

Photography by Yoshi Ohara  
Styled by Amy Mach

Alexander Wang leather  
top \$1450, Saks Fifth  
Avenue, www.saks.com  
310.974.2111  
Lionel Strongberg silver  
onyx and black necklace  
Lionel Strongberg  
11.923.913.1444  
Tanya & Co. Hair from  
NYC, www.tanyaandco.com  
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Fifth Avenue

# MIGHTY MAYTE

Mayte Garcia's had a pretty high-profile romantic past including a marriage to rockstar Prince and an engagement to Tommy Lee. Here, the Puerto Rican beauty shares with our STEPHEN CHRISTOPHER about her new reality tv show, her pet rescue, and why you'll want to own her new dvd on belly dancing.



Reem Aca couture  
top, select Reem  
Aca boutiques  
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ring, \$875, Judith  
Ripka, Rodeo Dr,  
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310-275-3013  
Ivanka Trump  
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onyx and diamond  
earrings, \$8500,  
select California  
Frasco Jewelers,  
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Nordstrom locations



**M**ayte Garcia (pronounced 'my-tay') opens our interview with some frightening reasons we shouldn't talk about her very famous ex-husband—most of which involve the word *lawsuit*. Also sprinkled in there was something about a confidentiality agreement and how he protects his private life. Okay, fair enough.

Mayte stars on a new VH-1 reality show about five ex-wives of famous guys. Blatantly titled *Hollywood Exes*, it revolves around these women and their desires to strike out on their own. It's a quirky band of five, who, with just a side eye glance, know how to stir up good reality TV.

This Puerto Rican beauty's ex is the rock star Prince, though, at the time of their two-year marriage, he'd legally changed his name to that swirly yet unpronounceable symbol. They met when she was only sixteen, and six years later, in 1996, they wed on Valentine's Day. To this day, he remains the love of her life. "He was my first; he was my everything. The marriage was the happiest time of my life."

The two led an over-the-top existence. Within five minutes of publicly having a ring on her finger, a reporter caught a glimpse of it, and in less than an hour, the paparazzi were swarming their London hotel. From there, it was on. The Concorde flights to Paris, the couture fashion shows like Chanel and Galliano, the world concert tours, being photographed for *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar* by super shooters like Herb Ritts and Patrick Demarchelier. The night clubs in Miami and Los Angeles. Gianni Versace, just one year before his passing, had agreed to design her wedding dress and fly her to Paris for the fitting, but, as Mayte says, "It was 'someone' else's decision not to."

With highs come lows. "Getting divorced was one of my saddest times because I felt like a failure and I remember how people's energy changed toward me. Suddenly I felt like they treated me differently. I felt embarrassed and I caved in. I became a hermit for about a year."

Mayte refutes an internet article stating that the marriage was annulled. "No! We did not annul the marriage," she says emphatically. "You can't annul after four years of marriage *and* a child. You can't."

The child was named Boy Gregory; tragically, he lived only


one week. "I can't believe I survived that. It was hard and took a long time to get through it. There's nothing you can say to someone who's lost a child. No words can help. My family and my dogs helped me through it. Up to a year ago, I'd still get very emotional about it." She adds, "Some couples get closer after such a traumatic experience, others are torn apart."

About a year after her divorce she was swept up in a serious two-year whirlwind romance with a post-Pam Anderson tornado named Tommy Lee. Now, just the mention of his name and she bursts out laughing. "Tommy was Tommy. He was a kid. The romance happened within two days. We started dating after one month, I moved in two months later, and we got engaged after just six months. As crazy as it was, he was exactly what I needed at the time."

With no beau currently in her life, Mayte hopes to find love and have two children. Until then, her attention is on animals and on the nonprofit shelter rescue she started, MaytesRescue.com. She recently rescued one that was pregnant and helped deliver all ten adorable Chug (Chihuahua/Pug) puppies, one of which, incidentally, found a home because of this interview.

When Mayte was only eight, she appeared on *That's Incredible* as the world's youngest professional belly dancer. She's considered by many to be one of the best there is. "I also feel like it's gotten me to where I am, because of the confidence and empowerment it's given me. Even the most beautiful woman in the world could be in the room and I feel I blow her away when I'm dancing. Not in a physical sense, but there's something sensual—a strength and confidence that comes out where everyone else melts away. I've always felt that. It's not even about what I'm wearing. I can be in a raggedy old skirt and everybody will be like, 'Wow, that's strong. That's powerful!'"

Mayte wants other women to feel this empowerment and has made a belly dancing how-to DVD. "It's in us naturally as women. It's the simple act of breathing—your chest expanding and contracting. It's about isolation, which leads to undulation, which leads to figure eights—all the things that we do as women. You see yourself doing movements you never thought you could do."

Mayte's secret to being sexy? "First, do stuff for yourself. Go work out. Go for a walk. Cook. Plant. Walk your dog. Do things that you want to do. Then take a belly-dance class or buy my DVD at bellydance.com." 



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\$5985, *Mamey*,  
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pant, \$1985,  
*Neiman Marcus*,  
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\$3650, select  
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*Marcus*, and *Nord-*  
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*Jimmy Choo*  
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*jimmychoo.com*  
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Photographer: *Yoshi Ohara* / *YoshiOhara.com*  
Stylist: *Amy Mach* / *AmyMach.com*  
Makeup: *Patrick Tumoy* / *CelestineAgency.com*  
Hair: *Kristin Heitkotter* / *CelestineAgency.com*  
Stylist Assistant: *Alden Styles*  
Art Director: *Stephen Kamifuji*  
Location: *The Crescent Hotel*, Beverly Hills,  
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