

It's

WHAT WE'RE EXCITED ABOUT THIS MONTH

# IN THE AIR

**ms. chatelaine**

A WOMAN OF  
STYLE AND  
SUBSTANCE

## Roxanne Joyal

brings social enterprise and plenty of style together in Me to We, an offshoot of Free The Children

**IT'S HARD NOT** to feel like a bit of a slacker next to Roxanne Joyal. Aside from having co-founded a charity and created a social enterprise, the Manitoba native is a Stanford University grad and a Rhodes Scholar who clerked at the Supreme Court of Canada after completing a law degree at Oxford. The woman has even met Oprah, for Pete's sake.

"I've been very lucky, but also very eager to take opportunities presented to me," says Roxanne, a slight French lilt still noticeable in her voice. (She grew up in a francophone home and didn't speak English until she was eight.)

One such opportunity was her time as a page on Parliament Hill, which arguably shaped the rest >



### ROXANNE JOYAL

**Age:** 33  
**Occupation:** Co-CEO of Me to We  
**Hometown:** Toronto  
**Birthplace:** Ste. Agathe, Man.

by Maureen Halushak

photography by Roberto Caruso

## roxanne's favourite things



### ME TO WE'S SILVER LAMU TEARDROP EARRINGS

"They take me from daytime to cocktail party." (Turn to page 52 for another stunning Me To We creation.)



### CAVE SPRING RIESLING

"I really love a glass of white wine with a good meal, especially after a long day."



### M.A.C VIVA GLAM V LIPGLASS

"It's a great neutral with a little bit of glamour."



### THE CANADIAN TENORS' EPONYMOUS ALBUM

"These guys visited our Bogani Cottages in Kenya, and all of the girls on the trip developed a bit of a crush on them."



**1** *Canada Day! Kate and Will join celebrations on Parliament Hill, Ottawa*

2

**3** *Toronto's annual Pride Parade*

4

**5** *Montreal's Just for Laughs comedy festival begins*

6

7



**Photos of Roxanne's adventures in Kenya (front) and India (behind).**

► ***ms. chatelaine continued***

of her life. That's where she met an outgoing fellow page named Marc Kielburger, whom she soon started dating (and eventually married). The couple took a year off from university to volunteer overseas and spent time in Kenya, where Roxanne helped source locally made gifts for an eco-lodge. She was struck by the plight of the female artisans she met there.

"They often didn't have a voice in society; they put in the work but got very little credit," she says. "I realized that I wanted to help women in developing countries and provide them with opportunities to support their families."

The chance to do just that would come from the most unlikely place: Marc's younger brother, 12-year-old Craig, who had founded the international development agency Free The Children while they were overseas and was running it out of his parents' home in Thornhill. The widespread success of this grass-roots venture would eventually land the brothers a spot on *Oprah*, after which Roxanne met Lady O.

"I was the first Free The Children employee," she says. "Over the years, I've done every job within the organization — thankfully, I'm no longer the accountant!"

These days, she's co-CEO of Me to We, the Free The Children offshoot she was instrumental in developing, and divides her time between Toronto and the Maasai Mara region of Kenya. She works ►



**8** *Calgary Stampede begins*

9

10

11

12

13

**14** *First day of Caribana festival, Toronto*

**15** *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part II opens*

> *ms. chatelaine continued*

closely with 400 women who craft jewellery and accessories for Me to We's new line, Artisans.

Each item in the line's first collection is inspired by African handiwork and colour palettes but informed by North American tastes; Roxanne and her team pull together trend forecasts and design every product. It's a win-win-win: The products are on trend, the net profits are split between Free The Children and Me to We and the artisans are paid a fair wage. For most, it's their first taste of financial independence. And forget splurging on a new purse or pair of shoes; one artisan, Mama Toti, used her first paycheque to buy a goat. "When she went to the market and bought it, she told us that she finally felt like a person," says Roxanne.

We wouldn't blame you if you wanted to buy a Me to We item solely so Mama Toti can expand her herd (she's now up to six goats). However, Roxanne is adamant that this not be the case. "I don't want you to buy our products because you feel guilty into it," she says. "I want you to buy them because you love them." Trust us, you will. ❖

*Roxanne's  
telling  
DETAILS*

**I never leave home without...**  
my BlackBerry charger. When I first visited Kenya, I had to travel for 45 minutes to make a phone call. Now there are four networks.

**My go-to comfort food is...**  
spaghetti bolognese, hands down.

**My favourite thing about Kenya is...**the sense of possibility. Talk about people pulling themselves up by their bootstraps!

**My grocery cart always contains...** fair-trade bananas, because I know the person who cut them down is getting a better price.

**The last book I read was...**  
*Room* by Emma Donoghue.