while constantly developing.

We will be using this platform to share stories and experiences of women who live and work in Singapore and who we think we can learn from. We hope you enjoy our very first series!

- Simone x



MEET SARISSA RODRIGUEZ-SCHWARTZ

The former New York native has called Singapore home since 2011. She's a female entrepreneur, co-founder of SJS Group and the CEO of various food & beverage and nightlife establishments in Singapore, such as: Lulu's Lounge, Papi's Tacos, Pasta Bar and their latest project — an Italian bistro and cocktail bar - bar Milano

Q&A

Q: WHAT IS "WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT?" IS THIS ABOUT GENDER EQUALITY, OR IS IT MORE THAN THAT?

A: THIS IS ALL-ENCOMPASSING BUT YES, FIRST AND FOREMOST IT'S ABOUT GENDER EQUALITY. IT'S ABOUT HAVING REPRESENTATION IN DECISION-MAKING, KNOCKING DOWN STEREOTYPES, AND BEING SEEN AS EQUAL IN REGARDS TO PAY, LAWS, RESOURCES, AND MORE. WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IS ALSO THE KEY TO SOCIETAL TRANSFORMATION, ECONOMIC STABILITY, AND GLOBAL ADVANCES.

Q: WHAT ARE THE QUALITIES OF AN EMPOWERED WOMAN?

A: THE MOST IMPORTANT QUALITIES ARE INDEPENDENCE, EDUCATION, EXHIBITS SELF-LOVE AND SELF-CARE AND NOT PLACING CONDITIONS ON WHAT MAKES HER HAPPY.

Q: CAN YOU SHARE YOUR PERSONAL ICONS OF EMPOWERED WOMEN AND WHAT SETS THEM APART?

A: I LOOK UP TO WOMEN WHO ARE UNAPOLOGETICALLY THEMSELVES, WHO HAVE BROKEN BARRIERS, AND WHO ULTIMATELY DO THE RIGHT THING. ALEXANDRIA OCASIO-CORTEZ, WHO WAS ELECTED TO CONGRESS AFTER A GRASSROOTS CAMPAIGN OPERATED OUT OF THE BAR SHE WAS WORKING AT. SHE HAS BROUGHT A VOICE TO THE YOUNGER GENERATION BY USING SOCIAL MEDIA TO SPEAK DIRECTLY TO HER CONSTITUENTS, DEMYSTIFYING POLITICS, AND STANDING UP FOR EQUALITY AND ANTI-POVERTY.AMY SCHUMER, A BRILLIANT COMEDIAN, ENTERTAINER, AND ACTIVIST. SHE IS AN ICON FOR HER STANCE ON ANTI-BODY SHAMING, POLITICAL ACTIVISM, AND CALLS TO ACTION. WHEN MOST CELEBRITIES STAY QUIET, SHE GETS LOUDER AND I AM HERE FOR IT.

Q: HOW DO YOU EMPOWER WOMEN WHO WORK WITH YOU?

A: BY ALWAYS BEING A LISTENING EAR, LOOKING OUT FOR THEIR WELL-BEING, AND MAKING SURE THEY ARE MAKING THE RIGHT DECISIONS IN REGARDS TO WORK/LIFE BALANCE.

Q: WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE YOUNG WOMEN JUST STARTING THEIR CAREER?

A: I sometimes wonder what career path I would have taken if I came of age during this time in history. When your only icons are actresses and pop stars, it does put a limit on what you believe you can accomplish. Young women have considerably more opportunities if not simply by having well-rounded icons and women to look up to. My advice would be to forge forward and do those that came before you proud, understand that you belong in the room, work hard to prove your value, then demand to be paid accordingly.

Q: WERE THERE OBSTACLES IN YOUR OWN CAREER WITH RESPECT TO GENDER?

A: BEING ACCOMPLISHED SO YOUNG, BOTH YOUTH AND GENDER COMBINED WORKED AGAINST ME. I HAD TO WORK EXTRA HARD TO CLAIM AUTHORITY, PUT ASIDE GENERAL INSECURITIES AND THE DREADED "IMPOSTER SYNDROME", AND UNDERSTAND THAT I BELONGED.

Q: HOW DO YOU EMPOWER WOMEN THROUGH FASHION?

A: FASHION SHOULD BE LIVEABLE! I DON'T BELIEVE FASHION SHOULD BE PAINFUL. THIS IS WHY I ALWAYS DRESS FOR STYLE & COMFORT, SO I CAN FOCUS ON THE TASKS THAT MATTER INSTEAD OF WHY MY FEET HURT.



“ I TREATED *EVERY* BUSINESS AS MY OWN. BEFORE IT WAS MY OWN. I WORKED HARDER, CONSISTENTLY LEARNED, AND ULTIMATELY PRODUCED. *NO ONE* CAN DENY SKILL, TALENT, AND HARD WORK. ”