




Behind The Lens

A look into the world of photographer George Kamper

By Rachel Galvin

From the streets of New York to the beaches of South Florida, George Kamper has paved the way in the world of Fashion Photography. His groundbreaking work has been featured in such magazines as *Maxim*, *GQ*, *Ocean Drive*, *W*, *In Style* and *Capture Life*. Each piece not only paints a vivid picture, but also reveals the unique insight that Kamper has created throughout the years.



His road to success has not been easy. In a world full of photographers, Kamper struggled to make a name for himself. After giving up his youthful dream of being a rock star, he began photography as a hobby while on-duty as a lifeguard. When his images received attention, a career was born.

After attending Rochester's Institute for Technology, he pursued jobs at ad agencies and catalogs. His risky new ideas were foreign to the conservative majority. The only way he was able to get his foot in the door was by creating what others wanted.

Living in a small space with six other people was difficult but he created a studio out of the parlor. He went on to buy larger spaces in Rochester and New York City and eventually merged and formed his company KSC. The company began representing eight other photographers and involving themselves in other specialty services.

His now partner, Brad Tuckman, was able to take Kamper's style a step further by entering the digital realm. Stylist, Danny Santiago, joined the team and helps to create the stunning imagery now famously displayed on bookstore shelves.

Kamper has built a strong team. Within the last two years, his company has grown from five to 19 people. Stepping through the doors of KSC is like becoming part of the family. The staff is unassuming, the space simplistic and efficient with room for endless possibilities. They even build and store many of their own sets and props on-site.

Some of the staff have grown from interns to photographers under Kamper's direction. He allows his team to be a part of the process and not just assistants. Four members of the staff have shown their appreciation by getting a tattoo of the KSC logo.

His team both here and in the New York office works together to create and enhance the vibrant canvas on which Kamper unveils his view of the world. Of course, it wasn't always that way. "My attitude has really changed," he says, "it used to be 'give me your lay-out' and I would shoot it. Now it's more about my perspective."

Kamper's point of view is so trusted that the Greater Miami Convention and Visitor's Bureau has hired him to recreate Miami itself – at least in the eye of potential tourists around the world. When asked about his favorite shoot, he responds, "Miami is the boldest. The GMCVB and their ad agency, TURKEL, took such a leap of faith to make a change."

Indeed. What used to entice visitors were pictures of families playing on the beach. Today it's Kamper's sexy sun-kissed models sprawling in seductive come-on poses. "Something you would only find in Miami," he quips when referring to a picture of two girls together in the grass at Vizcaya.

The goal of the new campaign is to show off the adult-playground aspect of Miami, a place for celebrities and the wealthy to play in high style among the beautiful people. The GMCVB teamed up with IMG, which represents such models as Tyra Banks, Gisele Bundchen and Heidi Klum.

Kamper did a similar campaign to promote Venice with a picture essay book. Today his studio still does ads, catalogs, and other services. In fact, their retouching has been used on the popular Mini Cooper campaign. But the focus is turning to fashion. "I'm in a very amazing position when it comes to my career," gleams Kamper. "I'm just working on developing my eye, editorial, and experimenting."

A modest Kamper feels that he has fallen into his success hazily despite his team's praises. "I think I have made every mistake in the book...but something keeps putting me back on track." What is next for Kamper, who appears to have hit the top of his field? More. Thank goodness for that.

To view more of George Kamper's work
visit www.KSCstudio.com