

MAMA KNOWS BEST

ORGASMS, GREEN JUICE AND EMBRACING YOUR 'WOMBIVERSE' — **RUBY WARRINGTON** MEETS AMERICA'S FAVOURITE NEW BIRTHING GURU

Having a baby — the actual process of pregnancy and childbirth — has, as we know, become very hip, but you're about to find out just how hip. It's not about swollen ankles, constipation and icky bouts of morning sickness: say hello to a total lifestyle detox, as peddled by the New York birthing guru Latham Thomas. In her new book, *Mama Glow*, the "bohemian-chic, tree-hugging, shoe-loving, vegan vixen and holistic wellness maven" pushes everything from regular orgasms to a daily dose of green juice, to "weeding out the wackness" from life for expectant mothers. Move over, Gwyneth Paltrow and your Goop, there's a new mommy messiah in town.

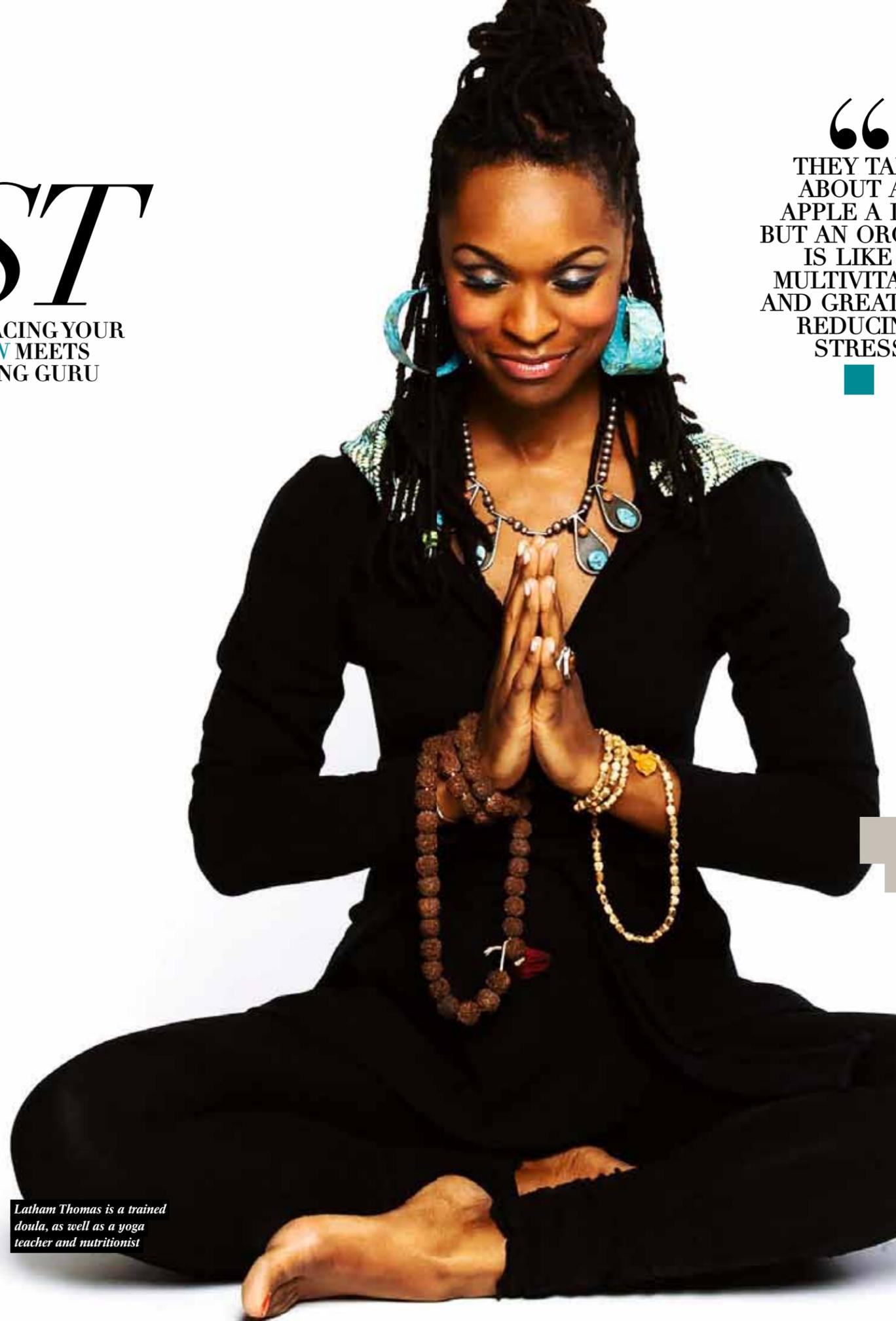
"Feeling confident about a natural, drug-free birth and getting skinny again when you're done are just benefits of the process," says Thomas, 33, when we meet to discuss the programme laid out in her book. "If you eat this way, and you're not stressed out, and you do what you love every day when you wake up, and you're in good company, then yeah, you're not going to gain too much weight and you're going to look radiant. And if you're having lots of orgasms, too, the chances are you're going to have an easier birth."

The launch party for the book — also a fundraiser for Christy Turlington's Every Mother Counts campaign — took place last month at the accessory designer Rebecca Minkoff's Midtown atelier. Thomas's nine-year-old son, Fulano, already an established DJ who has played for the likes of the Vogue Bambini Petite Parade and the DVF Gap Kids launch, manned the decks, while the great and good of the trendy wellness community toasted her success with raw-ginger cocktails and slivers of spelt pizza. We meet at Soho House in Manhattan's Meatpacking District the following week, where Thomas could easily win a prize for most popular — everybody wants to say hello. Supermodel tall, she cuts a striking figure in skinny white jeans, her long black dreads piled on top of her head.

"I wrote this book for women like me," she says, "women who are concerned with their wellbeing, with having a committed yoga practice, who want to embrace their power and feel connected, but who also want to be cool and have nice things." This is a group she feels is currently underserved by the pregnancy literature on the market. "All the books I looked at when I was pregnant, 10 years ago, were, like, 'Now you're feeling fat, maybe you have high blood pressure or you're incontinent.' I was, like, 'Oh God, no thanks.' I want women to embrace pregnancy as something that happens through you and understand that by making the right lifestyle choices, you can have total control over your experience."

The book is divided into trimesters, and each section looks at pregnancy In the Kitchen, On the Mat and In Your Life. This means switching to a mainly plant-based diet, adopting a challenging regular yoga practice, writing a daily journal — "to cleanse your limiting beliefs and become spiritually fit" — and, yes, making sure you're being thoroughly satisfied in bed. "People don't have enough sex, period," says Thomas. "We schedule it instead of having fun with it. A lot of the women I work with are uptight. Or they work out too much so they're very muscular and tight in that area, where they should be softening, ready to receive a baby. They talk about an apple a day, but an orgasm is like a multivitamin and great for reducing stress."

Throughout the book, she also makes links between orgasm and female fertility: "The uterus is marathon-training for labour during arousal," she



Latham Thomas is a trained doula, as well as a yoga teacher and nutritionist

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writes at one point. She laughs as she tells me: "The baby coming out is the huge orgasm. If you look at the brain of a mother in birth and a woman at the height of her arousal, the neural pathways that are lit up are the same." She writes about her own "ecstatic birth". Having been in labour for just four hours, she describes being in a trance-like state akin to a powerful natural high, "not that I've ever taken drugs, but I had them destroy the video footage because I was so out of it".

There's also a chapter on foreplay for birthing day, in which she encourages "a lot of kissing" in early labour. "The mouth and throat are hard-wired to your pelvic floor and sacred passageway [birth canal]. The opening of the mouth and throat signals the opening of those muscles, so get ready to pucker up."

A graduate of Columbia University, Thomas taught environmental sciences before "having my own child sparked a whole movement inside me". She decided to retrain as a nutritionist and yoga instructor, working with pregnant women. She went on to complete her doula training in 2005 and has since attended hundreds of births, at home and in hospital, acting as her clients' coach and "glow pilot" from conception to contractions.

Alicia Keys, one of her celebrity fans, writes: "It's easy to think of birth as a series of decisions that someone else is making for us. But we women are powerful and almighty, and *Mama Glow* helps show us just how empowered we can be throughout this glorious time in our lives." All very well if you're a pop superstar with a full staff. But how many real women have time to whip up a batch of Lavender-Ginger Goddess Tonic when morning sickness hits or perform a "clearance movement meditation" while trying to get child No 1 to stop stuffing Lego down the sink?

"Well, I was doing it and I'm a busy girl," says Thomas. "But it's about finding the nuggets that work for you, even if that just means small tools to modify your behaviour. You can eat the fish and throw away the bones. But if you've got time to watch *The X Factor*, I'm sorry, you've got time to spend an hour focusing on you. And being pregnant is the perfect excuse." ●

Mama Glow — A Hip Guide to Your Fabulous Abundant Pregnancy is out now (Hay House £10.99)

HOW TO GET YOUR GLOW ON

● Embark on a pre-pregnancy relationship detox. Identify toxic friendships and weed them out, as the related stress can change your cervical mucus pH and affect fertility.

● Nurture your "womb-iverse" by cleansing your body of animal products, gluten, caffeine, alcohol, processed grains and refined sugar. This is your seat of creativity and divine light, this is where you can "womb-ifest" your deepest desires.

● Eat your greens. You can get all the folic acid and calcium you need from leafy green vegetables. Your prescription: two salads a day and a green juice in the morning.

● Make your own (almond) milk. Many reproductive issues stem from the overconsumption of dairy products.

● Deconstruct your cravings. When you feel a desire to eat, observe the emotions that come up with it, then drink a glass of water or eat a healthier version of the food you crave.

● Create a positive affirmation for your pregnancy. For example: "I am a strong, wise woman and I trust my body's wisdom."

● As your body changes, try the "Love Gaze". Sit in front of the mirror naked and take a good look at yourself. Send love and acceptance to your reflection. Lather your body in your favourite oil or lotion.