

# A former stripper from Utah has taken up residence in 'MILF Manor'

Utah Barb, Garcia Gutierrez is smart, funny, attractive, outgoing, at least a little bit naughty and a bit barely so maybe it's no surprise that the former stripper is one of the cast members on Season 2 of TLC's "MILF Manor."

"I have always lived outside the box. I don't use society norms and never have. It just naturally who I am," said the 40-year-old, who moved from Mexico City to Salt Lake City when she was 19. "It's very on brand for me to do something like this."

(She works in marketing these days.) A friend told Gutierrez she knew TV producers who were looking for women in her age range for an upcoming reality show, and urged her to apply. About a month later, Gutierrez was headed for Canada and the show, although she didn't know what show it was until after she arrived north of the border. "Two of the producers I was working with came to see [her] room with champagne and that's how they told me it was 'MILF Manor,'" she said in an interview with The Salt Lake Tribune.

Gutierrez is one of six women competing for the affections of six 20-something guys while staying in a fabulous mansion. She is the youngest of the women — she was 45 when the show was produced; the others range up to 59.

She believes she was the only one of the six women who watched Season 1 of "MILF Manor" — she knows a twist was coming. In Season 1, the young men were the sons of the older women — but she figured that would not be the case in Season 2, because her son, who is in his early 20s, "doesn't like to be in front of the camera. He's very reserved. He knows his journey for me, but it's not for him."

The Season 2 twist was revealed at the end of the first episode, when the fathers of the five young men arrived

to compete for the affections of the women.

"It was so much fun," she said.

## Tawdry or funny?

Make no mistake, "MILF Manor" is tacky, tawdry and filled with sexual innuendo. What did you expect? MILF does, after all, stand for "mother I'd like to f---." And Gutierrez plays right along with it.

"I've dated men from 29 to one-foot-in-the-groove, depending on how much money they have," she said with a laugh in the first episode.

It would be easy to climb on a moral high horse and deride "MILF Manor" for the often lascivious behavior of the participants — not to mention the standard-issue reality-show rivalries and drama — but it's hard to take it seriously. It's ridiculous and it looks like the participants are having fun with it.

Certainly Gutierrez is. "If I'm not laughing with somebody, it's not going to work out with a romantic relationship," she said. "Laughter and finding the humor in things is just how I operate."

Of course, her sense of humor can be well, unfettered. On the show, she says she's searching for "wacky little things." On a date with one of the young men, she asks him if he's sexually aroused. But it always seems like she's playing along with the show — like it's a game for her.

The situations are quite obvious, staged. The participants' reactions are not. "Everything that I did and felt during this experience was 100% genuine," she said.

And she has a sense of humor about herself. "I have so much Botox I can't even smile," she said at one point.

It wasn't all fun and games, however. There were tensions with some of the other women, not to mention



Utah Barb, Garcia Gutierrez is making waves in Season 2 of "MILF Manor."

some of the men. "I mean, that house is obviously a stressful environment," Gutierrez said. "We shared a house with a bunch of people you don't really know. But in hindsight ... it really was such a fun experience. And there were some real connections made and friendships for life. I wouldn't trade that for anything, and I would do it again."

## She doesn't hide her past

On the show — and in real life — Gutierrez is not ashamed to talk about her past as a stripper. Ironically, before she was cast in "MILF Manor" she was working with different TV producers trying to get another reality show off the ground. "They wanted to highlight the strip club industry here in Salt Lake," she said, "because of the dynamic with the Mormon Church." But it was just taking too long, and things were just not falling into place. And it just happened that this one happened.

She talks about stripping almost from the get-go on "MILF Manor."

"I have spent so much time trying to shine a light on the industry," she said. "Obviously, there's a lot of stigma around the word 'stripper,' because I've also done burlesque and when I say 'burlesque,' nobody even bats an

eye." And the two are basically "the same thing. It was a strip tease."

She said it took her "a long time to just be comfortable to say, 'It's part of my past. I have loved everything I've done. I've had such a fun life. I've met some amazing people. I made great money and traveled the world.'"

A lot of people are surprised to learn that there are actually strip clubs in Utah. "Exactly," Gutierrez said. "And I think the dynamic of a strip club here is so interesting because — like how strippers must stay at least 3 feet from club patrons."

"It's not what people think," she said. "I always say that it's just glorified go-go dancing here."

## Shout out to Midvale

Episode 1 featured a picture of Gutierrez wearing a shirt emblazoned "Hooters Midvale" — where she worked when she was in her early 20s.

The restaurant, at 7157 S. State St., closed in late 2016. It's now home to a Korean barbecue establishment.

## Younger vs. older

"I knew the concept was going to be younger guys, but I had no idea the

twist was going to be their dads," Gutierrez said. "So that was a huge shock to all of us."

From the looks on their faces, it was a considerably bigger shock for the young guys, several of whom express their displeasure with the twist. Although maybe it made things more comfortable for Gutierrez.

"I mean, I typically date older," she said. "I'm not used to dating younger guys. ... So I was actually really, really excited" when the dads showed up. She has "dabbled" in dating younger men, she said with a laugh. After pandemic lockdowns were lifted, she said, "life was just weird. I ended up hanging out with a 29-year-old that worked at the mall. I don't know what I was doing. But I felt like I wanted to experiment a little bit."

## Looking for love?

Gutierrez, who's never been married and hasn't been in a committed relationship "in over 10 years," didn't exactly expect to find romance on "MILF Manor," but she was open to the idea.

"I was open to maybe getting around. Just kidding!" she said, laughing. Whether it was the dads or the sons, "I was open to everything, to be honest with you. I thought I was going to have fun and make connections."

She's convinced that "it's very hard to date at my age" because it's mostly "younger guys" on the dating apps. "I feel like dating just took a turn for the worse in the last 10 years, and people don't have that attention span when it comes to dating anymore because of the internet." So she said she went into the show thinking she "had an opportunity to actually make a genuine connection."

New episodes of "MILF Manor" air Sundays on TLC — 8 p.m. on Dish and DirecTV, 11 p.m. on Comcast. Episodes also stream on Max.

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