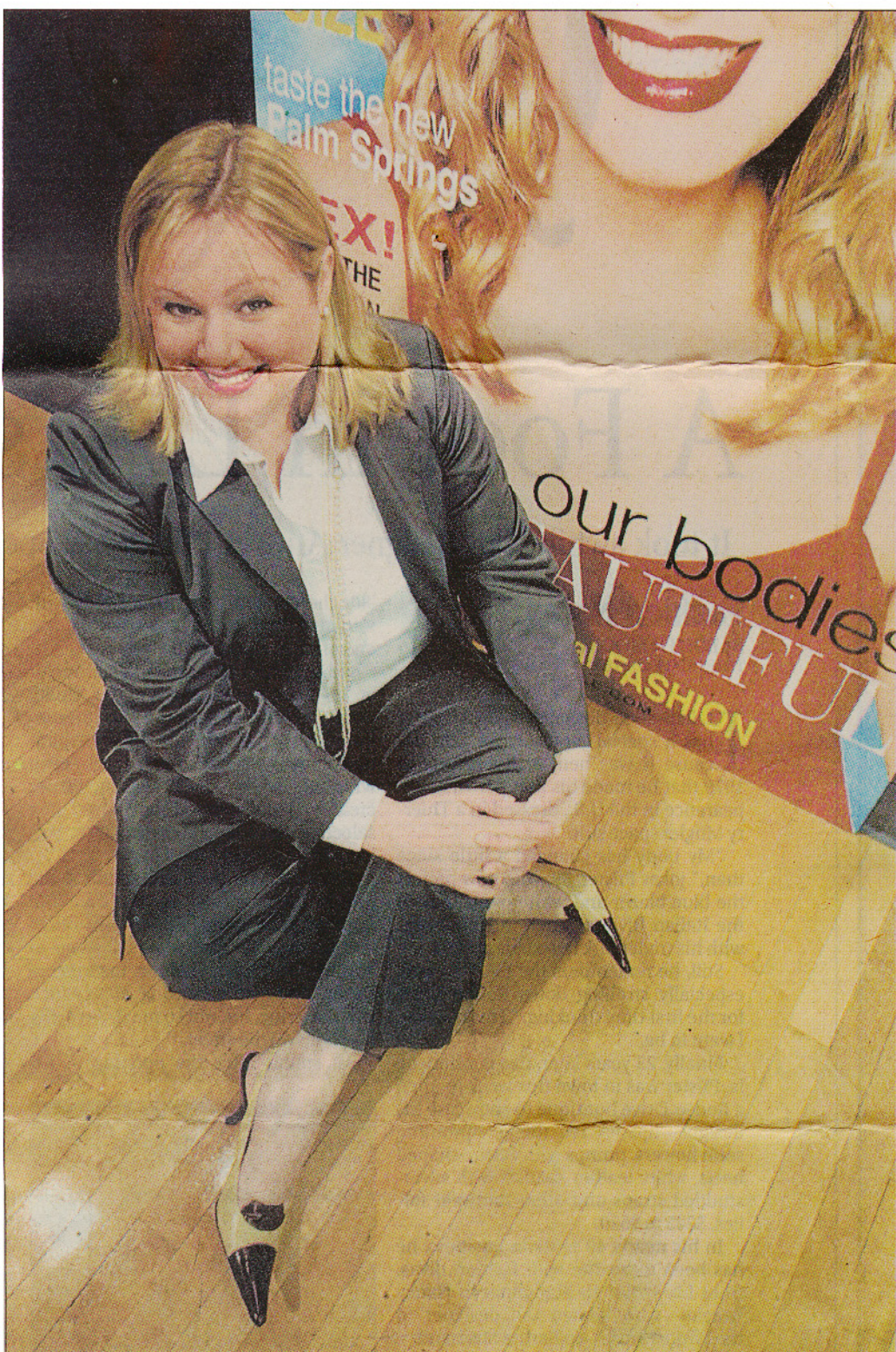


# Los Angeles Times

FRIDAY, JUNE 7, 2002

## Southern California LIVING

# EYES ON THE SIZE



TINA FINEBERG / Special to The Times

Can another plus-size women's magazine succeed? Newcomer Grace thinks so.

By MAGGIE FARLEY  
TIMES STAFF WRITER

**N**EW YORK—Ceslie Armstrong, the editor of newly launched Grace magazine, says it's time for full-figured women to get the attention they deserve. "It's a huge, huge, market," she said.

Pun intended.

"Nearly 70% of American women wear a size 12 or above, but we're treated like we're invisible," Armstrong said in the magazine's 5th Avenue offices. Armstrong, an elegant and unabashed size 16 herself, wants to reinvent the way the fashion industry perceives the country's plus-size market—the retail segment that is growing the fastest but whose customers have the fewest choices.

In the same way Martha Stewart exalted domesticity, Armstrong hopes to help American women crave curves—or at least accept them. Her previous attempt, Mode magazine, folded last September. At a time when advertisers are holding budgets down, trying once again to expand a nation's notion of beauty may be heavy lifting. Or it could be a super-sized business opportunity.

Most magazines aimed at plus-size women have had a difficult time staying in business; Extra Hip and Radiance are no longer publishing. But the first such title, California-based BBW (Big Beautiful Woman), founded in the late '70s, still publishes every other month following a brief shutdown in 1999.

Last month, Grace magazine, for women "who live life to the fullest," claimed space on newsstands between "get thin for summer" issues of Glamour and Vogue. The cover features a "real" woman, a cardiac surgery nurse who moonlights as size 12 model.

Designed for women who are often stigmatized for their size, the contents are forthright. The debut issue includes a spread on bathing suits that actually fit, an article on sex with the lights on, an arty sepia-toned nude portrait,

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CESLIE ARMSTRONG  
Editor, Grace magazine

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