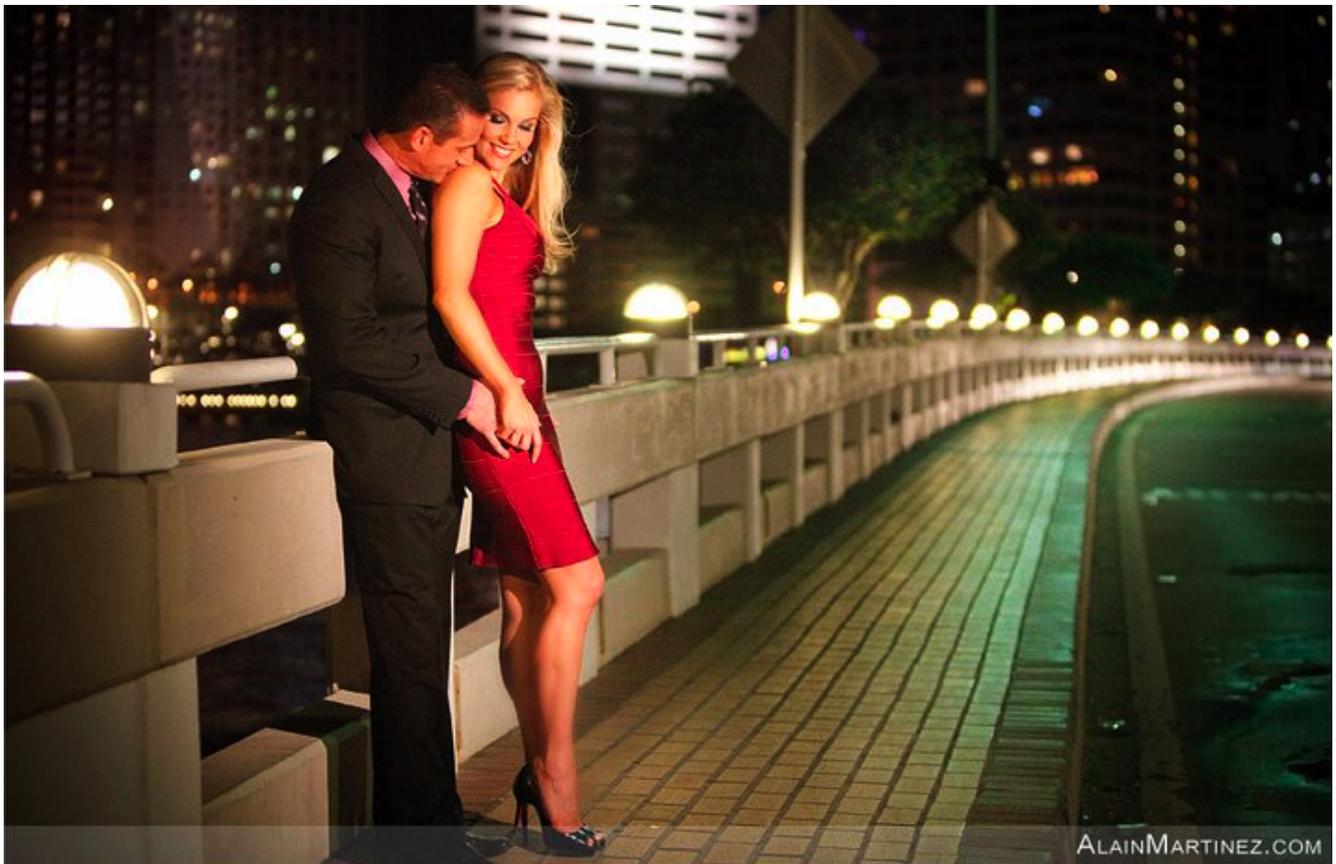
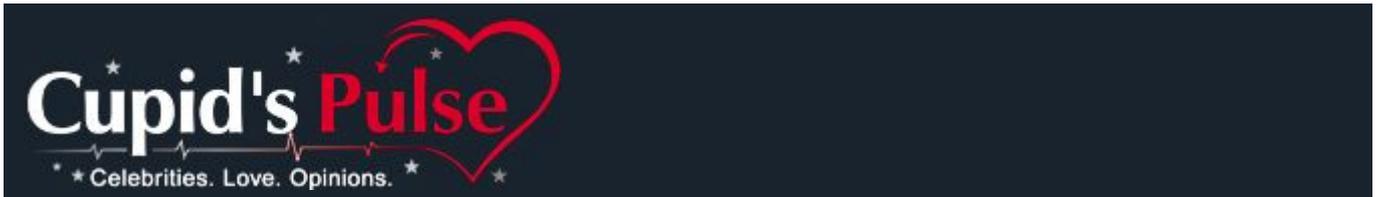


Exclusive Interview: Mrs. United States Talks to Us About Life as a Married Beauty Queen



By Ryan Boyle

For a lot of men and women, the idea of balancing a lifestyle dedicated to both work and love can be downright stressful. Mrs. United States winner, Shannon Ford, filled us in on living the life of a beauty queen as well as a newlywed and how she makes time to enjoy both. Ford, a veteran of beauty pageants since she was 18 years old, is no doubt a busy woman.

“I’m traveling a lot,” she said, “from Daytona to Texas to St. Petersburg. It’s fun, but it can be tiring as well.”

It’s easy to see how all of this travel can put a strain on even the healthiest of relationships; not for this couple, however. Ford says of her husband, police officer and amateur Jet Ski racer Ray Quintana, “He’s very understanding. There are things of his that I can’t attend because of my schedule, and there are things of mine that he can’t attend because of his schedule, but we’re both trusting and understanding with each other.”

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Talk about finding Mr. Right. Ford and her husband met while attending college in Florida and dated on and off for 15 years before finally deciding to tie the knot. As many couples decide to rush into marriage, the decision to wait before making their vows was a blessing. “I really had no idea who I was or what I wanted to do with my life,” she went on to say.

A major role in any partnership is making time to be with one another. After all, in a marriage, there needs to be a level of common ground that exists between husband and wife. “We’re both very independent,” Ford told us, “but when we go out together, it’s because we want to and not because we’re afraid of being alone.”

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When Mr. and Mrs. United States do find the time, it’s not spent in as traditional of a sense as you may think. “We run a lot of 5K’s” she told us. “We don’t go out to dinner too often. I’m not very comfortable with going out to dinner, but running is a passion of our’s, so we do that together.”

It’s not the camera flashes of the paparazzi that have the beauty queen feeling uncomfortable. “I have Celiac disease,”

she informed us. Celiac stems from the inability to process foods containing gluten, so it's no wonder that going out to eat proves to be difficult for Ford. In fact, she has taken a proactive stance on her condition and has begun a crusade to spread knowledge on the symptoms of Celiac and ways to raise awareness to those who could be suffering.

For more information, visit Shannon Ford's website. You can also visit '1 in 133' to learn more about the fight against Celiac disease.