



My Drift

Title: Vanna

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Vanna White was born Vanna Marie Rosich on February 18, 1957, in North Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. Her parents divorced when she was an infant and she was raised by her mother, Joan, and stepfather, Herbert White Jr. in North Myrtle Beach. White took the name of her stepfather and after graduating from high school moved to Atlanta, Georgia, where she attended The Atlanta School of Fashion and Design and worked as a model.

White was a contestant in the Miss Georgia USA 1978 pageant. She didn't win.

She headed to Los Angeles in 1979 to pursue a modeling and acting career. During Vanna's modeling career, there are hundreds of pictures you can find on the Internet like the one below taken in 1980.



White's first appearance in a game show was on a June 20, 1980, episode of The Price Is Right, in which she was among the first four contestants. She did not make it on stage.

She has made cameo appearances on television shows such as L.A. Law, Super Mario Bros. Show, Simon and Simon, The King of Queens, Full House, and in films such as Naked Gun 33+1/3, The Final Insult, and Double Dragon.



Vanna auditioned with 200 other women to fill the spot left vacant by the previous Wheel of Fortune co-host, Susan Stafford. Merv Griffin, the show's creator, was the one to ultimately decide on White as the new co-host. Vanna joined Pat Sajak as co-host of Wheel of Fortune in November 1982, and they have been hosting the show ever since.

On Nov 8, 2019, Sony Pictures Television announced that White would temporarily take over hosting Wheel of Fortune as MC because Sajak was hospitalized with a blocked intestine and needed emergency surgery. Vanna hosted the show for about a month, and I thought she did a great job. Guest letter turners used during her shows included Mickey Mouse and Minnie Mouse during the Secret Santa Holiday Giveaway. The show went on hiatus during Christmas holidays and when it returned on Jan 6, 2020, Vanna was assisted by a "special guest", Pat Sajak's daughter Maggie. Fully recovered from his surgery, Sajak returned to the show on Jan 13, 2020. In 2021, it was announced that both Sajak and White have been signed on to continue as hosts of Wheel of Fortune through the 2023–24 season.





1982 – Vanna and Pat Sajak's first Wheel of Fortune show

Five years into White's career, though, America gasped when the game show sweetheart, wearing only a long-sleeved shirt that exposed her bare behind, appeared on the cover of Playboy magazine. Inside was a spread showing a seminude White in various suggestive poses.

Apparently, while Vanna was a struggling model before being hired for Wheel of Fortune, she posed for a lot of sexy pictures.

Well, Hugh Hefner was smart enough to buy the rights to her modeling pictures.

Needless to say, Vanna was not happy when she found out that her pictures were going to be on the cover and in Playboy magazine without her permission.

White filed a \$5.2 million lawsuit against the magazine, hoping to halt the publication of her image. She claimed the photos would tarnish her image as a modest, wholesome, attractive, and innocent all-American girl.



May 1987 Issue of Playboy

The issue was published anyway, and Vanna was upset but not fired from her Wheel of Fortune job. In fact, all this attention helped make her famous early in her career.

According to the "Wheel of Fortune" website, Vanna has worn over 7,000 different dresses during her time on the show.

Did you know that she never wears the same dress more than once?

Here are one of the first dresses (1982 – Vanna age 25) and one this year (2022 – Vanna age 65):



THEN

NOW

Here are a few more dresses Vanna has worn in the 40 years in between:





You may be wondering how Vanna can afford over 7,000 dresses and how in the world do they all fit in her closet? Well, you will learn the answers next.

Vanna owns none of the dresses she wears on Wheel of Fortune.

How long does it take to film a ‘Wheel of Fortune’ episode?

Fans of the show may be surprised to learn this, but host Pat Sajak and Vanna White actually only spend four days a month filming. Every other Thursday and Friday, they barrel through production on six shows a day.

Guess where Pat and Vanna’s favorite place to tape Wheel of Fortune is located? The picture below should give you a hint.



Vanna changes her outfit for every show.

Where do all these dresses come from?

Vanna has a fitting for new dresses every few weeks. Her dress size has not changed much over the 40 years on the show. Every couple of weeks, Wheel of Fortune is sent 50 to 60 loaner dresses from various designers. From there, she and costumer Kathi Nishimoto pick out their favorites—usually about 12 or so—which she'll go on to ultimately wear on the show.

What happens to Vanna White's dresses after she wears them?

The dresses are whisked off Vanna after each show, promptly documented and sent right back to the designers, who receive on-air credit. The heels, however, are all Vanna-owned, and she cites their familiarity as a major help when prancing across the stage. White keeps the majority of her shoes at the studio in a color-coordinated cabinet in her dressing room.

Vanna's dressing room is her home away from home.



Vanna takes PeopleTV and my Readers for a Tour of her Dressing Room



Poor Vanna – She has to live in this dump!



Vanna keeps her borrowed dresses and her own shoes and jewelry here

Currently, Pat Sajak earns \$14 million a year to host Wheel of Fortune. Vanna White's salary is \$10 million. Best of all, they only work 48 days a year. The current filming schedule of Wheel consists of four taping days per month.

Not a bad gig!

Pat Sajak is a former weatherman, current television personality, actor and Wheel of Fortune game show host who has a net worth of \$70 million.

This may surprise you, but Vanna is richer than Pat! As of this writing, Vanna's \$85 million net worth makes her roughly \$15 million richer than her co-host. The difference is thanks mostly to real estate investments made with her former husband real estate developer/restaurateur named George Santo Pietro. At one time, Vanna owned \$50 million worth of Beverly Hills real estate.



At the time of his death in 2020, Alex Trebek was worth \$75 million. Therefore, Vanna is the richest of the three.

Casino Licensing Earnings

Believe it or not, Vanna White's salary from "Wheel of Fortune" isn't her largest source of annual income. Vanna and Pat both make more money licensing their images to casino slot machines than they do from the game show itself.



Wheel of Fortune was the first entertainment property to be licensed for use on slot machines. In 1996 the first Wheel of Fortune branded slot machines were placed in casinos in Las Vegas. They quickly proved to be extremely successful and were licensed to casinos around the world. Within a decade, the Wheel of Fortune branded slot machines were reported to be the highest revenue generating slot machines in most casinos. There are an estimated 20,000 "Wheel" slot machines on casinos floors around the world. In Las Vegas alone, Wheel of Fortune slot machines generate over \$1 billion per year in gross revenue. Worldwide the machines generate over \$2 billion.

In exchange for licensing their respective images and likenesses for the slot machines, Pat and Vanna both earn more than \$15 million per year, mostly from a base royalty payment - both also from a variety of bonuses and appearance fees.

Some Personal Information

When Vanna White left North Myrtle Beach to pursue her dream of becoming a star, she only had \$1,000 to her name. She waited tables and modeled while in college in Atlanta and while looking for fame and fortune in her early days in Los Angeles.

In the 1980's Vanna dated "Playgirl" centerfold and Chippendales-dancer-turned-actor John Gibson. They got engaged at some point in the 80s, however, Gibson was killed in a plane crash in 1986, before they got married.

Vanna married restaurant owner George Santo Pietro in December 1990. Santo Pietro was born to a wealthy family in Beverly Hills. He launched his first restaurant in the early 1980s. He followed up with a successful sushi place called Sushi-Ko that became a hot spot for celebrities. They had two children together, son Nicholas, born in 1994 and a daughter Giovanna, nicknamed Gigi, in 1997. White and Santo Pietro divorced in November 2002.



Vanna's Beverly Hills Mansion

Vanna lived in the above mansion on Beverly Park Lane until 2002 when she and George Santo Pietro got divorced. She put the house on the market for \$47.5 million. The house sold in June 2020 for a much lower price of \$19.3 million.



Vanna's Home in Sherman Oaks



**Vanna's Current Boyfriend
John Donaldson**

Vanna's grandmother taught her how to crochet when she was five. She continues this hobby to this day. After talking about her love of crocheting on the "Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson," she was contacted by the yarn manufacturer Lion Brand Yarns. The company contracted with her to create her own line of yarns called Vanna's Choice.

White donates half the proceeds from her yarn sales to St. Jude's. In some years like 2018, White and Lion Brand Yarn reached an incredible \$2 million in donations. Yes, Vanna has donated millions and millions of dollars to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

Vanna White Measurements:

Body: 35-24-34 inches

Breast size: 35 inches

Waist size: 24 inches

Hip size: 34 inches

Height: 5 foot 6 inches

Weight: 125 pounds

Shoe size: Ladies 9



Not too bad for age 65!!

You now know a little bit more about that letter turner on Wheel of Fortune.

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