



# Wicked inside

Each month in the run up to the London Lifestyle Awards in October, we will be speaking to a star from one of the awards categories. Catherine McCabe talks to Kerry Ellis who takes a bow for the capital's theatre

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**M**usical theatre aficionado Kerry Ellis has the essence of the West End coursing through her veins. Her earliest memory? Standing on stage in Suffolk at the age of three, dressed as a rainbow, singing her heart out in a pantomime. From the moment her father took her to see *Les Misérables*, her mind was made up: "I remember it so vividly. I always knew what my path was going to be." Fast forward a decade and you'll find Ellis centre stage of the *Les Misérables* revolution.

As we sit down for our interview, Ellis is getting ready to being prepped and primed for our exclusive London Lifestyle Awards photo shoot at the Royal Albert Hall. Even after she wipes away her make-up, Ellis is simply beautiful. And it seems there's not a prima donna bone in her body. For the shoot, she has brought an army of her own ad hoc

shoe collection, and fawns over every new item like a 10-year-old girl in Topshop.

With long blonde hair that falls to her waist, and clear ghostly pale skin, you'd never guess that she spent much of her career playing a wart-nosed, beguiling witch. "I was the first blonde ever to play Elphaba in *Wicked*," she explains, "they had to spray my hair black every night."

At just 16, Ellis joined the Lane Theatre of Arts in Surrey, and landed her first 'serious' role as Martine McCutcheon's understudy in *My Fair Lady* at just 21. She captured the estuary Eliza Doolittle to perfection, so much so that she wowed one well known audience member into offering her a lead role. "Brian May saw me and asked me to audition for *We Will Rock You*. He is such a sweet guy, he has become a real mentor to me."