

STYLED BY EIVAN METZNER; HAIR BY SERGE NORMANT FOR ORBE AT ELIZABETH ARDEN; MAKEUP BY LAURA MERCIER; BLANKET AND PILLOW BY ADRIENNE LANDAU



VENDELA

"Are you still as beautiful and skinny?" Eileen Ford would write her.

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Va-va-Vendela!

his photograph represents the public thawing of Vendela, the Swedish model whose cool comportment and ladylike glow evoked comparisons to Grace Kelly when, in 1988, she nabbed a three-year contract (for a rumored \$4-million-plus) to be the face for Elizabeth Arden, that most proper of fashion and fragrance houses. The twenty-four-year-old Vendela (accent on the first syllable) says she doubts she could have managed quite so well, sultry a shooting even a year ago. "I think I grew up," she says. "I fell in love. I went into acting classes, and that really got me to start looking inside and start going for the great, juicy feelings—all those feelings that you might be scared of."

In other words, still another model eager to leap from static to moving pictures. But Vendela is well positioned for the move. "You know how people say you have to be in the right time and the right place," says Vendela, whose speech combines adolescent enthusiasm with a steely edge of purposefulness. "That's always happened to me."

Indeed. Model mogul Eileen Ford first spotted Vendela Kirsebom in a Stockholm restaurant with her parents. And while Vendela chose to finish high school, Ford would write the girl regularly, asking, Vendela recalls, "Are you still as beautiful and skinny? Are you keeping your skin looking great?" She was. She did. At nineteen she signed with Ford; at twenty-one, with Arden. And when she fell in love, it was with Jon Peters, the controversially well-paid co-head of Columbia Pictures and someone, she admits, who provided an excellent orientation into the culture of filmmaking. "Unbelievable visions and fantasies about everything," she says of Peters. "He makes other people believe they can do more than they ever thought they would; he pulls it out of you." Recently, she's been based largely in L.A., attending film classes at U.C.L.A. three times a week and cautiously considering possibilities for her screen debut. Yes, there's one particularly promising offer, she says; no, it's not at Columbia. —BEN BRANTLEY



Photograph by BRIGITTE LACOMBE