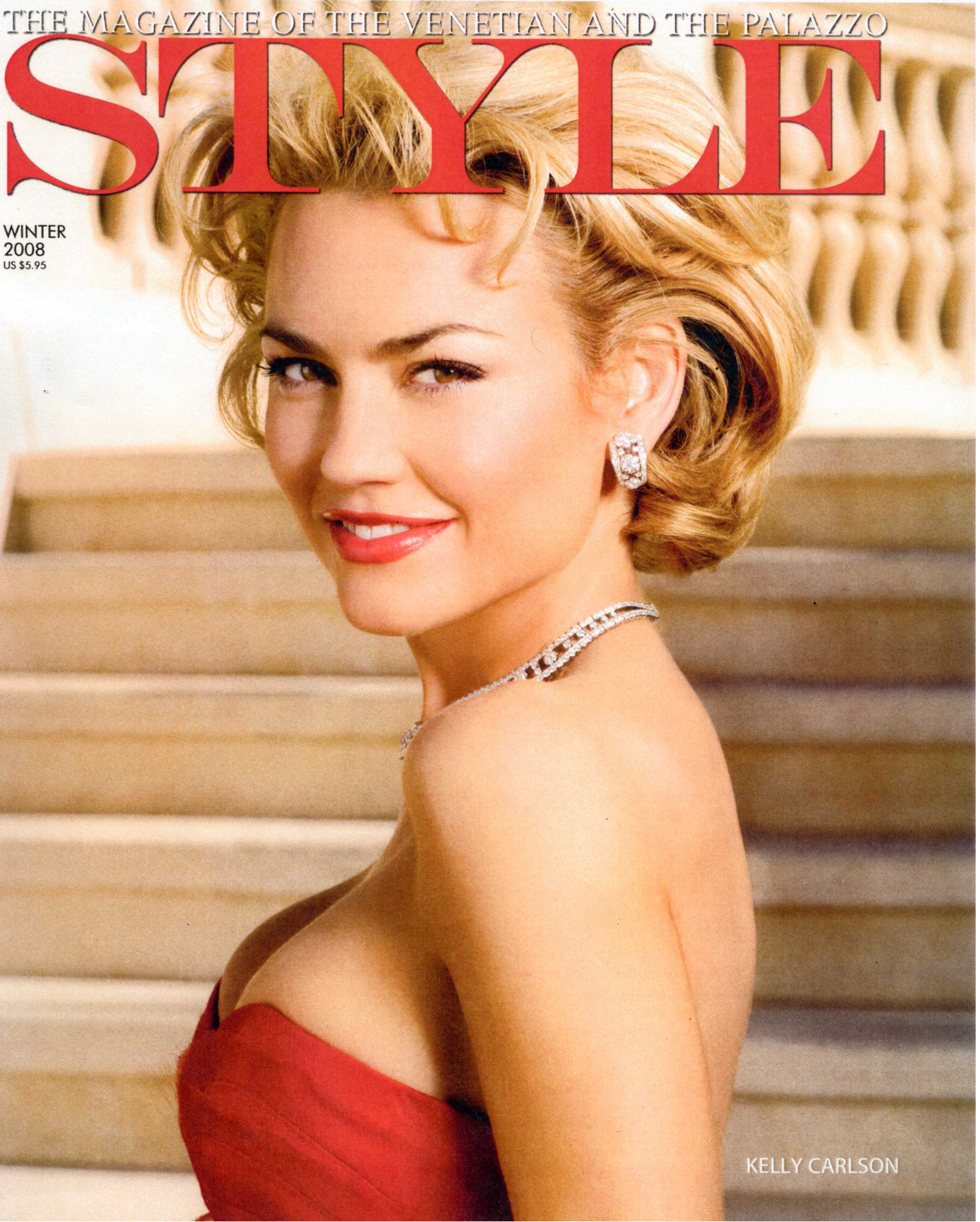


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KELLY CARLSON

ROLE PLAY

Nip/Tuck bombshell **Kelly Carlson** talks about life, love and the part that landed her on Hollywood's hot list

BY E.C. GLADSTONE

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JACK GUY

You can see it in her eyes. Kelly Carlson is excited about a certain man in the room whose work she has admired for a long time. A man who commands the respect of all those around him.

I would love to tell you that's me, but the actress who plays Kimber Henry on the F/X dramedy *Nip/Tuck* is a foodie, so it's meeting James Beard-awarded, Michelin-starred Chef Charlie Trotter that is the real treat.

During her quick weekend visit to The Palazzo and The Venetian in November, Trotter was happy to arrange a special luncheon for the actress in Restaurant Charlie's unique balcony "chef's table" overlooking the kitchen. After we're seated, along with Kelly's godmother, Lynda Hughes, Trotter even offers a tour of the state-of-the-art kitchen, introducing his staff, discussing his philosophy (how many chefs can quote Walt Whitman?) and explaining the uncommon vegetables, fish preparations and desserts in progress. Kelly, who is a regular cook herself, stops before a stock pot to ask advice about making reductions, and the surprisingly unassuming Chicago chef is happy to give a quick impromptu lesson.

"I'm totally excited," Carlson raves. "I'm an eater. I eat everything. I don't deprive myself." Today, our five courses include a peekytoe-crab salad with sake "snow" and rice milk and incredibly tender braised octopus with Serrano ham and scarlet peppers.

"I love going to Vegas restaurants for the food and the fun energy. There is always great service," the actress says between bites.

To be sure, Carlson is the type of woman who appreciates doing something right, or not at all. After all, she brought such convincing bravado to ex-porn-star Kimber (original-



Gold-lamé-and-nylon top by **L'Wren Scott**, wool skirt by **Louis Vuitton** and patent-leather shoes by **Yves Saint Laurent** all available at Barneys New York, The Shoppes at The Palazzo. 18K-yellow-gold-and-diamond Vintage Alhambra necklace and Fleurette stud earrings both by **Van Cleef & Arpels** available at Van Cleef & Arpels, The Shoppes at The Palazzo, \$35,800 and \$18,400.

