

*Kung-fu student,
eco-warrior, all-round
amazon, and half of one
of the world's richest
power couples –
who better to showcase
this season's popping,
sporty looks than
Gisele Bündchen?
Christa D'Souza
is pulled into the
supermodel's irresistible
forcefield. Photographed
by Mario Testino*

GISELE'S LEGS GO
ON FOR MILES;
SPORTIF LEGGINGS
GO SOME WAY
TO CREATE
THE ILLUSION
Wool sweater, from
£975, Mugler. Miniskirt,
£276, Diane von
Furstenberg. Leather
pocket belt, £435,
Michael Kors. Lycra
leggings, £205, McQ,
at Net-a-Porter.com.
Patent-leather clutch,
£595. Patent-leather
shoes, £365. Both Jimmy
Choo. Lacquered wood
bangles, from £160
each, Hermès. Gold-
plated bracelet, £315,
Tom Binns, at Dover
Street Market. Hair:
Oribe, at Oribe Salon,
Miami Beach. Make-up:
Linda Cantello. Nails:
Gina Viviano.
Set design: Rachel
Thomas. Digital
artwork: R&D. Model:
Gisele Bündchen.
Fashion editor:
Lucinda Chambers

**SHE'S
SHE'S**

LOOKING SWELL:
URBANITES WILL RACE
TO MICHAEL KORS'S
NEON-PINK NEOPRENE
ZIP-UP TUNIC

Stretch-wool crêpe dress,
£1,210, Michael Kors.
Patent-leather clutch, £595,
Jimmy Choo. Studded cuff,
£465, Céline, at Matches.
Perspex round bangle,
to order. Perspex square
bangle, to order. Both
Cornelia Webb. Gold-
plated cuff, £284, Vionnet,
at Selfridges. Sunglasses,
£13, Giant Vintage



CTRIC





STELLA McCARTNEY'S HIGH-SHINE TENNIS DRESS BEFITS BRAZIL'S GOLDEN GIRL; WORK IT OFF-COURT WITH MARNI'S GRAPHIC BOLERO

Opposite: wool/silk jacket, £729, Marni. Tennis dress, £100, Adidas by Stella McCartney, at Stella McCartney. Leggings, £1,270, Hervé Léger by Max Azria. Leather bag with chain strap, £995, Prada. Studded leather purse, £160, McQ, at Harvey Nichols. Red cuff, from £115, Alexis Bittar. Gold-plated cuff, £284, Vionnet, at Selfridges. Orange lacquered wood bangle, from £175, Hermès. Sunglasses, from £13, Giant Vintage

Beauty note: smooth on Giorgio Armani Fluid Sheer in 3 Golden Bronze, £33, for a bronzed gleam

THE HUMBLE BASEBALL SWEATER IS NO LONGER JUST FOR TRACK AND FIELD BUT A VIABLE EVERYDAY GO-TO

This page: raffia baseball top, £608, Roksanda Ilincic, at Opening Ceremony, New York. Silk-éponge and faille dress with pleated skirt, worn underneath, £1,310, Gucci. Neoprene leggings, from £335, Lisa Marie Fernandez. Patent-leather shoes, £365, Jimmy Choo. Pink leather wallet, £145, McQ, at Selfridges. Black leather clutch, £285, Michael Kors. Gold-plated cuff, £284, Vionnet, at Selfridges. Studded resin cuff, from a selection, Louis Vuitton

AUTUMN'S SPORTY SEPARATES
HAVE GRAB-AND-GO APPEAL;
ZIP IN AND POPPER UP

This page: cropped cotton jacket,
from £1,341, Mugler. Neoprene
swimsuit, from £250, Lisa Marie
Fernandez. Miniskirt, £276, Diane
von Furstenberg. Leggings, £1,270,
Hervé Léger by Max Azria. Leather
bag with chain strap, £955, Emilio
Pucci. Studded leather wallet, £145,
McQ, at Selfridges. Cuff, £12.50,
Freedom, at Topshop. Sunglasses,
from £11, Giant Vintage
REWORKED WITH LADYLIKE
PLISSE PLEATS, A SCUBA
T-SHIRT MAKES FOR A
WINNING STATEMENT

Opposite: turtleneck sweater, £40,
Zara. Pleated silk-crêpe skirt, £675,
Gucci. Cotton and leather leggings,
from £275, Ground Zero, at Beyond
the Valley and Shop172.com.
Leather shoes, £375, Christian
Louboutin. Leather belt with zip
detail, £100. White studded leather
purse, £160. Both McQ, at Harvey
Nichols and Net-a-Porter.com. Yellow
leather clutch bag, £450, Burberry.
Studded gold-plated bracelets, from
£415 each, Tom Binns, at Dover
Street Market. Neon-pink bangle,
from £140, Alexis Bittar. Resin
and gold-plated bracelet, £193,
Vionnet, at Selfridges. Sunglasses,
from £260, Mykita Mylon by
Bernhard Willhelm





COLOUR-BLOCKED
BRIGHTS PACK A PUNCH,
ESPECIALLY WHEN
DELIVERED IN AN UPBEAT
SPORTY TEMPO

Top, £22, Nike. Pleated silk skirt, £369, Jonathan Saunders for Escada Sport. Leather belt, £119, Hugo. Leggings, £38, Cyberdog. Leather shoes, £195, Kurt Geiger. Sunglasses, £145. Black leather clutch, £285. Both Michael Kors. Studded leather clutch, £140, McQ, at Selfridges. Wide yellow bangle, from £160, Hermès. Studded gold-plated cuff, £525, Tom Binns, at Dover Street Market. Thin yellow bangle, from £140, Alexis Bittar

Gisele Bündchen is jogging around a kung-fu studio in Boston. Long, golden hair tied up in a messy ponytail, her lean 31-year-old frame veiled in a film of sweat, she keeps looking over her shoulder, beaming encouragingly at me. Is this OK? Am I all right?

Sort of. Those high, pert buttocks of hers, like two plums in a stocking, even in her voluminous workout trousers; those spare sinewy arms; that innate, balletic gracefulness; those spectacular features (in the flesh, she's like a young Rita Hayworth)... It doesn't exactly imbue one with an overwhelming sense of confidence. "Awww, but come on, you're doing great," she says, those magnificent freckled features splitting into a sympathetic smile. My heart can't help sinking slightly, though, when our instructor, Yao Li, pulls out two red plastic blocks and holds each in the air. A loud *thwack* emanates from the one that Gisele deftly kicks, again and again (that poor cushion is toast), while mine remains resolutely undimpled. "Aim at the block," Yao Li murmurs patiently.

"You see?" beams Gisele, wagging a finger at me as, at last, block lowered only inches from the floor, my foot weakly makes contact. "You got it! Heyyy! You're one of the team!"

Next, Yao Li tells us to squat on our haunches, Chinese style, with our soles on the floor, something the average person may not be able to do unless they are used to using a squat lavatory. But with "G", as Yao calls her, one feels, at least physically, there is nothing she cannot do. It really is extraordinary watching how flexible her 6ft, size-eight frame is. Is it a genetic thing, like being able to fold your tongue in half? "Oh, you mean *thees*?" she says, in that exuberant yet curiously mournful Brazilian accent. "It's funny, I was just in India and all the ladies, they can be like this for hours! They need to fetch something? They just walk over like this." She scuttles across the floor like a big cricket. "But, see, I've been doing yoga for 12 years and kung fu for, like, four, right? We always say in another life, I must have been a warrior..." As though to demonstrate her warrior-ness, she and Yao conclude the class with a stunning display of kung fu-istry, including knives and sticks and lots of impressive sound effects.

It is around three o'clock on a sultry fall afternoon, and Gisele and I are sitting in the middle of the studio in downtown Boston – the place she has called home ever since she got married to Tom Brady in February 2009. Brady, the father of her beloved two-year-old son, Benjamin, and her equally beloved five-year-old stepson, John (Brady's child by the

actress Bridget Moynahan), is the famed quarterback for the New England Patriots. In his sporting home, Brady, 34, is so famous that when I let slip to the man at Boston immigration I was coming to see Mrs Tom Brady, he nearly asked for *my* autograph.

"Oh, Tom," purrs Bündchen, indulgently. "He's such a gentle giant. I'm so proud of him. When I go to watch him play, I'm like this big cheerleader, jumping up and down for him. I was born such a passionate person. I don't know if that's my blessing or my curse!"

Gisele and Tom. Tom and Gisele. The ultimate power couple. In Boston, they have an almost regal status, doling out Thanksgiving dinners in soup kitchens, making cheesy service announcements on local television about remembering to turn out the lights, pitching up at rubber-chicken municipal charity dos, and so forth. According to *Forbes* magazine, Bündchen – born in the farm belt of southern Brazil, the daughter of

a human-resources manager and a bank clerk – is the richest supermodel in the world. Her fortune, amassed, not least, through her former contracts with Victoria's Secret, Balenciaga, Dior, Versace, Louis Vuitton, Apple and Givenchy (not to mention the million-dollar flip-flop line, clothes label and skincare range she produces out of Brazil) is estimated at around £90 million – which somewhat dwarfs the £46 million Brady is reputed to make – but together they are way, way more than the sum of their parts, towering above the Jolie-Pitts, the Beckhams and even the Knowles-Zs.

Brady, though born and bred in California, suits this town, with his square-cut, all-American looks and his statesmanlike yet *homme du peuple* air. It is a little surreal, though, to think of such an exotic creature as Gisele living here in "Beantown", a lovely if slightly provincial place, with *Cheers*-style sports bars, a massive college population and tour guides all done up in tricorne hats and buckled shoes on every street corner. It seems a little unglamorous, a little tame.

But then, as Gisele would be the first to tell you, ever since she and Tom got married two years ago, being a wife, being a mother, those are her priorities now. Though technically here for only six months during American-football season (the couple also have a massive custom-built mansion in Los Angeles), she now regards herself as a

Bostonian, and is never happier than when safely "cocooned" at home, an airy loft space atop a picturesque brick townhouse overlooking the Charles River. "Actually, I've never really been the kind of person who clubbed and stuff," she says, taking a lusty swig from her water bottle. "I'm a Cancer, see. I'm home-loving. I really enjoy feeling safe, in my own environment, surrounded by the people I love..." Which includes, it seems, Yao and the studio. "This place," she says, gesticulating enthusiastically about her. "It's my oasis. The kung fu I do here, the t'ai chi, it's like a metaphor for my life... Y'know, my eldest, Jack [as her stepson, John, is called], he's gonna be starting with Yao this fall..."

Oh, Gisele! You gotta love her! So warm and exuberant and genuinely earth-motherly in the flesh. Really, a golden retriever would be more aloof than she. You can feel that serotonin emanating off her like a Ready Brek glow. It's not just the stupendous looks,

it's something she radiates. If you could bottle it, self-help books would cease to exist. No wonder she's what the retail industry calls a "brand magician" – able to sell anything to anyone; and no wonder, too, that she gets the caution as opposed to the parking ticket (as she did recently driving back with the kids from Cape Cod). As Yao, silent until now, wisely pronounces, "G's mind is so positive, when she thinks something, it just happens. She doesn't allow the negativity to get in there."

At the same time, you can see how she can be misinterpreted. How things can get lost in translation. How, on paper, she can sometimes sound – well, just a little lacking in self-awareness. Like the time she told a *Vanity Fair* reporter that Jack felt "100 per cent" hers. Or that there should be a "worldwide law" for mothers to breastfeed their children for at least six months (she herself breast-fed Benjamin for 16 months). Or that she felt no pain during labour (she gave birth at home, in the bath, with no pain relief, and Tom up the sharp end to "catch" him). "Well, it's a personal decision," she shrugs. "You have to honour what feels right and, for me, it was never even an option I'd do it otherwise. I mean, isn't that what our bodies are meant to do? Isn't that the *great* thing about being a woman? It's funny, I only realised it when I saw the videotape afterwards, but I was actually >

*"It's funny,
I only
realised it
afterwards,
but I was
actually
'omming'
during my
labour"*

'omming' during the process. The closest thing I could compare it to is an out-of-body experience – but I guess people who don't meditate wouldn't really know what that means..." *Ouch!* You see what I mean?

Gisele was born in 1980 – not in Horizontina, the tiny German-speaking hamlet, population 10,000, where her parents live – but in the nearest town, where there was at least a hospital. The daughter of Valdir and Vania, Gisele Caroline Nonnenmacher Bündchen and her five sisters were raised rather sternly – allowed to watch television for only one hour a day; assigned household chores; and, because the house had only two bedrooms, sharing a room. "We slept in bunk beds and every time anyone wanted a shower, it was like, me first, me first!" she explains. "Sometimes my sisters and I would share one together to save time." Four of the sisters are now employed by her – Patrícia (her non-identical twin) is her manager in Brazil, Gabriela her lawyer, Raquel does the accounting and Rafaela works on the website. (Graziela, the fifth, is a judge.)

Gisele insists – as all models do – that she wasn't at all the sexy siren as a girl. Very tall and skinny (her classmates nicknamed her Oliva Palito, Portuguese for Olive Oyl), she was good enough at volleyball to go professional, had she wanted. Yet her height gave her a terrible slouch, which infuriated her mother, who herself bears a

resemblance to Faye Dunaway. Thus, at the age of 13, on her mother's insistence, Gisele enrolled on a local modelling course, along with Patrícia and Graziela. She was discovered the following year, eating a McDonald's in a shopping mall on a school trip to São Paulo, by a scout from Elite. By the age of 16, she had left home for Tokyo to embark on her career, barely able to speak English. Two years later, she was hailed by Alexander McQueen as the Body and appeared on the cover of American *Vogue* heralding "the return of the curve".

Those were heady times for Gisele, what with her being everybody's favourite Victoria's Secret model, and dating Leonardo DiCaprio. But they were quite tense, too. "You have to understand. I was a country girl, and I came into this world with all this

attention on me... All I was doing was trying to take some pictures and make a living, y'know, and I didn't know how to handle it," she says. "Yes, I was successful and all these wonderful things were happening, but I was working 360 days a year, and when I started waking up every morning miserable, I just had to say enough is enough, no more!"

So what did she do? In her practical way, she asked her manager at IMG, Anne Nelson (who has worked with her for 16 years and become "a mother figure to me"), for time off and went to Brazil to see her family, whom she then took on a safari to Africa. "Family, for me, is my base," she shrugs. "I'm so grateful for that. I really feel that if I did not have that foundation when I was 16, I wouldn't have dared to leave. Every year we have a family holiday, all of us together – my sisters, my parents, my sisters' husbands and children. It's kind of a sacred time."

Another "sacred" ritual is the two weeks of the year she repairs to her eco-friendly beach hideaway deep in the Costa Rican jungle, where she can gallop along the beach, practise yoga under the stars, hang out with her dogs, Vida and Lua, and generally commune with nature (she was recently appointed a UN goodwill ambassador for environmental issues and is a vociferous campaigner against deforestation). Costa Rica is also where she got married (the

second of two ceremonies, the first was a proper Catholic one in LA "for the parents"), right on the sea. It was a closely guarded affair, attended by just 25 people – one of whom, of course, was 18-month-old Jack, in a little tuxedo. The bride wore Dolce & Gabbana, as did the dogs, in little white lace collars custom-designed to match, as *Vanity Fair* reported.

A charmed life, in other words, to the power of 10. But if there is one thing that all the self-help books, and meditating, and staying focused, and being married to Tom have taught her is that it is counterproductive to apologise for it; to feel that, because she has such a nice life, she should try to make it *less* so. "People think if you look after yourself you're being selfish, you know. But what Tom taught me – and he is a living example of this – is that in order to be your best, you have to

honour your own needs first. If I honour my needs first, I will be the best wife, the best mom, the best sister, the best friend. I have to come first, because then everyone benefits."

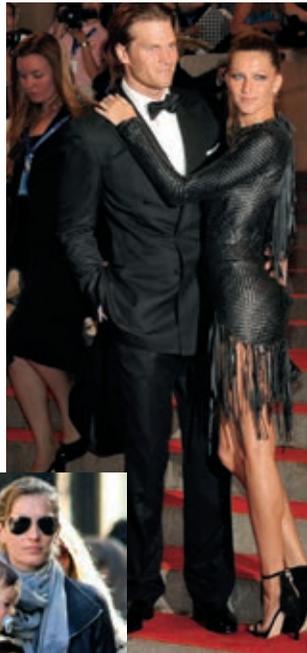
To that end, yes, she has a nanny, a Brazilian friend called Mayda, who acted as a doula at the birth – and, no, she does not allow for bratty kids, as so many of these celebrity types often do. Sugar is a big no-no. "My children, they are like white canvases," she says. "When Benjamin eats broccoli, he thinks it's dessert!" For Jack's last birthday, she made the cake herself with "cocoa powder and coconut oil and, you know, those dried things – what are they called? That's it! Dates – and I put them all in the processor, and whoosh! Delicious!"

As for herself, she will have an occasional ice-cream cone or a couple of pieces of chocolate. But gone are the *vida loca* days of her early twenties when she smoked a packet-and-a-half of cigarettes a day, drank red wine every night and tucked into big hefty steaks. Nowadays she hardly drinks – "Well, Tom, he doesn't drink at all, so what am I going to do, have a glass of wine by myself?" – and she tries limiting red meat to once every 15 days or so. "I love meat," she says, "C'mon, I'm Brazilian! But I also love animals. So what I find really helpful – you might think I'm crazy – is that before I eat any meat I always take one second of silence to put my hands over it and bless it and be grateful at least that it was a life..."

Crazy? No, that's not how I'd describe her. She lacks a certain cynicism, this is true. And there's not a truckload of self-awareness either – the symptom, no doubt, of being told she is beautiful, over and over again. But then, it's fun being around her. She's like a puppy, a child almost, with this boundless energy and enthusiasm. I challenge anyone not to become a little smitten in her presence.

It's getting late. We've been chatting for nearly two hours – can this girl talk! – and it is time for her to get back home to see her "cub", as she calls Ben. On goes the baseball cap, pulled down low, to brave the streets of Boston incognito. But not even a bin liner could adequately hide that body of hers. "Yeah, well," she smiles, a little helplessly. "Like I tell my five sisters, who don't work at it very hard at *all*, whatever you put in, you get out. I'm not afraid of working hard at anything, whatever it is. I just always want to be the best that I can." Seconds later, she's whirled down the stairs and out the door, leaving me alone in the studio with Yao. We look at each other brightly, and make all sorts of plans for me to continue kung fu when I get back home. But, like the red plastic cushions stacked up in the corner, I can't help feeling just a tiny bit deflated. ■

TO SEE GISELE IN ACTION, DOWNLOAD VOGUE'S IPAD APP



Above: Gisele with her husband, Tom Brady, at the Met Gala, May 2010. Left: with their son, Ben, November 2010



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SUPER BRIGHTS ON A
SUPERNOVA; McQ'S FLIRTY
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ADDS A FEMININE SPIN TO
ATHLETIC MIGHT
Cotton halterneck dress, £280,
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