

# Kim Novak May Replace Rita Hayworth

By JAMES BACON

HOLLYWOOD (U) — Columbia Studios, weary of too much wrangling and too few pictures from Rita Hayworth, is quietly grooming a voluptuous Bohemian from Chicago for the Hayworth spot on the lot.

None of the Columbia brass will admit publicly that curvy Kim Novak, a former model, is getting such a build-up but the signs are unmistakable.

Kim, a green-eyed blonde with more curves than an Alpine pass, doesn't look the least bit like red-haired Rita. That's as it should be because look-alikes never get very far in Hollywood. Her figure is superior to Rita's and, of course, she's only 21, some 14 years younger than Miss Hayworth.

The resemblance comes in that most marketable of Hollywood assets — basic, earthy sexiness. Both have it but Kim will have it much longer.

One Columbia topper, who pleads anonymity, believes Miss Novak will eventually take over for Rita. He explains why:

"Kim could not have come along at a better time. We know Rita Hayworth sells tickets and we know why, but first she has to be in a picture. She's made only three pictures since 1949 when she married Aly Khan. And we haven't seen her since she married Dick Haymes last fall."

**May Go Abroad**  
It's entirely possible that Hollywood may not see her again. If the government can enforce its deportation order against Haymes, Rita may settle abroad with her husband.

"Columbia believes," continues the studio executive, "that one Kim Novak in a picture is worth a dozen Rita Hayworths in Argentina."

The public will first see Kim as a star, an unusual beginning for a young girl in this business. She plays a sexy moll in a detective drama filmed originally under the title "The Killer Wore a Badge," starring Fred MacMurray.

At the sneak preview, the Novak sex appeal registered so much that the title of the picture was changed to "Pushover" with the accent on Kim instead of Guns.

**Publicity Appearances**  
But the studio knew her potential long before she ever got on film. Even before it was announced she was signed to a contract, she started eyes and flash bulbs popping in two publicity appearances in competition with established stars.

She was known then as Marilyn Novak, her right name, but the studio asked her to drop the Marilyn to avoid comparison with Marilyn the Monroe.

"I'm so happy they let me keep Novak," she says. "It sounds so earthy. I think the public is fed up with trumped up, theatrical Anglo-Saxon names."

Kim was discovered for the movies while riding a bicycle in Beverly Hills.

She had come out here on a modeling job with a line of refrigerators. Her job was to dress in a scanty costume and answer prospective buyers' questions. Selling Point

"I spent most of my time bending over and pulling out vegetable trays. My boss said that was the greatest selling point the refrigerator had."

After the job ended, she stayed on for a vacation and that's how she happened to be riding a bicycle in Beverly Hills. Agent Louis Shurr, noted for his good eye in picking blonde lovelies, spotted her. She was wearing shorts at the time. He took her to Columbia for a screen test.

The test consisted of a monologue from "The Devil Passes" in which Kim, tells what she wants out of life. It's significant too that the Columbia bosses decreed that she make the test in the tight-fitting long black silk dress that Miss Hayworth wore in "Affair in Trinidad."

Unmarried, she lives with her pet dachshund and a Siamese cat she claims can unlock doors. Kim is 5 feet 6 and weighs 125 pounds, well distributed over one of the better figures in town.

"She's got everything Rita has," says one Columbia source, "and what's more important, she's got it here."

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