

Fun, Fit & Fab

BY MARUSKA MOORE
Sentinel Intern

Living in Los Angeles or any metropolitan city can be fun & adventurous but difficult to maintain a healthy fit lifestyle, especially when you have to commute daily and sit for hours in traffic. Sometimes it can take a toll on your social life too, alienating you from your friends. We have found five women who keep it all in perspective and have managed to combine friends, fitness and being fierce.

Valley wood Fit Girls is a bevy of playful, confident & energetic, beauties ranging in ages from 36-45. With a very healthy approach to friendship & fitness. "With thousands of followers across the nation and internationally via Facebook, Twitter and Youtube -these ladies have created an online phenomenon. VFG is passionate about educating and entertaining women of color, (especially African-American women), to encourage their friends and family members to do the same."

Bernadette Manansala (BM)—founder of VFG and songwriter, **Claudia Jordan (CJ)**—model/actress and radio personality, **Cecily Wiggins (CW)**—comediienne and entrepreneur, **Tanjareen Martin (TM)**—filmmaker and actress, and **Kam Horne (KM)**—model/ TV personality.

I got a chance to catch up with VFG recently at the Conga Room in Downtown Los Angeles, where Claudia Jordan was doing a live broadcast of a weekly segment of the Jamie Foxx Show. Cecily couldn't attend she had a previous engagement, of her own. We talked about the hikes they host as well as their ideas on womens health.

Maruska(M): Thank you for inviting me and doing the interview, there is an attractive medley of backgrounds in this group, how did you ladies meet?

In unison: Claudia

Bernadette Manansala (BM): But, we all have known each other over the course of 6-10 years

Tanjareen(TM): I actually met Kam at a casting and was like, "I like her"

M: What is the Valleywood Fit Club about? What is your Motto?

TM: "Too vain to gain" (half joking)

Kam Horne(KH): "Keep motivated, find inspiration"

CJ: "Work out to eat"

BM: It's "Too vain to gain", "Live it up or give it up", but also accept accountability and encourage others to start their own chapter.

M: How did these hikes start? What was your motivation?

BM: I started taking hikes by myself, and running then I invited people to come one by one, because I never had time for my friends with work and stuff so I had to find a way to make time...

TM: Yeah she called and asked if wanted to go hiking. I was like "HIKING?!" Isn't that what White people do, Black people don't HIKE!"

CJ: This actually helped us get closer. We knew and liked each other, but we started getting really involved in our own lives and careers, like, we never had time for each other and this helped keep our friendship together. It was more about friendship than hiking, a way to catch up with each other.

BM: Yeah, but when it comes to this you gotta find the right people—to keep you motivated and who have the same things in mind.

M: This a great way to get people motivated on their own, what results have you seen from the monthly hikes?

KH: ENERGY. With my two kids...

M: Wait, you have two kids? You're tiny?

KH: (Smiling) Yeah. 14 and 22 months. This helped...a lot, I lost 31 pounds. It helped me feel good, I got a chance to hang out with my friends. I had so much energy. My husband helped too, he grills twice a week. I also did the diet challenge.

M: What's the Diet Challenge?

KH: Well each week we would chose a diet to stick to, we did the Master Cleanse, one week of nothing but Veggies.

TM: Remember when we did that tofu?

BM: Yeah, they didn't like it but I stuck with it, I like tofu.

TM: UGH!

BM: I recently got a message from this one girl on twitter from London, she was researching and found us and said that they had started because she was inspired by us.

M: Will there be a VFG international?

BM: No, I am not trying to do anything like that, we are only inspiring others to get out there and do what they need to do for a healthy life.

M: What about the girl that "doesn't have the time" to get out and exercise? How can they be motivated?

CJ: Well we aren't professionals, just inspirational. [Often times] we make excuses for our selves which is absolute b** s**. "Black women don't work out", "We can't get our hair wet"—You can't let your hair be a priority over blood pressure.

TM: Yeah, you really need to find out what is important to you,

(Kam nods in agreement)

M: Let's talk food. What are your eating habits?

CJ: No veggies, candy. Candy. (pulls a pack of nerds from her purse).

M: I can't write that, seriously?

CJ: You asked.

TM: She's for real the other day, she wanted to stop at the liquor store to grab some Boston Baked Beans.

CJ: Well I work out twice as hard so that's my reward. But I never use salt. Salt retains water. I got a nice Vinegar chicken recipe I like. I just eat to taste my food, don't overdue it when you are full—Stop.

KH: Every meal is based around veggies. Have a meat, double up on veggies like broccoli and asparagus.

(I only look at Tanjareen)

TM: I'm the Veggie Vixen. Whatchu think?

M: You know, you are the second Black vegan I know, I have a friend named Donald, I thought he was the only one? Where can people go to find dishes you like.

TM: I get asked this question so many times- go to www.valleywoodfitgirlsclub.com—I give recipes and places I eat.

M: What about you Bernie?

BM: Power drinks in the morning, an exotic salad apple walnuts; I avoid bread & substitute meat with tofu. No Whitey, which means no processed flour, refined sugar—any of that.

M: You are serious about your fitness and all of you have a timeless beauty. Last question before we go, how can someone interested in the monthly hike contact with you??

BM: www.valleywoodfitgirlsclub.com You can find connections to get at us individually too.

Cannick {Continued From A-7}

lighter skin have always been treated better. In the days of slavery, the dark-skinned Blacks

slave owners, who were often responsible for the lighter shade of brown his slaves had, give

supply owner what color and type of hair do they sell the most—honey blonde silky straight.

But this isn't about Black people's issues (and there are many)

Metcalfe, Parren Mitchell, Robert Nix, Charles Rangel, Louis Stokes, and DC Delegate Walter Fauntroy founded the Congressional Black Caucus. And