



Hi!
Society

By MONET LU

La Greta: Irresistibly Complicated

WHEN IT COMES to glamor, sophistication and class, one Philippine showbiz personality distinctly glitters. Gretchen Barretto sparkles in an unparalleled way. She's intriguing, beautiful, volatile and as her latest album would profess, complicated.



Gretchen Barretto

I met Gretchen many moons ago during her first few trips to the US. She was young, fresh and so very delightfully *kikay*. She is super *makuwento* and just interesting to be around. I remember it was around that time when she was trying to get over a break-up with a showbiz boyfriend. It was also a time when she was just getting to know her current partner, billionaire Tonyboy Cojuangco.

With our common friend Mary Ann Pimenta, I've produced shows involving Gretchen here in the US, including Reflections 4, where she flew to LA unexpectedly at the last minute to model a bridal masterpiece by Louie Mamengo while being escorted by Richard Gomez.

It was in one particular project that we had a disagreement—very typical of a star-producer relationship. I guess it was serious enough to create a falling out and we never saw or spoke to each other for a long time after that incident.

From then on, I would just see her on TFC giving interviews about her controversial life. We weren't on friendly terms but I was still enthralled by the very candid and public Gretchen Barretto we all have come to know and love.

About two years ago, while vacationing in Manila, our friend Mary Ann invited me to lunch. Mary Ann said Gretchen was going to be there and that she wanted to see me.

Upon arriving at the restaurant, Gretchen was so welcoming and sweet to me. She even said *hindi nya matandaan na nag-away kami*. I still had the fragments of the argument stored in my head but to Gretchen, that

chapter was a bygone.

That's when I realized, Gretchen is the type of person na *hindi nagtanim ng sama ng loob*.

She knows how to forgive and forget.

Instantly, I felt very relieved. In no time, we were catching up just like old times. As usual, she was still as *makuwento* and *kikay* as ever.

The Gretchen that you see on TV being hunted by controversies isn't necessarily the same Gretchen that you will see in a private setting, when she knows she's just surrounded by close friends.

We have to admit, whenever Gretchen talks, everybody drops what they're doing to take a listen.

With all her risqué quotable quotes, she entertains, she sparks reactions and emotions from her public.

Hailed as one of the most beautiful faces in Philippine movies, Gretchen draws admiring stares wherever she goes.

She is an effortless fashionista. You can see it in her understated fashion and natural but elegant simplicity.

She started out as a movie actress, having starred in blockbuster movies with her contemporaries in late 80s and 90s.

Gretchen has since ventured into recording albums. Her first record titled, *Unexpected* was certified Platinum.

Her latest album is aptly named *Complicated*. In her albums, she shares songs that tickle her heart and soul.

In them, she bears her passion, sentimentality and essence as a woman and an

artist.
This is the Gretchen I know—passionate and expressive. I also know her to be resilient in the face of challenges.

To me, Gretchen possesses the stuff legends are made of.
To La Greta—enjoy life, enjoy love!

The author is a Marikina-born, award-winning celebrity beauty stylist with his own chain of salons across Southern California and Las Vegas, Nevada. Ultimately, Monet is known as an all-around artiste who produces sold-out fashion and awards shows, as well as unforgettable marketing campaigns. Monet is also the founder of the revolutionary all-natural beauty products available at www.skinbymonet.com. He supports many humanitarian efforts to include projects in his native Marikina, The Bantay Bata Foundation, and many more. To contact Monet, please visit www.monetsalon.com for more information.

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