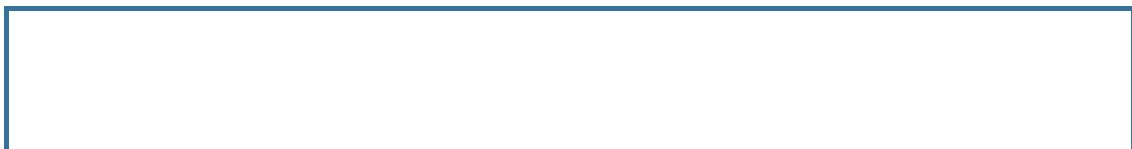




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THE REAL HOUSEWIVES OF NEW JERSEY

# Real Housewives of N.J.'s Caroline & Dina: We Fight Big and We Love Big

May 12, 2009

If Bravo's [preview](#) of *The Real Housewives of New Jersey* — which has its official premiere Tuesday (11 p.m. ET) — proves anything, it's that *The Sopranos* aren't the only Garden State family you don't want to mess with. Not convinced? Just wait for **Caroline Manzo** (sister to fellow Housewife **Dina** and sister-in-law to third Housewife, the [pregnant Jacqueline](#)) to growl, "Let me tell you something about my family; We are as thick as thieves."

Chatting with PEOPLE, Dina downplays Caroline's toughness, but remains fiercely loyal: "My sister comes off very strong but she's got a softer side," she says. Here, the Manzo sisters happily dish about everything from their fans ("I love the gays," says Dina, "and they love me") to other *Housewives* casts and getting ready for the intensity of the spotlight. "We didn't go into this blindly. We knew there were people out there who were going to rip us apart," Dina says. In other words, the catfight's out of the bag. — *Suzanne Zuckerman*



**Have you started getting recognized yet?**

**Caroline:** Yes. I've given out a fair amount of autographs considering that the show hasn't aired for real yet. The reaction has been nothing short of explosive. I never in my wildest dreams thought that this would be happening to me.

**Dina:** It freaks me out because I'll be food shopping and somebody will just come up to me. I'm like, "Why would you want my autograph?" It's kind of silly to me. I have a lot of gay fans coming up to me and saying, "Your hair is fabulous!" and "I love the way you dress!" and "You're fantastic." So I think that's my audience and I couldn't be happier.

**Do you represent typical New Jersey housewives?**

**Caroline:** That's kind of a loaded question. Do I think we depict an Italian American family? Yes, I do. Do I think I depict a housewife? I most certainly am. There are some aspects to my personality that may be stronger than most, but the fact remains that I wake up every morning and I make the beds and I go food shopping and I let the dogs out and I do the laundry and I am somebody's wife and somebody's mother.

**Dina:** When I think of New Jersey, I think of moms who are passionate about their families. We definitely represent that. We're not really looking to be in the social scene as much as some of the other [casts] in the franchise. Our show is more authentic because some of those women were kind of forced to hang out with each other, whereas for us, we'd all be out to dinner together anyway — with the exception of a couple. We're just regular people. We're not walking a red carpet every night.

**Do family dynamics make the drama more intense?**

**Caroline:** With any family — and it's not only Italian families — there is history. With history comes passion. When there are fights, we fight big. And when we forgive and we love, we love big and we forgive big. That's what family is. I think this country needs that right now.

**Dina, How have your teenage daughter Alexia's schoolmates reacted?**

**Dina:** I was a little bit worried about putting her out there, but she's gotten nothing but positive [feedback]. She just made captain of the track team. She was always popular but now kids are coming out of the woodwork. Eighth graders who are older than her want to be her friend. So she's kind of liking the limelight a little bit too. Let's just hope it doesn't go to her head.

**Are you prepared for any potential backlash?**



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**Caroline:** There is no preparing for it. But I'm a big girl. I've taught my children to accept that not everybody is going to love you. We make mistakes and we do things that perhaps at times will embarrass us, but that's what makes us human. I am proud of who I am. And I am so proud of my children.

**Dina:** We're very confident that we're good people. I can put my head on my pillow every night knowing that I give back to my community and I'm a great mother and a great sister, so they can say whatever they want.

RICHARD BRILL/STARTRAKS

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**LASHUN** | May 12th, 2009

OMG!! I JUST WATCH THE PREVIEW OF THE NEW HOUSEWIVES OF NEW JERSEY AND I BELIEVE THIS IS GOING TO BE THE BEST ONE YET. I'VE BEEN A FAN OF HOUSEWIVES FROM THE BEGINNING, ATLANTA DEFINETELY BROUGHT THE DRAMA BUT I BELIEVE NEW JERSEY GOT EM BEAT. CAN'T WAIT TO WATCH THE SHOW.

**SHERIE** | May 12th, 2009

I saw the preview and absolutely loved it. Can't wait to see more. These women seem so much more interesting than the NY housewives or the California housewives. The California housewives disgust me. The NY housewives bore me. The New Jersey housewives are just full of intrigue! I love it!

**CRISTINA** | May 12th, 2009

can't wait till the premiere 😊

**KRISTEN** | May 12th, 2009

I am SO EXCITED to watch this! I think it will be MUCH better than the other Real Housewives shows! I LOVE Caroline!

**JENN** | May 12th, 2009

this one belongs with the atl house wives ,, drama drama ,, i can't wait to see it ,, when is the atl housewives coming back ,, nene is a riot act love her ,, ill be watching the new jersey h-wives,,

**ROSE** | May 12th, 2009

i can't stand that n.j. is stereotyped like this. when people hear i'm from n.j. this is what they think i am. it's so weird to me b/c i know NO ONE like this. we're just...normal.

**LORI** | May 12th, 2009

OK Bravo, get out of a NY/NJ state of mind. I want to see a Texas Housewives!!!! But don't bring in a b\*\*\*h like Kelley or Tamara....

**KAR** | May 12th, 2009

I suspect Caroline will be the break out star. She seems to be larger than life and lives/loves with a passion beyond plastic. The others may be good in a cat fight but that woman won't stop until she orders her son(s) to get the shovel out of the trunk.

**SANDRA** | May 12th, 2009

I'd also like to a few Latina's in the Housewives as well. The only Latina was Jo De LaRosa...Maybe next Housewives can be the Housewives of H-Town or Texas Housewives??

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**New Jersey**

TUI | May 12th, 2009

I am excited to watch Real Housewives of New Jersey. I loved RHNYC, it was my favorite this past season. But I think this one given their Italian family oriented nature I think this will take the cake.

I saw a bit of the previews and already like it so can't wait to watch the drama.

I watched RHOC, too much emphasis on material things and make up and botox, yuk, got old real fast. Same goes for the RHOA, too much jealousy and cattyness. Though there was a bit of that same ugliness on RHONYC, the cast were pretty ok except for the high and mighty Kelly, whoever she is.

My fav was Betheny, will miss watching her.

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