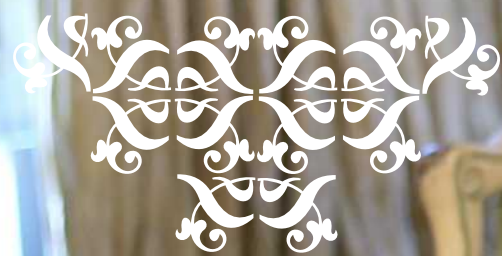





**QUEEN
BEE**



When Houstonian Lynn Wyatt, the gregarious, international socialite, philanthropist, speaks...people listen. And, for good reason. She knows everyone and has entertained more potentates, aristocrats, and tycoons than just about anyone in her rarified constellation of friends.

Forget oil. She's the greatest natural resource Texas has. Here, in an exclusive, Lance Avery Morgan and Rob Giardinelli, share an interview that takes us inside the world of this living, loveable legend.

Photography by John Conroy Styling by Summar Salah

Make-up by Tonya Riner Production Asst: Mallory Miller
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BEGINNING IN THE 1960S, WHEN IT CAME to representing Texas on an international social level, the man for the job...would be a woman. Lynn Wyatt. With her striking blonde hair, flawless porcelain complexion, and small frame that is eclipsed by only her gregarious personality, *Call Me Lynn*, is a phrase spoken by Wyatt that's been heard in the most fashionable Jet Set circles since the mid-20th century and will likely be for decades more.

The spirited grande dame, who is anything but stodgy, has so positively represented this state that it could easily be renamed The Republic of Lynn. Her elegance has been emulated for years and will be for plenty more to come, as the young and young-at-heart worship her heightened personal style, entertaining largesse and attitude that everyone's welcome as-long-as-their-fun point of view toward life is brought to the party.

Fun, as Wyatt often says, is her favorite word. And, she's serious about it. If you're not having fun, you're killing time, so we caught up with La Lynn to learn more about her stunning life well-lived that includes her husband, Oscar Wyatt, and four sons, Steven Bradford Wyatt, Douglas Bryan Wyatt, Oscar Sherman "Trey" Wyatt III, and Bradford Allington Wyatt.

LANCE AVERY MORGAN: Lynn, we're here in the beautiful study of your palatial home. We're honored to be here and love knowing you because you have made such a difference to the world on so many levels. And, so we want to thank you, first of all, for doing that. Okay, let's jump in. What has motivated your life in philanthropy to help others at a high level?

LYNN WYATT: Thank you very much. It is so lovely to have you both here. With philanthropy, I have the greatest admiration for people who contribute so many different ways voluntarily. No matter how we serve, it is the desire to be useful in helping other people that matters most.

ROB GIARDINELLI: Not only do you possess great style while raising funds for so many international organizations, but you've also made a career out of it. What's one piece of advice you would give to someone who's chairing their first gala or throwing their first very first dinner party to really make it a spectacular, memorable affair?

LYNN: What a great question. First, have a variety of guests: some whom know each other and some who do not know each other. I like to seat one person they know on one side and one that they don't on the other side. Also, I *never* place husbands and wives together.

RG: What's the reason for not putting husbands and wives next to each other?

LYNN: I realized that if a husband and wife are next to each other, they don't talk to each other. Instead, they're talking to the person on the other side of them. They need a rest from their spouse, so by placing them apart it leads to more interesting table conversation.

RG: I agree with that. I also love the tradition in Texas, and certainly, in Europe, that gentleman change places at dessert to speak to other guests at the table. They can choose to sit by others, whom they would also like to know.

LYNN: I think that's fascinating. Sometimes, I will have men move two places over...usually before dessert because I don't want people walking around all the time. And, there are still two people on the other side of them that haven't spoken to each other yet.

LAM: We were talking earlier about your theory to good conversation. What's one of your favorite conversations starters, for instance, at a dinner party with a complete stranger when you're seated next to a tycoon of industry?

LYNN: I would ask, what are you doing that is interesting in your field, or what you are doing now that motivates you? I'd love to hear about it. Usually, people give you honest answers that way.

LAM: Speaking of conversation points, what was it like growing up in the legendary Sakowitz store retail environment and what did you learn that you applied to the rest of your life?

LYNN: When I was going to high school, everybody thought that I got my clothes for free and I said, 'No way.' My mother said, 'if I was working at the store, I would get a 20% discount just like every other employee'. No, I never got anything for free. So the first time I went to try on clothes, my mother told me, 'Go and pick out the things that you want and bring them into the dressing room to make sure they all fit.' I was so excited and finally, after we were there for two hours in the dressing room, she said, 'You can only have five outfits.' I was disappointed, but it made me really think about what I could wear. I thought I would pick this skirt to put with that blouse. This sweater can go with the same skirt and this belt to go with this, and so on. It taught me how to mix things up and have fun with it. It was because of that, I started experimenting with things. So much so that as my mother got older, she'd asked me to come over and help her pick out things for her to wear. She was a wonderful woman. Really lovely.

LAM: I was honored to meet your mother, Ann Sakowitz, years ago. What a true lady, proving the apple doesn't fall far from the tree.

LYNN: Well, thank you. She had a fabulous sense of humor. And, she played Gin Rummy and beat the hell out of every man.

LAM: So, that's where you get *your* sense of humor?

LYNN: Thank you. Probably. She made everybody laugh. And you know, after I got older, I realized how wonderfully lucky I was to have parents who were so kind. I mean, after learning what goes on in the world that I didn't know at that time. I was so thankful and grateful. Plus, my brother and I are very close. He went to St. John's, which had just opened when I was at San Jacinto High School. My parents wanted me to change and go to St. John's, which I didn't want to do because all of my friends were at San Jacinto.

RG: Weren't you a cheerleader there?

LYNN: You do your homework. I remember that this boy had a crush on me and I sort of had a little crush on him. He was playing football, but wasn't a big football player, like the quarterback, yet every time he would do something good, I said, "well, I'm going to do a big cheer for you."

PEERLESS STYLE

LAM: You seem to be everyone's cheerleader, Lynn. What is one style tip you would give to someone who's invited to a party with a theme?

LYNN: I would say to try to dress accordingly to the theme as best as you can, but try to be a bit original. And, if not original, clever.

RG: Do you like costume parties?

LYNN: Not especially. Well, sometimes I like them. Instead of kooky costumes, I like pretty. Am I going to have a giant pumpkin costume? That's not me. No, no, no. But, if it is a theme, I'll try to carry out the theme. I think I have several costumes up in my attic somewhere. When somebody gets an invitation to a costume party, it is a lot of pressure. When I had birthday parties every year, I would have a theme, and everybody would ask me around Christmas time, what is the theme of your party next year? And it would be something like pink. Yes, one time the theme was *Think Pink*. I always had a seated birthday dinner, placed, with a buffet. One time the Prince (Rainier) rang that he'd be at the party. I sat him at the head of the table and I said, 'Monsignor, I don't see any pink on you.' He picks up his foot and his socks are pink. I said, Thank the Lord. Otherwise, I was going to send you home.

LAM: What's fascinating to me is that you've entertained so much over the years and you've done it so beautifully. What is the key ingredient to the perfect party for you?

LYNN: That's easy. First of all, be at the front door and greet *every* guest, look them in the eye and say, *I'm so glad you're here. Thank you for accepting my invitation.* Let them know how truly happy you are that they came.

RG: You've been in a lot of doorways, welcoming a lot of people into your world.

LYNN: No question. You eventually go into the living room. But, *always* stay at the door, no matter what, until every guest has arrived.

LAM: One party, one great gathering that we want you to share is your experience at *The Battle of Versailles in 1973*, the big fashion event you attended where French and American designers collaborated—and competed—for the first time. Did you think that was a special occasion of gathering both the



Dress by Alexander McQueen, \$8,540. At Neiman Marcus. Lynn's own jewelry.



Dress by Jenny Packham, \$3210. Earrings by Oscar de la Renta, \$390. Both at Neiman Marcus. Lynn's own belt, shoes, and other jewelry.

“ I’ve always said to myself that there is a way to dress: with class, a bit of dash, but never trash. Also, I say, always trust the mirror. You know why? The mirror never lies. ”



Jumpsuit by ALC, \$795.
At Saks Fifth Avenue.
Lynn's own jewelry.

French and American designers?

LYNN: Absolutely. I was very, very honored to be invited.

LAM: It really put American designers on the map at that super high level to be on par with the French designers, don't you think?

LYNN: Yes. I was really good friends with Bill Blass, who showed there. I would also stay with him in his New York City house and he would always have great food that he would cook *himself*. He had a lovely country house in the woods that had a lovely garden. You'd come upon an area and there'd be a fabulous statue that seemed like it should be in his house or something. He was such a great, great conversationalist and he loved my husband, Oscar. Oh, they would talk on the phone about politics all the time. Everything that Oscar would say, he'd agree with. I was very honored to be in his guest room many times.

RG: Not only was he an incredible designer, but he had impeccable taste.

LYNN: That's right. And you know what, we never, ever discussed clothes even though he was such a prolific designer. I read one time that he said, 'That's what I like about Lynn. We didn't talk about clothes and that's a sign of our great friendship.' He was such a gentleman.

RG: Tell us about how your own personal style was formed.

LYNN: I've always said to myself that there's a way to dress: with class, with a bit of dash, but never trash. Also, I say, *always trust the mirror*. You know, why? *The mirror never lies*.

LAM: You've been a muse of so many designers. Tell us about some of your favorite ones, past and present.

LYNN: I was fortunate to go to the collections every year when Yves St. Laurent was alive. My husband told me, 'I want you to go over to Paris.' He was on his way to the Middle East and he would drop me off in Paris on the way. I had friends there and they were always giving parties. I was at The Ritz and across the street, as you know, is the Chanel store. I went over there and chose some things, off the rack, not made to measure. I was in the fitting room and the curtain was pushed away. This lady comes in and says, 'Oh, so you're the Texan?' And, I said, yes. Then she left. And I asked the salesgirl, 'Is that who I think it was? Mademoiselle Chanel?' And they said, yes, it was Mademoiselle. She must have been 90.

RG: Wow. So Coco Chanel came into your dressing room?

LYNN: That's right. She had heard that a Texas girl had come in to have some things made to measure. I was so honored that she took the time to see who I was.

LAM: You were an early adopter of burgeoning fashion designers, too, with French designer André Courrèges in the 60s, as an example. You're a forward thinker with fashion.

LYNN: Well, thank you for saying that. I don't think of myself like that, but I appreciate it. He was actually my first made to measure designer. I hadn't had any made to measure before then. I knew him well and he was so advanced.

LAM: I believe Sakowitz was the first store to carry him and his designs in the U.S.?

LYNN: That's right. I came back from seeing him in Paris and I told my brother, 'You have to go see him there.' He flew over to see his talent and when he returned, he said, 'We're going to put a Courrèges shop in the

store.' It sold like gangbusters. He was the right designer for the right time.

LAM: I understand that standing for couture fitting sessions, or made to measure, is grueling.

LYNN: It is. They measure everything: your knuckles, your ear, half of your finger and the other half of your finger. And there's someone that reads the measurements aloud in order to build a mannequin body exactly like mine from the bust to the hips to the legs, so it has to be perfect. It is so that you don't have to stand for hours. When I first started, I learned that I had to come back for four fittings. I said, listen, I live in Houston, Texas. I am not going to fly to Paris just for fittings.'

LAM: You're a busy woman, you had a lot of things to accomplish. You were also raising a family.

LYNN: Right. So then I would go and they'd have all of it done except to correct a few things here and there and they'd send it back to me in boxes. Huge boxes. I mean you would've thought that there was a human being in there because of the way they were packed so perfectly. All the tissue paper, it was fabulous.

LAM: Speaking of your busy years, you're a sharpshooter. In fact, there's a great piece of art on your terrace that has both you and Annie Oakley on each side. If you could compete in any Olympic sport, would it be shooting?

“When I first started, I learned that I had to come back for four fittings. I said, listen, I live in Houston, Texas. I am not going to fly to Paris just for fittings.”



Princess Grace and Lynn Wyatt, 1970s. Courtesy of Lynn Wyatt.

LYNN: I don't shoot anymore. On our honeymoon, we went to the Middle East for two weeks. Oscar never takes off more than a week for something. He's at work right now. At 95, he's still a workaholic.

We first went to the Middle East because I'd never been there. The museums we went to were fabulous. Then, on the second part, we went on a bear hunt. The juxtaposition of things is what I love. I love to do something that's the complete opposite of what I just did. It feels so inspiring and new.

LAM: You stay really active and are in such great shape to keep up with your very busy lifestyle. What are some of your secrets to staying fit and trim?

LYNN: You know, I didn't want to go to a gym. For many years I've had many exercise trainers. When I went to the South of France for the summer, I had a girl and a boy that were from there and each one would do different things. I would do kickboxing, which I love. *I can protect you*.

LAM: I'll bet you can. I'm betting that started in the 70s and 80s. What were some of your favorite moments from that era?

LYNN: I was fortunate to have had a villa in the South of France. Princess Grace and Prince Rainier of Monaco were very dear friends. I spent three months away every summer and it was fabulous. The nightclub, Regine's, was the rage then. It started in Paris. Then, she went on to open one in Monte Carlo and also in the South of France. Our friends always had seated, black-tie dinners in those days. Oh, it was fabulous. Then everyone would go home to change clothes and go back to Regine's. They had a pool that you could just dabble your hand in the water while you were sitting in one of those banquettes... while the music played just above the small dance floor. If you were sitting maybe ten feet away from your guest you could still talk to each other. It was so advanced to know how to do that. We'd dance the Frug and the Monkey. Nightclub culture started there, no question. We'd dance until dawn. It was Studio 54 before Studio 54.

LAM: Sounds like my kind of party and the place to be where the height of the international Jet Set was then.

LYNN: I'll say. I remember there was a duchess one time who said, 'I want to introduce you to French society.'

LAM: This already sounds like a French farce waiting to happen.

LYNN: It was. There was a wonderful gentleman who was very highly ranked—more than a prince. And, he said, ‘I want to play a joke on the Duchess. She wants to introduce you to society, but, I’m going to say that I’ve known you for a long time. Go along with it.’ I said, okay. She introduced me by saying, ‘I want to introduce you to Lynn Wyatt, my friend from Houston, Texas.’ He said, ‘I thought that was you, I was hoping that you would be here.’ He put his arms around me, then hugged her...and she looked back at me completely amazed.

LAM: Because of your close friendship with Princess Grace and Prince Rainier, you’re part of the Princess Grace Foundation. You’ve done such good work on an international level, obviously beyond Texas. You told me how Cary Grant would call you personally, to speak with you about being involved with the foundation and its annual gala. Tell us about that experience.

LYNN: When Princess Grace died, it was so tragic. She was on her way to meet me in Paris when it happened. Three months later, I got a call from the Prince. He said, ‘Lynn, I want you to be a founder of the Princess Grace Foundation.’ I was so honored. I said, I don’t even live in France. He said, ‘I want you to be part of it. She loved you and you were such dear friends.’ So I thought, I’ll do it. But, you know, the first time you do anything, you have to hit the ball out of the park or they won’t want you to come back to the game the next time.

RG: There were some heavy hitters who were on the Foundation’s board like Frank Sinatra, Cary Grant, Princess Caroline, Princess Stephanie, Mary Wells Lawrence, and you. How did you approach a first-ever event like that?

LYNN: Some guy who was very important contacted me and said, ‘I want to help you.’ I said, ‘You know, I want to do this on my own, because if something goes wrong, it is only my fault. And I know the way I want to do things and that’s the way I’ll do it. I decided to do it, instead of in New York where everybody has parties every night, in Washington D.C. Ronald Reagan was the president at the time.’



I had three price tags for the tickets. For the most expensive, you would go to everything. For the lesser price ticket, it was more limited, and so on. Nancy Reagan would be there, which was a draw. So we put on a show for them that was a seated dinner with Julio Iglesias who performed, with a luncheon, and other events. It was fabulous. I have to say, now this is bragging a little, but I have to say it has been said that never in all these 45 years since has as much money been raised as we made on that one.

LAM: One thing I know, that a lot of people don’t know, is that you have a very famous friendship with Elton John and he adores you. You’ve often attended his White Tie and Tiara charity ball at his place in England. Tell us about what that’s like for you since you’re such close friends.

LYNN: I am always very honored to stay at his house. He has a huge estate and he puts up a big tent. The first time he did it was wonderful. Now, it has grown and the tent is huge. He has fabulous people. I’ve met lovely, lovely people there and he is the most generous man. I’ve never met a more generous man than he is, and I’m so flattered that he always seats me at his right. He has wonderful entertainment. And it is something that I truly look forward to every year in the summer.

RG: One of the many characters you’ve known is Andy Warhol. You were lucky enough to have done a photo session with him in the late 70s. What was that collaboration process like and what is it like to have your image immortalized by someone so revered in the art world?

LYNN: I was fortunate enough to have several famous artists who wanted to paint my portrait and I kept saying, no, I don’t have the time. Then, I met Andy and we became very close friends. In *The Andy Warhol Diaries*, which I have on the shelf there, it shows that Andy was very kind about me. I thought that Andy was the John Singer Sargent of my generation and it

was a fabulous experience. And, I love my paintings.

RG: You are certainly one of his most dynamic subjects, that’s for sure. There are very few people who were photographed by him at that high level. I love your portraits.

LYNN: Thank you. He did *four*. I have two. He told me, ‘Lynn, you don’t want the other two?’ And I said, no. He said, ‘Why? You know, it is the same face but different colors that match each other. That’s the way I do it.’ I said, I know, but I just don’t think I could live with four more Lynn Wyatt’s in this house. That would make five. I found out years later when I was visiting friends in Southampton, and my host said, ‘I want to show you some things because this man collects Warhols. Loads of them. They want you to come over and see them.’ So, I said, sure, I’d love to see them.

LAM: The Warhol plot thickens.

LYNN: I’ll say it did. I went there and the wife said, ‘I want to give you a tour of the house.’ There was an Andy Warhol in every room. Then, I go into their bedroom and over their bed are the other two Lynn Wyatt portraits. I said, ‘That is terrible. You let your husband do that?’ She said, ‘It was me who told him to put up the paintings there.’ I said, ‘Well, you flatter me. You made my whole weekend.’

LAM & RG: We love that. We’ve had an experience with a Warhol as well, at a very important business lunch at the Lever House in Midtown Manhattan, with people who knew we were from Texas. As we walked to our table at the very end of the restaurant, all we could see was *your* portrait at a distance. We thought, surely we’re not going to sit under Lynn Wyatt’s Warhol portrait. That would be too good to be true. And sure enough, we were seated under the Lynn Wyatt Warhol, which I guess now, in retrospect, was a copy. But it sure proved to be a very good omen for the meeting.

LYNN: Isn’t that *fun*. I’m donating mine to The Museum of Fine Arts here in Houston. They’re also building a theatre because I’m very heavily involved in the organization. It is called the Lynn Wyatt Theatre. They’re going to put the portraits up there. They’ve taken pictures of them, and I’ll have them until I die at which time the museum will receive the originals. And there will be a park, too.

LAM: You are too modest, Lynn. I think you’re referring to the Lynn Wyatt Square For The Performing Arts in downtown Houston. Most people are saying it will be the soul of the city because *you* feel that the performing arts are the soul of the city.

LYNN: Oh my God, I was so honored. I mean, I started crying. They said this block, it is a whole darn block, is going to be named for me because I’m involved in all the performing arts. Then one of my boys said, ‘Mom, that’s going to go on long after you’re gone. It’ll go through posterity.’

RG: We’ll be here cheering you on when it opens.

LYNN: Thank you, thank you. Well, I hope I’m here, too. Gosh, it will be gorgeous. I was so flattered.

LAM: What a treat to sit with you here, Lynn, and to hear your wonderful stories about past, present, and really, the future because you’re just warming up and we’re so excited to know you. We’re honored that you’re our state’s international ambassador on so many levels. So, thank you for being *you*.

LYNN: I am so honored that you even chose me for this marvelous opportunity. They were very thoughtful questions—you did your homework and I feel blessed that you asked me to answer them and our photo shoot has been divine. It sounds so corny when I say this, but I’m so thankful and grateful for my life...and to be able to go over all these memories about the people that I love and know today. I’ve been blessed, I really know I have, and I thank the Lord as I think about everything that has come to me in my life. I feel thankful for both of you, too. ☺



Blazer by Oscar de la Renta, \$2990. Blouse by Akris, \$795. Pants by Akris, \$395. At Neiman Marcus. Lynn’s own belt, jewelry, and shoes.

“ I thought that Andy was the John Singer Sargent of my generation and it was a fabulous experience. And, I love my paintings. ”