



VIEW FROM THE TOP

## Keeping It Fancy

TIM QUINN MAKES THE WORLD MORE BEAUTIFUL AS AN AMBASSADOR FOR GIORGIO ARMANI COSMETICS—AND AS AN ARDENT SUPPORTER OF MGH CANCER CENTER. BY REBECCA KNIGHT

Growing up in Torrington, Connecticut, Tim Quinn's childhood was mostly typical rough-and-tumble stuff. Quinn, who is the fourth child of seven in a raucous Irish Catholic family, spent his afternoons building forts in the woods with schoolmates, racing around the neighborhood with his younger sister Mary Ellen, and dragging his baby brother, Michael, around town in a wagon.

But his favorite memories are of watching his mother, Christine, get ready for an evening out with his father. His mother was a homemaker who did a bit of interior decorating on the side, but when she had a date with Quinn's father, Andrew, a teacher, she would become as radiant as a movie star. She would sit at her glass-top vanity brushing her auburn hair, powdering her face, and lining her lips. She would spritz herself with Rive Gauche perfume and put on her swankiest jewelry. Quinn was rapt. "I always loved the idea of transformation," he says.

Today, transformation is his life's work. As the director of creative artistry at Giorgio Armani cosmetics—a top-10-selling prestige makeup line and a division of L'Oréal USA—Quinn travels the world to fashion shows and Hollywood red carpets as an ambassador for the luxury makeup brand. "I admire Mr. Armani's approach," says Quinn, who is in his mid-40s. "He's not about artifice; he's not about the bells and whistles. One of my favorite sayings by Mr. Armani is: 'Elegance isn't being noticed; it's being remembered.' That strikes a chord with me."

Quinn is tall, trim, and blond; he has twinkly green eyes and sun-kissed skin. His fashion sense is understated chic: He wears a black button-down shirt, white skinny jeans, and cool, Clark Kent-style eyeglasses. He is

warm and animated, and he peppers his conversation with saucy asides. As a makeup artist, Quinn is known for his clean, tailored sensibility punctuated with unexpected pops of color. "I'm big on editing," he says. "It's always easier to wear the same thing over and over, but I help people

see they could try something different."

Quinn's life is just as jet-set and glamorous as you might imagine. His clients range from A-list celebrities, such as Kerry Washington and Amber Heard, to serious-minded beautiful people, such as Jill Biden and Andrea Mitchell, the NBC News correspondent and wife of Alan Greenspan. He travels 40 weeks out of the year, mainly to New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago.

When he's not on the road, Quinn splits his time between Boca Raton, Florida, and Dorchester, Massachusetts, where he lives with his partner, Isaac Mann, a hairstylist in Newton. He met Mann in Provincetown on a blind date in the late '90s. It was kismet: "He thought I was famous, and I thought he was rich," he says cheekily.

While Boston is not his year-round home—Quinn does not enjoy the lingering, frosty New England winters—the city holds a singular place in his heart. In the spring of 2007, Quinn began having sciatic twinges in his left leg. That July he collapsed in his hotel room in Paris during fashion week. He flew back to the United States and saw a series of doctors in Philadelphia and Washington, DC; none could figure out what was wrong with him. Quinn grew sicker and sicker. "Finally, Isaac said: 'You need to come to Boston,'" Quinn recalls. After a biopsy at Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH), he was diagnosed with testicular cancer in his pelvis. The prognosis was good so long as he started an immediate chemotherapy regimen, which required three rounds of five-day-long hospital stays over a nine-week period.

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OPPOSITE: Tim Quinn stops in at the Julie Michaud Prettyology studio on Newbury Street in between his world travels.

Tim Quinn and Giorgio Armani at Saks Fifth Avenue in New York in 2008.



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Quinn arrived at MGH armed with supplies. He brought cashmere blankets and throw pillows, flowering orchid plants, a crystal water carafe, various icons, and framed photos to brighten his room. “I always like things to be pretty,” he says by way of explanation. Among his supplies were gift bags brimming with face masks and lip gloss for anyone who wanted some. Armani’s fashion group, meanwhile, sent him an assortment of designer skullcaps in navy, black, taupe, and striped green and red. (Hair loss is a common, temporary by-product of chemotherapy, and Quinn never let anyone see him without hair.) On his second round of treatment, Quinn started running impromptu classes about makeup techniques from his hospital room. He invited everyone: fellow patients, nurses, doctors, and aides. Not surprisingly, attendance was very high.

At first the classes were just something Quinn did to stay busy and keep his mind off cancer, but they quickly took on a deeper meaning. “I thought that when I got better I was going to have one of those Oprah moments, where I’d decide to go do work in Africa or something. But then I realized that what I do has a lot of value. It makes people feel better about themselves. It was something I had taken for granted.”

What Quinn does certainly has value, but he fell into such feel-good work almost by accident. After graduating from Albertus Magnus College with a degree in economics, he got a job as a broker trainee at Merrill Lynch in Fort Lauderdale. He had a flair for numbers, but the desk job bored him. He later ran an ice cream store in Pompano Beach and did some modeling in South Florida. “It was the ’80s in Miami: Madonna had a club down there, Versace was still alive. It was a party every night,” he recalls. A friend in LA helped him secure a gig as a production coordinator and makeup artist for the comedy film

*Hijacking Hollywood*, starring Henry Thomas of *E.T.* fame. The movie flopped, but it inspired Quinn’s career in cosmetics.

He went to makeup school in Milan, then worked for Borghese, the Italian beauty company, for four years. He also did a yearlong stint at Laura Mercier before going freelance. His big break came in 2001 when Serge Jureidini, in charge of launching Giorgio Armani cosmetics, asked him to bring his talents to the brand. “He said: ‘I promise you if you come here, I’ll make you a star.’ I moved to New York City the next day,” says Quinn.

BELOW: Quinn with cancer awareness activist Alana Stewart at a benefit for the John Wayne Cancer Institute in 2011.



## ABOUT FACE

Tim Quinn shares his Boston inspirations.

### **Favorite place in the city:**

“MGH Cancer Center, of course. But after that: Manchester-by-the-Sea’s Singing Beach.”

### **Applause for Boston women:**

“They take a much more pragmatic approach to makeup. When I come back here from LA, it’s so refreshing to see what people actually look like.”

### **New England seasons:**

“You update your wardrobe seasonally, so you need to update your makeup seasonally, too.”

### **Life philosophy:**

“Enjoy the ride, keep it fancy, and be kind.”

Quinn has undeniably attained that stardom, and now he helps make even the sickest cancer patients feel better about themselves. Cancer-free for the last five years, he recently joined the advisory board of the Farrah Fawcett Foundation (Fawcett was a friend whose death from cancer had a profound effect on Quinn), and he regularly works with the Look Good Feel Better campaign, which helps cancer patients improve their self-esteem. “Cancer sucks,” he says bluntly. “But if you look pretty, you don’t feel as bad. It’s like wearing your best dress. You suddenly have a different confidence.” **BC**