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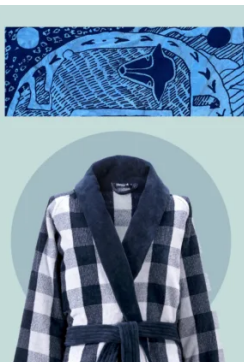
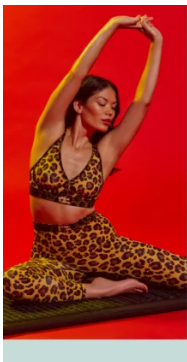
Private Lives Public Places

Baz Luhrmann, Director

BY JACKIE COOPERMAN, PUBLISHED ON 03/30/2010

Australian Baz Luhrmann, whose staging of Puccini's *La Bohème* previews on Broadway starting November 26, says that growing up "on the edge of the world" prepared him for the "traveling-circus life" he now leads. In a typical month, this director of the films *Strictly Ballroom*, *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet*, and *Moulin Rouge* flies between Morocco—where he's about to start shooting a mega-million-dollar epic on Alexander the Great—Los Angeles, New York, and Europe. Here are a few of his favorite stops along the way.

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FAVORITE PLACES TO EAT

- In Manhattan, Craft. I love the food, all the choices, and the presentation.
- In London, Hakkasan is fantastic, but avoid the bird's-nest-soup dessert.
- In Sydney, Hugo's, overlooking the water, for breakfast. Usually I have salmon, scrambled eggs with mushrooms, and great juice. We're huge on coffee in Australia because we have massive Italian immigration, so I'd have a shot and a half of caffè latte.

IN MY FLIGHT BAG

When I get on a plane, I'm carrying my Prada bag, which is with me all the time. It has my iPod, my work in a red folder, a breathing mask (I have trouble breathing), and sometimes sleeping pills. Since I can't remember anything, I have this pouch around my neck that holds my memo pad, my Sony digital recorder, and lists—I look like an unaccompanied child. I write everything down, record everything, and then e-mail the recordings to my assistant in Australia.

MUST-STOP SHOPS

- In London, Paul Smith's boutique, Westbourne House, is terrific. You can go there and get a suit tailored. Then you go to the Levi's in San Francisco and get custom-made jeans.
- In New York, Kim's Underground video store on Bleecker Street is a fantastic place. You can find any movie in the world there, no question.

MY LATEST MUSICAL DISCOVERY

There's a Canadian guy I really dig—Remy Shand. Leonardo DiCaprio played me his CD, *The Way I Feel*.

MY HOMES AWAY FROM HOME

- Over the past 15 years, I've virtually lived at the Chateau Marmont in Hollywood.

The best room is the second penthouse, which has a piano and overlooks the gardens.

- At the Amanjena in Marrakech, you're in your suite in the middle of the desert, with your own pool and massive private garden. Designer Ed Tuttle does extraordinary things at the Amanresorts, but I especially like what he's done here.
- My favorite hotel room in all the world is the Sarkies Suite at Raffles in Singapore. It's done in dark teak, and incredibly beautiful. The dining room has swirling fans and a giant balcony. It's just a dream.
- Everywhere else, I stay at Ian Schrager hotels. I particularly like the Sanderson in London.

IF I HAD A DIFFERENT CAREER

A flower designer—I could see making something new and beautiful every day. My father, when he died, was working on genetically engineered orchids. He had a plantation where he was growing them. I appreciate the beauty and variety. They're like goldfish—the freakier they are, the more beautiful. I also like white peonies.

ON MY BEDSIDE TABLE

When I'm heading for Sydney or New York, whoever's taking care of my travels will make sure the books I'm reading are waiting for me there. We get two copies of everything. Right now it's Mary Renault's *The Nature of Alexander* and anything else I can find relating to Alexander the Great.

I COULDN'T LIVE WITHOUT

My key-ring memo pad from Muji in London. I wear it on a chain around my neck. It's always there. It has cardboard covers. The Tate is doing it as well in plastic covers.

MOST CHERISHED SOUVENIRS

In Paris, when we were researching the first staged version of *La Bohème* in 1990, we maniacally collected all the postcards of photographers Robert Doisneau and Henri Cartier-Bresson that we could find. Doisneau's *The Kiss by the Hôtel de Ville* really set the whole design idea for our production.

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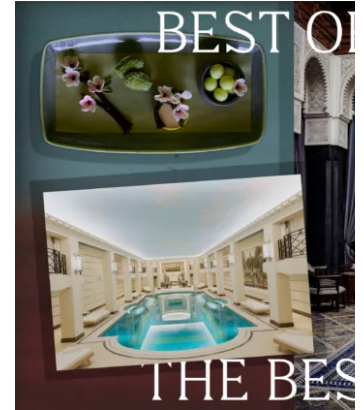
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