

# Melanie

## Kannokada

### Television Host, Model, Actress

It's her soft grace that captivates you right away. Melanie Kannokada is a rising actress and model who stormed the international entertainment and fashion world in 2007 after she won the Miss India America competition. She has modeled for some of the best Indian designers such as Manish Malhotra and Ritu Kumar and has done major advertising campaigns with conglomerates such as Verizon, Nike and Tata's TrueRoots. You've probably also seen her on television whether as the host of the American show, *Pulse: The Desi Beat* or as one of the "Bollywood Girls" in rapper Sean Kingston's music video toasting South Asian beauties. Kannokada has also made guest appearances on the uber guilty pleasure, *Gossip Girl* and *The Daily Show*. Kannokada recently finished shooting the lead role in her first feature film *Bicycle Bride*, a romantic comedy to be released in early this year. But looks can be deceptive.

Behind her pretty face is a tough exterior—Kannokada holds a 2nd degree black belt. She also can crack you up. Kannokada describes herself as a "goofball," finding her partner in crime in Rajiv Satyal, "The Funny Indian" soon after winning her beauty pageant title. Now they perform nationally together. She also participates in improvisational comedy with the infamous Upright Citizens Brigade Theater in NYC. Kannokada dedicates her free time to a not-for-profit organization called "Hospital for Hope," whose focus is the construction of hospitals in rural India. And if that isn't impressive enough, she also won bronze medals in the Junior Pan Am Games in Shotokan Karate in 1999 and 2001! Oh and did we mention that she has a mechanical engineering degree from Stanford University? The perfect woman? Pretty much.

DesiHits! was filming a remake of Sean Kingston's smash hit, 'Beautiful Girls' to 'Bollywood Girls' and Melanie was our ultimate Bollywood Girl. I thought 'WOW what a stunner,' but she has no divaness about her! The most wonderful thing about Melanie is that her exquisite beauty is wrapped in a layer of absolute humbleness.

- Anjula Acharia-Bath Chairman,  
president and founder of Desi Hits!

## Q&A:

**Zodiac sign:** Pisces.

**Relationship status:** In a relationship.

**Best way to unwind:** A long, hot shower.

**Fave Bollywood movie:** *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai*.

**Favourite Hollywood movie:** *Life is Beautiful*.

**Favourite book:** Colouring books.

**Guilty pleasure:** Molten chocolate cake.

**If you could choose a superpower, what would it be and why?** To have the ability to be in two places at once, because life is short and there are so many amazing experiences to be had.

**What is on your iPod?** You mean what's on my iPhone? Right now, my Fryderyk Chopin station on Pandora.

**Something quirky about yourself no one would know:** Two things: 1) I love doing jig saw puzzles and 2) I often trip when I walk up the stairs.

**Best personal feature and why:** Optimism—great things can happen as long as you believe they can.

**Best feature on the opposite sex:** Smile.

**Celebrity crush:** Chase Crawford.

**If you had to choose, would it be Romance or Hot Sex?** I'm a hopeless romantic...but of course, romance leads to...

**Three things you can't live without:** Music, laughter, love.

**Most memorable professional moment:** Having a live audience of 2000 people roar with laughter during the first comedy act I co-wrote and performed. I was totally surprised by the response.

**Most valuable life lesson:** Live by your own values and principles despite the pressure others will inevitably force upon you.

**Motto you live by:** Achievement is not based on awards or titles, but how much better the world is after you've left it.

