



SKY'S THE LIMIT FOR *Sofia Dickens*

The Swedish-born TV-personality Sofia Dickens offers her views on summer, Swedish culture, looks and staying in shape.

She's reported on the presidential election, graced the sideline of the Superbowl, and covered the late Pope John Paul II's funeral in the Vatican City. Now Sofia Dickens – formerly Lidskog – is looking for her next challenge.

PHOTOGRAPH BY HENRIK OLUND

Dickens became a familiar face as host of "Channel One News," a national entertainment and news show with eight million viewers that airs daily in middle- and high schools across the country, and as a Jeopardy! video correspondent.

She recently hired new representation and is currently meeting with networks all over Los Angeles to find the right opportunity.

"I'm ready to go and there are a couple of things that I might know more about even by next week," Dickens says. Her agent is moving quickly and the days ahead are fully booked with meetings. She looks cool and relaxed, and her eyes sparkle with excitement as she ponders the possibilities.

Her confidence in finding the right future endeavor may come from the fact that she's following in the footsteps of household names such as Anderson Cooper of CNN, Lisa Ling of National Geographic, and Maria Meneunos of the NBC "Today Show," all of whom had her job at Channel One before her.

TRULY SWEDISH-AMERICAN

Born in Sweden, Dickens came to the United States before her first birthday, and the Lidskog family settled in Concord, Mass. She spent her summer between high school and college in Sweden playing lacrosse with their national team in the European Championship, but never lived there otherwise. "My family became so Americanized that we never went back," she explains.

Still, she handles the Swedish language with ease, and keenly feels the difference between Swedish and American culture.

"The Swedish culture is so wonderful that it's something I carry with me," she muses.

One thing she loves is Swedish summer.

"Swedes really go out of their way to enjoy the summer, since there is not a lot of it. People take the time to relax," she says. Families out on their boats, the Swedish flag flapping

in the breeze and little summer cottages represent the Swedish image to her. She misses having a good midsummer party to look forward to where she lives in Newport Beach, Calif. She did go to one such party there, but it wasn't quite the same.

Another important difference in the two cultures, Dickens says, is that Swedes enjoy simple pleasures, while Americans often go for what's more luxurious and excessive. She respects that aspect of Swedish culture – that simple things like lingonberry juice and cinnamon rolls can make you happy. Even when it comes to possessions, Swedes are more minimalist and everything is a little less complicated; there is less to choose from over all, and that's a good thing, she thinks.

Her husband Reed, whom she married last October, knows that Swedish food has to be part of their life, and several trips to IKEA a month to pick up meatballs and other must-haves is proof of that. At their wedding, which took place in Reed's native Louisiana, guests were treated to a traditional Swedish "princess cake," made from scratch – including the marzipan – by a local woman who followed a recipe from the restaurant Aquavit in New York. It was a huge success with the international crowd, as well as being Dickens's personal favorite.

STAYING IN SHAPE

Spending so much time in front of the camera requires looking good, and when asked about any special beauty secrets Dickens answers casually, "I think that you look the most beautiful when you're comfortable with what God gave you."

She thinks for a moment and continues: "I work in a really competitive industry, and if you're constantly wanting what other people have, you'll never be happy."

She stays in shape by going to a gym close to her home, where she does a regimen of yoga,

weights and cardio (she loves tae-bo). She also enjoys playing tennis and golf with her husband. She says she doesn't have any favorite skin products, but stays out of the sun as much as possible, always wearing a factor 45 sun block, much to her friends' amusement.

On the road Dickens always brings along a bag of blue corn chips and carrot sticks to snack on. She's careful about what she eats and avoids sugar and carbohydrates as much as possible. "There isn't much I don't eat, I just try to keep the quantity down," she explains. She enjoys exotic foods in moderation and doesn't follow any particular diet.

Dickens loves to read, especially about politics, and recently finished "Founding Brothers: The Revolutionary Generation," by Joseph J. Ellis. Reading it, she realized that the struggle to agree among the founders of the country centuries ago continues even in today's politics, where opposing sides still have differing visions on how things should be run. She finds it exciting to get to tackle issues from a cultural, religious and political side, all of which interest her deeply.

Thanks to her experience working on Jeopardy! and Channel One News, Dickens is able to choose carefully in looking for a new show. She already has turned down a number of offers that didn't feel right or didn't interest her. She would like a job where she has some creative input, but it's also important to her that she feel passionate about what's already going on there. "TV is an exciting industry because there is a constant flow of new programming, so I'm excited about all the possibilities," she says with a broad smile.

"For now I'd like to stay in California," she says, although she's also willing to travel the world for the right job. "I'd love to be a mom some day. I think Newport Beach would be a great place for the kids to live. But, then again, so is the South..."

ANNA CONNELL