

The Glamorous (hiccup!) Life of *Jo Barrett*



ASHLEY GARMON



I love your dress! And could you please pass the Bazooka?

Illustration by Josh Wilson

Dear Ladies Who Lunch,
I love gum. Gum is playful, and I feel like a kid when I'm chewing it. In fact, as I'm writing this, I'm plowing through a pack of Dentyne Ice, Arctic Chill.

I started chewing gum a few years ago when I noticed hordes of thin, gorgeous Texas women chewing lots of it. That's when it hit me. Gum is actually a meal replacement. That's right. You heard it here first, folks. Gum is the best dieting tool around.

I mean, why else would all these fabulous Texas women be chewing gum all the time? Like, literally, all day long? It's because gum is better than Atkins, and Weight Watchers, and those awful protein smoothie shakes that taste like cement.

Gum, I realized, is the key to being thin.

Let me give you an example. Say you've just worked out for two hours. You've done the treadmill, the stair stepper and a round of weights. You are sweaty, fatigued and feeling pretty good about burning all those calories.

At this point, you can either go for a cheeseburger, fries and a "Diet" Coke (remember you're trying to lose weight here) or opt for a nice, refreshing slice of gum. Ahhh, the joys of sliding a thin little wafer-sized slice of gum into your mouth. And then chewing on it for the next six to eight hours until the hunger pangs subside.

I typically opt for the cheeseburger. But these thin, gorgeous Texas broads—I have a sneaking suspicion they're reaching into

their purses for that dainty, sugar-free pack of Orbit.

And yet, despite the obvious merits of bubble gum (blowing big fat bubbles that get stuck on your face), there is one place you should never, ever, not in a million years, pop a slice of Big Red. Or Wrigley's Spearmint. Or Freshen Up. It's the Black Tie Affair.

Gowns and gum don't mix, ladies. In fact, watching a Texas woman with her \$10,000 custom-ordered Naeem Khan clinging to her perfectly sculpted figure while smacking on a piece of gum is enough for me to send the dogs after her. And that's putting it mildly.

So why do I find myself at these black tie affairs with gorgeous, perfectly sculpted women popping their gum? I mean, can't someone tell these ladies that everyone else ordered the burger? **H**



PHOTOS COURTESY HARPERCOLLINS

Jo Barrett is a guest columnist for H Texas magazine. Her two fiction novels, "The Men's Guide to the Women's Bathroom," and "This Is How It Happened (not a love story)" are published by HarperCollins and available at bookstores nationwide. "The Men's Guide to the Women's Bathroom" was optioned by CBS and Paramount Pictures with Hollywood actor Hugh Jackman's production company attached.