

# 'OOH LA LA'

EVER SINCE GOK WAN FIRST BURST ONTO OUR TELEVISION SCREENS, WE HAVE BEEN PICKING UP TIPS ON HOW TO LOOK GOOD NAKED. **MIEKA SMILES** STRIPPED DOWN TO HER DAINTIEST SMALLS TO SEE HOW SHE FARED IN FRONT OF THE LENS.

**S**AMANTHA from Sex and the City has always been a bit of an inspiration to me. The sexy Sam character is bold, brash and has the confidence to go for what she wants. Not really like me at all. I can remember one episode in particular when Samantha – in her early forties at this point – decided to get photographed in the nude because she wanted to capture her "hot" body before "everything went south." Fabulous.

There are things that upset me about my body – my ludicrously fat knees, my ever-expanding thighs, my massive feet – but, by and large, I have never been ashamed to show it off. So when my City Living colleague Karen was sent a press release about Alison Groves' new boudoir photography service I was definitely up for giving it a shot.

But make no mistake – this is not nude photography. After taking a peek at the stunning images on Alison's website it became clear that her work is more about capturing a cheeky hint of sexiness through the power of suggestion: a chunky off the shoulder jumper, a glimpse of a bra. Not seedy in the slightest.

I was shocked at the response I got from my friends and family when I told them what I had

planned. There were plenty of upturned noses... "Oooh, I wouldn't dream of doing something like that... definitely not for me."

"Why on earth are you putting yourself through something like that? It sounds like absolute torture."

Surprisingly though, the women who weren't so keen fell into the younger category. It was the oldies who gave me their full blessing: "I would have loved have done something like that," said my mum-in-law. I think I even got a "You go girl!"

So, after treating myself to a lingerie shopping spree, I was ready and raring to go. Here is how my day unfolded:

## 8am

I am due to meet Alison at Newcastle's newest luxury hotel, Hotel Du Vin, near the quayside. I rummage for the sat nav, pop in the postcode and set off, boot loaded with a range of underwear, chunky knit jumpers, pashminas and glam accessories.

Boldly Go...

## 9am

I arrive at the swanky looking Hotel Du Vin fresh faced and excited rather than nervous. I am led up to one of the hotel's gorgeous rooms and greeted by Alison and my makeup artist for the day Louise Lunn. They fix me a lovely cup of tea and I slip into a satin dressing gown while I begin my consultation with Louise. She asks what kind of make up I usually wear and what I'm comfortable with. I tell her to go for it as I'm used to wearing quite a bit.

## 10am

Louise announces I'm done so I whisk over to the mirror to view her careful work. It looks amazing. I can't believe what a great job she has done and curse myself for not having her handy on my wedding day. Despite expecting to look Jordan-esque, the result is very natural and subtle. Louise loosely tongs my hair and I'm camera ready.

## 11am

Louise says goodbye and me and Alison are left alone to start the shoot. We dig about in my bag of goodies and pick a selection of outfits that will look the best on film. I whip on the first set – a dark grey push up bra and French knickers. I feel momentarily daft as I stand there. But Alison quickly takes control and asks me to take my first pose on the huge, luxurious bed.

## 12noon

I am directed by Alison and we chat effortlessly while I switch settings and outfits – a chaise lounge, a windowsill, a leather chair turned backwards. I start to really get into it, and dare to throw a few sultry stares at the camera. I feel

confident and better still when Alison lets me have a glimpse of a few of the pictures she has captured on her camera.

## 12.30pm

Alison has got everything she needs. I start to pack up and reluctantly get ready to set off home. With my gorgeous make up and soaring confidence still in place I wish I was heading somewhere a bit more glamorous than my mum's for a cuppa.

## The Result...

As we are on deadline for the magazine, Alison gets my disc of images turned around in super quick time. I can't wait to rush home to look at her work. I love it all. I am more than happy to email many off them to my mum and friends but, with the risk of sounding a bit sleazy, there are a few racier ones that are definitely for my hubby's eyes only. A small album would make an ideal gift for a groom or even a saucy birthday, anniversary, Valentine's or Christmas gift.

It's highly unlikely that any of my repeated vows to diet and exercise will ever amount to much. So, overall, I'm glad I have probably captured my body at its best. Samantha eat your heart out!



## FACTS

- The basic package is £595.
- This includes: A hotel suite booked for the shoot, refreshments and professional hair and make up.
- It also includes a viewing of around 80 images in Alison's dedicated viewing area at her studio and the first 10 images in a bespoke album.
- Clients can choose to go for a bigger album or add extra products such as frames or canvases.
- Please visit [www.alisongroves.com](http://www.alisongroves.com) for more information or contact (0191) 222-1309.
- Louise's contact details are all on her website at [www.louiselunn.co.uk](http://www.louiselunn.co.uk)
- Our shoot took place in Newcastle's Hotel Du Vin. Visit [www.hotelduvin.co.uk](http://www.hotelduvin.co.uk) for more details.