

ONE

From The

HART

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SPECIAL THANKS TO ELAINE FORSGATE-MARDEN

Anyone who was a television fanatic between the years of 1979 and 1984, will unlikely have a certain show or its introduction erased from their memory. "This is my boss, Jonathan Hart - a self-made millionaire. He's quite a guy. This is Mrs. H. She's gorgeous. She's one lady who knows how to take care of herself. By the way, my name is Max. I take care of both of them, which ain't easy; 'cause when they met... it was murder!" For five successful seasons, viewers eagerly awaited the next episode of 'Hart To Hart', the fictional story of the lives of Jonathan and Jennifer Hart, a wealthy couple who in their spare time were amateur detectives. The Peninsula meets one of the iconic co-stars of the series, Stefanie Powers, on a recent trip to Hong Kong.



Of COURSE WE STAYED AT THE PENINSULA, AND BILL ALWAYS SAID THE LOBBY FELT LIKE A SCENE FROM A BLACK-AND-WHITE THRILLER MOVIE AND THAT SPIES COULD BE HIDING BEHIND THE PLANT POTS.

It is almost 30 years since the much-loved television show, 'Hart To Hart' created by writer Sidney Sheldon and produced by the legendary Aaron Spelling and Leonard Goldberg, disappeared from our screens, much to the chagrin of millions of viewers who followed the lives of Jonathan and Jennifer Hart for five seasons on the ABC Network and through syndication to other channels across the world. Mrs Hart, played by actress Stefanie Powers who earned five Emmy nominations for her part, was known throughout the series for her hair, a tumbling mane of reddish brunette locks, that she claimed she always took care of herself.

Time may have passed, but Stefanie Powers remains immaculately groomed and poised, with not a hair out of place, as she glides through The Lobby of The Peninsula Hong Kong for our meeting. I felt it might be rather crass to even discuss her most famous role, so instead choose to start the conversation with the topic of her long-standing love affair with Hong Kong.

In 1972, Powers began a nine-year relationship with actor William Holden and the following year, she accompanied him on a trip to Hong Kong, a place that he had been constantly fascinated with since filming 'Love Is A Many Splendored Thing' (1955) and 'The World of Suzie Wong' (1960). "We came to play in a pro-celebrity tennis tournament with M.W Lo (affectionately known to his friends simply as MW, and later in his life as the 'Grand Old Man of Hong Kong Tennis') who probably at the time owned the world's most expensive tennis court," recalls Powers with a radiant smile. "Of course we stayed at The Peninsula, and Bill always said The Lobby felt like a scene from a black-and-white thriller movie and that spies could be hiding behind the plant pots. Being at the hotel always created a sense of intrigue somehow, and for us, The Peninsula became synonymous with Hong Kong."

Following Holden's death in 1981, Powers began to spend more time in Hong Kong, immersing herself in the company of an intimate circle of friends that included film and television producer Elaine Forstgate-Marden. "I wanted to really experience all of the changes that were taking place in China and Hong Kong," says Powers. This desire was so great that she purchased a lot on Lantau Island, in Discovery Bay, before it became the development it is today, where she built a home. "There weren't really even any roads at that time," she recalls. "I called a *fung shui* master, and we named the "road" where my house was 'Sea Horse Lane', as I am a water sign and was

born in the year of the horse. I kept the house for 14 years and truly had the best of times."

These days, Powers splits her time between Los Angeles, New York, London and Kenya, where she continues to oversee the operations of her late husband's namesake wildlife foundation, which was founded to carry on Holden's dedicated efforts to preserve wildlife and to meet the ever-increasing demand for alternatives to extinction. The Foundation's education programme currently serves over 10,000 students every year.

As much a part of her life as her career, Powers' devotion to animal preservation and protection at times she says "becomes more of a vocation than an avocation." She was appointed conservation consultant to Jaguar Land Rover after creating the Jaguar Conservation Trust which she operated in Central America. She has also been on the advisory boards of four zoos in the United States and is a fellow of the Los Angeles Zoo, the Explorers' Club, and the Royal Geographic Society. She is active in the movement to preserve and protect the remaining herds of North American wild horses and has received numerous international awards for her grassroots work in conservation which she considers a life-long commitment.

In addition to her philanthropic commitments, Powers says she is "blessed with the ability to continue to work." Throughout her career she has never neglected her theatrical roots, appearing in many a stage production, including 'Love Letters' in London's West End and the United States, reuniting with Robert Wagner in the cast.

One of her most recent roles was that of Tallulah Bankhead in Matthew Lombardo's play 'Looped', after Valerie Harper, who earned a Tony nomination for originating the part on Broadway, was diagnosed with terminal brain cancer. The actress says that there are plans in the pipeline to bring the show to London in the near future.

In 2011, Powers released her memoir 'One from the Heart'. In it, she tells the story of her working relationship with Robert Wagner that endured more than 15 years and of her passionate nine-year personal relationship with Oscar-winning actor Holden. 'One from the Hart' is Stefanie Powers's story of a resourceful, empowered, and atypical celebrity life, told with all the candour, wit, and wisdom that have come to embody the lady herself.

