

KICKIN' IT

Sashay, Parlay! Deborah Gregory pens one of the summer's hot reads, *Catwalk*



Deborah Gregory, Terry McMillan



Legendary super model Beverly Johnson with daughter Anansa Sims



Model Grace Gibson and her mother actress Lynn Whitfield

By Audrey J. Bernard
Lifestyles/Society Editor

Out in the Lionel Hamptons (Sag Harbor) and up on the Cape (Martha's Vineyard) and as far reaching as The Pelican Resort (St. Martins) they're not talking about who's on the A-1 party lists; who's tipping out on whom; what marriages won't last through the summer; who was wearing what; who was seen making the rounds at the hot night spots; who's on the DL (down low); or who's fresh out of the closet! Not at all.

The buzz is all about the Queen of Chit-Chat, the affable Deborah Gregory, and her highly antici-



Top Feline Deborah Gregory

pated teen novel *Catwalk* (Delacorte Press; \$8.99), which catwalked off bookshelves including those in the plush Hue Man bookstore in Harlem where Gregory attended a capacity crowd book signing in June.

You don't have to be a tween to know who Gregory is – but it helps. Remember the sensational tween series “The Cheetah Girls” that spawned a series of 23 books, three Disney Channel Original Movies, two sold-out concert tours, three double-platinum albums, and marathon merchandise tie-ins through Sears and Wal-Mart?

Well, Gregory is the author of that popular girl power series of books, and her latest growl power, *Cheetah Girls 3*, which was filmed on location in India, makes its American debut on the Disney Channel on August 22.

With *Catwalk*, once again the author is serving up *purrlicious* dish like no one else can. Once

again, feline characters rule. Pashmina Purrstein and her fierce friends – Angora, Felinez and Aphrodite – are primed for rising above the ranks of the runway.

Catwalk follows the four feline best friends at Manhattan's Fashion International High School where they are about to enter the contest of their lives. Each year, students split up into fashion houses and compete to design, produce, and show fully original fashion lines with the winner earning a scholarship, a professional show, and a real shot at a career in fashion. This all takes place in the fashion capital of the world – The Big Apple – Metropolis.

The competition is – like its creator – *purrfecto!*

To celebrate the release of *Catwalk*, on Wednesday, June 25, one day after the release of the *purrfect* summer page-turner, some of Gregory's *catitude* friends – supermodel Beverly Johnson and her model/actress daughter

Anansa Sims, actress Lynn Whitfield, and her model daughter Grace Gibson, actor Melvin Van Peebles, author Terry McMillan, model Veronica Webb, Nole Marin of America's Next Top Model – walked a pink carpet to attend a book bash for Gregory at the Laboratory Institute of Merchandising which was transformed into FashionOpolis.

Inside FashionOpolis, fashionistas were greeted by Gregory all dolled up in pink and ready to party and chat about her latest conquest because tweens rule! Parents are bracing themselves for this latest invasion of growl power.

Back at the *pahtee* – The fête was fierce and Gregory – looking *pinkalicious* – worked the room greeting fans and admirers alike and idle only to enjoy performances by Rose and 757 and legendary vogueer Benny Ninja and the House of Ninja. Meow!

Throughout the pretty in pink



Host & supermodel Beverly Johnson



Melvin Van Peebles, Lynn Whitfield



Model Veronica Webb, celebrity stylist Nole Maron



House of Ninja perform at book bash

evening everyone connected with the party – including the staff of waiters – who were also dressed in luscious pink. Topping off the pink theme were Pink Alize martinis to drown down the catnip treats.

Before leaving, guests were presented with a fabulous cadeau (French word for gift or present) – a hot pink patent leather bag filled with Gregory signature Cheetah pieces from her massive merchandise line. For your *shoppportunity* cheetahrama.com. *Scratch, scratch.* (Photo: Terrence Jennings)