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Samantha wears a layered silk chiffon  
midi skirt by **LILY & MOSS**

# A LEAGUE OF HER OWN

IF SAMANTHA STUMPO TAKES OVER HER MOTHER'S BUSINESS, IT WILL BE THE *ONLY* SECOND-GENERATION FEMALE-OWNED CONTRACTING BUSINESS IN THE WORLD. HOW ABOUT THAT!

*Interview by* HAYLEY MAYBURY & NICOLE BECHARD  
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*A special thanks to* LILY & MIGS *for wardrobe*  
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## SAMANTHA STUMPO'S MOTHER CINDY IS NO ORDINARY MOM.

*On top of being a single mother of two, Cindy manages C. Stumpo Development, her multi-million dollar construction and development company, and is the star of the hit HGTV show Tough as Nails. And—if all goes according to plan—Samantha will be taking over her mother's empire someday. Talk about an amazing (yet overwhelming!) opportunity. We sat down with Sam to get the inside scoop on how she feels about it all, and on what it's like being "a woman in a man's world."*

**Sam, your mom has really worked to make her business a family venture, and ultimately plans on passing it down to you. How do you feel about such an opportunity?**

I am very excited and up for the challenge of running the business, when it comes my way. I have huge shoes to fill, as my mother is an amazing woman. My dream is to follow in her footsteps and keep this company growing. I think it's awesome that she is a woman in a man's world, and I hope to be just as empowering, inspiring and motivating as she is to other women.

**Was it hard for you to accept this responsibility, or did you always know this would be your vocation?**

For many years I did not know what I wanted to do with my life. That's why I went to college, to try and figure out what I wanted to do, and even then I changed my mind several times. After working for my mom part time—and then switching to full time—I saw a complete change in the way her world worked and what she did on the job every day. To see her work with men all day long and see their respect for her work ethic was incredible. It was like watching the conductor of an orchestra, and the crew was its different instruments, all functioning in unison to build amazingly well crafted, high-end homes.

About six months into my first year of full-time work, I knew [that this was what I] wanted. I still have a lot of work cut out for me, but I am definitely ready for the challenge. I want everyone to know that just because this is my mother's company, does not mean I am going to get the business handed to me like it's a piece of cake. I am going to have to prove myself to her and all of her subcontractors. When the day does come for my mom to hand the company over to me,

I want her to feel like [her legacy] is in great hands, and [to know] that I will not fail her or any of the future clients of C. Stumpo Development.

**How does it feel to be a woman in a male-dominated field? Especially a young woman who has grown into the business rather than chose it?**

I have to say it's not easy being a woman in this business, especially as young as I am. I have a lot to learn. I have to build relationships with all the guys out there [based on mutual] respect, so that we can trust each other. A lot of the guys have seen me grow from a baby to the young woman I am today; for some of them it's hard to listen to me because they still look at me as if I'm a little girl. But then there are others that are willing to help and teach me. I take what I can get, and work harder every day with the guys that need to get to know me as an adult, and eventually, I will gain their respect.

**Specifically speaking, what are some of the stereotypes you have to work against on a daily basis?**

First of all, being a woman [in construction] is a hard enough stereotype, but then I also get the age factor. I get told I am a baby, and young, and I feel like a lot of the guys think they have to treat me like I'm a fragile little girl. I get comments like, "I'm sure you don't want to get dirty today." Just little comments here and there. [But] after hearing the same old [things] I just start to ignore them and move forward.

**Do you feel that having this show has changed any of these stereotypes about women?**

I hope that the show [has] changed people's opinions, or stereotypes, but I do not know for sure. What I do know is that

we show women all over America that they can do anything a man can do, and that they should not let anyone or anything get in their way.

**What has been the response from your viewers like?**

The response from our viewers has been overwhelmingly positive. There are a ton of women (and men!) who have contacted my mother or myself to say how much they are inspired by us and that we make them want to change their life. Some women out there are interested in the [construction and development] industry—our fan base tells us that they know how we feel and that they see that they can succeed through us. That's why we did the show. Our hope was to show women of all ages they can do anything they want, even [in] a male-dominated [industry]. Men and women should be equal no matter the profession.

**Despite having to dress very functionally due to the nature of your job, you and your mom both always look fabulous on camera! Do you enjoy dressing up and adding some feminine details day to day, or is your look intended just for the camera?**

It's not easy adding feminine attire on a job site, but sometimes you just feel like you have to. Every now and then [my mom and I] do our hair, or put on a little makeup. We wear Uggs or sneakers instead of boots, cute jeans, a stylish scarf, a hat and gloves in the winter...something that changes it up. [Then], there [are] days when we're filming when I don't want to wear anything but sweat pants, because of being tired and wanting a break. I think all of us that were part of [the] show can agree on that. Reality television was like having another job—every day we went out to our real job, and also had to perform another job by being filmed.

**You are fortunate to have such a strong mother figure in your life. What do you feel are the most valuable lessons she has taught you through her work?**

Growing up with such an amazingly strong mother was the best thing any child could ask for. Since I can remember, my mother has always taught me to voice my opinion and to not hold back on how I feel. To stand up for myself (even though I might not have always done so). Now that I am working with her, I see even a stronger side that I didn't see growing up. I see how strong-willed her business sense [is]. She is never afraid and she always has her head on her shoulders. She is never at a loss of words. My mother knows her business inside and out.

I want to say the biggest thing for me, watching [my mother], is that she is never, ever afraid. She will walk up to anyone and speak her mind. She has taught me that you need to be strong and [can't] let the guys intimidate you. She says you have to remember that everyone started somewhere. When I look back at my childhood, I [ask] myself, "How was she able to do it all? How was she able to raise a family and go to work every day, and come home to us and help us with our homework, or talk to us and never complain?" [My mom] was just always so happy to see us. She found time for us no matter how busy she was. I hope that when I have a family someday I am able to do the same. I am truly inspired by her in more ways than she will ever know.

**“WHAT I WANT EVERYONE TO KNOW IS THAT, JUST BECAUSE THIS IS MY MOTHER'S COMPANY DOES NOT MEAN I AM GOING TO GET THE BUSINESS JUST HANDED TO ME LIKE IT'S A PIECE OF CAKE. I AM GOING TO HAVE TO PROVE MYSELF TO HER AND ALL OF HER SUBCONTRACTORS THAT I AM GOING TO BE THE NEXT GENERATION OF STUMPO WOMEN TO RUN THIS COMPANY AND THAT I WILL HAVE DESERVED THE RESPECT BY ALL WHEN THE TIME COMES.”**



*For more information on Cindy and Samantha Stumpo, please contact Thomas Fleming at Look Los Angeles (PR Firm) 608.282.9840 or email tom@look-la.com*