

ALSO INSIDE: SHOULD MEN STAY OUT OF THE DELIVERY ROOM • TEEN OBESITY: ARE BAJAN KIDS AT RISK

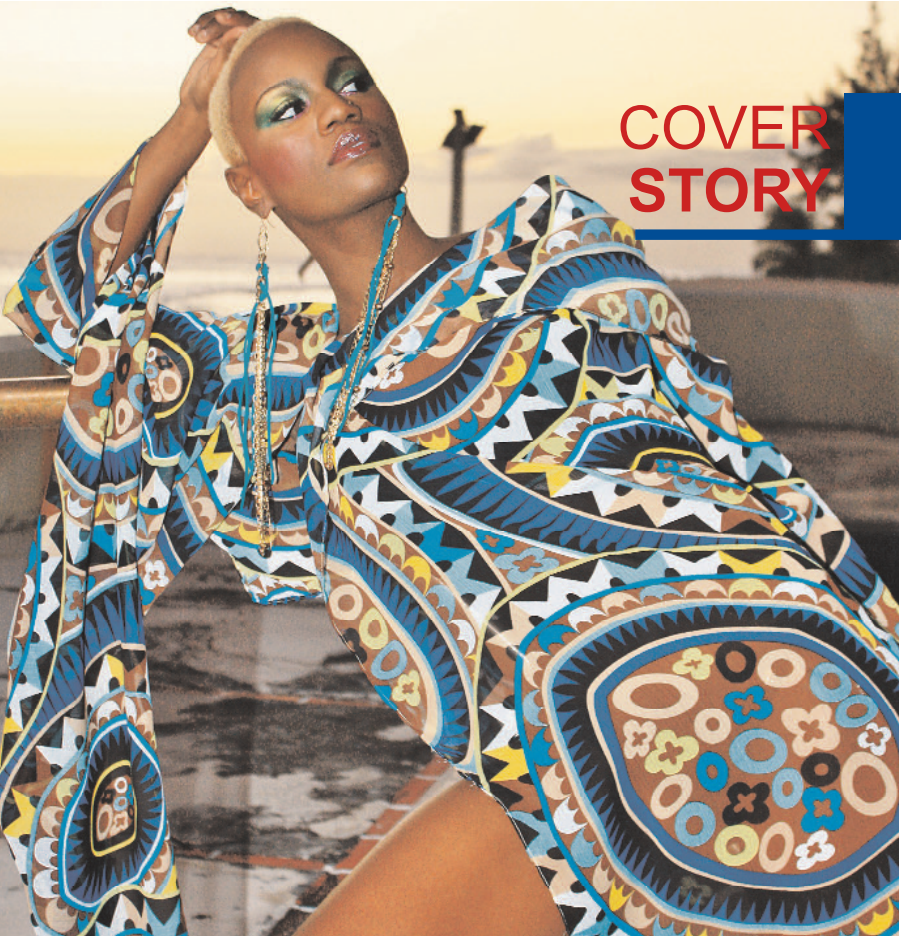
# THE ASKY

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**AYESHA IBRAHIM**  
DESIGNING HER LIFE FOR 2012





COVER  
STORY

# Essence of womanhood

**Barbadian designer Ayesha Ibrahim talks with EASY magazine about her love of fashion, carving out a life for herself in Miami, and why she wants women to be inspired by the beauty and vibrancy of her creations.**

by Sherie Holder-Olutayo

**When did you first become interested in design?**

From as far back as I can remember, I was always interested in fashion. I remember from the age of nine or ten my mother taking me to my seamstress for us to sit and design various outfits for special occasions. So, from a young age my goal was to be different, and I did this through fashion. I then began modelling at the age of 17 and soon took on the role of stylist at the age of 24, but it wasn't until completion of my Bachelor's in business and after styling various clients in Barbados and in the United States that I realized that I was not truly expressing myself as the artist that I know I am. Such a realization pushed me to follow my dream and pursue a career as a fashion designer.

**How would you say your approach to fashion is different? Or what message do you want your designs to convey?**

I would say that with regards to my approach to fashion, I strive for difference and oneness with my pieces. My goal with each ASMI piece is for them to tell a story, causing them to stand out amongst all others. I therefore embrace vibrant colours, complicated prints and intense fabrics and fuse them together to create a unique and expressive ASMI design. The message of ASMI is that of strength. My goal as a designer was to create a brand that truly defined a woman; a brand that embodied all the qualities I saw in them: strength, independence, elegance and true beauty.

**Since you live in Miami, have you found it difficult to break onto the fashion scene?**

Yes, I must say that at first I found it difficult and even frustrating, but then I realized that it is up to me to make the best of my situation and my environment.

Once I came to that realization and embraced what Miami had to offer with regards to fashion and its opportunities, doors began to open for me. I received requests to be featured on morning show segments such as **Miami Now TV**, magazine features and requests from boutique owners to view my designs. I am now a firm believer that hard work never fails, and only the best will come if one continues to make the best out of his or her situation.

**Why is it important for you to incorporate Barbados into your designs?**

My designs are based on my inspirations. No matter where I go or how far I travel, Barbados is my home and I love my country. That simple fact inspires me daily and it is embedded in my designs. My inspiration also stems from my background. I am Afro-Barbadian with my mother being from Barbados and my father from Tanzania, Africa, and it is not only my love for these countries that inspire me but it is also the strength of the women of these countries. My mother raised me to be strong, independent and ambitious, and those are the qualities I see when I look at the women of Barbados, and as Caribbean women, direct descendants of Africa, such overwhelming beauty motivates and encourages me to create and design something beautiful.



**How receptive has your family been to your career choice?**

My family supports me 100 per cent and they are always there when I need them, especially my mother. She is my motivation. On the days that I feel frustrated and overwhelmed I remember that they are here in Barbados cheering me on and I know I must make them proud. In fact, it was my brother who encouraged me to pursue my Master's in fine arts with a focus in fashion design. Without any doubts he saw my intense love for fashion and he knew my potential. He encouraged me to follow my dreams and put my best foot forward.

**Creative professions like fashion design allow you to really be expressive. How has fashion design fuelled your creative expression?**

Fashion design has allowed me to think outside the box; some days I feel like a scientist in a lab experimenting with various fabrics, trimmings and details to create a unique piece. With all of my designs I try to add an element of difference. This is usually achieved using either a technique, fabric choice or colour collaboration



Makeup: Renee Ifill  
Pictures by Ryan Wills  
Models showcasing  
Ayesha's fashions:  
Rhea Cummins-Jordan  
and Claire Yarde

that would have been least expected. What I enjoy about fashion design is that every day I discover something new and not only do these discoveries fuel my creative expression but they also inspire me to create a one of a kind ASMI design.

**What do you want women to take away from your designs?**  
I want women to take from my designs all the qualities I see in them. I want them to wear an ASMI original and recognize their strength, independence and elegance and, most of all, I simply want them to see and recognize their true beauty.

**Where would you like to see yourself in the future?**  
I see myself designing ASMI originals for women throughout the Caribbean and I see ASMI collections being sold.





## Editor's Note

### Real Life

**4&5** Velice Greenidge is going on this year without her son Xavier. She talks about the challenges of losing the love of her life and finding peace.

### Social Scene

**17** Get the inside scoop on the hottest events on the social calendar with Gercine Carter.

### State of women in 2012

**8&9** EASY magazine continues with its series on women with Marcia Weekes.

SO MUCH OF THIS LIFE is about dealing with the vagaries that sometimes throw us off-balance. I think the older you get the more you realize there is very little in this life that you can control. We like to think we're in control of everything, but we're really not. Even things like our careers and the direction we choose to go in are subject to the economic recession and the changes that life inevitably brings.

Coming to the realization that there's very little we actually control is a humbling and difficult thing to process. But grasping that concept becomes necessary if we're going to navigate this life successfully and maintain our peace of mind.

For our cover story, Ayesha Ibrahim, a budding Barbadian fashion designer, is doing all within her power to launch herself onto the United States design scene. Perhaps it has been a case of opportunity meeting preparation, but Ayesha is finding doors opening and she is boldly walking through them. We have her story in this week's **EASY**, and it's sure to inspire other young women to walk confidently in the direction of their dreams.

Over the years I have come to appreciate the Serenity prayer, but death is a very difficult thing for some people to accept. Perhaps it's the finality of it, but death can be a daunting prospect, especially when a parent loses a child. The difficulty of coping with the void that loss ultimately leaves can be overwhelming. Velice Greenidge knows that pain first-hand. She talks candidly about losing her son, her reliance and faith in God, and the grace to face 2012 knowing that he is in a better place. These and a host of other features make up this week's **EASY**. So for those things that we can change, which ultimately have to do with ourselves, let's deal with them as positively as we can. We need to remind ourselves to let go and just take a glimpse at the Serenity prayer, as I often do, because it helps to put things in perspective: "God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can and the wisdom to know the difference."

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## Cover Story

**12&13** Ayesha Ibrahim talks about her penchant for fashion, her love for bold colours and how she's charting her own path to success.

