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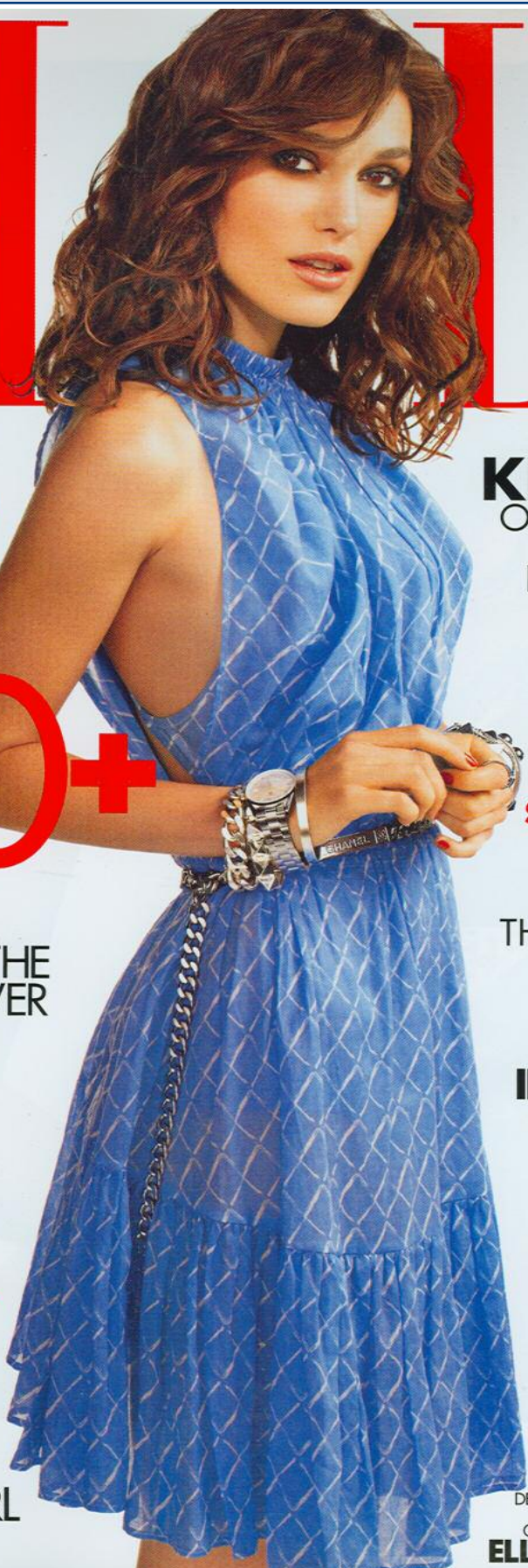
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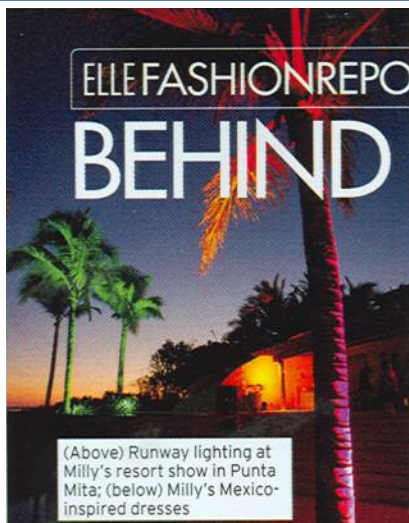
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BEHIND THE SCENES



(Above) Runway lighting at Milly's resort show in Punta Mita; (below) Milly's Mexico-inspired dresses



(From left) Smith with models backstage; the after-party; sunny shifts from resort



Surf and Turf

MILLY DESIGNER MICHELLE SMITH FINDS INSPIRATION FOR HER RESORT COLLECTION ON MEXICO'S PACIFIC COAST

It's a scene straight out of a 1960s Slim Aarons snap: Standing on the edge of a terrace attached to a Pueblo-style villa that hovers over a minty green sea, Milly designer Michelle Smith sips a margarita in a floor-length palm-print dress at sunset. Smith has arranged a laid-back cocktail party and runway show in the locale that served as the muse for her resort collection, Punta Mita, Mexico (a development of shore-hugging villas and a Four Seasons resort 45 minutes from Puerto Vallarta). The bronzed local models walk the pink- and green-lit terrace minutes after sundown as the prints—derived from the area's mosaic tile designs and surrounding flora—on the beach shifts and low-riding bikinis flutter and blend seamlessly with the panoramic backdrop.

Known for her on-the-mark party dresses, Smith has always been inspired to design by the good life. Although her most recent wares for spring, which follow an old Newport theme, might be accessorized with a Tretorn tennis shoe, the free-flowing resort collection—according to the designer—should be worn with bare feet. “I fell in love with Punta Mita’s beaches and a little-known surfing town close by called Sayulita two years ago. For my collection, I was drawn to the traditional Mexican dresses and the fuchsia bougainvillea that grows everywhere.” Among the bright, graphic patterns, one is named “the Punta Mita,” a blend of translucent turquoise and honey yellows, inspired by the sea and sky of the peninsula’s protected beaches—quite literally, a slice of sunshine.—ALEXA BRAZILIAN