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YOU CAN'T ALWAYS GET what you want

The first lady of rock talks about her 28-year marriage to Keith Richards, her wild-child days & the frightening diagnosis she had to share with her kids

by Kate Rae

LOOK AT ANY PHOTO OF PATTI HANSEN and her Rolling Stones husband, Keith Richards, and the contrasts between the two are as apparent as their mutual adoration. She: strong, sunny, radiant. He: the man whose infamous comment about snorting his dad's ashes was not actually unfathomable, given the source. If you were to place bets on which half of the couple would be targeted by cancer – not once but twice – the smart money would not be on Patti. But unpredictability is one of cancer's cruellest traits: It attacks the young, the kind, the recently wed, the new mom, the marathoner. No one is immune, not even Patti Hansen.

Former supermodel and Studio 54 regular Patti discovered this first-hand in 2005, when a mammogram picked up on some calcification in her breast. The reality hit her hard. "I was, like, 'Okay. I'm one of *those* people now.'" After a biopsy revealed it was the beginning stages of cancer, Patti's doctor suggested a lumpectomy.

A year later, Patti noticed blood in her urine. Within a month, doctors had identified a mass in her bladder, and she began chemotherapy. Three months later, she had her bladder removed and a new one fashioned out of a part of her intestine. >

Patti Hansen targets breast cancer with daughters Theodora and Alexandra Richards

Photographed in New York City, January 15 by Steven Sebring

Join the Fight

A breast-cancer diagnosis doesn't always lead to the best treatment, but a movement for change is in the air.

Jill Anzarut, a 35-year-old mother of two from Toronto, felt fortunate that she discovered the lump in her breast early, when the tumour was still only half a centimetre wide. Unfortunately, it wasn't big enough to qualify her for provincial funding for the drug that could reduce her risk of recurrence, Herceptin. Had she lived in another jurisdiction, like Alberta or British Columbia, the province would have covered it.

A social-media frenzy ensued as various groups lobbied to raise awareness about the discrepancies between provinces when it comes to breast cancer. "Your treatment options largely depend on which part of the country you live in," says Alison Gordon of Rethink Breast Cancer. If you live outside Alberta or B.C., you can write your province's health minister. To copy and paste Rethink's petition letter visit chatelaine.com/rethink.

“My daughters were angry,” says Patti. “They said, ‘See, Mom, you take such good care of yourself, and look at you!’ They couldn’t understand how I got cancer, because I eat well, I exercise, I do all the right things.”

Patti, who once regularly graced the covers of *Vogue* and *Glamour*, met Keith at Studio 54 in 1979. (Rumour has it she had no idea who he was at the time.) They married four years later, on his 40th birthday, and had two daughters, Theodora and Alexandra, soon after.

Fast-forward 32 years. Patti arrives at the *Chatelaine* shoot for Fashion Targets Breast Cancer in perfectly casual, laid-back style, clad in dark-brown pants that at first look like jeans but are, of course, rock-'n'-roll leather, and a slouchy V-neck sweater.

She's effortlessly cool and incredibly warm, greeting everyone with a beaming smile. Her look was, and still is, that of the quintessential all-American beauty: tall, athletic, tanned and freckled, with shaggy blond hair. She laughs about her glory days of modelling, when famed fashion photographers like Arthur Elgort, Helmut Newton, Patrick Demarchelier and Richard Avedon were going wild for her Amazonian looks — at five foot nine and 130 pounds, she was relatively curvaceous. As she told *Vogue*, “I was busting out of those clothes. The editors would say, ‘Oh no! The collections aren't fitting Patti!’ I loved when boyfriends would call me their Amazon girl. I never wore flats: the higher the shoe, the better.”

Her daughters now live the model's life she once did — flying around the world and stomping down runways. Telling her girls, now 24 and 26, about her diagnosis was hard, Patti says, even though “they aren't babies anymore.” What's frustrating is the fact that they both smoke — something that Patti herself hasn't done for 26 years but still blames for

her cancers. “You'd think they'd stop because of all the cancer in the family.”

Patti, the youngest of seven children, is the sole matriarch left in the Hansen clan. She was brought up in a tightly knit, second-generation Norwegian working-class family in Staten Island, New York. Ten years ago, her sister Beverly died at 56 of complications from esophageal and lung cancer, and her only other sister, Barbara, also died of lung cancer, at 65, right after Patti's own surgery. The family is extremely close: Theodora and Alexandra are best friends with their cousins, and their utter adoration of Patti and each other is evident, and very enviable — it is what every mother dreams of. They are respectful of Patti and have an easy familial banter, finishing each other's thoughts and sentences.

When she told them about her diagnosis, “they were angry,” says Patti. “They said, ‘See, Mom, you take such good care of yourself, and look at you!’ They couldn't understand how I got cancer, because I eat well, I exercise, I do all the right things.”

Despite her diagnosis, Patti refused to feel like a victim. “I just really felt like a number. We're all touched by someone with cancer; the statistics are so high that when I was diagnosed it really wasn't a shock to me.”

While telling the girls was difficult, telling her husband was even harder. Married to Patti now for 27 years, Keith had a difficult time accepting the news and the treatment it demanded. “I had to take care of him,” says Patti. “I knew I had to get better because he was depressed. He was really sad. He ▶



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Target Tees

Celebrating 10 years of breast-cancer breakthroughs

For all the savvy women who sport the breast-aware bull's-eye symbol on a Fashion Targets Breast Cancer (FTBC) tee, there's cause for celebration. Not only does this year mark the campaign's 10th anniversary in Canada, but in that decade, devoted to supporting women, FTBC has raised more than \$1.7 million.

A shout-out also goes to Rethink Breast Cancer, the organization behind FTBC Canada, which turns 10 this year too. “Rethink has come a long way, from a charity of two to a national organization,” says Alison Gordon, Rethink's vice-president of strategy, marketing and communications. “And through our fundraising we've been able to create a variety of important support networks for young women.”

Aided by individuals and sponsors like Joe Fresh Style, Rethink's initiatives include helping mothers in treatment find child care, creating innovative new research programs and social-media initiatives to connect with young cancer patients.

And, thanks to groups like Rethink, there are still more reasons to break out the bubbly. With money devoted to enhancing education, screening and treatment, women's survival rates are rising. In fact, the breast-cancer mortality rate in Canada has dropped by more than 30 percent since 1986 and is currently the lowest it's been since 1950. So celebrate with us — because sporting the Target does change lives.

Your chance to win!

▶ To enjoy a weekend getaway for two to Toronto, including a **Joe Fresh Style** shopping spree, visit chatelaine.com/fashiontargets.

Contest closes May 31, 2011. Open to residents of Canada over age of majority. One entry per person. Odds of winning depend on number of eligible entries received. Mathematical skill-testing question to be correctly answered to win. No purchase necessary. Entry form and full rules available at www.chatelaine.com/fashiontargets.

Empower Yourself

There are many things women may not be aware of when it comes to getting access to the best care possible. Here are four things you should know – and what you can do to take your health care back into your own hands.

1. Take charge of tests. Think you've found a lump? Your doctor might suggest an ultrasound, but you should know that other options exist. "You can talk to your doctor about the type of screening you want," says Gordon. For instance, a breast-cancer clinic may give you access to the information (and answers) you need faster and more efficiently than a general ultrasound clinic.

2. Tailor your therapy. Surgery is still the principal treatment for breast cancer, but, according to the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, up to 90 percent of American women get other care too. It's important to research what is most likely to reduce your risk of recurrence, >

had a hard time, but the love gets so strong. I knew: He needs me. He needs me around."

Patti is the rock of the family. She muses that her marriage to Keith has survived through all of the years and the ups and downs because they share the same working-class roots and values. "I cook for him; I do a lot of stews. Right now, we're doing a lot of crockpot cooking. It's just the two of us at home." Turns out the bad boy of rock 'n' roll's most enduring band, famed for taking top spot on the *Who's Likely to Die List* for 10 years straight, likes his creature comforts. But when they started dating, Patti's family and friends were deeply worried. "One of my gay friends said, 'Don't do it! Don't go. Don't go, Patti.' I said, 'I'm going; this is great.' And I was up with him for five days straight... We were in a car, we went to apartments, we went to Harlem looking at record shops. I remember the fifth day, when I finally started seeing things flying," says Patti in Keith's memoir, *Life*.

Somehow, even after a very stormy introduction to her family, which ended with a completely plastered Keith smashing his guitar on a table while Patti was sobbing upstairs, they managed to stay together. Keith had fallen madly in love with her, he wrote in his diary entry excerpted in *Life*: "Incredibly, I've found a woman. Unbelievably, she is the most beautiful (physically) specimen in the WORLD. But that ain't it! It certainly helps but it's her mind, her joy of life and (wonders) she thinks this battered junkie is the guy she loves. I'm over the moon... I'm kicking 40 and besotted."

Keith and Patti were married in 1983 in Cabo San Lucas, Mexico, and the girls were born soon after, a year apart. Keith thought he was done with fathering, having had Marlon and Angela with actress and model Anita Pallenberg, "We've done it and we've made it. No more diapers," he says in his book. "But no! Here comes another one. Her name's Theodora. And then a year later another one, >



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HOT MODEL TURNED EARTH MOTHER

(1) Wedding song, Mexico, 1983. (2) At the launch of her bag line Hung On U. (3) With Keith in L.A. in 2009. (4) The Richards family, 1992. (5) The whole clan, including Marlon and Angela, children from Keith's first marriage, with their kids. (6) With Keith in 1981.

PHOTO 1, ANNIE LEBOVITZ; PHOTO 2, WIREIMAGE; PHOTO 3, CHRIS POLK/GETTY IMAGES; PHOTO 4, ART + COMMERCE; PHOTOS 5 & 6, JANE ROSE.



Alexandra. Little T&A. And they weren't even a gleam in my eye when I wrote that song." They all lived on the beaches in Antigua and Jamaica in the sun for the first few years of the girls' lives, until they had to go to school. Then the family moved back to New York while they built their house in Connecticut, where they've stayed ever since, in

her newest project: resurrecting a bag that a late friend had designed in the '70s. "He was giving it to all the models at the time. My daughters found mine in my closet, and they were wearing it and I went, 'Wow, that looks great.'" Patti started wearing the simple cross-body black-suede bag everywhere, including on red carpets.



► says Stephen Chia, a medical oncologist at the B.C. Cancer Agency. (For instance, some cancers don't respond to chemotherapy.) "Find out the specifics of your cancer, and learn what will likely be of greatest benefit to you," he says.

3. Talk about trials.

A lot of women don't know they may be eligible for drug trials, says Chia. "But the reason we're doing better in 2011 than ever before is that many women have taken part in ►

a big, beautiful place tucked down a leafy lane about an hour from Manhattan. (Keith nicknamed the house Costalot, thanks to all the bedrock they had to blast to build the foundations.)

Together, they struggled through the effects of the chemo. ("It's exhausting. I mean, I was feeling like shit. Chemo is just debilitating," Patti says.) The couple stayed cocooned in their Connecticut home, making stews and watching movie after movie together. "We watched a lot of happy movies, old movies. *Miracle on 34th Street*. Tim Allen [movies]," she says. "Corny humour. I like corny humour."

One potential chemo side effect that Patti was relieved to avoid was the loss of her hair. "I was preparing myself. I took Theodora with me to some wig place, and I looked at her and I just started crying. It's a big thing for a woman. I play around with wigs every New Year's Eve, and I thought, 'This will be fun.' But the reality of it... it's a heavy moment."

Now cancer-free, Patti focuses her energies on

"My girlfriend said, 'I used to have that bag too! Let's do something with it, because it's so fabulous, and mine's ripped and shredded and lost.'"

Together, they recreated the bag in different sizes and fabrics for a label they named Hung On U. "Our price points are from \$30 to \$400 — from nylons and leopard-print to suedes and leathers — and we have them in three different sizes."

Patti's other project is to get women talking about cancer, a fight her girls are passionate about as well. "I mean, the word *cancer* is scary in its own right," says Alexandra. "I think talking about it is like talking about a monster you're going to attack. Being vocal is the best thing that you can do: It spreads the awareness, which brings the money that's going to go into the research that maybe one day is going to come out with a cure." Patti agrees with her: "I'm an advocate for going for your mammograms, going for your checkups, doing your self-exams. We must do the best we can with the bodies we're given." ❖



Pop Quiz

research.” The discovery of the drug Herceptin in the last decade is an example, he says. “Ask whether there are clinical trials you might be eligible for, and what types—not only could you benefit, but you will also help the next generation of breast-cancer patients.”

4. Trust your instincts. “Remember, there is no perfect test,” says Chia. (In the U.S., mammograms miss 15 to 20 percent of cancers; ultrasounds are often inconclusive.) “If a test comes back negative but you’re still worried and feel certain something is wrong, don’t just leave it at that,” he says. “Be persistent, and find out what else you can do diagnostically to put your mind at ease.” ❄

Keith Richards and Patti Hansen’s daughters Theodora and Alexandra on their guilty (and not so guilty) pleasures

What’s the last book you read?

Theodora: Etta James’ autobiography.
Alexandra: *My Uncle Oswald*, by Roald Dahl — his second adult novel.

What’s on your bedside table? **T:** A little glass bluebird from my grandmother. **A:** My eyeglasses.

Guiltiest pleasure? **A:** Chocolate-covered pretzels by Balducci’s. With caramel. **T:** Eggo waffles. Those things are like crack to me. It’s amazing. I will eat, like, three boxes in a day.

Favourite comfort food? **T:** Spaghetti and tomato sauce. I could eat it every day. **A:** I really like this wrap from Jubilee Marketplace in New York. It’s loaded with yummy avocado, tomato and mozzarella.

Favourite cocktail? **T:** Whisky on the rocks. **A:** Pretty boring: vodka and a splash of soda with lime.

Words that you most overuse?

T: *Phenomenal*. I just put that one out of my vocabulary. And *brutal*. **A:** *Awesome*.

What’s the worst piece of advice you’ve ever been given? **T:** Marry someone who loves you more than you love them. **A:** But you aren’t married, so you don’t know if that’s even true.

T: Yeah, but I still think it’s a silly piece of advice. I don’t think there should be any rules of love.

What is the most exciting part of your job?

A: Travelling. **T:** Yeah, but we don’t get to do that as often as they used to. Back when Mom was a model, she got to go to Morocco. Now, they have green screens and it’s like, “Let’s just pretend we’re in Morocco.” Not as fun.

Do you like to sing? **T:** I love singing, but if I ever did sing in front of anyone, I would be like Jim Morrison, with my back to the crowd. **A:** She has an amazing voice. **T:** I think I sound like Jasmine from Disney’s *Aladdin*.

What about singing in the shower? Do you have a go-to? **T:** That changes daily. Hourly. **A:** Any of those poppy songs you hear on the radio when your alarm comes on...

T: Katy Perry. **A:** ... and you’re so tired and you can’t help mumbling whatever you just heard.

Who or what makes you laugh the hardest?

T: Alexandra and the Monty Python classic *Life of Brian*. **A:** Bill Murray, my boyfriend. Oh, and, of course, Theodora.

What do you live for? **A:** Family and friends.

T: Yeah, I think that’s the purpose in your life.