BLOCK PARTY

With winter quickly approaching, Myer ambassador Elyse Knowles models layered streetwear, perfect for the cooler months

Photography DANIEL NADEL Styling IRENE TSOLAKAS Interview SASKIA TILLERS

It's common knowledge that Byron Bay is home to more than a few famous faces – most notably Hollywood royalty Chris Hemsworth and Elsa Pataky. But the beach town's newest residents, model Elyse Knowles and her longtime partner, carpenter Josh Barker, won't be bombarding their A-list neighbours with invitations to backyard barbecues anytime soon. "We've seen them on the beach quite a few times," explains Knowles. "But we stick to the boundaries. They're trying to live a normal life, walking their dog with their kids, and just having a ripper time. Everyone here is on the same page – I don't like being stopped every two seconds, so I wouldn't ever stop them either."

In addition to the appeal of relative anonymity away from the prying eyes of paparazzi, Knowles, 26, admits their recent move from Melbourne was in part a self-imposed respite from the city lifestyle. "It's forced me to step back and realise what I really want to be stressing about in my day," Knowles tells *Stellar*. "This year I'm going to stop, breathe, relax and enjoy. I've been putting a lot of focus on trying to find balance."

Since becoming an Australian household name in 2017 when she and Barker won the 13th season of *The Block*, Knowles has continued adding to her impressive résumé. A campaign for Seafolly, partnerships with Calvin Klein, Davidoff and Aveda, and a gig following in Jennifer Hawkins's footsteps as a Myer ambassador further cemented her one-to-watch status. But don't be fooled by her seemingly swift rise – Knowles has still been in the business for longer than most. ▶

Rotate by Birger Christensen dress, $550; **Fiorucci** jacket (worn around waist), $450; **See By Chloé** boots, $670; (opposite) **Aéryne** jacket, $260, and pants, $180; **Victoria by Victoria Beckham** shirt, $500; **Calvin Klein** bra, $49.95; **Marc Jacobs** trainers, $349, all from myer.com.au, 13 69 37

"I've been modelling since I was 10 years old," she says. "But these days [it's] about representing brands that share the same values as me, and working together as a team. That's what we do in Myer. [Being an ambassador] is more than the kind of modelling where you stand there and turn around for a 360 [degree view] of the outfit. You're a bit of a businesswoman, speaking on behalf of the brand."

At the *Stellar* shoot, Knowles models layered winter streetwear from labels such as Fiorucci, Rotate by Birger Christensen and Aéryne, who are among the 20 new and exclusive brands in Myer stores this season. Speaking about the new arrivals, Knowles acknowledges, "That's a huge point of difference, giving customers the chance to shop all these new designs fresh off the runway. They're edgy, on trend, but also affordable."

And when she's off duty, Knowles is still getting accustomed to life in the slow(er) lane, happily relishing new rituals like sunset walks with her dogs and bike rides to the markets for local produce. She is also, for the first time, living in a house that she and Barker have no plans to renovate. "We're renting, and [while] we are looking for a property

PSWL by Proenza Schouler jacket, $400, and T-shirt, $200; **Victoria by Victoria Beckham** dress, $790; **Fiorucci** jeans, $300; **Marc Jacobs** trainers, $349, all from myer.com.au, 13 69 37

Aéryne top, $120, and jumpsuit, $280, both from myer.com.au, 13 69 37

we can do up, I'm not rushing into it," she tells *Stellar*. "I'm enjoying not having tools and materials all around me in a house that's half undone."

She is quick to laugh off some of the more far-fetched rumours that come hand in hand with a growing profile, and says she has made her peace with the fact her private life is now of public interest. "It's pretty funny reading those articles where they've made up a whole story about my life," she says. "You just have to laugh about it – [if] you let those kind of things get to you, you end up very negative.

"People are intrigued, but you've got to take that as a compliment. We just switch off when people ask us, 'When are you going to get engaged? When are you having babies?' Um, I'll have a baby when I'm gonna have a baby – not when you want me to! Surprises are pretty special in life, and yeah, I'm going to keep a lot of surprises." ★

"I'll have a baby when I'm gonna have a baby – not when you want me to"

Victoria by Victoria Beckham jacket, $2500; **PSWL by Proenza Schouler** dress, $500, and jacket (worn around waist), $660, all from myer.com.au, 13 69 37

Hair Taylor James Redman using Pure Haircare **Make-Up** Samantha P using Dior Makeup