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DYLAN LAUREN

THE CANDY MOGUL
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& HER SECRETS
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candy CORPORATION

Dylan Lauren—the mastermind behind
Dylan’s Candy Bar— proves that with a
little imagination, a strong business sense and
a lot of passion, life can be pretty sweet.

BY PATTY ADAMS MARTINEZ

Dylan Lauren at her
Upper East Side store



Walking into the Dylan's Candy Bar headquarters on the Upper East Side of Manhattan feels as if you're one of the lucky few who have found the Golden Ticket and won a chance to visit Willy Wonka's chocolate factory. You're greeted by the company logo and a huge bowl of pastel treats. The lobby's stools look like giant red-and-white swirled peppermints, and the carpet has gumdrop-colored stripes in nearly every hue. But instead of a disheveled Gene Wilder in a top hat and bow tie waiting for you at the end of the chocolate river, there's founder Dylan Lauren, sitting pretty in a bubblegum-pink throne—really. Her energy is palpable, whether she's talking about Dylan's Candy Bar's first downtown location, which will open in a few weeks (housed in the old Andy Warhol Factory building, it will feature an ice cream counter for customers who want a cold sweet treat) or sharing her joy over her biggest project yet, daughter Kingsley Rainbow and son Cooper Blue, born via surrogate in April. "I'm so excited to have such a sweet combination, a boy and a girl, that I can celebrate in blue and pink!" says Lauren. This zest for life isn't something new, according to her father, Ralph, who shared with *Forbes*, "She's always buzzing, always excited about everything."

Wearing a fitted gold sweater, black tights and warm winter boots, the CEO is slimmer than one would imagine a confectionery entrepreneur to be. Lauren later tells me she believes in "everything

in moderation" and balances out her daily sugar fix (mostly gummies) with five days of aerobic workouts and three to four weight training sessions per week. "I actually brought workout equipment into the office, so other people would use it," says the 40 year old, whose first name was inspired by her parents' love of Bob Dylan and Dylan Thomas. "I made a joke that we don't want to be Oompa Loompas. We can eat candy, but we've got to work out." She has walking meetings and wrote her book, *Dylan's Candy Bar: Unwrap Your Sweet Life*, on her Blackberry, while doing Step-Mill training. "The craziness of the workday disappears when I exercise, and that's when I come up with my best ideas."

The daughter of fashion designer (and Bedford, NY, resident) Ralph Lauren and his author-artist wife, Ricky, may not have always known what she wanted to be when she grew up, but she knew she would make a name for herself. So when she was 16 and her dad wanted to name a fragrance after her, the headstrong teen flat-out said no. "I was confident I would own my own business one day, and I wanted my name to be part of my brand," says Lauren, who studied art history at Duke University. She opened her flagship outlet in NYC in 2001—the largest candy palace in the world, which sells more than 7,000 types of confections including nut-free, sugar-free and gluten-free treats, and candy-inspired apparel, jewelry, spa treatments and even



Lauren has collaborated with Havaianas, the Brazilian flip-flop brand, for a colorful collection.

cocktails (including the vodka-based Pop Rocks explosion and a Strawberry Nerds mojito). "I learned from my dad the importance of creating a lifestyle brand," she says. "Candy isn't only for kids, but also for the kid inside all of us."

Mission accomplished: Her edible empire is growing as big as the lollipop trees in her shops, with full-size locations in Los Angeles, Miami and East Hampton, NY, with new spots opening up this spring in Chicago along with Manhattan. Fun-size stores are popping up in airports across America, and Dylan's Candy Bar is collaborating with everyone from Maclaren strollers to Havaianas flip-flops and Hello Kitty. Lauren—who draws inspiration from masterpieces by pop artists Jeff Koons and Claes Oldenburg—jokes that she even dreams in a vivid Technicolor Candy Land.

Her now-husband Paul Arrouet, the founder of Marblegate Asset Management, knew sweets were the key to her heart. In 2010, he spelled out "You are my It Girl" with Hershey's Kisses and jellybeans before he got down on one knee and asked her to marry him at sunset on a beach in Montauk, NY. "It was very creative," she says with a smile.

In 2011, the two wed at one of her favorite places in the world: her parents' 300-acre Westchester County estate in what she calls an "Alice in Wonderland-meets Marie Antoinette"-themed affair. "Every woman wants to feel like a princess on her wedding day, and my family's house in Bedford feels like a magic castle," she explains. In a planning move that surprised no one, candy was incorporated into almost every aspect of her big day—from chocolate place cards to 30-foot-long candy buffets, and a swimming pool that changed into a multitude of sugary shades.

The success of her candy company has also enabled Lauren to put her money into another cause dear to her heart: helping animals. The longtime ASPCA supporter recently created an animal charity called Dylan's Candy BarN. "Just growing up with animals made me fall in love with them," says Lauren, who had

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Pink cotton candy drink



Rock candy cocktail

Dylan's Dinner Party Tips

1. Lists!! Write everything down, so you don't forget a single detail.
2. Clean and prepare the night before so you aren't rushing. This way you can enjoy your party the day of.
3. Invite a mix of people that you know would get along and share a common interest, so there are no awkward silences.
4. For a casual dinner party, I like to use disposable/recyclable pretty paper and plastic goods. It prevents having to wash the dishes.
5. Always have healthy options with dressing available on the side. Crudité is an easy one to buy preprepared in the supermarket.
6. Have a fun buffet menu that's interactive. For example, a salad bar, make-your-own taco bar and sundae bar.
7. To add a more personal element, serve your own customized/signature cocktail that you can premix the night before. Some of my favorites I've pulled from my own bar include a Pop Rocks explosion martini, a cotton candy mimosa and a Sour Patch margarita.
8. Host a game post-dinner. Write questions on cards that people can pick out of a bowl asking their favorite movie, favorite candy, favorite book, etc. It's an easy icebreaker for guests who may not know each other.
9. Always provide a candy buffet with a vast assortment of colorful different candies like chocolates, gummies and hard candies for people to enjoy during and after the party.
10. Don't forget to have Tupperware ready for leftovers!

two pet bunnies named Chocolate and Vanilla as a child, and now has a rescue dog named Jersey. Soon her stores will also carry dog treats—just another way that the business-savvy sweets executive is making her personal passions into a way to expand her empire.

Still on her bucket list? A candy-themed amusement park. "Walt Disney is my idol," she says. "Who wouldn't want to live in a world surrounded by lollipop trees and a garden with gummy bears and gum-balls? I think everyone should live every day like a kid in a candy store." ☺