

# Beautiful Dreamer

Portland makeup artist follows her dream to Europe

**S**pring abounds with color: yellow daffodils, pink azaleas, purple crocuses and, most importantly, red dresses. The seventh annual Red Dress Party is April 14, and according to event chairman Reid Decker, tickets are selling quickly. So reserve yours today, then head to the mall to choose a flamboyant fashion.

Speaking of fashion, my friend **Kristen Arnett** left Portland this month to further her career in the fashion industry. I first met her when I (literally) bumped into her at First Thursday. "Hey, you write my favorite column in *Just Out*," she said, immediately becoming my new best friend. Ever since, I've followed her with great interest because I never understood how a talented makeup artist could support herself (financially or artistically) in our small city.

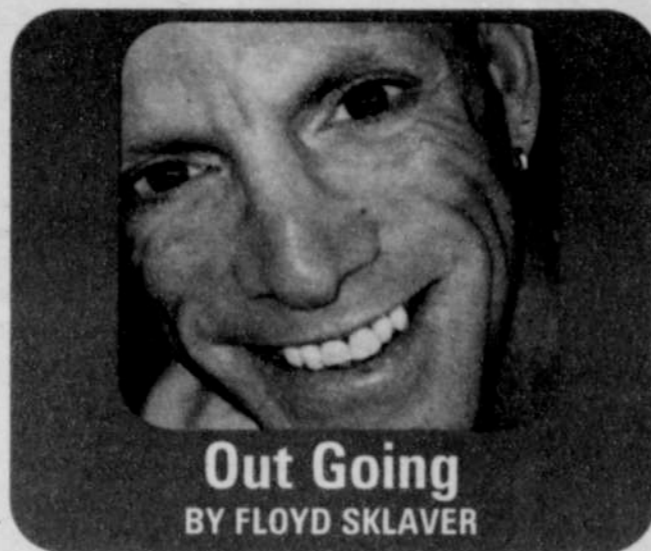
Turns out I was right. The beautiful brunette left for Milan, Italy, on a great adventure. I caught her by cell phone in Seattle the day before she flew out.

**Floyd Sklaver:** How long has this been in the works?

**Kristen Arnett:** Since January '06 when I went to a makeup artists trade show in London. The last night, this guy walked in and I just got this sense I needed to talk to him. He started giving me advice and said, "If you want to be the best you can be in fashion, get yourself to Milan."

**FS:** Why Milan?

**KA:** As a makeup artist you want to hook up with as many models, stylists and photographers as



**Out Going**  
BY FLOYD SKLAVER

Portland is lifestyle-oriented; [it's about] making our people look good, for Nike and Adidas. But Milan is notorious for being cutting-edge. There, makeup is a sustainable career. And an expensive one. I have at least \$30,000 worth of makeup. It took days to figure out how much to bring.

**FS:** Sounds like the fashion area interests you most.

**KA:** It's more like being an actual artist, but my final image is the product of everyone's collaboration. I rely on at least two others to make my artwork look good, and once it's washed off the model's face, it's gone forever. The touchy part is that if any aspect of the shoot isn't topnotch, I can't use it for my book because it won't be worthwhile. I did a shoot in December with a photographer in town. We shot for nine hours, and I got two images out of the whole thing. Milan is more of a calculated risk because the talent pool is higher. Portland's been really good for me, but I need to take it to a higher level if I want to pursue my dream.

**FS:** How did you get started in makeup?

**KA:** I was passionate about it since I was 14, no 12. I'd have my mom take me to the drugstore, and I'd spend two hours in the makeup department looking at colors. I'd cut pictures out of magazines but only cut out the heads. My mom thought I was

crazy. I learned photography just so I could make up my friends. It's like people who pick up a guitar and always play it. I picked up makeup and couldn't stop thinking about it.

**FS:** What will you miss most about PDX?

**KA:** My friends, that's the biggest thing. I cried driving over the Interstate Bridge the other day. It's so cozy in Portland. There's a German word, *gemütlich*, which means comfortable and inviting. That's what Portland is.

**FS:** Well, just don't forget us now that you're *Out Going*. ©

FLOYD SKLAVER wants to know about your event. E-mail him at [floydsklaver@comcast.net](mailto:floydsklaver@comcast.net).



"I'm looking at this like grad school," Kristen Arnett says. "I've put all of my savings into it, and I'm going to come home broke."

you can. In Milan, the best of the best are there. I'm looking at this like grad school. I've put all of my savings into it, and I'm going to come home broke. But I hope to end up with a wonderful book that showcases my work.

**FS:** What does a makeup stylist do?

**KA:** Anytime there's a photograph or video being shot, makeup should be an element of creating it. The word for makeup artist in Italian means tricker or magician. You're taking a three-dimensional person and applying color, shadow and highlight to be read in a two-dimensional way. It's anything from making someone look camera-ready, which can be adding sweat to a model, to an over-the-top artistic collaboration between designer, model and photographer that can be impressionistic or surreal.

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