



Sir The Label shirt, \$320, sirthelabel.com; **Seafolly** bikini top, \$70, and briefs, \$50, seafolly.com; **Petite Grand** earrings (right ear), \$175, petitegrand.com; **Jolie & Deen** earrings (left ear), \$69, jolieanddeen.com.au; **Odyssey** necklaces (above), \$100, and (below), \$110, odyssey.com (all jewellery worn throughout)

THE YEAR OF ELYSE

stellarfashion



Girl of the moment Elyse Knowles ushers in the springtime in romantic dresses and swimsuits by the ocean

Photography EDDIE NEW
Styling IRENE TSOLAKAS
Interview SASKIA TILLERS



Sass & Bide dress, \$390, sassandbide.com; **Odyssey** bracelet (left hand), \$90, odyssey.com; **Jolie & Deen** ring (worn throughout), \$59, jolieanddeen.com.au; (left) **Matin** dress, \$940, matinstudio.com; **Seafolly** bandeau top, \$70, seafolly.com; **Odyssey** bracelet (right hand, above), \$90, as before; **Petite Grand** bracelet (right hand, below), \$145, petitegrand.com

Like a lot of young Australian women, Elyse Knowles grew up admiring model Miranda Kerr. But unlike the average wide-eyed teenager, Knowles would then grow up to follow in Kerr's very famous footsteps.

"I always researched her," the 25-year-old says of Kerr, who once modelled for Seafolly - a coveted gig now held by Knowles. "I had a folder on my computer of all the poses she would do - what she loves, what she would eat and drink. Anyone who [modelled for] Seafolly I would think: 'Oh my gosh, I want to be her.' Now I'm walking past posters, seeing my big boobhead!"

It's a big adjustment for someone who recalls a childhood in suburban Melbourne in which she was a "shy little girl, who wasn't someone that excelled

in school". Encouraged by her mother, she began modelling at 10. "It brought me out of my shell," Knowles says. "[Modelling] gave me confidence, and a drive to want more, I guess. I loved it."

Winning the 13th season of *The Block* last year with her boyfriend of nearly six years, carpenter Josh Barker, 29, took Knowles's profile to a new level. And while her life as a model and social media influencer - she boasts almost one million Instagram followers - may seem at odds with a childhood spent "going camping, riding motorbikes, and getting dirty", Knowles says she will only accept jobs that allow her to simply be herself. "I've turned down clients who have said that I'd have to stop motorbike riding, or whatever," she says. "I'm not going to stop doing the things I love. That's who I am, and I'm not going to change for anyone."

It is a mindset that has served her well - particularly this year. In the six months since she last caught up with *Stellar*,

"I'm not going to stop doing things I love. I'm not going to change for anyone"

Knowles has signed on as an ambassador for international beauty brand Aveda, as well as Myer, and sizzled as the face (and body) of a global campaign for iconic brand Seafolly. She also works with the Australian swimwear label on Fit Is A Feeling, a campaign that promotes body positivity and pushes customers to remember that mental strength and confidence are just as important as physical fitness. ▶

“Seafolly has been a big dream of mine,” she says. “I had my list of things I’ve wanted to achieve in my career, and at the start I never thought I could get there. But I kept chugging along, changed that mindspace and said, ‘I can, I can.’”

“You put it in your mind and work out a way you can get there. Whereas if you think you can’t, you’re never going to get there – because you never try. You won’t find a way. When you think you can and you want it, you work out every possible way to try and get it.”

As for speculation over tensions between her and outgoing Myer ambassador Jennifer Hawkins, Knowles is adamant there are no hard feelings between them. “We’re in the Myer family together, which is nice,” she tells *Stellar*.

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“Jen was a big inspiration to try and get there myself one day. I feel like I’m ticking off a lot of dreams this year, and I’m pretty content. But we always want a little more, don’t we? If I got to 50 and hadn’t tried, I’d be pretty angry at myself.” ★

Seafolly swimsuit, \$120, seafolly.com; **Nerida Winter** hat, \$395, nerida winter.com; (right) **Seafolly** bikini, \$89.95, as before; **Nerida Winter** hat, \$295, as before

Hair Luana Coscia using Kevin.Murphy
Make-Up Naomi McFadden using Luma Cosmetics

