

RH00C: Fernanda Rocha Speaks Out About Fitness, Love and Being the First Lesbian Housewife



By Whitney Baker

Many reality television viewers know Fernanda Rocha as a new addition to season six of *The Real Housewives of Orange County* (RH00C) – and the first lesbian housewife to boot. But Rocha's story begins far away from the O.C. and long before her television debut. Before moving to Los Angeles, Rocha received her degree in kinesiology and worked as a personal trainer and gym manager in Brazil.

“I grew up in Brazil in a small and simple family filled with love. They always supported my crazy mind,” she says. “And the freedom that they gave me to follow what I wanted to do was very important – it made me who I am.”

That type of support led Rocha to a land a spot on Bravo’s wildly popular reality television show. It all began after a photo shoot for a line of fitness clothing when Rocha went to a restaurant in Laguna Beach, where Bravo happened to be filming. The “Housewives’ began talking to her about her clothing line, and shortly after, Tamra Barney, and two friends came to one of her Brazilian Booty classes at a local gym. Last year, when Bravo called to see if she wanted to join the show, she was ready to take a risk and try a new experience. And, based on the response from her fans, it appears that the risk has paid off.

“I get a positive answer from people – very nice and very loving. The show put a good message out there about me,” she says.

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As for her status as the first lesbian housewife, for Rocha, the message is simple: equality. She strives to show that there is no difference between her and the other girls, saying “I’m not this way. I’m like you! It’s so important to stop labeling.”

When asked what she’s looking for in a partner, it’s no surprise that Rocha knows exactly what she wants. “I want someone who is sexy and fun. I look for chemistry, attraction, honesty, someone who knows what they want sexually,” she says. “I want someone who is happy with herself and with what she does. I want someone who is positive about life and believes that we are here to dream big and be happy.”

Rocha adds, "There are a lot of bisexual people out there, but I don't want that for me. I had to go through my own process of knowing the difference between being with a woman and a man, and I know who I am."

With that thought in mind, Rocha has certainly done her part in the fight for gay rights. She supports the NOH8 Campaign as well as It Gets Better Project (TM), a project to give hope to LGBT youth. Most recently, she served as the grand marshal of Chicago's Gay Pride Parade 2011. "It was so exciting, just being there and being Fernanda. Any opportunity that I have to go and support [LGBT causes], I'm 100% there."

Of course, it wasn't always an easy road of self-discovery. Keeping her own experiences in mind, she encourages young people to be honest with themselves. "Don't expect people to accept your choice; be happy with yourself and embrace it. Focus on that, and don't worry about acceptance," she continues. "If you know who you are and you're happy and proud of yourself, [acceptance from others] doesn't matter."

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Rocha uses her interest in fitness to promote her beliefs on self-assurance. In order for her workout routine to reach people outside of Orange County, she is currently working on a series of Brazilian Booty workouts, set for release at the end of the year and available on seven DVDs and also OnDemand. Additionally, she is creating Fernanda's Weekly Body Transformation, an online program that includes nutritional supplements. This fitness guru is also a supporter of Let's Move, a program developed by First Lady Michelle Obama to solve the epidemic of childhood obesity.

Rocha's positive outlook and joie de vivre shines through all aspects of her life, whether it be her role as a reality television star or her fitness empire. Even when it comes to finding the one, her energy is contagious, "I have hope. I

don't want to settle; I want everything. I am open to love!"

You can follow Fernanda on Twitter or find her on Facebook.

And be sure to stay tuned for the next season of *The Real Housewives of Orange County*!