



the Facemaker's tales

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CHAPTERS

France: Childhood recollections with amusing family's anecdotes. Memories of the horrid boarding school and going through an arduous hairdressing apprenticeship.

London: Arriving in London at 18 years old. Working in the last of the grand salons in Mayfair and minutiae's of dealing with the aristocratic clientele and royalty. Adapting to the British lifestyle, the seventies disco, social scene and moving to trendy Chelsea.

Biba: Described as "the most beautiful store in the world" by the Sunday Times. Getting the offer to set-up Biba's beauty salon, running it and becoming the establishment's face maker.

Going freelance: It's the mid seventies and becoming one of the first freelance hair & makeup artists is a pioneering move. Taking make-up to a new art form. Travelling all over the world, trials and tribulations of dealing with models.

A quick glance at the history of cosmetics: A make-up chronicle, pointing out the social pressures caused by one's appearance through the centuries up to today's conclusion: "The average woman has sixteen square feet of skin, her dissatisfaction with it, accounts for the expenditure".

First visit to Australia: Discovering the splendour of Australia and its people. Doing a promotion tour and falling in love with Sydney.

Back to London and globetrotting: The pressures of doing the Italian Vogue "collections" with the complex David Bailey. Models tantrums, the tricks of the trade and photographers.

Fashion shows: "Fashion shows were always as chaotic as the sinking of the Titanic" after describing the backstage scene, one is introduced to the audience protocol and the "front row syndrome". London in the seventies and Andrew Logan's Alternative Miss World.

Famous People: From rock stars to Paul McCartney's story about the real origin of the Beatles' Haircut and Linda McCartney nagging about carnivores. The famous wives get a mention; more anecdotes are disclosed as well as casualties of the business.

New York: Life in New York and being told: you don't have enough 'attitude' turns a Frenchman into fury.

From Sri Lanka to Haiti: A shoot in Sri Lanka turns into a nightmare. Lord Snowdon shows his true colours. Working with Bailey from the Canal du Midi to the colourful Haiti.

Juggling between TV commercials & Stills: TV commercials are becoming a new art form, filmed in studios with extravagant sets or exotic locations: from the Seychelles' jungle, Ireland's landscapes, Bahamas' islands, Canada's mountain peaks, Miami beaches and many adventures. Hours of travel, working from sunrise to sundown, struggling against the conditions. So much for the glamour!

Time: “Forever trying to keep up with this four-letter word”

La Digue: Filming with Tony Scott in ‘La Digue’ with 13 top models, turns into a nightmare.

Au revoir London: Stepping into the 80% tax bracket is the last straw. Deciding to immigrate to Australia and going through the ordeal of getting a resident visa.

Sydney: Moving to Sydney.

Hosted by Princess Diana and Prince Charles, the "Bicentennial Wool Collection" saga unrolls at the Opera house with the international supermodels and designers.

Kenya: Booked for an international commercial. Of all the torturous journeys, this one takes the cake. Camping in the jungle at mercy of the wild life. The glamour of filming on safari goes straight out the window, but makes entertaining reading.

Becoming an editor between trips: Squeezing the making of a beauty video and a few more adventures. Doing more commercials in the Rocky Mountains and Yellow Stone. Accepting the offer of creating a beauty magazine with all its dilemmas.

The price of notoriety: Featuring in a “Sunsilk” commercial and surprised at the frequency it is shown. Topped with a comedy show doing a satire on it on a weekly basis, soon losing anonymity and hating it.

From the canvas to more Timotei adventures: Discovering oil painting, creating over 60 artworks and having 4 exhibitions in 2 years. More commercial adventures are disclosed: from Hungary, the icy fiords of Norway to the scorching Arizona desert. Discovering a new passion: “computers”.

New Zealand: Having hardly any time to enjoy the Sydney lifestyle, off to New Zealand for another two UK commercials. From Queenstown, Christchurch and spending a week in the Hakataramea valley. Due to the lack of hotels, living in caravans in freezing conditions.

Adieu Fashion: Year 2000, creativity, innovation, taste, style and professionalism are gone. How many times were they going to rehash retro? Quality is replaced by mediocrity and CHEAP is the magic word. After 35 Years of expressing a contribution to an art form, one is disillusioned, disgusted, disappointed and over it. Anyone who can hold a brush is an “artist” (a title that should be earned). It’s time to say goodbye to the industry.



France

Subject to bad timing I was the child that wasn't intended. Born in the first hour of Easter Sunday 1950 in 'la belle France', I was the last offspring of my mother's second marriage and my father's third.

Being the first baby delivered on that celebratory day, resembling an Easter egg, I was presented to my mother wrapped in a huge blue bow. From that moment on, she was warned that I was not to be ignored.

My mother was a bright, creative woman who had retired from her hat designer's career when she married. Warm, loving and hardworking, she had a passion for cooking and being a "cordon bleu", she excelled at it. She also loved flowers and would turn any vacant space into a colourful garden.

Having a strong dislike for housework, she always made sure we had a maid and to this day I have never seen her with a duster or a vacuum cleaner. She was always well groomed and a faithful devotee of the perfume and cosmetic industry. Her choice of husbands was disastrous and her adult life was filled with heartbreaks, hardship and suffering. However, gifted with a good sense of humour this did not dampen her enthusiasm and joie de vivre.

Divorced, she had a boy and a girl from her previous marriage. These half siblings were already in their teens by the time I was born, leaving me with a three year old brother.

My father, a born and bred Parisian, was a terrible womaniser, a gambler and abusive to his family. Besides cheating on his mistresses, he had very little time for other activities such as work or nurturing his family. This left my mother struggling with running the family business and raising her children. Usually with a need to replenish his wallet, he would turn up unexpectedly. Entering via the workshop, growling at the workers for a while, he would then proceed via the garden to enter the rear of the shop. My mother would turn ashen and within minutes a quarrel would start as the takings were never to his satisfaction. My brother and I would scatter, as we knew we were next in his line of fire.

My brother Gilbert had enjoyed three years of blissful existence prior to my arrival. After months of putting up with a disruptive, attention-seeking sibling, he had enough and worked out a plan to end this intrusion into his lifestyle.

Being the proud owner of a bicycle with a cart, he strapped me down in this attachment and cycled off to negotiate. Sometime later beaming from ear to ear, the new owner of a bag of pristine marbles, strutted back, solo. My dear brother had traded to one of his friends: his bicycle the trailer and 'moi' for the grand price of eighteen marbles.

My mother had anxiously been looking for me, questioned my brother as to my whereabouts. Denying any knowledge of where I was, he continued to play with his new marbles, leaving her frantic, to say the least.

Moments later, she received a phone call from a hysterical woman stating that an unknown child wearing a bracelet engraved 'Régis', had been deposited in her living

room. Subsequent calls to neighbours, revealed my mother's number. Grateful for this information mum darted to my rescue.

Gilbert resentfully returned the eighteen marbles in exchange for 'moi' the bicycle and the trailer.

At the risk of crushing my self-confidence, aware how attached my brother was to his bicycle and trailer; I never tried to find out how many marbles I was really worth!

I am pleased to report that none of the other siblings tried to trade me in and my brother Gilbert never became an entrepreneur.

The family business was a shop, selling and repairing anything on two wheels and everything for sport. Cycling was an important part of my dad's life as his father, a pioneer of cycling, was one of the instigators of the "Tour de France".

Continuing the family tradition, my father was by then, the president of the cycling club. My mother's fabulous cooking being as sought after as my father's advice, the house had a constant flow of cyclists. When she was not feeding them steaks, she was putting the steaks in the seat of their shorts, so they could finish a race in less pain, literally "by the seat of their pants".

Witnessing the racers hardship, suffering, tenacity and casualties, I swore to never get involved in sports and to this day I have kept my promise.

When my father was in the mood, he would engineer lighter and faster bikes for the top boys. Making sure to keep a popular profile, one year he made the Christmas lights banners for the entire street but unfortunately, as per usual, forgot to spend Noël with his family.

As soon as I became of age, I was sent to a catholic boarding school. Memories of this lugubrious establishment are of the brother's austere black robes, their harshness and severity, the hypocrisy behind their crucifix and the cruelty between their prayers. Many punishments were endured for not respecting the measly 30 minutes per day when one was permitted to speak.

Apart from constant studying and endless praying, very little else was permitted. I longed for the weekends when, after the seemingly endless train ride, I would embrace my gorgeous mother and feed on her affection, tenderness and gourmet cooking.

Occasionally we would visit my maternal grandparents in the heart of Normandy. My grand father was a gentle stoic man; in contrast my grand mother was a sharp-witted woman who made Betty Davis look dull. Approached by her village committee to become the mayor, her response was:

"Why would I want to be the mayor when I can tell the mayor what to do".

She loved telling my brother and I anecdotes of the past. She also kept reminding us that, prior to her birth, we were related to nobility. However all this changed due to intervention of my audacious aristocratic great grand mother Célanie Laplanche.

Soon to wed an equally titled gentleman, Célanie had decided to sample her future spouse's virility. Unluckily for her, a few days later he was shot in the face in a hunting accident. Needless to say the wedding was cancelled. Fate had it that she fell pregnant as a result of this experiment and speed was of the essence in order to correct this faux

pas.

A commoner had been pursuing her. Begrudgingly relinquishing her title, she married him and a few months later my grand mother was born.

Guilty of ending this blue blood lineage she told her daughter the story, which she promised to pass on to her progeny.

She also explained how the “De” of “De Laplanche” had been dropped from the family surname to become “Laplanche” to avoid the persecution of aristocratic families during the revolution. The “De” was the equivalent of “Lord” and one could literally lose one’s head for having this title.

As we travelled through the countryside grandma would point out sumptuous mansions and chateaux, which had been in the family, most of it tragically lost during the uprising. I couldn’t help wondering how life would have been, without the siege of “la Bastille” and my great grand mother’s indiscretions, indeed it felt as though I had been cheated. It certainly put me off celebrating the 14th of July for a while.

My grandmother missing the days of carriages, used to find cars oppressive and uncomfortable. In anticipation of a long journey she requested that my mother use her business truck so she could comfortably sit in her armchair in the rear. Heaving her huge wheeled armchair onboard we fulfilled her request and set off on our journey. Negotiating a rough road, going over a fatal hump, a loud noise from the rear caused my mother to stop the truck and investigate.

Grandmother had vanished! Anxiously we ran out of the truck to find “grand-mère” regally sitting in her armchair in the middle of the road, a raised eyebrow stating her displeasure.

The tradition going back to my grand parents was that the husband and wife had separate bedrooms. It never occurred to me to question this arrangement.

Early one morning I was departing on a scouting holiday and had to collect a friend on my way to the bus. Ringing the bell, I caused total panic as the entire household realised they had overslept. Waiting for my friend to get ready, I couldn’t help noticing that his parents slept in the same bedroom. Troubled by this discovery I was distraught that his parents were so poor that they could not afford separate bedrooms. I had yet to learn about connubial customs.

By the age of nine, assertive and articulate, I had matured well beyond my years. Cautious of the resentful man who never kissed, hugged or smiled at me, I was taken aback when one day my father actually came to talk to me. That was a first! I couldn’t help noticing how ashen and upset he looked. He proceeded to tell me that he was returning from his best friend’s funeral and how distressed and distraught his wife and children were. Being one not to miss out on such an opportunity I replied:

“That’s one thing that will never happen in this household”.

To my surprise he didn’t react to my statement and went to the workshop, where five minutes later he died of a massive heart attack.

I am sorry to say that I never regretted those last words and neither I nor my brother ever shed a tear on his passing.

I was to be astounded at my mother's grief. How could she weep for the man who had been so cruel to her and her children? Obviously, I had a lot to learn about adults and their emotions!

The enormous crowd at the funeral formed an endless queue, waiting to offer their condolences to my distressed mother. Hiding her grief behind a black veil, she could hardly stand up. The ceaseless handshaking and seeing our mother so upset were to be the most gruelling part of that day.

School holidays always included a lengthy stay at my maternal grandparents. Grandma and Grandpa were always delighted to have us and always made sure that our five cousins would be sharing with us this yearly adventure. An army of children invaded overnight my grand parents' home. All being city kids, we would relish these stays in the countryside.

Opening the arched gate, almost hidden by a lush cascade of honeysuckle, an overwhelming fragrance would greet anyone entering. Surrounded by exquisite rose gardens, a straight path led to the perpetually open doors.

An oversized fireplace would always be alight and a cast iron stove was forever simmering something delicious. Both provided a constant aroma of food and wood fire, which blended into a distinctive fragrance and is forever engraved in my memory.

The perpetually ravenous guests would surround the large sturdy table, as grandpa would start carving the gigantic loaf of wood-fired bread while grandma would display her culinary prowess.

The rustic home was surrounded with grandma's obsession: gardens! There were countless flower and vegetable marvels scatted through hedges and pathways. Her chief pride was her rose gardens, which boasted hundreds of varieties including some of her own propagation. Surrounding the property were of course the mandatory fields with cows and chicken coops. Also, large enough to intrigue us and sufficiently small not to lose one's way, were several woods which were our favourite playground.

To complete this children's perfect playfield was the attic. The enormous room was packed with furniture, old toys, pictures, mysterious boxes, clothes from yesteryear, hats, furs and a collection of postcards dating from the 1900's. We were in heaven and the days were filled with escapades, games and lots of fun.

Grandma and grandpa were pious and every week came the day when we had to pay for this idyllic holiday. Every Sunday we were washed, scrubbed, polished and spruced up to exhaustion. The girls became a mélange of dolls and chocolate boxes, as the top of their heads would support bows that defied gravity while frills would decorate every hem.

After being lined up for the final inspection, we walked up the long hill to the village church. Once seated in the pew, grand-mère's usual warm and affectionate manner would turn into severe and strict mode. Under her veiled hat, a pair of eagle eyes observed our every move, making sure we behaved to perfection. The worse part was yet to come as we exited the house of worship, we would be displayed to her friends as some priceless item in an auction... We hated it and only years later realized it was called

pride.

As soon as the ordeal was over, we would run down the hill and stand by the gateway eagerly waiting for our parents' visit, whilst grandma would start preparing another feast. Mum always turned up with an enormous cake and lots of goodies for all. In good French style the rest of the day was mainly spent around the dinner table.

Being accustomed to city stores we were under the impression that meat came in cling wrap. To correct our ignorance and just in case it might be one day useful, Grandma insisted that we observed the killing and gutting of chickens and rabbits.

Grim pale faces lined up as they were about to be slaughtered, while the executioner herself carried out the gruesome task with the precision of a surgeon. Peeling off the skin of a rabbit, like slipping off a tight sweater, would cause an instantaneous conversion to vegetarianism. Until later, drifting smells of a sizzling roast would trigger an instant amnesia and we couldn't wait to consume the victim. Children's memory can be so selective.

One of the Norman customs was to drink calvados liqueur with one's coffee (for grown-ups of course). To make her calvados tastier, grandma would add various fruits and nuts, leaving them to saturate for months to achieve the right bouquet. On one occasion, I was asked to throw away the cherries of an empty bottle of cherry calvados. Looking at these fruits going to waste, I thought it was time for the chickens to live it up (while they could) and fed them the cherries.

A short while later, an alarmed cousin rushed in to tell the gathering that the poultry was behaving in the strangest manner. We all tramped out to witness this enigma.

The hen house was in total disarray; chickens were twirling around chasing their own tails, while others were trying to get up, but in vain. The rooster, desperately attempting to negotiate the chicken coop's ramp, kept falling off half way. Realizing that my grand parents thought that some "mad chicken" disease had stricken their fowls, I had to come clean with the truth. Thankfully they all laughed and grandma said:

"This will only make them tastier".

Studying came easily to me. Being top of my class was the norm and expected of me. The few times I was relegated to second place were severely reprimanded.

From the daily chore of being a choirboy, I was promoted to deliver the quotidian epistle. Perched on a pew gave me a new angle for observing the congregation. I soon came to the conclusion that the constant standing, sitting and kneeling was to ensure that nobody would fall asleep during the lengthy, tedious mass.

There were regular visits from missionaries lecturing us about third world countries and the underprivileged. Unavoidably the end of the homily would finish with a money collection. Being on a very tight budget the regular donations were genuinely depriving. On a particular occasion the only change I had, was for my bus fare to take me to the train station. The idea of lugging my suitcase for a few kilometres didn't appeal and I refrained to donate. The censorious priest's stare provoked my justification:

"I hear that the Vatican's vaults has countless priceless artworks, why don't you ask the Pope to sell a couple of paintings? Surely it would be more rewarding than a few

broke kids' spare change".

This remark prompted a visit to the head priest's office and a lengthy scolding.

Being brought up in gastronomic style, I hated the boarding school's bland food, especially lentils which usually contained more gravel than seed's. Feeling nauseous at the sight of my plate filled with the dreaded leguminous grains, I refused to eat it. Warned that the same plate would be presented daily until I consumed it, I upheld my disapproval. On the third day, the mixture had taken an alarming greenish hue and looked more repulsive than ever. An obstinate brother exasperated by my tenacity decided to force-feed me with the disgusting grub. Within seconds I turned ashen and threw up all over the brother's immaculate robe and shoes. Subsequently, to my delight, I was never imposed to eat the dreadful "lens culinaris" again.

The boarders' parents were principally pious and subdued people. When graduation day came, so did the parents.

Across the predictably beige and grey crowd, I spotted my mother's car pulling up. Emerging from her large black Citroën a vision in a floral pleated silk dress with a matching hat almost made me faint. Being at the age when one would like one's parent to blend in, I was stricken with the blatant fact that my mother was not into blending mode.

Surviving this final episode, I left the horrendous boarding school with great haste. I felt like a released prisoner, no more studies, punishments, cold water, forced silence, Latin prayers, vile food and sermons. I was free and ready to discover the world.

I did not want to study another book ever again; I wanted to do something creative and artistic, my enthusiasm was boundless.

My first career move was a hairdressing apprenticeship. Spending one day a week studying at the hairdressing school, five days were spent working in a hair salon. The school covered all facets of hairdressing from trichology to finger waving.

Irrelevant of trends, one had to learn the old techniques of "Marcel Waving" using a curling iron heated on a spirit lamp. This was a very tricky task as one had to guess the right temperature not to scorch the model's locks. Drifting smells of burnt hair were a dead give away of anyone failing this exercise.

Finding models, brave enough to face this peril, was almost impossible. As a last resort, predictably 'mothers' would end up as victims. Missing lumps of hair, jagged haircuts and strange hair colours, they were easy to pinpoint in a crowd.

Learning how to use a "cut-throat" razor turned out to be just as risky for the model as for the apprentice. To hone this skill we were required to cover balloons with shaving foam and cautiously scrape it off with the dreaded razor. Failing this assignment would cause an obvious POP and a lathered learner. The bang would also surprise other students triggering an array of popping balloons. The lesson being: "to always be steady, calm and collected when holding a razor".

My employer was very tough, fastidious and demanding. Learning my trade the hard way, the 12 hour-days were laborious and without breaks. Tips were most welcome, as my weekly wage would have hardly paid for a sandwich.

Hairpieces were the rage and after hours I would attend to the 'spare hair', clients had left behind. Once all set and ready, I would scrub the salon inside out, clean and sterilize all hairdressing equipment and fill up all the various lotion and potion containers.

The skin on my hands was blistered by the constant use of perm solutions, bleaches and detergents and many times I wondered if I had made the right career move.

After months of shampooing, sweeping hair and washing floors, I was determined to move on. Gradually with charm, fortitude and flair, I established a clientele.

Having a stylist for the price of an apprentice, my stingy employer was delighted to make a nice profit. Performing those two chores was even more exhausting, however it accelerated my training.

Already recognized as the "hairpiece master", New Year's Eve 1967, a Sunday, was to be business as usual and I was solidly booked. Having started my first client at 8am, I was finishing my last masterpiece at 9pm. The day had been so frantic I hadn't even had time to eat and was totally worn out.

Cashing up his inflated takings, my employer reminded me that it was time to resume my apprentice duties and to scrub the salon.

Slaving during the next two hours, I swore to myself it would be the last time this would take place. Getting home after the clock had struck midnight, although I was only seventeen years old, I had no energy left to celebrate the New Year.

However, after 18 months of hard work and study, I passed the 3-year apprenticeship exam and won several competitions. My days of scrubbing floors were over and a new chapter of my life was about to begin.

My main mission in life was similar to that of Edit Piaf, to have "no regrets". I was to grab all opportunities and make the best of them.

It was 1968, the French students were rioting everywhere, burning cars and everything in their path, France was in a mess, London was the 'IN' place, so off I went.





My Paternal grand parents



My grand father in uniform



My maternal grand parents



Mum and Dad carrying through the Huët cycling tradition



Mum with my half sister Nicole, her daughter Fabienne and my brother Gilbert in front of the family business



it must be Sunday

with mum, her sister, my brother and cousins



serious business

in France, when we say a large loaf, we mean it



Mum and Dad



no grudge! with my brother Gilbert



Grand mère's (sober) chickens





left: my parents in tête à tête

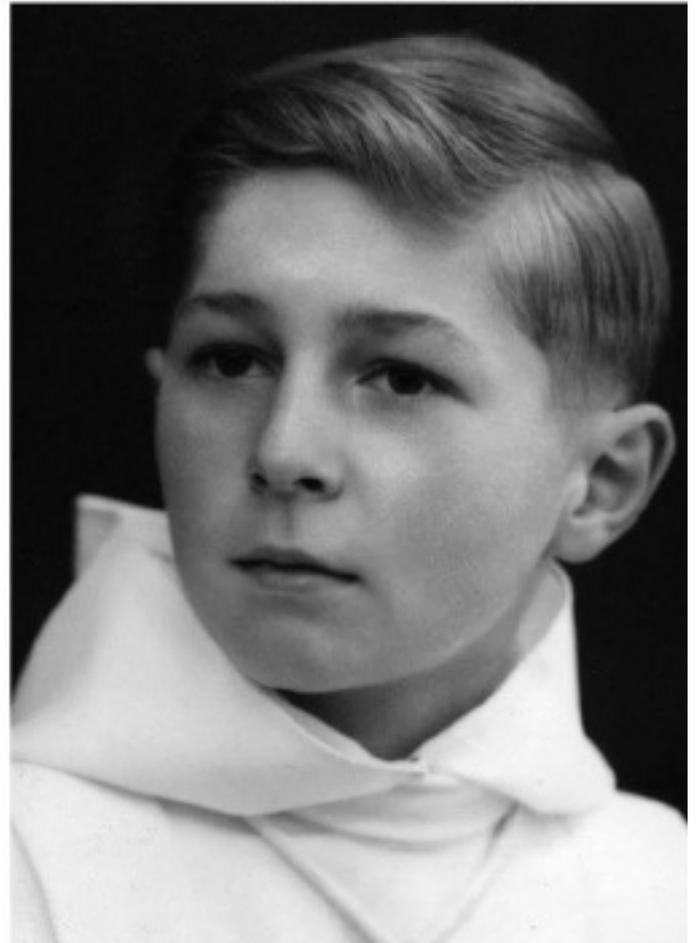
right: Mum in her youth

bottom: with my grand parents
siblings, cousins, nieces and
nephews.



my brother Gilbert and me

my choirboy days



London

I didn't know a soul in London, eighteen years under my belt, twenty pounds in my pocket, a limited school English, a letter of reference and lots of attitude, I went looking for a job. Luckily for me, French hairdressers were also the 'IN' thing and I landed a job in a week.

Soon I learned the importance of pronouncing English vowels correctly. After weeks of searching for a serviced flat, at long last I found a great studio.

My vocabulary was still very limited and wanting to find out from the landlady how often was the linen changed, the only words that came to mind at the time were:

"How often do you clean the sheets around here?" Unfortunately with my French elocution it came out as:

"How often do you clean the shit around here?"

Well the woman turned feral, fuming she shouting out words I didn't understand and threw me out. Bewildered, I stood on the pavement. Unsurprisingly I didn't get the apartment.

What was it I had said that made her so angry? I had a pretty good idea of what she had said.

It was only after I explained my ill fortune to an English friend, that the nuances of the 'ee' and 'i' were explained to me. From that day forth, I swore to give great attention to my pronunciation.

"Working like an aunt - stepping in a poodle - don't be hungry - filled with a penis - I ate you - I can't ear and I am irated" eventually turned into: Working like an ant - stepping in a puddle - don't be angry - filled with happiness - I hate you - I can't hear and I am irate and the "rain in Spain remained on the plain".

I was thrilled to commence my new employment.

The salon was conveniently located in stylish Mayfair, a short trot to Fortnum & Mason, Bond Street and the Ritz. "Posh" was one of the first new words I learnt. Opened by Mae West in the thirties, the gigantic establishment called "Riché" took up an entire block. It was one of the last of the "Grand Salons" and I have never seen anything like it since.

A doorman would greet customers on arrival, entering the mammoth foyer was like stepping into an old Hollywood movie set. The main reception alone occupied the entire ground floor. At the centre, a colossal sweeping marble staircase lead clients to another reception with a cloakroom. Once attired in a salon gown, clients were escorted through an interminable hallway leading them to countless salons. Each hairdresser had his own boudoir, named after an architectural style, such as the 'Regency room' or the 'Victorian salon'. These vast sumptuous rooms varied in colour schemes and pomposity, at best, would describe the decor. By the time clients sat in their designated chair (ten minutes after arrival) they felt as though they had had a workout and were ready for some serious pampering.

Trichologist, wigmaker, beautician, pedicurist, manicurist, colourist and a never

ending supply of hairdressers. Their numerous assistants, were in perpetual attendance, in order to supply any services requested, however whimsical. The mandatory “tea lady” would also be attending to anyone’s palatal requests.

An army of staff constantly on the move were attending to Lady Something, Countess Somewhat, Baroness Von Whatever or Princess of Somewhere. They also milady to various members of the royal family, which were outcalls, better known as “Palace delivery”.

The decor hadn’t been touched since the thirties: tassels, gilded mirrors, engraved ceilings, wooden panelling, crystal chandeliers, wall to wall marble and tapestries. Stretching for three metres, the shampooing basin was carved in the shape of a massive seashell and made out of one piece of granite. The monogram of Riché was engraved on everything that didn’t move and the lavishness of yesteryear was still alive.

In this amphitheatre I witnessed the last days of grand ladies’ lifestyle of opulence, luxury, extravagance and self-indulgence to the extreme.

The first thing I learnt was the lady’s etiquette dress code:

First, the jewellery was chosen, the dress being a mere accessory, to harmonize with the gems. The cleavage shape would depend on the length of the necklace and the colour to complement the shade of the bijoux. The hairstyle would be determined by the size and shape of the tiara. Therefore, the jewels had been chosen prior to arrival, as the headdress or necklace had to be readily available for the hairdresser to create the appropriate hairstyle.

Unfortunately they never managed to coordinate their handbags or their shoes!

Dilemmas arose as to whether to select the rubies, the emeralds or the diamonds. Should it be marquis, pear or baguette shaped?

A lady would only wear pearls during the day, as other gems were considered vulgar during daylight hours, but after dark they made-up for it.

On royal occasions the salon would be inundated with security men carrying monogrammed velvet cases with a selection of tiaras negotiable to the preferred hairstyle.

Members of the royal family would be forewarned of what colour outfit her majesty was wearing as etiquette did not permit anyone to wear the same shade. Black was a colour never worn on these occasions, as the royal etiquette demanded, that it was to be worn only at funerals (a mistake made by Diana, many years later, on her first formal evening with Charles).

The aristocratic gossips were priceless. From the styling chair to the staff room, they would circulate within seconds and of course; in those days one could trust one’s hairdresser?

Most aristocracy had their own marital arrangements, which had to be carried out with a certain amount of decorum. Sometimes we had to create complex scenarios for Lady X not to be in the same room as her husband’s mistress. From the backwash to the stylist chair, to the hairdryer, the staff worked out a routine for both ladies to be totally unaware of each other’s presence. Having so many rooms suddenly made a lot of sense.

It was common knowledge that the Queen mother adored gay men, and her staff at Clarence house were predominantly precious old fags. Hence the idiom “there is more than one old queen in that palace”. The royal mum caught some of them dressing up in her regal wardrobe, prompting some words of warning. They promised to never repeat this gaffe, until a few months later bejewelled in her prized frocks, they were caught again.

She was a great lady and I enjoyed many long chats with her. She made everyone feel at ease and one would often forget her status. The display of a new range of cosmetics always induced great excitement and involved lots of sampling.

Eccentric is the word that embodies the English aristocracy. One of the better-known members of the House of Lords would be driven every Friday afternoon, in his Rolls Royce, to the salon. Heading straight for the beautician room, he would fold up his pinstriped pants and would indulge in his usual pedicure, but more importantly, his noble toes were to be coated with the brightest shade of red vanish.

Amongst the ladies in waiting and the illustrious clients there was little we didn't know about British high society. In order to avoid indiscretions we had to keep tabs on who was sleeping with whom and who was not sleeping with whom. We had to know who were the ex wives, to make sure they never sat next to the new spouse. We also had to provide information to various clients as to who was wearing what, so they could outshine each other.

There would also be the usual hairdresser's counselling sessions, which I had mastered soon after my first “shampoo and set”.

I have been guilty of committing the occasional faux pas. Omitting to answer the reception intercom, I greeted a lovely lady on her arrival. Being the gentleman that I am, I escorted her to her appointed salon. As we proceeded down the lengthy hall, we were soon chatting and laughing away. As we entered the stylist's room, to my surprise, every one was curtsying. She was the Queen of Denmark and remarked that she'd never had such a friendly welcome. Mortified, I believe, would describe how I felt.

I soon realized that having a countess, duchess and baroness in one room could be attention and competition seeking and tremendous tact had to be implemented.

I also learnt that to sound upper class all you needed to do was to pinch your nose and put a plum in your mouth, piece of cake!

Speaking of which, my first encounter with “British tea” was somewhat of a culture shock. Having been invited to dine at a friend's parents' home, I arrived as any well brought up Frenchman would, armed with a bottle of wine and a bouquet of flowers. To my “horreur” a rather bland boiled dinner was served with a cup of tea for beverage.

Being brought up in a country where “savoir faire” *the know how* to receiving guests and the strict rules of entertaining were de rigueur, it seemed that all my knowledge of wine complementing dishes and the correct menu were out the window, so to speak.

The old saying that the English eat to live and the French live to eat became black and white. It seemed that if one's host provided the guests with something edible and liquid refreshment, it was acceptable. There were no rules of white wine with fish or red wine

with meat, having entrées or desert. Most of all, there wasn't the palaver that the French put themselves through for a diner party.

This made entertaining less daunting and easier. Soon I was to throw dinner parties for a dozen people at a time. Unfortunately, there was a catch!

Having a French host, people expected a French style soirée and different standards were demanded. Not to disappoint my guests, I dug out my mother's recipes and all the savoir-faire I had acquired, and was eventually noted as the host with the most.

Going out to restaurants was yet again another experience. Unlike today, London in the seventies was not renowned for its fabulous restaurants. They were very few and far between, and pricey didn't necessarily mean good.

Treating a friend for her birthday, we were eating at "Inigo Jones". The legendary institution had all the grandeur one would expect, although I thought the live harpsichord was a bit overwhelming.

I had ordered a 'medium rare' fillet mignon. As I sliced the first piece, I realised that it was totally overcooked. Immediately calling the waiter, I asked him to return the dish to the chef and to bring me the medium rare fillet I had requested.

Judging by the reaction of the waiter and my friends, complaining and sending dishes back to the kitchen was not the done thing. It was explained that one does not complain in restaurants. I was baffled!

"Do you mean that if the dish is bad, uncooked or overcooked people don't say anything?"

"Well! It is not done HERE"

I was appalled, how was a restaurant to improve the quality of its food if people didn't complain and what was the point of paying a small fortune for something which was inedible? Up to this day, I refuse to follow this trend and will continue to get the response "Ah the French" (they are such a pain).

The most visible difference between Paris and London was the lack of cafés and outdoor terraces. One of the French national pleasures is to spend hours on terraces, sipping something delicious, looking and bitching at the passers by.

London had the pubs, claustrophobic, noisy, smoky places where squashed crowds would stand to gather and socialise. Sorry, but you had to be Anglo-Saxon to understand that one!

Between the pushing and shoving, trying not to spill one's drink, attempting to light up a cigarette while holding a glass and figuring out what had been said amid the noise, was not my idea of recreation. On hot days they would all stand on the pavement making such a racket that the locals would complain and the police would intervene.

Alas I had to wait another 15 years for the trend of cafés and terraces to start spreading through London.

After a few months at "Riché" I soon found the old world protocol stifling. I had come to London for adventure and excitement, and the "Grand Salon" wasn't HAPPENING!

I was fascinated by the art of makeup but unfortunately there was no such thing as a makeup school. The closest was a beautician course, which included the teaching of

applying makeup for various occasions.

Enrolling for the course, I was to find out that I was the only man in the class. After learning all the various facets of beauty treatments, skin types and facial care, I was finally taught makeup.

The strongest statement of cosmetics at the time was a silvery grey or, for the more daring, pale blue eye shadow.

The final exam required an evening makeup; being audacious I had created a hot pink look on my model. Eye shadows of such colour being none existent, I had used blusher and lipstick on the eyes to create what I thought was a striking effect.

A conservative lady was one of the judges, as she approached my model, a look of horror shrouded her middle age face. Informed that pink should only be seen on lips and that subtlety wasn't my forte, I flunked the exam and was advised, in no uncertain terms, to stick to hairdressing. Ascribing it to 'generation differences' I shrugged off my first failure and swore that one-day, the old biddy would eat her words.

Being 1970, I went to work in the trendiest street: King's Road, Chelsea. Arriving in a 'groovy' salon, one-tenth the size of "Riché" was a totally different experience.

Decorum was dispensed with, no more: "my lady" "how do you do" "spiffing" "raather" "a-hare-lair" "I say old chap" and "cheerio". Farewell suits & ties, hello hipsters and flares.

I needed to adopt a whole new vocabulary and drop my plum, as my Mayfair intonations were definitely not Hip! To complicate matters, just as I'd worked out the shillings, guineas and half-crowns, they decided to go decimal and into pence. Was I forever to learn new ways?

Leaping on my magic carpet and given the freedom of artistic license, my neat haircut grew to a lion's mane, my clothes became "Hip" and my terminology changed to "far-out".

Being a good hairdresser, in a very short period of time, I developed a loyal clientele of "Sloane Rangers".

Having a hefty background of doing evening hairstyles, I wasn't surprised when my employer asked me to do one of her client's hair for a ball at "Buckingham Palace".

The woman was known to be difficult at the best of times, but on that particular day, she was at her worse. From the moment of arrival, she created havoc. From screaming at the junior who shampooed her hair to tossing her coffee for being too cold, the woman was plain obnoxious. By the time she arrived to my styling chair I knew that I had to tread carefully, thankfully I had dealt with tougher bitches before and knew how to proceed. First I made sure to ask her EXACTELY what she wanted.

"I want a very simple and elegant 'up' do".

Having done a few hundred of those in my time, I progressed with my creation. Finishing the sleek, slightly pointed, French pleat, I worked on crafting a statuesque profile.

Fiddling with my handiwork by pulling out pieces of hair, she stated:

"It's to harsh, I want bits of hair around my face".

“If I give you ‘bits of hair’ it is going to end up like a ‘Brigitte Bardot’ look that’s ‘sexy,’ but not ‘elegant’.”

Unsettling the whole salon, she then continued to pull out pieces of hair, screaming and shouting that the ‘do’ was hideous. Exasperated, I told her what I thought of her behaviour and to do her own hair. I hit her on the head with a hairbrush and through her out of the salon.

That night was her formal presentation to the Queen and a few months later she married to become Princess Michael of Kent.

Most astonishingly, days after the incident, she asked for me to do her hair. Strangely enough, I refused!

Fate has it that a few years later I was on a shoot for a Guerlain poster. The PR received a phone call at the studio, from one of their store manager in a quandary about giving a refund on a “golden bee” bottle.

The “Golden Bee” was a custom made bottle, containing half a litre of a person’s favourite Guerlain perfume bearing the person’s name and royal bees painted in pure gold. Made solely in Paris’ main store, it had to be ordered well in advance and sent to wherever the recipient lived, all making it a very exclusive and expensive item.

Princess Michael doing some charity function received such bottle, as an appreciation gesture. Deciding that she’d rather have the money, she was in a store asking for a cash replacement, hence the phone call to the PR. Being a customized item it was irreplaceable. Predictably tactful, the PR made out a figure at the top of her head and the Princess was reimbursed.

Thankfully most days in the Kings road’s salon were not as eventful and the clientele was even-tempered.

Dispensing hours of commuting, I had moved to a new flat less than a block away. It was one of those huge Chelsea mansion flats, making ‘sharing’ a bearable experience. Most of my flatmates were predominantly aspiring artists, with the result that they all worked nights in restaurants. They usually went to bed as I was preparing to go to work.

The flatmate experience was a novelty, as in Paris apartments were usually too small to share. London’s enormous flats lent themselves to this social sharing and for a time, could be fun. Primarily, it made living in London affordable, as one was spending money on other things.

The flatmates were a colourful mix. Firstly there was Marie Hélène, French with a Russian background, a mane of flaming red hair framed her beautiful bone structure. Aspiring to become a great authoress, she was a mélange between Sarah Bernard and Greta Garbo. Always dressed in vintage clothes from the twenties, thirties and forties, embodying the drama queen persona the wild beauty was always puffing from her cigarette holder. Her husky voice had a thespian tone that constantly echoed through the flat.

In contrast, her handsome husband Richard, was quiet and discrete. A talented surrealist painter, he was always thriving towards perfection, making each painting a lengthy process with unprofitable results.

Nicole was a gorgeous fiery woman, the petite feisty French Aries wasn't contented to work as a waitress, wanting to run the restaurant and she eventually did.

Driving back in her little mini from a party in the country, we were caught in a terrible blizzard. The visibility was null as she persisted to drive. Creator of road rage, she would curse and hoot at all the numerous car lights coming towards us. Eventually realizing that we were on the wrong side of the motorway and driving against the traffic, she swiftly swerved across the middle verge and eventually driving on the right side of the motorway, we made it home safely.

Serge was exotically handsome, competing for the 'drama queen' title his aim in life was to live it to the maximum and made a career out of partying.

Catherine was beautiful calm and collected, always pursuing her unknown vocation and I believe she is still searching. Born a Leo she could be very determined.

On one occasion she wanted to go to some party, which I didn't want to go to. For days on end she nagged at me to change my mind. For the sake of peace and quiet, I eventually agreed. After begging me to do her hair and makeup and lengthy preparations, we were ready to depart to the dreaded party. Just as we were on our way out, she declared that due to a sudden headache, she had changed her mind and wanted to stay home. Snappily I became enraged, I grabbed her head and banged it on the wall, screeching:

"Now you have a reason to have a headache".

Never witnessed such anger, she was taken aback and replied:

"Actually, I am much better now, let's go!"

Off we went... and had a great time.

Last but not least, there was the flat's dog, Samsy. Having a drinking and drug addiction, we had to constantly watch him.

Decorated in Arabian style with numerous cushions, we had a smoking den. Everything being at low level was reachable for an inquisitive dog. Our canine having a penchant for Pernot and red wine, we couldn't leave any drinks unattended for long. If a smoking session was in progress, we would close the room's door and leave Samsy outside. Determined to get its fix, he would stiff the smoke from under the door. Its basket being at the end of a long corridor, we knew when Samsy was out of it, as he would rub against the long wall to aid itself to make it to its bed.

Full of boundless youthful energy, working all day and clubbing all night, sleeping was not on the menu. Clubbing was a full time job in itself. Preparation for the night out was a huge issue, as hair and wardrobe had to be continually reinvented. Food was the last item on the list, as all spare cash was constantly spent on clubbing and new outfits, most of them leaving little to the imagination.

While New York had Studio 54, London had the 'Sombrero'. Queues of hundreds of night owls, dressed to kill, were pleading for entry. If you didn't look the part, you didn't get in, your look was your ticket and one had to stand out to get 'selected'.

Getting over this hurdle, one had some serious clubbing to do. Between consuming massive quantities of tequila sunrises, dancing with anyone looking fabulous, flirting with

anything seemingly sexy, catching up with all the latest scandals, trying the latest drug, guessing the gender of your dancing partner, ignoring ex lovers and selecting new ones, it was hard work. No wonder it took till 5am to leave.

Apart from the compulsory clubbing, one had to do the mandatory Saturday walk down the King's Road, checking out the scene, and the scene checking you out. Sipping coffee at the only terrace in King's road's "Picasso" was obligatory. This was also 'the street' where one would get invited to one of many parties, not that it mattered, as most parties expected to be gate crashed. Everything would happen at these bashes, as sex, drugs and rock and roll were the main objective. It was quite common for people to have several sexual encounters in one night, with various partners of course.

Fancy dress parties were the all the rage and themes forevermore challenging. From Walt Disney, Muppet Show, retro, history characters, movie titles, film stars to comic book heroes, one was forever making a creative costume.

Being invited to a "bad taste" party, I was intrigued as to the translation of the theme. Was one to dress badly, look like something that tasted bad or was it a subject matter?

Opting for the latter, from the false beard to bleeding holes in my hands and forehead, wearing a crown of thorns and a torn blood-spattered robe, I went as Jesus Christ coming down the cross. A friend joining me was dressed as a "Stabbed Cesar" his bloody toga embedded with knives handles.

The party being a block away we walked to it. Londoners were quite blaze about strange sights, but the vision of our duo caused quite a reaction. People were cracking up, clapping and whistling, we stopped traffic and by the time we arrived at the party we already had had a great time.

Fashion was constantly changing, in good London mode I went from the hippy stage, the beads, the Indian shirts, patchouli oils, kohl, American Indian jewellery, recycled vintage clothes, to bright tank tops and tight leather jeans. I tortured my hair from perming to blow-drying and joined the fashion victims of that era.

As platform shoes were growing to dangerous new heights, I was the proud owner of 6-inch platforms, seeing the world from a new angle I never took them off. I recall hanging my latest purchase, an art deco mirror in the bathroom. The next morning as I went in to shave, to my shoeless dismay, all I could see was the top of my head.

Ignoring what my aesthetician teachers had told me, I would unleash my avant-garde ideas by doing the occasional hair & makeup for newspapers or magazines. One of my favourite clients was the fashion editor and authoress, Molly Parkin. This vivacious lady, whose hair I tinted emerald green for her 40th birthday, had a close friend called Barbara Hulaniki, who was the creator of Biba.



BIBA

Described as “the most beautiful store in the world” by the Sunday Times. Biba was a six storey, 400,000 square feet mega department store and was THE institution for the trendsetters worldwide. One went to Biba as if one was going to see a movie première. As you stepped through the illustrious doors, you walked into an art deco dream. Adorned with black and cream, a myriad of exquisite counters would titillate the eye. In the midst of hundreds of ostrich feathers the latest of Barbara’s conceptions were displayed. Makeup, clothes, furniture, wallpaper, food, utensils, what ever you needed, it was there!

Most of it, designed by Barbara, was exquisite and affordable, a dream come true for young people searching for new means of expression. Thousands of girls would queue, like fans at a rock concert, to buy the latest boots. The release of her new collections would cause havoc, never had one seen such hysteria in a store and made ‘Harrods sales’ look subdued.

It was the first time in history that a makeup range covered over a hundred colours. If dusty pink was your colour, you could have it as a lipstick, blusher, nail polish, eye shadow, foundation or loose powder, you could also find that colour in clothes, wallpaper and china. Pretty revolutionary for that era!

Doll-like faces wearing the latest shade of black lipstick would stand behind the mirrored counters adding to the sultry mood of the thrilling experience of shopping at Biba.

Including the roof garden, each of the seven levels had its mood and purpose. Each floor was a fantasy world, were you could wander for hours. While on the “Men only” floor, the “Mistress Room” would separate the men from the boys by displaying the latest sexy lingerie, the oversize furniture in “the mum to be” room would make anyone in that condition feel smaller.

On the children’s floor an array of Lolita clothes would match mum’s, while a mini castle would contain exquisite books of fairy tales.

The “Casbah” would titillate the eye with a bazaar full of exotic goodies from fezzes to mantillas.

The food hall would startle with an eight foot Great Dane stacked with dog food and various sounds such as cows mooing or chickens clucking indicative of which section you were in.

The “Rainbow Room” was the grand restaurant reflecting the glamorous years of Hollywood of the thirties. Serving over six hundred people every evening, one could dine and dance on its ballroom floor to the sound of live bands such as the Pointer Sisters & Manhattan Transfer.

The ice-cream bar with its multicoloured candy jars was reminiscent of the fifties, the roof garden restaurant with its peacock chairs, evoked the twenties. The roof gardens varied from the Spanish garden, Tudor garden to romantic garden with streams, bridges,

peacocks, and flamingos, even penguins, which incidentally kept escaping to the ice cream bar creating chaos.

Not surprisingly, people were coming from all over the world to partake in the unique experience that was Biba.

The only thing it didn't have, was a beauty salon and a makeup artist to promote the very distinctive 'Biba look'. Barbara had been on the look out for a person or persons to take over this endeavour.

Molly Parkin had praised my talents to Barbara and soon a meeting took place. I remember walking into her exquisite home, lush with art deco antiques and meeting this beautiful, stylish lady. She was quite shy and this calmed my nervousness. After a lengthy conversation she offered me the job of setting up the beauty salon, running it and to be the Biba 'face maker'. I was stunned, bewildered, terrified and overwhelmed.

It was an enormous task! My twenty-two years hadn't prepared me for such an undertaking, or had they? I would never find out unless I tried.

It was the offer of a lifetime that I couldn't refuse and, with an air of confidence that the French do so well I accepted the job.

Within a few days I left my employment and my casual look and opted for my new Biba image.

To evoke to the thirties, the salon was to be called the "Beauty Parlour". Matching the rest of the store it was to be exclusively decorated in black and cream. Arduous long months were ahead, as I searched relentlessly for equipment, from thirties hairdryers, chrome bottles, deco hand mirrors and basins to barber chairs. This was the seventies and hairdressing equipment was either pink, baby blue or floral. 'Organic' was not in the hairdressing language and I spent months trying to find shampoos based on fruits or herbs. Also, I wanted to broaden the extensive Biba colour range to hair colours. This was by no means an easy task as hair products were then quite limited. After weeks of searching, I finally found a company, which was about to launch a range of crazy colours. At last, we could offer our future clients an array of colours, from lime green, scarlet red, blueberry, electric blue, lemon yellow to bright fuchsia. We were to be the pioneers in outrageous hair colour, while reviving the glamour of beauty.

Everything had to be altered, chromed, painted or mirrored, even the hairnets were dyed black. The gowns were made out of black satin for ladies and black velour for the guys, as glamour overrode practicality. Architects and tradesmen were driven crazy by the constant request for detail.

In true Biba glamorous tradition we had private cubicles built, so nobody would be seen with foil on their heads or perm rollers. One was ONLY to be seen when looking good!

To create my total makeovers, I was given my own circular boudoir with endless shelves displaying the entire Biba makeup range. After conducting ceaseless interviews and recruiting staff from all over the world, I completed my first mission and walking into the Beauty Parlour was, at last, part of the Biba experience.

I believed that if I was selling 'looks' and 'makeup' I should 'be' what I advertised.

Men wearing makeup belonged to previous centuries and it was quite a daring undertaking.

Every day as I put on my Biba look, I finally understood the daily chore of women's beauty routine. To aspire to the retro image, I had to transform myself into what I called my "silent movie star" look. Tying down my long blond hair into a black-gelled bun, a ghostly pale foundation covering my face and dark smudgy eyes completed the dramatic disguise. A stiff starched evening shirt, bowtie and tails refined the final Rudolf Valentino effect.

You certainly had to suffer to be part of the glamorous Biba image! Not to mention the interesting reactions which were experienced as I ventured outdoors.

This was the era when Londoners were threatened daily by IRA bomb scares. All large stores were targeted and Biba was no exception. Many times a week, all customers and staff would be asked to exit the store and wait patiently as the bomb squad proceeded with their search. I was always amazed at the British 'sang froid' as all calmly walked out of the store. On one occasion they found a large bomb in the buyer's office, which was where my office was. This made us a bit edgy for a while.

To illustrate the various looks the beauty parlour could offer, I wanted to do a series of photographs that covered all the retro looks, from pre-Raphaelite to the fifties and also all the current "Biba looks". My ideas being larger than my budget meant I could not afford a famous photographer. Word was out that I was scouting for new talent and before long, I was inundated with promising young photographers' portfolios. Having selected the best, I met them personally to make a final decision.

I carried out the interviews in the "meeting room" where company representatives displayed their products to the Biba buyers. To accommodate their presentation, a mammoth intimidating table filled the room. A shy, young photographer called Stuart MacLeod had some beauty shots with a quality that caught my eye. I decided to see him a second time on my day off, when the office would be less frantic.

As I greeted him, I detected a perplexed look. The problem being that he was confused, as he thought he was to meet Régis. Taken aback to his response, I told him I was Régis! His looked even more puzzled. Suddenly the penny dropped! Being my day off, I was not in my Biba regalia; instead of the sleek dark hair and theatrical makeup, he was looking at blond locks and a fresh face. An explanation took place and a good laugh started our long working relationship.

To do a Photo shoot in Biba was a photographer's dream, seven levels of magical sets with bountiful supplies of clothes and accessories. After more castings for models, we worked incessantly from morning to night. Adopting all the glamorous movie stars' retro images to the Biba looks, within a few weeks we had completed the series of photographs successfully.

Amid running the beauty parlour, doing makeovers, media interviews, photographic work, I was kept pretty busy. Aggravations of managing staff, stocktaking, transforming miss average into a model, turning models into Biba dolls, were to be my daily tasks.

Attended by illustrious guests, there were constant Biba parties at the Rainbow Room,

the roof garden or Barbara's house. The days were full and yet again, sleep was something other people did.

Soon I was working with all the international magazines, moulding, promoting, updating the Biba look and becoming a reputable entity. Things were moving fast and were extremely exhilarating.

I loved meeting new people, enticing them into the magical Biba world. Hiding behind my "silent movie" mask, I was quite comfortable with interviews and cameras, one felt like an actor doing a play, as though nothing was quite as it seemed.

I met and worked with a lot of famous people, never being a "fan type", it did not bother me, which was just as well, as there is nothing worse than a nervous makeup artist with shaky hands.

Britt Ekland was an actress known for her natural, sexy Nordic looks. She had just finished a James Bond movie and asked me to transform her for the world première. Her request was quite clear:

"I want to look completely different, a real glamorous Hollywood look".

Fulfilling her desires, I crimped her long straight hair into a wild mane, and gave her a Marilyn Monroe makeup.

Emerging from the white Rolls Royce, clad in a red sequin dress, wrapped in a white mink coat she looked a million dollars. The paparazzi were overwhelmed by this astounding vision, wondering who she was? Mystified, they saved their film for Britt Ekland "the star" and no one took her picture, hence the whole exercise had been a total waste of time and she was not impressed.

Creative people and accountants are like oil and water. Behind the huge Biba Empire were investors and their accountants. As the years went by, they kept interfering with Barbara's creativity. This constant officious blockade on her ideas and the Biba image drove her crazy and eventually, one day she just walked out and I followed her.

Without her, the store closed down a few months later. It was 1976, the conclusion of a chapter in my life and the end of an era for London.



Going freelance

I knew I didn't want a nine to five job ever again. Being the mid-seventies, models were still doing their own hair and makeup as fashion makeup artists were rare and not yet in vogue. Keeping my assistant and dear friend Tish as my secretary, I made the audacious and daring move to set myself up as a freelance hair & makeup artist.

Mid twenties, I was at last an independent man heading towards a new venture. After sending out my newly printed "Visagiste" cards, to my great relief slowly but surely the phone started to ring and my fabulous (for a minute bored) secretary, started to take bookings from various clients.

Being part of the first wave of this new profession was arduous, as everything had to come from instinct and the strength of one's convictions. There was no teacher to coach one, no role model to look up to; it was all new, original and enterprising.

One had to create the standards and ethics of this new profession. Worse of all, I had to price myself and work out an hourly fee. Being a person of extremes I opted for an outrageous sum. One thing I was never to be was cheap! I had to work out fees for travel days, weekends, overtime and weather checks. I had to also decide the boundaries of my job.

How much equipment should I carry? How many shades of lipsticks, eye shadows, nail varnishes should I lug? Before I knew it, I had carry two huge bags and would have to learn how to minimize.

London was the happening place and creativity and innovations had open doors.

I felt that makeup had not been used to its full potential and neither had I. Taking my artistry to new heights, with the help of my friend Stuart MacLeod, we created a whole series of surrealistic photographs.

From making latex baldheads to using every colour of the rainbow, exploiting my brushes in ways never dared before, I let my creativity run free and created radical new images. Aided by Stuart's brilliant technique we ended up with a collection of groundbreaking concepts. Taking makeup and photography to a pinnacle, beauty photography was to emerge as a new art form. This was to help both our careers.

A cosmetic company called "Miners" approached us to do a series of advertisements, incorporating this original style. Spending days at designing new looks, I fashioned eyebrows in unconceivable shapes, applied eye shadows in outlandish ways and painted skins in astonishing shades. The final result made quite an impact and the campaign was a huge success.

The beauty editor of Harpers & Queen, at the time, was a pioneering lady called Leslie Kenton. She approached us to further our ideas into editorial images, which we did with enthusiasm. Digging further into our bottomless box of tricks, we came out with more outlandish concepts.

This promoted a new trend towards innovative beauty photography, and also created a demand for professional fashion makeup artists.

Computer retouching didn't exist, the work had to be flawless and lengthy hours were spent to meticulously achieve the perfect finish. This process would take even longer if the end result was going to be on a billposter, as each brushstroke would be magnified hundreds of times.

I had to overcome my natural excitable personality to achieve the equanimity essential for one to execute this work. Temperamental models, difficult photographers or awkward locations often tested this self-control.

Not only was one dealing with the unpredictable living canvases, but their owners could be moody, grumpy, irritable, quivering, nervous, smelly, hung over, sick, tired or plain obnoxious. Regrettably I endured all of the above.

It is quite remarkable how skin reflects its owner's mood or condition and I always stunned models when I told them their period was due by just looking at their skin.

With one's canvas often being less than ideal: spotty, greasy, flaky, sun burnt, porous or wrinkly, one still had to deliver a flawless result. Sometimes clients would demand impossible things, and I often had to remind them that my brushes were not "magic wands".

If the demands were achievable, I never questioned them and delivered what ever was asked. I prided myself on always being on time and while shooting, I was always standing by with a hairbrush on the lookout for a stray hair, or with my powder puff to eradicate unwanted shine. Keeping an eye on unwelcome clothes' creases, reminding models not to walk out of the set with untapped shoes, prompting them to carefully take off sweaters to avoid makeup stains or holding a reflector, was part of the job and a constant undertaking. I became an 'ace stain remover', there wasn't a make-up stain I couldn't remove instantly. Armed with hairspray, I would squirt the offensive spot and rub it off with tissues, et voilà!

There were no "supermodels" in those days, just top models, doing what models are supposed to do: moulding into a constantly changing image for the required look of the minute. They were exclusive, expensive, exquisite coat hangers, chameleons that didn't stick to "a look" contrary to today's supermodels.

An important part of being a makeup artist was to have people skills and savoir-faire, making sure that things would go as smoothly as possible. This was totally selfish, as applying a beautiful makeup on a discontented face is as ineffectual as painting a cracked wall. Emotions had to be dealt with like flaws on a living canvas, furthering a better result.

Boosting models' egos, feeding their self-confidence, one had to be entertaining, motivating, witty, tactful and humorous. The exchange of personal minutiae and confidences would develop an intimacy, which allowed one to reach the inner person. The more one understood one's subject, the better one could manage a crisis. To facilitate this task I identified the various types of models:

The nice model: *delightful to work with, enjoy it while it lasts.*

The agreeable but demanding model: *to be dealt with tactfully.*

The moody model: *to be ignored as much as possible.*

The famous but pleasant model: *to be dealt with courteously.*

The famous and fastidious model: *to be dealt with cautiously & diplomatically.*

The know it all model: *Thinks she can do her makeup better than anyone. First: start diplomatically, if unsuccessful, tell the client that there is one makeup artist too many on the job; she'll soon tone down.*

The bitch: *The only way to deal with them, is to turn yourself into a super bitch and let them know who is the boss, as if you let them win they will take over, give you hell and make your job impossible.*

There were plenty of models but very few visagistes. Everybody now wanted hair & makeup artists, but there were only a handful of us in the whole world and soon I was inundated.

By then, I felt I was well on my way, climbing the steps to success. Launching myself into this new career, equipped with my two heavy bags, I became a mobile hair and beauty salon. Every day would differ, working at various locations, different studios, with diverse people; I began to know London better than any taxi driver.

Working in Europe 'a job' soon became a 'flight away', I travelled ceaselessly; airports and hotels became my second home. I would wake up to the ring of a telephone often wondering which country I was in and what language to respond in. It was not uncommon for me to start my week in Munich, spend Wednesday in Rome and Friday in Paris.

I was to discover the pressure of delivering constant creative output. Every season I would be creating the show cards and posters for various cosmetic companies such as Mary Quant, Rimmel, Boots, Miners, Elisabeth Arden, Helena Rubinstein, Max Factor, Almay, YSL and Guerlain. Each of these having a distinctive image, I would have to create individual looks.

Unfortunately, most of the time, all the companies would turn out with the same makeup colours and there was only so much one could do with the same eye shadow. Thankfully, I surprised myself and seemed to come up with new ideas on demand.

To follow were the countless beauty books for various companies. From Mary Quant to Marks & Spencers' step-by-step makeovers, tips and tricks of the trade were divulged to avid readers.

I loved making up 'real' people. Unlike models, they had lines and unpredictable features. It was challenging but far more rewarding, as one would observe their reaction to their 'new' image. More than satisfying their vanity it strengthened their self-esteem and confidence.

Biting the hand that fed me, I would advise people to buy cheap brands, as I discovered that apart from pricing and packaging, most cosmetics were identical, expensive didn't mean exclusive as often they came out of the same factory. As a matter of fact, some of the expensive brands would incorporate perfume in their products, which would cause more allergies.

By then my voluminous makeup bag had to contain an extensive range of cosmetics, as one never knew what one would be asked to do until one arrived at the job. Creating

an advertisement for a new eye shadow or lipstick prior to manufacture of the product, took the talents of an inventive artist with a paint palette to produce the required effect and colour.

The hardest achievement was to paint the perfect 'even' lips. Both sides of a face being uneven, the only centred feature (apart from the nose) is the mouth. Most mouths are uneven; to correct this imperfection one had to balance it with the rest of the face, making a simple alteration quite difficult.

Due to the unpredictable British weather and the need to photograph fashion three months ahead, one had to travel to various locations. The problem of working three months ahead of publication, photographing summer in winter and winter in summer, meant, predictably the models would either freeze or overheat.

My suitcase was always on standby, including toiletry bag, smalls, passport, traveller's cheques and location essentials. These would include sun creams, sarongs, caps, gloves, Swiss knife, clock, thermal underwear, shorts and a swimsuit. I could pack my suitcase and be out of the house in ten minutes. This came in useful as many times little forewarning was given.

Working on commercials where exotic locations were essential to the product, totalled many hours of travel, frequent injections, countless airports, carting luggage, driving for miles, working from sunrise to sundown, struggling against the cold, sheltering for the rain or shielding from the sun.

Constantly improvising working areas on steps, fields, barges, boats, trains, cars, car parks, beaches, mountains, fiords, forests, park benches and trying to keep the models hair and face in pristine condition was a constant struggle. So much for the glamour!

I would guard my ever-growing makeup box with my life. Sometimes I would have to battle with airport staff to allow me to carry it on board. Imagine what would happen to all those eye shadows in the cargo hold?

One thing about airport security puzzled me; my makeup box was searched hundreds of times, yet the only container large enough to hold anything suspicious was my loose powder box and it was never opened!

Adding to the required skills, one had to also have a 'nose' for fashion, as the looks one created three months ahead had to blend with the fashion evolution. Somehow this came as second nature, one intuitively knew if next year was to be bright, bold, matt or shiny.

Often woken up by some beauty editor doing her 'trend' report, I would come up with 'spur of the moment' answers. 'Quoted' three months later I would read my words as 'facts' to discover how easy it was to be a trendsetter and how gullible the whole industry was.

When doing editorial, I would create a makeup, fitting to the magazine's image, ranging from natural, sporty, sexy, and sophisticated to edgy. We would do all the fashion shots first and at the end of the day, when the models were tired and the makeup had been on all day, the editors would decide to do a cover trial.

This use to infuriate me, as it made more sense to do a close-up cover shot at the

start of the day, when the makeup and the model were fresh.

Even more revealing, was to pick up the cover three months later and read a whole list of cosmetics credited to that cover, irrespective of what was actually used. The credits for a cover were allocated to the company who advertised the most in that magazine.

This might explain why somehow, the lipstick one bought from the credit in a magazine did not look the same when applied.



A quick glance at the history of cosmetics

Makeup has an extraordinary history about which I would like to enlighten anyone interested (if not jump to the next chapter).

Throughout recorded history man has painted his face, at times, in primitive tribes decorating it boldly as a form of camouflage or as a mark of status, again touching it delicately with a little colour in the hope of regaining lost youth.

From the red-stained teeth of Hindu women, the shaved foreheads of the fifteen-century to the black-stained teeth of the Japanese, all have been considered at their time a mark of beauty and at least one Persian king always took his cosmetic case to the battlefield.

Although primitive man did at times use makeup to frighten his enemies, it has usually been used to attract lovers and friends and to bolster self-confidence.

In some eras, moralists threatened hellfire and eternal damnation to those who dared defile God's handiwork with artificial colours. To those who dared, it would cause social pressures and could tarnish a reputation and, in the eighteenth century, even cause the legal nullification of one's marriage.

Sociological changes are usually interlaced with economic, technological, and psychological ones, as in the twentieth century, with supply following increased demand brought about by a psychological need for youth and beauty.

What man or woman first applied to their face or when it happened is lost in the mists of prehistoric times. Although archaeologists have unearthed Egyptian palettes for grinding eye paint, dating from about 10,000 B.C most of makeup artefacts found are dated from about 5,000 B.C. It is known that men and women in Egypt used face & body makeup as a daily routine.

Some of the cosmetics jars found in the tomb of Tutankhamun still contained a 3000-year-old skin cream. They rouged their cheeks & lips, 5000-year-old samples of lip rouge have been found. They often stained their nails, the palms of their hands & the soles of their feet with henna, accentuated veins on the breasts and temples with blue tint and sometime even painted their nipples gold. Men painted their bodies with orange pigments, ladies would lighten their skin with a yellow ochre colour and seldom failed to line their eyes heavily with kohl of various colours, already, perfumes were big business.

In ancient Rome it was said that: *a woman without makeup is like food without salt*. Light complexions were considered essential for fashionable women; white lead & chalk were used for that purpose while crocodile excrement was used as a mudpack.

Personal decorations varied and continued through the centuries. Eye shadow in various colours were used to some extent from the sixth-century Spain to fifteenth-century France.

During the Italian renaissance (15th century) shaving their forehead to the ideal size (height=width) ladies continued to whiten their faces with poisonous white lead, often applying one coat over another, either to avoid the trouble of removing the paint each

day or in order to fill in the wrinkles, they also used mercury to remove imperfections in the skin, both destroying their teeth and causing premature aging.

One century later in the Elizabethan days, they just used more of it. It was said about Elisabeth I: *“Along with her red wig, she wore the fashionable red & white paint on her exposed skin, and the older she got, the more she painted”*.

The early seventeenth-century saw the use of paint becoming more discreet and Patches to be most fashionable. Men and women wore motifs such as stars, half moons and hearts, often to hide blemishes.

By the mid-seventeenth century ladies and gallants of the courts were competing to wear the most paint and the largest wigs. The patches were by then serving a purpose beyond pure decoration. Crucial placement of each patch sent a different message across, all of a sexual nature. Great ladies usually wore seven or eight of them and always carried their patch boxes with them to replace any, which might fall off or, to satisfy any sudden urge for an additional one.

To the eighteenth century lady of fashion, some makeup was essential, and as the century progressed, they couldn't have enough of it. The French court ladies whitened their faces, pencilled their eyebrows, touched up their veins with blue, and rouged to the limit; only prostitutes, it is said, aspired for a natural look.

By 1781 it was estimated that Frenchwomen used two million pots of rouge a year.

This century saw the French court at its peak of fashion statements and going through tons of powder and mountains of hair, until they all lost their heads.

The nineteenth century saw the pendulum swing away from the obvious, taking makeup to a subtler look. The rosy cheeks and lips looked almost natural, and ladies were devoting considerable time to their makeup to create a more illusory effect.

Until the French restoration, when ladies used a ghostly white makeup and quantities of rice powder, in an attempt to look like figures out of the mass book: pale, slender, delicate, spiritual, slightly indisposed, given to attacks of the vapours.

As the Victorian influence became more pervasive, the use of cosmetics became more furtive, fewer women would admit to wearing rouge and it would only be seen on elderly gentlemen who clung to the habits of earlier years. Although in different circles such as actresses and dancers, the “demi-mondaines” whitened their face with face enamel, rouged their cheeks and lips excessively, lined their eyes with black and even wore false eyelashes.

Apart from those rare exceptions, especially the second half of the nineteenth century was the most subdued as far as makeup goes and rouge was certainly in a state of dubious respectability.

In 1846 Theron T. Pond began manufacturing Pond's Extract, one of the first widely distributed American cosmetics. By the end of the century 262 establishments were producing cosmetics and the favourite beauty bible was The Rimmel's book of perfumes in 1865.

By the twentieth century the cosmetics cycle returned to the completely free and open use of makeup. Perhaps for the first time since the Egyptians, the unlimited use of

cosmetics came to be universally accepted, both socially and morally. So much so that for the first time in cosmetic history one can pin point each decade, by the “look” of that decade.

In 1903 Vogue was very concerned about ladies choosing the right “rouge” and loose powder to give them that ‘fresh look’. Most fashionable ladies opted for the powder papers and subtle rouge. Regular visits to the Beauty parlours were a must. Mme Leclair and Harriet Hubbard Ayer were the supreme queens of skin preparations.

In 1904 a Monsieur Coty tried to sell a new perfume called “La Rose Jaquemot” to a Paris department store, was refused permission even to open the bottle, managed on his way out to smash it, enchanting the store full of customers with the delightful scent and launched himself into business.

In 1907 the nail varnish was born and so was the “Wrinkle Eradicator”, the first of many promises to come.

“Even the most conservative and prejudiced people” wrote the beauty editor of Vogue in 1920, *“now concede that a woman exquisitely made up may yet be, in spite of seeming frivolity, a faithful wife and a devoted mother”*.

The “liquid face powder” invented in 1904 was now perfected, later called foundation it would revolutionize the cosmetic industry, while tweezers were slowly plucking their way to a thinner brow arch.

Beauty secrets of famous actresses such as Sarah Bernhardt were very much in demand on both sides of the Atlantic. Her beauty bath recipe called for *“half a pound of marshmallow flowers, a quarter pound of hyssop, and four pounds of bran put directly into the bath water”*.

After a brief stormy partnership with Mme Hubbard Ayer a Canadian woman, Florence Nightingale Graham, borrowed six thousand US dollars from a cousin, chose the name Elizabeth Arden and started one of the most successful careers in cosmetics. In 1929 she refused an offer of fifteen million US dollars for the company.

The beauty business was already catering for all occasions: so much so that in 1921 the motorist enthusiast could obtain for US\$76.40, a black leather travelling case containing twenty two preparations *“for the protection of the skin against the ravages of the sun, wind and dust”*. Already all the miracle creams were available, from *“Sagging Cheeks Lifted”* to *“Ill Shaped Noses”* creams, there was even a *“Roll-Off Reducing Cream”* at six dollars per pound, presumably per pound of cream.

The year 1923 saw the successful invention of “Kurlash”, a tool for curling eyelashes. Madame Helena Rubinstein, who began beautifying Australian women in 1902, was the New York beauty specialist ‘par excellence’, with Yardley (open since 1770) only steps behind.

With the flat-chested look in fashion, English women were reading *“The Queen”* for advice on how to reduce the bust. Face-lifts were already in practice but restricted to the rich & famous.

The lipstick was taking over “the little red box of courage” (rouge for cheeks & lips). Research shows that American women at that time were applying three thousand miles

of lipstick a year.

Described as *“a dark mixture applied on lids and in the hollow of the eye to bring out its sombre radiance”* the eye shadow was reborn in 1927 and first only worn by daring women. The look was wistful: thinly plucked and pencilled eyebrows, shadowed eyes, plenty of mascara and a painted rosebud mouth, thankfully in 1928 the Kleenex was invented.

By 1925 it was estimated that American women spent nearly a billion US dollars a year for cosmetic and beauty care. Unfortunately this did not improve the quality of the products, as a New York dermatologist said, *“Some women apply mixtures to their faces that would take the paint off an automobile”*.

By 1930 the average American woman was spending US\$307 a year on cosmetics. In the May issue of Harper's Bazaar an article mentioned the arrival of *“a nail varnish to match your lipstick”* How radical! Why did no one think of it before?

Initially taken up by the Hollywood and New York international set, the tanned look was in; fake tan products were sold by the thousands. Lipsticks outlining the Cupid's bow came in various shades, the hot favourites of that year were, Lido Crimson, Riviera Red and Palm Beach Coral. Vogue stated: *“Nothing is more significant for women than their lipsticks”*. The universal use of makeup bought with it problems in etiquette undreamed of a few decades earlier, applying lipstick and powder in public had come to be tolerated, even by men, so long as it was done discreetly and only when necessary, while applying rouge was still unthinkable.

Long thin eyebrows took sophisticated shapes, Dietrich being a perfect example; eye shadows were available in blue, green, violet, brown, black and grey. False eyelashes were growing to bewildering lengths and curling irons to curl your own were a must.

To a great extent Hollywood set the Makeup fashion trends of the thirties and Max Factor created in 1938 the “Pan-Cake”, the first water soluble foundation, which was a significant breakthrough at the time.

In 1940 a long overdue Act was finally passed in the USA “the Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act” regulating all goods on the market, preventing adulteration, misbranding and deceptive packaging.

“Paint your lips, as an artist would” advised Vogue in 1941 *“use a brush & two shades of lipstick”*. Twenty million US dollars was spent on lipstick that year, and sixty million on cold cream to remove it.

Despite the war, the cosmetic industry was still growing. As seamed stockings were in short supply, resourceful ladies would first apply leg makeup, and then draw the seam line with an eye pencil, so to look as they were wearing them.

In 1946 American women spent thirty million dollars on five thousand tons of lipstick.

Eyebrows were getting bolder but more precise and mascara was a must. Ladies were outlining their lips with the new Rimmel lip pencil and the three indispensable items were; lipstick, brow pencil & block mascara, (although the spitting required for the mascara to be liquefied must have looked most un-lady like).

1950 started with the “doe-eyed” look, taking eyeliner to aggressively unreal

proportions. The painted look was IN, the eyeliner was imperative and lips turned to pinks and oranges. After an enormously successful advertising campaign “Fire and Ice”, Revlon became the leading brand in the USA.

In 1954 Max Factor sold more than ten million “pan-cake” makeup units a year and brought out the “Erase” and all women with dark circles under the eyes were eternally grateful.

English ladies favoured Coty, Charles of the Ritz, Yardley and Cyclax, French women were still wearing Rimmel and Max Factor and were turning towards more exclusive brands such as Lancôme, Dior and Guerlain. After so many years of being so essential, “rouge” was suddenly discarded.

As the fifties unfurled, largely due to Ingrid Bergman and foreign films, makeup became softer and even a few imperfections, such as freckles, were occasionally allowed to show, eyebrows grew thicker but defined. In 1958 the automatic mascara was introduced and spiting on block mascara became a thing of the past.

The cosmetic empire was booming and the fiercest competitors were Miss Arden and Madame Rubinstein. This did little to reduce prices. In 1958 a lipstick costing six cents to make was sold for two dollars. One manufacturer admitted to a 900 percent mark-up on some products.

The sixties began with the brown lipstick then progressed to ice pink outlined with a darker liner to the no lipstick look.

The only continuity in that decade was the emphasis on eyes while the eyebrows and lips were underplayed. Eyeliner became thicker and longer and the accentuation of the socket line was deeper and darker. The false eyelashes got thicker and made their way to the under eye area and, as if it wasn't enough, sometimes one would draw more lashes on the top and under the eyes with black liner.

The favoured colours were charcoal black, Brown, taupe and dark blue highlighted with pale aqua & white. “Rouge”, renamed “blush” had a brief revival, subtle in colour it was usually used all over the face to give a healthy glow.

The appearance of Elizabeth Taylor as Cleopatra on the big screen made matters worse and no girl would be seen with less than one pair of false eyelashes. The “Egyptian look” and “Nile green” eyes became popular for a while, so did eyelashes with rhinestones.

Also borrowed from the North Africans and Indians was the trend of using Kohl. It was the decade where it was said to men: *“It's getting masculine to be feminine”* and men's fragrances and toiletries were developing into big business.

In 1967, street makeup took its cue from stage makeup, with emphasis on modelling the face with highlights and shadows, bringing emphasis on bone structure. Applied by a makeup artist the result was striking but the “do it yourself” jobs observed on the street were not always as successful. The late 60's saw spikier lashes, painted freckles, glitter & glint. Mary Quant was England's queen of the Mods, shiny faces were the rage, while men were immersing themselves in Brut and fake tan. *Queen's* Joan Price was keeping her readers up to date with the latest fads, Twiggy and Verushka were the super models

and Zsa Zsa Gabor started her own cosmetic line.

In 1970 permissiveness in makeup hit a new peak, with no apparent restrictions on either colour or design. In London, models were using a variation of poster paint around the eyes and watercolours on the face. Rainbows around the eyes, red eyelashes, multi-coloured streaks in the hair, pale green eyebrows, gold eyelids, you name it, they wore it. The “Punk rockers” were raising a few eyebrows; the idea was not only to catch the eye but also to rivet the attention. Makeup was at its peak of extravagance.

The London Biba store revolutionized the cosmetic industry with a range of 120 shades for eyes lips & nails. Pale ivory doll like faces with thin eyebrows, dusky raccoon eyes, and a dark mouth was the look. Every shades of Berry seemed to be the flavour.

At last affordable cosmetics were on the market and young people couldn't get enough of them, makeup became more of an accessory and as women would buy a new outfit they would purchase a matching eye shadow or lipstick.

Coloured pencils replaced Kohl, “Cat's eyes”, Glitter and frosty powders were the trend for a moment. David Bowie took men's makeup to new dimensions; makeup became a self-expression and had no boundaries.

In the 1980's America was the trend setter, bringing the natural look back into vogue, allowing eyebrows to grow back to their natural shape hopefully like Brooke Shield and the “no makeup” makeup was born, a lengthy and precise exercise to make one look as natural as possible.

This natural trend caused cosmetic houses to redirect their customers towards the more lucrative skin care products and perfumes, suddenly most fashion labels and famous personalities were creating their own signature perfumes with profitable results.

By the mid eighties thanks to Joan Collins, stronger makeup returned and so did, eyeliner, fuchsia & purples. The end of the 80's revived the full on face, and mascara in all shades of the rainbow was the craze.

In 1993 the thinner arch eyebrow reappeared. A clean and precise eye makeup was the go, subtle eyeliner and natural looking foundation. Lips were matt and thanks to collagen were to grow to unnatural sizes.

Sadly no new look was created; instead “Retro” looks such as the 60's. 70's & 80's were to take turns in the trends.

By 2000, the trend of magazines using celebrities on their covers went to the extreme. Digitally enhanced to excess, straight out “Madame Tussauds”, not a line was to be seen on the ageless famous faces. Emaciated bodies being the trend any unflattering contour was instantly removed to result into flawless images, which had to be approved by the celebrity prior to release.

Aspiring to look like these unrealistic icons, spending more money than ever before, with the aid of cosmetics, diets, exercise, botox, liposuction and plastic surgery, women were redesigning their faces and bodies to achieve that perfect look they have been pursuing for centuries. *“The average woman has sixteen square feet of skin, her dissatisfaction with it accounts for the expenditure”*

First visit to Australia

While at Biba, I had met a bubbly lady called Kerry Yates, at the time, editor of Australian magazine "Dolly". A Biba makeover being the winning prize of a competition, she was chaperoning the winner. We gelled instantly and she asked if I were offered a good deal, would I come to Australia? Sure I said!

I had never thought of Australia, as my extensive travels never took me there. A vision of kangaroos and boomerangs was the extent of my knowledge of the country.

In the European cold month of February 1978 a company called "Sportsgirl" offered me a fashion promotion tour in Australia. The idea of going somewhere warm and sunny and getting paid for it was appealing. After extensive negotiations with Australian Immigration, helped by the sponsorship of Sportsgirl I was finally granted a visa.

I had by then acquired dual nationality and had a British passport, making travelling easier. The only conundrum was, I was still a reservist for the French government and also a loyal subject of her majesty. If a war was ever again to occur between France and England, was I to jump camp on a weekly basis?

Nothing had prepared me for the tedious hours of travel and the many tiring stops, I was going to the end of the world and it sure felt like it!

Serried rows of passengers would spend hours trying to find a comfortable position in which to sleep. Being such a long flight, I actually had to eat the airline food, something I usually avoided at all cost. Sampling the various food compartments was also a small distraction during the lengthy journey.

Akin to the 'real estate ads' I was always amazed by the creativity and inventiveness of airline menus. The reading of the gastronomic prose was always tantalising until the chosen dishes materialized to an inevitable disappointment.

One of the many transit stops was in Malaysia.

Having just done the launch of a new Yves Saint Laurent perfume called "Opium", superbly wrapped in my hand luggage, I was the proud custodian of the first bottle to arrive in Australia as a gift for Kerry.

Kuala Lumpur's perplexed custom officers, not quite up to date with the latest fashion, went into alarm mode at the sight of the golden letters spelling OPIUM. After tearing the wrapping apart and a lengthy analysis of the mystifying fluid, they came to the conclusion that I had told the truth and indeed it was perfume!

Who in their right mind would traffic labelled drugs?

After 36 long hours of flying and interminable passport control queues, I arrived to a stifling hot morning in Sydney.

In those days Australia didn't have much media exposure in Europe and I had no idea what to expect, however it was love at first sight of the Sydney Harbour, the awesome breath-taking panorama was totally unexpected, it was the best-kept secret.

Space! So much space, so different to Paris's cramped streets, London's endless row of houses, Sydney was so spacious. Wide streets, houses actually stood on their own with

large gardens and swimming pools (a luxury which is rarely seen in Europe's large cities). So much light and colour, lush tropical vegetation and always glimpses of that gorgeous harbour. Used to the constant traffic jams, I couldn't believe how fluid the circulation was.

Countless beaches, parks and picnic areas allowed such an amenable outdoor lifestyle. In London one had to travel at least 90 minutes, negotiate endless gridlocks to gain the privilege of sitting on an uncomfortable pebble beach to watch an ocean displaying various shades of grey.

People would laugh when I'd point out how many empty parking spaces there were, they didn't realise that for a Londoner an empty parking space was a rare sight. All it seemed was taken for granted.

People looked healthy and fit, dressed in bright colours showing up their golden skins, made a nice change from the pallid faces wearing the "new black" I was use to.

Living in the eastern suburbs, in 10 minutes I could be at a meeting in the city, at a studio, in a park, at the beach or on a boat. I was astonished at the city's equilibrium. To me, it was the perfect balance between business and pleasure, all reachable within minutes, I was overwhelmed by this wonderful lifestyle and I would be back!

I was amazed at drivers getting out of their cars swinging their doors wide open, had it been in London, due to the narrowness of the streets, those doors would have been destroyed within seconds. Living in Double Bay I also discovered that residents had dubious driving skills, the bigger the hairdo meant the more ominous the skill, and red lights were a mere suggestion. It was explained to me that these mature ladies had been taught to drive by "aiming the bonnet's insignia at the middle of the road" unfortunately omitting to look elsewhere.

I loved the "wysiwyg" (what you see is what you get) Australian attitude, no facade or pretence, friendly people. No fancy "how do you do" were needed, a simple "G day" sufficed. Everything seemed to be so straight forward and without fuss. So refreshing!

"We must do lunch" in London term translated as "I'll see you around", to my surprise in Australia they actually meant "when are you free for lunch?" My vocabulary was extended to new highs discovering that "root" was in Australia a verb (which was to be used cautiously). Every girl was called "Sheila", a "parade" was a fashion show, a "Barbie" had nothing to do with dolls and "doll" stood for darling. No matter how severe a situation was one would always be reassured with "she'll be right mate" or "no worries".

My task for the promotional tour was to create the models' hair & makeup, initiating the audience in the newest cosmetics and hosting Sportsgirl's latest collection. These fashion shows were to take place in various stores in different cities. An exhibition of my surrealistic beauty photographs was also to travel with us. I concocted a new image for myself for this venture. A sultry Brando makeup, sleek hair and all white outfits were the agenda.

A friend called Nicole was to join me for a few weeks to share this adventure. In Melbourne's Windsor hotel I shall never forget the bewildered expression of the lady bringing our breakfast. Nicole still in bed smoking a cigarette and reading the paper, and "Moi" in my kimono, hair clipped back, applying a hefty face-paint from my huge makeup

box outspread in front of me. The scene was obviously unfamiliar, as Australian blokes just didn't travel with so much makeup.

The reception staff soon got use to my getup, but failed to recognize me without it, refusing to give me my keys without ID.

Once my mission was accomplished, I stayed a few more weeks to enjoy and discover more of this magnificent country.

From then on I decided to come to Sydney every year, each visit becoming longer.



Back to London and globetrotting

After months of sunshine and blue skies, I was always stunned driving back from Heathrow at the glum of London's grey: buildings, people, streets and sky. It was like stepping into a black and white movie, all had become monochromatic. No wonder people looked so depressed there! Eventually I would have to live in a sunny place and I had found that country.

Being such a faraway land, my London friends couldn't understand my fondness for Australia, but they hadn't been enlightened as I had.

Travelling constantly, I was continuously working with new people and making new friends all over the world. I had bought a house in London's Parsons Green and it was always filled with an interesting cross section of houseguests, hence the little free time I had was spent entertaining.

Having purchased a particular house because it permitted expansion, a rare opportunity in London, I designed a three-storey extension with a massive eat-in kitchen accommodating a twelve-foot table, an enormous bathroom with an octagonal Jacuzzi for 6 people, a very self-indulgent walk-in wardrobe and guest rooms with en suites.

Having three guest rooms in London, one's home quickly became a small hotel. There was an incessant flow of guests; there was always a friend between homes, someone visiting, a lover moving in, or someone who didn't seem to have a home. If I didn't have much time to enjoy my home at least others did!

By this time I was working with all the top photographers. One of them was David Bailey, with whom I was to work a great deal.

Bailey was a force to reckon with! He didn't suffer fools easily, and was moody, temperamental, insecure, bossy, finicky and at the same time endearing. He loved testing people's character with sarcastic remarks and if you couldn't respond, crucifixion seemed a good option. Thankfully my skills at this sport were equal to his, and thus formed the basis for a mutual respect, which I am glad to say, lasted for years.

To compensate for his negative attributes, this quick-witted man was extremely talented, creative, ingenious and relentlessly resourceful, but he expected people he worked with to be equally capable.

Amongst the many magazines we worked for, we travelled a lot for Italian Vogue. These were the days when magazines had ample budgets and no requests were ever declined. If we decided to shoot in India or Cuba no questions were asked.

The Italian Vogue editor in chief at that time was a stylish lady called Lucia; she was one of the 'great editors' and believed in letting loose creative people.

The more taxing shoots were the "Haute Couture" collections. The couturiers always guarded their collection secrets till the last minute. The editor would have to acquire the garments as soon as the shows were finished; urgency prevailed, as we would have the precious samples only for a few hours.

Uninformed of the style of the collection, one had to come up with a theme at the last

minute. We often worked all night and each day, had to come up with new ideas, a great buzz of adrenalin would keep us going and our creative juices were flowing.

To add to these stressful conditions, Bailey was one of those people who would have a favourite tune and who would play the same song repeatedly for weeks; this often drove me nuts and distracted me no end.

Thanks to the conspiracy of the model agency's employees and hotel personnel, the Italian Playboys constantly pursued models. They knew which model was arriving, at what time, in which hotel and even their room numbers. They would haunt the hotel lobbies, like vultures ready to pounce on a prey. These sleazy characters unfortunately were part and parcel of the Italian life-style.

We would usually have the same three models for the whole shoot and my hardest task was to make them look different for each story. This was achieved by torturing their hair into a million different styles, applying ample quantities of make up, and using different lighting, backgrounds and locations.

It was also a time for me to put into operation my diplomatic skills as Bailey had 'favourites' and there was always one unpopular model (usually the one chosen by Vogue). This would cause tantrums and tears.

To add insult to injury Bailey's language was a chocker, swearing every two minutes and calling girls all sorts of names, would come as a shock to newcomers.

To prevent damage to newly created facial masterpieces, I would go to great lengths to avert any weeping. As a matter of fact, whenever circumstances causing a model spoil to her makeup, my first instinct was to shout, "watch out for your makeup". After all, each time consuming creation was a "one off" and could be so easily ruined.

New models had to be warned not to blow their nose, rub their faces or tuck into large pieces of food before a beauty shot. A lot of young girls having a habit of touching their hair were quickly reprimanded.

They were always surprised when I would pull out a straw from my bag of tricks when they were about to have a drink. The fact that they could have a drink without ruining my handiwork made both sides happy.

Some of these young models didn't think. Often I would pick up priceless gowns from the floor and would explain to them that these were expensive "one off" samples and should be cared for as such.

Something has always puzzled me: from couture to "ready to wear" using models with perfect bodies, rare were the times when dozens of pins were not used to make the clothes fit. What body shapes were those clothes designed for?

The most difficult models to work with were male models. Narcissistic and uncooperative, they were stuck to their look and would hate to appear any different. It wasn't uncommon that to a client request of a "businessman look", I would have changed the models' hair to a more conventional hairstyle, after disappearing in the bathroom for a moment, they would come out with their original spiked up hairstyle. Explaining to them that they had been paid to portray a businessman usually received the response "but it makes me look like a geek". Unfortunately brain and beauty was a rare combination, the

outfits they wore often had a higher IQ and one was often lost for words in frustration.

Vogue had their main studios in Milan and we would often work there. This was a rare opportunity to meet one's peers. The studios would be filled with the top photographers, hairdressers, makeup artist and models.

After work, we would all meet in trendy restaurants and engaged in some major socialising. To have at the same table Helmut Newton, Peter Lindbergh, Barry Lategan, Bruce Weber, Arthur Elgort and Bailey (all with their favourite models and team at hand) was not unusual but noisy, as copious exchanges of wit took place. With most of us residing at the "Hotel de la Ville", the partying would often continue until the wee hours in the morning, over a few bottles of Grappa and, yet again, sleeping was not on the agenda.

Although Vogue would have had a hefty hotel bill, they could console themselves knowing they were paying us editorial fees, which hardly covered our expenses.

Whenever we had some free time, it was utilized to do free work for Bailey's magazine "Ritz".

One had to do editorial to keep one's image at a high profile. Having work appearing in Vogue, Harpers or Tattler, one would get the big advertising jobs, which were very lucrative.

Most of the advertising was beauty and, one would often spend the whole day to achieve the final shot. Extreme attention was given to every detail, from each individual eyelash to the tip of the fingernails. The creative army would include the photographer with his assistant, models, wardrobe stylist, hair & makeup artist, art director and the clients with their entourages.

If the hands were an important feature such as in jewellery shot, a hand model would be brought in, as the right face with the right hands in one model were rare. She would hide behind 'the face model' allowing her hands to temporarily change owners.

It is no wonder that the average reader didn't manage to ever look as good as the advertisement.

Every trick in the book was used to achieve the required image: taping the model's breasts for generous cleavage, individual false eyelashes for thickening, haemorrhoid cream to tighten under the eyes, nail tips to even out broken nails, hair-extensions for volume, eyebrow wax to control their shape, eight hour cream and pencil outlining to puff up the lips, fake tan for glowing skin and clever shading and highlighting would bring out the model's best features. The photographer would use reflectors and flashlight to erase any small flaws. One could safely say that those images were pure fallacy.

The one great thing about Bailey was that he knew when he had captured the right shot and didn't squander countless rolls of film for one picture. Once he had the shot he would cheekily say to clients "Okay I've got the shot, now! How many rolls would you like me to waste?"

If the team's hard work resulted in a memorable photograph, the disappointing part was that usually, the photographer would get all the credit for it. Even more frustrating was if the photograph didn't get the expected rating, the photographer would blame it

on the model being wrong, the makeup not good enough, the hair overdone or underdone or the substandard clothes, but it was never 'sheer bad photography'.

The fact is, that the best hair & makeup on the most beautiful model can look disastrous, if poorly lit or badly photographed.

A top makeup artist had to have a confident knowledge of photography and lighting. Depending on film, light, indoors or outdoors, close up or full-length, the makeup would differ. When shooting outdoors the makeup artist became the lighting expert as one was forever holding a reflector to catch the best light for one's subject.

The "Royal College of Fashion" invited me to do an annual lecture to their final year students. Happy to contribute to the knowledge of future makeup artists, I agreed within certain conditions.

Aware of schools teaching being far removed from "the real thing" I wanted to be allowed to speak to the students without restraints and have a "warts and all" approach. Prude teachers being warned to keep away, I was to spend a few hours shaking fragile egos and enlightening students to the harsh reality of the business.

Having requested for all learners to have a model made-up to show off their skilfulness, I would march in like a fireball. They would get more information in one afternoon than in a whole semester.

Warning them that they were to operate in a tough industry, I would be intense in my questioning and ruthless in my criticism. If after a two-year course they were presenting a bad makeup, I was straightforward and told them they were wasting their time and parents' money. Unlike my teachers I would encourage anyone showing originality and creative expression. If showed a perfectly executed uninspiring make-up, I told them they would have a great career in doing weddings and "in store" demonstrations.

Often appalled to their lack of knowledge on current cosmetics, I even told off the teachers, pointing out that to work or teach in fashion, one had to have one's finger on the pulse of all the latest trends and products. Using rough language when considered necessary it was a lecture with a difference.

Surprisingly enough the students loved it and the college always sent me thank you notes, mentioning how "stimulating and motivating" my visit had been and how much they were looking forward to a next year repeat.



Fashion shows

Beside filming and photography were the gruelling fashion shows. After extensive discussions with the designers, seeing the sketches and glimpsing a few of the outfits in progress, I would make a few drawings of “looks” to be approved by the designers.

Fashion shows were always more chaotic than the sinking of the Titanic. Forever running out of time, oodles of frenetic people bustling around like busy ants attending to their various tasks, backstage was always buzzing with adrenalin. Dramas and tantrums would emerge, as attention seeking “Prima Donnas” would be in full performance.

Choreographers’ last minute run-throughs would steal the precious minutes, essential to finish make-ups. Dressers, models, hairdressers, makeup artists, stylists, designers and staff, were all squashed together in cramped space, amidst an array of clothes rails, shoes and accessories.

Pressure could inspire wonders and I could complete a full makeup in ten minutes, if necessary.

I never liked doing fashion shows for all the above reasons, but most of all, I felt it was a bad depiction of one’s work, as one was never given enough time to do a proper job and, being a perfectionist, it always left me feeling frustrated.

The most taxing shows were the twice yearly “ready to wear” seasons, in Paris, London, Milan and New York. Held in March and October within less than 10 days, more than 80 shows would take place.

The same crowd of models, fashion editors, journalists, buyers and photographers would scuttle from one show to the other. Hair and makeup artists would fit as many shows as physically possible.

The models most in demand would have a chauffeur (sometimes a motorbike) standing by, taking them to the various locations. They would always arrive late, still wearing the makeup and hair from the previous show. Within minutes the makeup would be removed, the hair redone and a new makeup applied.

While the frenzied backstage was in full operation, most of the audience was always frazzled.

Editors, buyers and photographers would have already seen several shows that day, and after the hustle of fighting for taxis, getting across town hurtling through traffic jams, elbowing through the queues of ‘standing tickets’ holders and struggling to get a seat before the ‘standing’ crowd was let in, they were usually stressed out, cantankerous and into pushy mode.

Of course the editors of glossy magazines, top newspapers, faithful buyers and best customers would have reserved seats. This in itself could cause havoc; hell was let loose if a Vogue editor was placed in the second row.

The “first row” syndrome was a status to be allocated very carefully. Fashion divas could turn fierce and spiteful if placed in the wrong row. This could cause an instant bad review, regardless of the quality of the show. Famous stars would simply NEVER wear or

MENTION that label ever again and buyers wouldn't buy.

The placing of the front row was also delicate, as one couldn't place editors who were rivals next to each other, an obligatory three seats had to separate them from each other's claws.

Once seated, after blowing a few air kisses, attired in the latest "nouveau noir" they attained the mandatory BORED expression. Looking remotely excited might indicate that it was a novelty.

Tagged with their PRESS badges, photographers would be packed like sardines in their enclosure, loading their cameras and already capturing the famous faces. For all this commotion, shows usually ran half an hour late, causing a domino effect for all the other shows.

Not surprisingly, the occasional fiasco would occur.

A delightful couturier called Yuki had decided to install a catwalk suspended over a swimming pool. The runway ended halfway over the pool, making the set more interesting.

The models parading down were facing a huge spotlight blinding them at the crucial turn. To add to these risqué conditions, one of the catwalk divas was short sighted.

Sure enough, gliding down the runway in a vision of silk drapes, missing the critical stop our short sighted diva made a spectacular splash. Professional to the end, she then proceeded to pretend it was intentional and gave an Ester Williams swimming performance, gracefully exiting to an applauding audience.

To add to the pressures of getting models ready on time, there were the "evening wear" transformations during the show, which had to be executed within seconds.

Zandra Rhodes, being one of the more radical designers, would demand dramatic changes for her extravagant evening wear. Having zealously designed jewel encrusted faces for one of her extravaganzas, I was faced with the dilemma of accomplishing these fabulous transformations within a flash. Forever resourceful, I spent many hours, gluing gemstones onto various shaped band-aids. Cutting out any excess, I had instant 'stick on' jewelled patterns to adorn my model's faces and solved this timeframe predicament. The audience was amazed that within seconds, models were transformed with diamond eyebrows, rhinestone cheeks and sequined foreheads.

Some people could make these stressful conditions even worse. Hosted in London by Princess Margaret, a charity event was presenting Yves Saint Laurent's latest collection. The YSL right hand man had flown from Paris to oversee the show. From the moment of arrival the man was a total distraction, which eventually turned into a totally annoying disturbance.

Hands waving in the air, screaming and yelling at everybody all we could hear was "NON NON NON". No matter what the models did, he did not like it.

Hysterical, minutes before the show was to start, he decided that due to unsatisfactory rehearsals he could not let the show go on.

Under false pretences, the English YSL representative led him into a backroom. Helped by a handful of six-foot tall exasperated supermodels, they locked him up during

the entire show.

The show was a great success and only when warm applause was to be heard, was the frenetic prisoner released.

As my London life unrolled, Nightclubs turned into huge Discos, “the Embassy” being one of the trendiest ones. Restaurants were multiplying, Beauchamp s’ Place “San Lorenzo” catered for the famed while Langan’s Brasserie supplied for capacity.

Starting as a small hairdressing salon, “Joseph” grew to a fashionable boutique to eventually end up as massive fashion and home-ware stores and various restaurants. Covent Garden was given an overhaul and became the favoured area for fashion.

Harvey Nichols became THE department store while Harrods was left to cater for tourists.

Parties and events were growing to mammoth proportions and contributing to them, more demanding than ever.

Out of the many events, was the yearly Andrew Logan’s “Alternative Miss World”. The outrageous extravaganza was a send-up of Miss World and became legendary. Having no beauty or gender restrictions, anyone (including their dog) could sign in. The unusual venues were always lavishly decorated within the yearly theme and the audience would look as unconventional as the contestants.

In October 1978, the alternative pageant had a “Circus” theme and was fittingly held in a circus tent. A large steep staircase had being built to enter the stage, each step sized twice higher than average, made sure that none of the contestants had a chance to descend gracefully. The stage was in a U shape, framing a sandpit. On the side, was a caged enclosure, not for lions but for the judges. Miles of red fabric wrapped the venue as countless suspended mannequins floated in mid air.

Good and bad taste rendered irrelevant, it was beauty made with imagination. All ages contenders came in various shapes and sizes, gender became ambiguous and reality dissolved at the edges as the bizarre and the beautiful assumed equal footing. Andrew hosted the show in a half man, half woman costume, switching profiles he would be either the host or the hostess. Co-hosted by larger than life “Divine”, one knew it was going to be a colourful evening.

Backstage was a mishmash of outrageous costumes and hefty make-up applications. To turn a girl into a gorgeous girl wasn’t easy but, making a boy into a beautiful girl was even more difficult. As expected, many hours were spent on preparations.

The runners-up had titles such as: Miss Bubble-wrap, Miss Nuclear Reactor, Miss proposition 13, Miss Wildlife, Miss Cherry Cocktail, Miss Bronx and Miss Wolverhampton Municipal Baths.

Keeping with tradition, there were the mandatory three sections: daywear, swimwear and eveningwear. My personal favourite was “Miss Consume a Product”, which turned out for daywear as a hamburger, followed by giant chips bouncing down the steps. For swimwear ‘she or he’ came out as a tube of “Ambre Solaire”, every step causing a massive squirt of cream to gush out from its top. The creative disguise finale was a box of “after eight” mints as eveningwear, which required some assistance for going down the

stairs.

All exhibitionists had creative costumes, from Martian attires, robots, drag to painted bodies and the judges, locked in their lion's cage, had a hard time making a decision. Makeup artist, Stevie Hughes made a grand entrance as "Linda Carriage" wearing a Scarlet O'Hara gown, cleverly mastering the stairs by sliding down on his backside, eventually won him the title. While all other competitors stood in the sandpit, the crowned winner attired with a ten metres gold cape was paraded on a donkey. Unfortunately, overwhelmed by the mammoth frock and loud cheering, the donkey fell off the catwalk, leading a crowned Queen, head first in the sandpit. This was more than anyone had bargained for, and the incident raised even more applause. Once assured that 'Queen and donkey' were okay, all invaded the stage and the venue turned into a raging Disco.



Famous People

Amongst the various facets of my work came the “Rock Stars”. These egotistical entities were a different ballgame. Constantly surrounded by their sycophantic entourage, depending on which substance they were consuming, they could be fickle, unpredictable and capricious.

Being in charge or creating their famous ‘image’ was always challenging. The most accomplished celebrities were often the most professional and the nicest, the difficult ones being the “one minute wonders”.

From record/CD covers, publicity shots, magazine covers, “Tops of the Pops” to concerts, the work was varied.

The most dreaded were the concerts. With security being paramount, one was always on tenterhooks. Exiting the concert being the most gruelling task, with decoy cars standing by, timing was crucial, as we would have to dodge the overexcited fans waiting at the stage-doors.

New strategies were constantly invented to avoid facing this occurrence. Having to run with all my equipment, I had a mental picture of being trampled on by fans trying to grab their idol.

Due to a few seconds delay, I recall Mark Bolan failing to get into the getaway Limo on time, a handful of his hair (including scalp) being torn from his head, blood gushing everywhere, all panicked fearing the worse. By then, the Limo was jammed, surrounded by crowds obstructing all vision. In pitch-black darkness, we were then tossed like lettuce, as the fans proceeded to shake the Limo. It took a while for security to intervene, allowing us to flee. If this was the way fans showed their love, I wouldn’t want to witness their displeasure.

Mark Bolan was one of the kindest people I have ever worked with and I was devastated when, two days after seeing him, I was told of his fatal car crash.

Not being a great Rock fan, I recall members of “the Rolling Stones” being quite annoyed with me for not remembering their names. Mick Jagger had a wicked sense of humour and an unassuming personality.

Like most musicians, fine language wasn’t his forte. I was at Bailey’s studio going through some contact-sheets with the Senior Vogue editor Sheila Weaton. Oozing elegance Sheila was one of the last “Grande Dame” working for Vogue. Her grey hair wrapped into a perfect French pleat, she always looked immaculate and imposing. Mick was picking up some prints from a session we had previously shot that week. Not noticing Sheila’s presence, looking at his photographs, he stated his approval with a loud “They’re fucking great”. Turning around he suddenly saw the “Grande Dame” regally standing in the corner. Looking like a little kid caught in mischief, he apologised profusely about his turn of phrase. In her posh accent Sheila replied:

“My dear fellow, I’ve heard worse, you can fucking swear as much as you fucking like, it doesn’t fucking bother me”.

Leaving Mick with a most surprised gawk.

Trying to cover-up the shiny glue dripping from his toupee, I never flinched when Gary Glitter would inform me that he had already “done his hair” and that I should just concentrate on shading his fading bone-structure.

Grace Jones was as wild and as crazy as she looked and, because of her larger than life personality, people were under the impression that she was tall. I am 5 foot 8 and I towered over her. The vision of her arrival at the studio would always give one a surprise. Emerging from a large limo, forever wearing the dark Ray-bans and dressed in black leather from head to toe, the presence of a ghostly white beauty mask could hardly be ignored. The fact that it kept her skin “nice and tight” was her only worry.

Cliff Richard was as amiable as the image he portrayed; I once painted him silver from head to toe for his “platinum” release.

Paul and Linda McCartney were always a pleasure to work with. Linda would actually send me thank you notes after jobs.

Paul once told me an anecdote, which I feel I should relate. The Beatles were just starting their legendary career and were on their first visit in Paris to upgrade their image. A Dutch hairdresser in their hotel’s barbershop had the grooviest haircut, which they wanted to copy. The hairdresser decided that his exclusive haircut wasn’t going to be duplicated and gave them a totally different haircut. Little did he know, that out of spite, he had just created the legendary mushroom “Beatles’ Haircut”!

Linda was obsessed with wanting everybody to be vegetarian. Unfortunately, she came to a wall with carnivorous ‘moi’. We use to argue, as she would try to convince me that a tofu burger was as good as a hamburger. Omnivorous was as far as this Frenchman was ready to go and that’s where he stayed.

Of the famous wives, Angie Bowie was the most electrifying. Incessantly reinventing her image, she was always on a mission to get a part in a movie, a play, an album to produce or a book to publish.

Her energy was boundless and attention seeking.

Rather partial to making an appearance, she would have me applying her makeup at her house in London before she would depart via Concorde to arrive at David’s concert in New York, looking fabulous.

Nothing would stop Bianca Jagger practicing her favourite pastime SHOPPING. If Mick had decided to be ungenerous with her spending money, she would go straight to Manolo Blahnik’s, borrow a thousand pounds, and get him to invoice Mick for some fictitious shoes and then go shopping.

Always on the lookout for a good deal, I discovered some fabulous lipsticks, selling at next to nothing in Woolworth. Seconds after bragging about my discovery to Bianca, we were in Woollies. Never buying one of anything, she picked up a dozen (it’s still, probably the most sensible buy she ever made). Standing at the checkout, I couldn’t help hearing a young girl saying to her girlfriend:

“Look it’s Bianca Jagger”

Her friend replying:

“Shopping at Woolworth! Are you mad?”

Besides the rock stars came the tricky breed of “Film Stars”. This complex species would come in all shapes and sizes, but always attired with an enormous ego and bodyguard. Like musicians the big stars were professional and the most pleasant. On the other hand the starlets, usually “soap stars”, would have to justify their mediocrity by being difficult, demanding and finicky.

One of the hardest tasks of a makeup artist is to create a look that is a compromise between the photographer’s, client’s and artist’s demands. Artists being very specific about their image, I would tread tactfully not to ruffle any feathers. If one had an obnoxious celebrity who didn’t want to collaborate, the predicament became impossible and nothing was worth that headache.

Setting up a photo shoot on a private jet, Omar Sharif was to be our leading man as the rich and famous star. Cast as the alluring secretary, Rachel Ward was attired in a fitted skirt and a tight jersey moulding her curvaceous figure.

Seated in a luxurious chair, Omar was being lit as I introduced Rachel to him. Eyes transfixed on her bosoms, he proceeded to tell her how enchanted he was to meet her. Had his gaze, gone further up, he would have seen Rachel’s furious expression, appalled by such sexism.

Transforming “Babe” star Magda Szubanski as “Swanson ready for her close-up” required layers of latex to conceal her eyebrows, extending her brow bone to be adorned with the famous arched brows.

Rarely had I worked on someone so ill, she had a fever, a raucous cough and had lost her voice. All she could muster was a slight whisper that sounded painful. The challenge to apply latex and makeup on a fevered face was not an easy one. The frowning caused by the coughing fits would tear the latex and required constant repairs. The poor darling couldn’t wait for this photo-shoot to be over.

Unfortunately just as we were capturing the last frame, a film crew appeared together with a man holding the dreaded book labelled “THIS IS YOUR LIFE”. Of all the days in her life, THIS was the worst one to pick for this accolade. Alas, she had to go straight to a studio, where a live audience and mystery guests awaited.

Repeating the concealing eyebrows technique, I was to transform Baz Luhrman into a fifties housewife, straight out of “Pleasantville” plus Lamingtons.

Being a very busy man, he had requested that the two-hours process took place while he was holding a meeting with his staff. From the false nails to the latex eyebrows, I slowly altered Mr into Mrs. Gesticulating his newly acquired crimson fingernails, the meeting unrolled as I progressed. Drawing a matching luscious mouth and a pristine wig were the final touches.

Baz suddenly realized that he was talking to a wall, as the gob smacked personnel had been mesmerized by this new persona that had emerged. He immediately rushed to a mirror to admire his new appearance.

Getting straight into character, he slipped into a puffy sleeved frock with the requisite

apron and minced to the location leaving his staff speechless.

Ah! The power of makeup...

I am pleased to say that most of the famous people I dealt with were obliging. Also, a lot of the young actresses were ex models with whom I had frequently worked before. Amongst them were: Andie McDowell, Greta Scacchi, Catherine Oxenburg, Rachel Ward, Iman and one of my favourites, Kelly Le Brock.

The gorgeous Andie McDowel would chew her nails to the cuticles and each session would start with lengthy false nails applications.

In my opinion one of the most beautiful women was Catherine Deneuve. I was always amazed at her hang-ups about her wide jaw and hips. Hence the saying that a woman is never satisfied.

Jack Nicholson was a real charmer. Alert to overexcited editors he'd ask me to stand guard at the dressing room's door while dressing.

Lynn Redgrave was always delightful and we both wished she had thicker hair.

Having been asked by Bailey to makeover Linda Gray for a cover story, the idea of painting "Dallas' Sue Helen's" quivering lips didn't appeal to me. To my surprise, she turned out to be a good actress and had none of her character's dubious features. Unlike most "Soap" performers, she was unpretentious and a total pleasure to work with. She treasured living on a ranch in the middle of wilderness, far away from 'Silicone Valley'. Instead of sending mounds of flowers via a chauffeur, prior to a big Hollywood party, as is the norm. She would turn up with a basket filled with freshly laid eggs from her own chickens, apparently baffling her hosts.

The fact that I have been known to decline working with certain "stars", due to their bad reputation and tantrums, might have helped this fortunate outcome.

If in doubt of the temperament of a certain celebrity, I could always call up my peers and partners in crime: Richard Sharah and Barbara Daly. One of them would have the full, unedited rundown, making one's decision quite simple.

This professional exchange worked both ways and this blacklisting would also apply to photographers, models and clients.

Even more interesting was to work with notorious sport stars, painters, authors and public figures. Most of them were always so unassuming and so refreshing to work with.

Having to update TV personalities and presenters' image was also one of my tasks. Being called upon to design a new look for Sixty Minutes' Liz Hayes, I was shown by her producer footage of Liz in various locations, where her make-up didn't look as flattering as it could. I don't think he was too impressed with me when I told him that each of those takes were poorly lit and no makeup could withstand such bad light. Suggesting to start with a reflector at all times and to have a good talk with his lighting cameraman was my advice.

In most interviews the question most asked was:

Who is your favourite person to makeup?

I often gave vague answers, as my favourite was a top model called Kim Harris who had a short career with a fatal end due to drug addiction.

She was the most unaffected, emotive and sweet natured girl. Pale faced, tall and lanky with wild frizzy hair, one would have not given her a second glance in the street. Her yellowed teeth caused by continuous smoking, clashed with her milky white skin and her posture was appalling.

Her addiction to various drugs caused her to be constantly shaking and twitching. She was not the groomed type and often would be picking at her toes nails while being made-up.

Despite all this, she was the perfect canvas upon which to work. She had even features, structured eyelids and a beautiful skin. Every session felt like one was transforming the ugly duckling into a beautiful swan.

Once made-up and dressed, as soon as she was in front of the camera, her slouched body straightened up, eyebrows raised, confident and poised, she suddenly glowed and became the most beautiful creature ever born.

This chameleon behaviour was the true sign of a super model, a rare and exciting experience.

During her short career she became one of the greatest models around. Gracing many covers worldwide, the Italians adored her and christened her “La Kim”.

Models seemed to stick to two types of lovers. Either they went for the creative and successful type such as photographers and musicians, or the handsome bum with bad habits. Unfortunately for Kim, she went for the latter. Influenced by the wrong people around her, her bad habits became worse and she spent a fair time in rehab.

Having to do a ‘bald-head’ story for a magazine, I had the hard task of finding a face that could withstand this harsh look. Not only had the model to wear a bald cap but also pretty outlandish make-ups inspired by Modigliani and Picasso.

Kim’s agent told me she was out of rehab and could do with raising her profile. Delighted that she was ‘clean’ and thrilled to having the perfect face, I immediately booked her for the job.

This latex extravaganza complicated by fancy hair structures was to take a couple of days to shoot. On the first day, I was glad to see that despite her usual shakes, she seemed healthy and all went well.

The next day as I was putting on the dreaded bald cap, I couldn’t help noticing a huge blister on her jaw. Asking her to what happened, I was stunned to find out that she had not even noticed it. Then in her usual casual manner she replied:

“Ho shit! I must have fallen asleep while smoking”.

The idea, of not feeling a cigarette burning one’s face, freaked me out. She must have been pretty out of it for this to occur. Covering-up a seeping blister is one of the hardest things to do, especially for a close up. This made an already intricate makeup even more tedious. As I patiently worked towards a flawless result, I knew that this was the last time my brushes would stroke this exquisite face.

Although accustomed to British eccentricity, one would have the occasional surprise. I was doing a photo shoot with the renowned thespian Sian Phillips. In a constant haze of smoke her husband at the time, Peter O’Toole, had come with her. While the photo

shoot was in progress, he came and asked me what was my relationship with a certain person? Baffled by his question I asked him how he knew about this friend.

“I have just opened and read your mail and this was the most interesting letter”.

Knowing that my sealed mail was inside my filofax, which was inside my bag, I couldn't believe that someone would have the nerve to be so snoopy. Responding to my mystified expression he simply said.

“I just find people's personal stuff so fascinating”.



New York

As if my life wasn't complicated enough as it was, as the eighties were beginning, I went to work in New York for a few months. I thrived on the NY energy, adored the nightlife and studio 54 became my second home. Once again I was to experience a culture shock.

Although quite well known by then, I hadn't invented the wheel and was down to earth and unpretentious.

While having an impressive portfolio, I hadn't attained the calibre of work I was hoping for. It was eventually explained to me that I was lacking "ATTITUDE"!

For one thing, you don't tell a French person they don't have attitude as they invented the word. Secondly, I could have attitude when I ascertained it was necessary. I could not see the purpose of behaving in a manner that would intimidate the people I worked with.

After a lifetime of playing second fiddle to Europe, America had come into its own fashion identity. Thanks to Calvin Klein they didn't need to import their designer knickers anymore and this went to their heads.

The people working in New York's fashion industry thought of themselves as FABULOUS and DIVINE. To be quite frank, having dealt with the real McCoy, they left me quite unimpressed and I went back to Europe.

One thing I admired about Americans was their talent of promoting themselves. There was no modesty or reticence about telling anyone how brilliant they were. Believing in the power of advertising, they would start with themselves and it worked.

As I was unpacking my bags, my newly acquired agent rang to tell me, I had been offered a very lucrative two-day job in New York (when I mention lucrative I usually mean quite a few thousand dollars). My usual way of turning down a job was to ask twice the fee, a first class Concorde ticket and a five star hotel accommodation. To my amazement they accepted all the conditions and two days later I was back in New York.

The job was an advert for a new fragrance and the look was to be "the day chic Parisienne" or what we call in French "B.C.B.G" (bon chic, bon genre). I suddenly understood why they were so desperate to get me.

Being the mid eighties there was a huge difference between the "Parisienne" and the American woman. French women were never very daring in their fashion statements. The motto being "a woman wears the clothes, the clothes don't wear the woman". Their makeup would almost be undetectable and a bright lipstick would be as bold as it would get. They would dress in Kenzo, YSL, Agnes B and Castelbajac. At their most casual, a "Lacoste" white Polo shirt with a navy cardigan, were de rigueur, while favoring "Shalimar" or "Air du Temps" as a perfume. Shopping at "le Printemps" and "Galeries Lafayette" they would not be seen without their "Hermes" bag "le Kelly" made fashionable by their Monaco Princess idol. Well shod in "Stephane Kélian's", their wrists were always bejeweled with a "Rolex" and the "Cartier" three gold bands were

compulsory.

Their hair would be short or blow-dried into a simple hairstyle, the more mature opting for a “catogan”.

In contrast American women epitomized the “Soaps” heroine of the time. From “Dynasty” to “Dallas” shoulder pads were growing to alarming width while belt buckles the size of shields competed with hefty earrings. To balance these ungainly apparels, a helmet like hairdo would defy the worse hurricane. In order to not fade into the background within these adornments a heavy makeup was de rigueur. Dark smudgy eyes, lots of shading and mounds of lip-gloss would complete the guise.

Having the final say in choosing the model and selecting my favoured outfit for the shot, in front of a crowd of clients I proceeded with the makeover. Trimming the model’s hair into a simple bob, I then applied a natural makeup with a slight accent on the eyes. A discreet pair of earrings as the only jewellery, a simple top under a tailored jacket, I decided that I had achieved the typical “Parisienne” look and announced she was ready. The clients’ reaction was unenthusiastic to say the least.

“Could we have more volume in the hair?”

“Don’t you think the eye makeup should be stronger?”

“She could do with some lip gloss”.

“The outfit is a bit too plain”.

“She needs more jewellery”.

“She doesn’t look glamorous enough!”

So far, I had been unassuming and without airs, my Aries temper took the better of me and I exploded in fit of anger.

“If you wanted a Joan Collins look alike, why didn’t you say so in the first place? YOU AMERICANS use words you don’t comprehend! You wouldn’t know CHIC if you fell over it. Tacky, cheap and vulgar is what you want and I DON’T DO BAD TASTE. I suggest you get one of your local makeup artists to accomplish this”.

They all stood there stupefied, they wanted ATTITUDE. Well they got it! After a few seconds to collect themselves and recover from the shock, they were suddenly all smiles and praised my convictions.

“You’re right, she looks fabulous, don’t change a thing”

By performing a “Prima Donna” tantrum, I had won their respect and from then on could do no wrong.



From Sri Lanka to Haiti

Having just returned to London, I was to pack again to go to Sri Lanka. This shoot was with photographer John Swannell for a department store brochure, promoting their “Ascot” fashion. The cover being of primary importance was to have a white temple with a dense blue sky as a background. A smart looking couple, attired in full “Ascot” suits, hats and gloves walking towards an equally smart gentleman, were to be the foreground. This layout was the prime reason why we were going to Sri Lanka.

Afar from the hustle and bustle of Colombo, our grand hotel was reminiscent of the colonial era and wealthier days. Still part of a dying breed called “Smokers” I couldn’t help being bemused at the huge warning sign beside my bed “PLEASE DON’T SMOKE IN BED BECAUSE THE ASHES WE FIND MAY BE YOURS”.

At the crack of dawn, we were on our way to the location. In scorching heat, confined in a sweltering van, we drove for five hours to reach our ‘temple’ destination. Getting out of the van, our dishevelled models looked like they needed a good shower. Being in the middle of nowhere, water and electricity were not part of the scenery. Taking advantage of the blue sky and the few hours of daylight left, we had to hurry.

Thankfully the models were to wear hats, as there was little I could do with their sweaty hair without power. The clothes also being damp from the humidity, looked limp and we were getting worried as to the result of this exercise.

As we were setting up for the shot, a Buddhist monk came out of the temple, explained to us that we were on sacred grounds and, out of respect to Buddha, certain rules were to be followed.

“No shoes”.

As we took our shoes off, we realised that our models were going to look peculiar with suits, hats, gloves and no shoes. We had to rethink our shot and crop the shoeless models, altering the whole look of the picture and making the client most unhappy.

“Knees should not be exposed on sacred grounds “

We all looked at each other, justifiably due to the heat, the whole team was wearing shorts. Worse still, our “lady’s outfit” had a short skirt. “Quelle horreur!” her knees had to be covered up.

More cropping would be required.

Our “Ascot Lady” looked quite ridiculous with fabric wrapped around her legs under her smart suit. By then, all attired in sarongs, resentfully compromised, we were about to proceed with the shot.

“Heads must NOT be covered”

This was getting ridiculous! A look of horror transpired on the client’s face as models removed their hats.

Optimistic and resourceful as ever, I improvised with a gelled look for the sodden heads. Not looking quite as glamorous as planned, our fashion shot, cropped into a beauty shot, had to be resumed. As the models were posing for the Polaroid, the monk

interrupted once again.

“Turning your back to a temple is disrespectful. Not allowed”.

All heads turned to the client, who looked like she was about to pass out.

In order for the models not to turn their backs to the temple and offend Buddha, they had to be photographed sideways, resulting in the outfits being indistinguishable, defying the whole purpose of the exercise.

By the time our one sided, shoeless, legless, hatless models were photographed, our client had wished we were in a London studio, with a projected backdrop, as this whole drill had been a total waste of time and money.

To aggravate matters, we couldn't leave our hotel for a couple of days as an uprising was taking place. Sounds of loud explosions and gunfire made us come to the decision to leave as soon as possible.

A few days after being back, I had to drive to a grand manor to do a shoot with Lord Snowdon and actress Jane Asher.

Being his mother's home he had “carte blanche” on the whole property. A section of the estate was in ruins due to a fire decades ago. Amongst a few remaining walls and burned wood, piles of weeds had taken over. Snowdon had decided to do the photographs there, for an arty look. While I was doing the hair & makeup, a few men cleared an area for the shoot to take place. Still being a smoker, I discarded my cigarette butts by the huge heap of rubbish that had been cleared.

At the end of the long hardworking day, as I was packing up my equipment, Snowdon came over and presented me with every cigarette butt I had smoked and like an old shrew said.

“Do you always have people picking up your litter”?

I was stunned by the man's pettiness; I wasn't going to explain that I didn't think my butts would have disturbed the ruination of this environment and I replied:

“Yes! don't you?”

As I got into my car and drove off, I made sure to add him to my blacklist as: “ANAL, never to work with again”.

A few days later I was off to the south of France for another Italian vogue shoot with Bailey. This time we were to live on barges for a few days sailing down the “Canal du Midi”.

Obviously going through an indolent stage, Bailey thought that he would set-up his camera on the barge's deck and comfortably take photographs, using the various passing scenes as backdrops. Unfortunately he hadn't banked on the fact that, to shade the horses pulling the barges in the old days, trees had been planted every four metres, making the landscape rather boring and repetitious. For this reason we ended up having to take the photographs in various locks, which were the only settings that broke up the monotonous surroundings.

Using an infrared film turning greens and reds to white, I had to use only grey and black makeup on the models. Making the most of the warm light at the end of the day, Bailey was doing a beauty shot with two topless models and “Moi” in French regalia

including beret and striped tee shirt. In the last rays of the day, propped up at the end of the moving barge, the black lipped and grey nipple'd, naked models were looking mighty strange. Due to the minimal light, a slow exposure was used, ensuring that we had to hold very still, like frozen figures.

It just so happened, that we were passing the local café of a small village. Sitting outside were two old blokes having their afternoon aperitifs, soon questioning the potency of their drink, witnessing this bizarre passing vision. Keeping our static state, holding back a desperate urge to explode in laughter, I shall never forget their bewildered expressions.

On my way back to London, I hadn't realised that it was the eve of Charles and Diana's wedding. The security for flights to London was massive. Every suitcase and hand luggage were thoroughly searched before takeoff and on arrival. Body searches were carried out as we boarded and exited the plane. As per usual, they took out everything that was neatly folded and shoved it back in a scrambled mess. As a result of these excessive safety measures, the plane was delayed and by the time I exited Heathrow, it was well past midnight as I joined the humongous queue waiting for taxis.

One hour later, finally in a cab on my way home, the driver explained that in celebration of the royal wedding, a huge concert was taking place in Hyde Park and the traffic was the worse he'd ever seen.

Quite rightly, it took an hour and a half to make the twenty minutes journey. As we approached my home, on account of the countless searches and screenings, I made the awful discovery that my keys were missing and there was nobody home.

Continuing to the nearest phone box, I called the only person who had my spare keys, who was also out. Making numerous calls to various friends, I eventually found someone who had wisely stayed home. Inviting myself over, until my key keeper would return home, the taxi took me to my rescuer's house, which was inconveniently situated on the other side of Hyde Park.

After being stuck in endless traffic jams, two and a half hours and one hundred and fifty pounds later, I finally arrived at my friend's home at 3.30am. Concurrently, my key keeper advised me that she had returned from the celebrations. Thinking that the traffic would be worse the next day (being the wedding day), I returned to get my keys.

Eventually getting a taxi, it was gridlock as concertgoers were leaving.

At 5.30am and two hundred and fifty pounds later, the costly key was opening my front door. Never recovering from taking ten hours and a small fortune for the one-hour flight from Paris to London, I haven't lost a key since!

Shooting another story for Italian Vogue at Haiti's "Oloffson" hotel, made famous by Graham Green's "Comedians", I caught up with my Voodoo knowledge and geared up to visit one of the poorest countries in the world.

Not keen on male models, Bailey often used members of his team as models and I often fell into that role. Supposedly "out of focus", he asked me to pose nude in the background of a few pictures. The following day, during the midday break, the models and I were topping up our suntan on a deserted 'nude beach'. Passing by, Bailey

remarked how impudent we were to be naked on a beach. Impudence indeed! My naked butt was about to be published in a million copies of Vogue, but that was okay.

One of the stories was the Valentino collection of colourful frilly short skirts and tops. The decision had been taken to use the weekly market as a colourful backdrop for this story.

Dealing with the rough dusty roads, we eventually arrived at the lively marketplace. The locals were indeed colourful, crowds of large ladies wearing layers of bright patterns; enormous turbans topped with stacks of overflowing baskets created a multi-coloured combination that would use up an entire painter's palette. Unfortunately once we had our models standing in front of our colourful backdrop, the minute outfits looked like the poor cousin of the local's dazzling display of colour. Eventually, we had to focus on the bland mud walls and dusty donkeys to make the garments look more exiting.

One of the models on the shoot was Kelly Le Brock. Weeks away from filming "Lady in Red", under contract with Revlon in the USA, she was at the peak of her modelling career and very much in demand. Exhausted from the overload of work, she wanted to stay in Haiti for a few days of rest. Her agent had already been nagging the editor as to her return and her decision wasn't considered to be wise.

Residing in a "Club Med", we had been told to bring minimal cash with us, as there was a "no closed doors" policy. Being refused an advance payment by the editor, Kelly was still determined to stay. Making an arrangement with the "chef de village", to be a part time waitress to pay for her accommodation, she pursued her desires and stayed for a well-deserved rest.

While her New York agent was having conniptions on the daily fortune she was losing, Kelly "the supermodel" was happily serving breakfast at club med's tables, enjoying her break.



Juggling between TV commercials & Stills

Besides photography, TV commercials were taking on a new dimension. After years of delivering an explicit message “buy this” in a straightforward manner, they were trying to make those 30 seconds more creative and visually more exciting. To achieve this, producers were expanding their budgets to hundreds of thousands of dollars, in order to employ top directors.

To generate these alluring visuals directors would only use “la crème de la crème” teams. This put me on the top of the ice cream.

Commercials were tiresome, long, hard working days, however very lucrative. These commercials would go either of two ways: film studios with extravagant sets or exotic locations. Directors went to excessive lengths to accomplish those exquisite visuals. It wasn't uncommon to spend at least one week filming a 30 second commercial.

“Stand by... rolling camera...and ... action”.

Working with a film crew was a new experience. Doing stills, one was used to working with a small compact team, but film crews were massive. A basic film crew would include the Director, producer, production manager, cameraman, camera assistant, focus puller, clapper/loader, gaffer, grip, sound recorder, prop, video operator, art director, stylist, hair & makeup artist, runner, caterer, of course the artist or artists and the client. There would be a minimum of twenty people. I had problems remembering the model's names let alone the entire army's.

Excess luggage took on a whole new meaning when travelling with a film crew. A ton of equipment was carted around wherever we went. Forget about taxis, vans and trucks were indispensable.

Often, we would be filming in remote locations. Accessing the location, accommodating and feeding all these people was a production in itself.

After been given little notice, I was packing my suitcase to go to Praslin, a small island in the Seychelles, to do a TV commercial for a hair shampoo.

As I came closer to my destination the airplanes got smaller. Arriving late from the previous flight, I was the last to board the ten-seater plane taking me to my final destination. As every seat was taken, the only staff on board, the pilot, asked me to occupy the seat next to him. For a minute I was thrilled to be sitting in the co-pilot's seat, until the obvious occurred, prompting me to ask the pilot:

“What happens if you have a heart attack?”

“It's all yours” was the reply I didn't want to hear. Thankfully the flight went well and I didn't need a crash course in how to land a plane, which could've turned into a course how to crash a plane.

A few hours later, I was already working. The location was a tropical forest. A generous donation had allowed us to film in the restricted reserve, where the unique “Coco des Fesses” grows. This untouched area was covered with decades of layers of rotting leaves and each step I took felt hazardous. Hanging leaves the size of a building

made the daunting surroundings even more intimidating. Once again an intense humid heat was to complicate my task as a hairdresser. To make matters worse, our model was running away from some fictitious being during the whole commercial. At great peril she had to stop right at the edge of a hazardous precipice, making a “wide shot” more impressive.

After hours of filming, our exhausted model had been racing endlessly in this sweltering atmosphere, stopping nervously at the crucial spot.

A perplexed client approached me and had the stupidity to ask me:

“Why has the hair lost its bounce?”

“Why does an ice cream melt in the sun?” seemed to be a fitting reply.

The last day of shooting was to take place in a swimming pool and would have been appealing if it hadn't been for a “reverse shot”. The visual of this four seconds shot was the final clip of the commercial, where the model would be emerging out of the water, totally dry, looking fabulous. This had to be filmed in reverse, requiring our model to end up under water, demanding a fresh hairstyle and makeup for each take. It took the whole day to capture those wonderful four seconds.

I was delighted to hear that my next assignment was on location in London. It was for ‘Lewis’ and taking place in a derelict underground parking. The story taking place in some distant future, a “Mad Max” set was built around the decaying location.

Our hero and heroine were to be accordingly wild looking and a few extras were made-up to look like dangerous thugs. This also required “continuity” in our heroes' looks and ample quantities of Polaroid were taken of the hair make-up and wardrobe to make sure that each day they would be identical.

Amid the atmospheric burning fires, beaten-up cars, dripping pipes, fake spider webs, hazy smoke, the odd skeleton and hired rats, our leading lady was running for her life, chased by fierce hooligans.

The place was so damp and putrefied that there was nowhere to sit. Choking from the fires' smoke, we had no air to breathe and our eyes were stinging. At the end of the first day, we couldn't wait to get out of our underground grave and breathe some fresh air.

The three-day shoot was running into over budget as we started our fourth day at 6.00am. Getting down to the (by then loathed) set, we were preparing our leading man to make his heroic entrance. Escorted by two huge black Great Danes on leashes he was to save our heroine from her dubious prospects.

Unfortunately the large canines hadn't been to ‘synchronization training’ and kept going in opposite directions, leaving our hero's stretched arms looking ripe for a crucifixion.

Each shot taking longer than planned, the day stretched into the night. “Running over” was a very expensive business as each member of the crew charged ‘double time’ every hour.

Not being able to sit anywhere (or breathe for that matter) the crew was getting exhausted but carried on. Past midnight and still working, the crew was by then on double-double time, being a Saturday an extra double time had to be added, making

everyone's hourly fee six times the amount. By 6.00am the worn out team were emerging from their underground burrow, looking as they had dug it themselves.

After a solid 24 hours, we had finished the Mad Max saga, very weary but also wealthier.

Getting some well-needed fresh air, a few days later I was in Ireland fighting gales and freezing conditions for an American magazine. Thankfully we were photographing winter fashion and I didn't need to cover up blue skin and goose pimples.

Chosen as the ideal location, we were staying in an ancient castle converted into a hotel. We were all delighted to be living in such luxurious surroundings.

Unfortunately, expecting the imminent arrival of the USA president, the place was suddenly in total chaos. Arriving in trucks load of black cars, the CIA staff took over our peaceful setting. The security measures were extreme and every stone was turned. On the top of it, they were aiming to install one hundred telephone lines in a few days and were creating havoc.

Tired of the constant searches and disruptions, the decision was made for us to move to less glamorous but quieter surroundings. Compromising yet again, bucolic Irish landscapes were to substitute the grand stately grounds.

Within a couple of machine loads and spin drier, I was in the Bahamas, doing an advertising campaign for a sun tanning cream. Bronzed Amazons in skimpy swimsuits, golden beaches and azure waters were the brief.

Desperate for the job, one of the models arrived with an unannounced plaster cast on her arm, not a good look for swimwear!

Having no other choice, we prevailed over this predicament with clever angles and inventive disguises.

Some of the pictures had to be shot on a yacht at sea. This required us to have two boats, one to shoot from and another to shoot at.

The two boats were tied together while I would get the girls ready. In all my years of unusual places to do hair and makeup, this took the cake. Cramped in the dark galley, applying makeup amidst the swaying and the recurring bumping of the two boats was the ultimate test of patience, steadiness and determination.

Adding to my frustration, the wind at sea was erratic and so was the hair; trying to control it was a sheer impossibility. Fighting the elements, I did the best I could for the next few days and soon, I was returning home.

"Gold" was the product we were selling in this next commercial. Filming at Shepperton studio, we had two models to portray one person. One was 'the face' the other was 'the body' which was to be nude.

A professional gilder had been brought in from Poland and the producer told me that I was to be taught the art of gilding, as I was to apply this technique to gild an entire body. Beside the language barrier, I soon learned the delicate and tricky ways to apply gold leaves. Having to use this method to living (and moving) tissue and creating a gentle adherent was my problem.

Looking at the storyboard was even more worrying: *The camera pans at a gold body*

to reveal a golden face. A woman's body and face are slowly exposed as the gold leaves peel off and fly away like petals. Her naked body dissolves into the body of a Cougar. The camera zooms to its golden eyes. A hand appears and reaches for the twinkling eye, which turns into a sparkling earring. A close-up of the beautiful woman putting on the earring ends the commercial.

Computerized special effects were not yet in use and some art director must've dropped some acid!

Facing this new challenge, stocked with a priceless mound of gold leaves, I was skilfully gilding our naked 'body' model on a "closed set". I was applying the last leaves when a loud roar startled us. We were told that the crew were filming the 'golden eye Cougar' shot in the adjacent studio. Pleading to see the rare animal, the model promised to walk carefully to the studio, preventing tearing her golden veneer. Reluctantly agreeing, I covered her with a sarong and we proceeded to the studio.

A small opening had been cut out from the cage's bars to fit the camera's lens. Feeling safe, we were all observing the tamer cracking his whip to provoke the needed snarl.

Sharp, powerful and fast, the Cougar leapt straight into the camera, pushing itself free from the cage and landing in the middle of the studio.

NEVER have I seen a studio emptied so fast. Within seconds the Cougar and tamer were left to each other's prospects. Thankfully the feline was soon returned to its cage, a clear sheet of Perspex blocking the gap. Unfortunately for me, the model looked like a mummy, straight out of a catfight, shreds of gold leaf hanging everywhere. After a few repairs and long days filming, blowing away priceless amounts of gold leaves, we eventually finished our gold commercial and I had become an expert gilder.

Changing scenery a few weeks later, I was standing on the peak of Canada's "Rockies" shooting a hair commercial. The opening scene was an overhead wide angled shot of the whole landscape. To achieve this cinematic episode, a colossal crane had to be used. After the torturous experience of getting the crane to the location, the whole crew helped to raise the giant structure.

Unfortunately, the unpredictable mountainous weather surprised us, with the threat of a potent electrical storm. The crane being a prime target for the first bolt of lightning, the crew moved hysterically at a speed faster than light to dismount the menacing apparatus.

Soaked to the bone, we managed to get it out of the way, seconds before the storm besieged us. Thankfully, no electrifying moments were experienced and the next day we started all over again.

Who would ever think that shooting a hair commercial could be such a hair-raising experience?

Amidst all these travels, there always were the regular shoots in Miami. Having a clement climate it was a photographer's favourite location and it was quite common to see on its endless beaches, tiers of photographers shooting catalogues.

Between the checked pants, candy coloured plastic houses and crustacean shaped letterboxes, I discovered that Florida had given a new dimension to the word "kitsch" and

“oversize”.

Doing a shoot for the UK catalogue “Littlewoods”, I joined a British crew of six photographers and an army of models, hairdressers, makeup artists and stylists.

Being in the middle of nowhere in the Gulf of Mexico, there were no hotels and we all resided in condominiums. All equipped with a mini kitchen with a microwave, our first mission was to acquire the basic goods for breakfast and dinner.

A brigade of minibuses took us to the local mall. Equipped with trolleys, the British crew were soon perusing the aisles and were in for a culture shock.

Perplexed, we all ended at the dairy section looking for milk and butter, to discover they were nonexistent. “Looks like butter” “tastes like butter” “almost butter” “half and half” but NO real butter or milk for that matter. The same occurred when looking for mineral water, they had every kind and colour sodas we didn’t even know existed, but no plain water.

Disconcerted, we all ended up with trolleys full of synthetic foods which none of us intended to eat, unless desperate. I could not help thinking, had this been a French crew, a major uprising would have occurred.

Within days, due to a lack of choices, we had all converted to the burgers and fries diet and understood why they were so many full-size people around.

At a fair distance and ignoring the crowd resembling beached whales, we were shooting the swimwear collection on six of the best bodies money could buy. The beach was in front of our building. This had been arranged to save hours of travelling and scouting for locations. It also allowed us to cram more shots in one day and thirty shots a day was the goal.

Being “Littlewoods” the fashion aimed at the middle of the road market and ‘safe’ would describe at best the designs.

We had only been working for a couple of hours, when two policemen suddenly interrupted the shoot. Complaints had been made regarding the skimpiness of our models’ swimsuits and beachgoers had demanded that such a disgusting spectacle be removed from their sight.

Declared offensive, we were asked to relocate to more deserted sites.

Omitting to tell them that the vision of 200 kilos of wobbly flesh squeezed in a bikini was to us, just as offensive (actually, nauseating), we moved on.

Having to hire a location van and scout for a suitable location took a few hours and soon the light was gone and so was meeting our deadline.

The next few days, frantically trying to catch up with our schedule, we cursed having to leave our downstairs beach (whaled) location, driving 90 minutes to our out-of-the-way beach. I couldn’t help thinking had it been any other country people would’ve paid us to stay on the beach.

Antaeus was the son of Gaia and Poseidon. He was a fearsome giant who compelled all strangers to wrestle with him and defeated or killed them all. He was invincible for as long as he remained in contact with his mother (the Earth) for she supplied him with strength. His battles were depicted on many Greek vases and even on coins.

No you haven't picked up the wrong book, but Chanel's new man's fragrance "Antaeus" which was about to be released. The theme of the commercial we were about to create was to be the battle of two giants.

Comprise with slow motion close-ups of two muscular naked bodies, wrestling amid a landscape of rivers and mountains. The viewer was kept in suspense as to the gender of the opponent. The final shot revealing a woman's hand, touching Antaeus' colossal back, turning him into stone, the marble torso braking into halves, revealed the perfume bottle and the gender of the adversary.

Directed by Lester Bookbinder, I knew this was going to be a tedious few days. Lester was the grand master of commercials and the ultimate perfectionist. He demanded 100% from his crew at all times, anyone failing in their duties would be greeted with Lester's handshake and fatal phrase: "I hope you enjoy your last day working with me".

The requirement of lavish sets called for a large studio, so we were to shoot our commercial in a film studio lot.

Working on a male and female bodybuilder, my task was to make them equally smooth, hairless, flawless, bronzed and glossy. To achieve this requirement, I had to shave the man's entire body from neck to toe. The two models were to be nude, as the close-ups were to reveal various body curves. While shaving some of the more intimate areas of the male model, he confided that he felt very uncomfortable about being nude in front of a whole film crew. Understanding his dilemma, I worked out a solution and went to speak to Lester.

Knowing that no rude parts were to be shown, I explained to him that I could make a "modesty pouch" and gaffer tape it in the smallest possible way, making our models feeling more self-confident.

To the models' delight he agreed. After warning the models that this 'modest apparel' would come at a price when removed, I proceeded with the shaving, tucking and taping. Grateful of my 'razor training', I would operate carefully as a single nick would have ruined a shot. A full body makeup was applied, coated with a glistening gel, on both models, taking lengthy hours of preparations.

To make our models look like giants, a miniature set of the landscape was built. The colossal bodies were to crash into lakes and mountains while fighting. Making sure that our model's skin would be kept immaculate, the whole set was built out of latex and rubber.

While filming the wrestling scenes, due to lengthy body contact, the male model's gaffer tape was tested at great length.

Our male hunk was not as brave as the role he portrayed when the time came for the daily removal of the modesty pouch and the tape. Being begged to remove the stuck apparel, I felt awful as I peeled off the gaffer tape and what ever hairs I hadn't shaved. At the end of the two weeks shoot, people still admired the silkiness of our models' bodies and only the models and myself knew there was one area that didn't look as pristine.

Working in film studio lots was always interesting as many types of productions were in progress. The canteen was particularly colourful with mingles of people in various

costumes and make-ups.

During our two-week Chanel shoot, one studio was the set for a horror movie and actors with creepy make-ups going down corridors would startle passers by.

Another commercial was also being filmed. People dressed as various fruits suggested that there were promoting some kind of confection.

The sight of a few Creatures from outer space (badly done) also hinted at the making of some futuristic movie. Some had intricate facial prosthesis, making it almost impossible for them to eat or drink.

In the adjacent studio, a film on the Titanic was in the making. An impressive set had been built of the ship's stern in a massive water tank. The ominous iceberg and dozens of extras in Victorian clothes were standing by.

While we filmed our 30 seconds commercial, they had time to crash, tilt and literally sink the Titanic.



the "gold" commercial



the "Mad Max" commercial



Time

After a few years of being an international hair & makeup artist, I came to the conclusion that, not only talent was essential but having the following was vital: flexible disposition, diplomacy, good health, strong back muscles, adaptable body temperature, boundless energy, infinite patience, shatterproof spirit, adaptable taste buds, language skills, reliable sleeping pills, dependable alarm clock, defiance to jetlag, durable shoes, a limitless credit card, up to date passport, a solid suitcase and most of all, a perpetual consciousness of the fourth dimension "TIME". I was a firm believer that everything in life was about timing but in my case, I was always running after it.

Forever trying to keep up with this four-letter word was a constant struggle. As soon as I started work on a model I was struggling against the greedy pendulum of time, always feeling that I was holding up a photographer or a film crew. Ceaselessly rushing, trying to catch-up with those precious minutes, one was always under pressure. Filming on location, we were forever dependent on daylight. Often cheated of precious hours by rain or clouds, one was often running out of time.

Keeping up with nature was another matter. When shooting on location, I was always fighting against nature's whims. From wild wind, rain to humid heat, the hair would be out of control or sticky and the makeup would, either slide off the model's faces in the heat, or hide a red runny nose in the cold.

Because of nature's unpredictability one was often booked on a "weather check". If one were to start a location shoot at 6.00am, a weather check call at 5.00am, would decide if the job was to go ahead. The location, being usually at least half an hour away, one had already eaten breakfast, shaved and washed before calling. If the job was cancelled, first you had lost the income of that day; second, there you were at 5.00am raring to be off and nowhere to go.

Between stills and commercials, I was always travelling and within a month, I would go through constant changes of temperature and climates. I hated location work and unfortunately spent decades enduring it, as it was an essential part of my job. Fortunately, there were also the preferred studio shoots.

Not yet having access to digital enhancement, one would have to be all the more resourceful in creative ideas. Having been asked to do an eye-catching campaign for Sassoon, I created a black, white and grey makeup, so the face looked like a black & white picture, resulting the model's hair being the only coloured feature in the photograph, producing a striking effect. This time consuming transformation of skin tone into shades of greys looked to the naked eye alarmingly ghostly and scary.

It was one of the model's 21st birthday and after overhearing a telephone conversation, she had found out that a surprise party was to take place on her return home. Deciding that SHE would be the surprise, she kept on her spine-chilling face-paint. After provoking more disarray in London's busy rush hour, she walked into her dark flat and switched on the light, triggering a deafening screech from a shocked gathering.

For a short time, there was a trend in photography to have masses of tungsten lights. One had to exaggerate the makeup, as all of the lights would bleach the model out. Within one hour, the studio would become unbearably hot and the constant light blinding.

Doing a five-day shoot, the (nameless) photographer I was working with, started the first day, with a nine-hour session, using only one model.

Despite constant eye drops, the girl kept complaining that her eyes were dry and sore. I wasn't surprised that looking into all these lights for hours on end would dry one's eyes. The next morning, looking like ET, she was rushed to hospital. The top of her retina had been burnt and she had to have her eyes bandaged for a few days.

Refusing to take the blame, the photographer proceeded to tell all, that I had burnt the girl's eyes with a faulty hairspray, containing some kind of acid. Thankfully, it didn't tarnish my reputation, as people knew that a few weeks previously he had melted a model's contact lenses with the same procedure.

When I wasn't working, I made sure that I spent just as much energy partying. From fancy dress to black tie and casual parties, I made my absolute contribution to life's leisure. Part and parcel of being well known was the abundant invitations to charity events and various openings. I was always amazed how people found my unlisted address and phone number. Interestingly enough, between London, Paris or Sydney those events tended to have a knowable crowd and one grew tired of seeing the same faces everywhere.

Thanks to Princess Diana's famous wedding dress, the Emanuels decided to celebrate their new fame by throwing a fabulous bash. Devoted to pomp and Rococo, the house had been ornate with trillions of golden bows. Displaying various shades of gold, the beribboned sumptuous buffet looked like a renaissance painting, gilded quail eggs pouring out of giant shells, canapés lavished with caviar, arrays of golden roasts amid priceless delicacies and palatable treats. As if all wasn't extravagant enough, the arrival of a golden carriage with Jane Seymour wearing an Emanuel "Gone with the Wind" ball-gown certainly was!

I was always looking forward to the end of each year, when I would have two months of predictable good weather, no travelling, as I would escape to 'my second home' Sydney. Spending Christmas and New Year in summer was still a novelty. I never got use to seeing the Christmas trees covered with fake snow and Father Christmas sweltering under their false beard, while passers by, would barely be wearing a pair of shorts.

To start a New Year in warm weather already made it a happy one. A New Years Eve party took place in Palm Beach Australia, strictly black tie; it was to be a grand affair. Overlooking the garden, a vast terrace was dominated by a massive, superbly decorated table illuminated with hundreds of candles embedded in tree logs. A blue and white theme was created with the aid of metres of white tulle and a multitude of giant blue crepe paper bows.

While the string quartet was playing, the distinguished guests arrived attired in the latest designer labels. Due to the menacing weather a tarpaulin had been erected at the last-minute to protect the guests. As the dinner progressed so did the rain. The guests

were getting more jovial, the rainfall was transforming into a downpour and the tarp was sagging dangerously. The champagne was flowing and within the golden glow of a myriad candles the gathering looked most glamorous.

WHOOSH! The inevitable happened. Owing to the weight of the water it had collected, the tarpaulin gave away, soaking the assembly into an instant 'blue rinse'. Thanks to the dripping dye of the blue bows, the tinted flood had plunged the party into a blue movie. Thankfully drunk enough to laugh about it, this didn't drown our spirit. We washed our blue stained bodies and the party continued with the notorious guests clothed in the host's spare tee shirts.

Within one's travels one meets all sorts of interesting people. Gifted with some psychic powers, I enjoyed meeting a wise, well-travelled Buddhist monk. He was exceptionally psychic and could read people's previous lives and see their aura. Having been told previously of my past lives, I was curious to see if his revelations would correspond with my prior findings.

He told me something of my previous lives, which were identical to what I had been told before. Not knowing anything about me, he then proceeded to tell me that my purpose in this life was to help people to be in the limelight, but to make sure I didn't 'step in' myself.

I couldn't believe it, my job was exactly that, I prepared people to either be on a magazine cover, a CD cover, a television show or a concert and I never once wanted to be in their shoes. Justifiably I was delighted to hear that I had chosen the right vocation. He also warned me to avoid using my psychic gifts, as they were more powerful than I knew and wasn't prepared enough to handle them. This worried me sufficiently never to read someone's hand ever again. The one thing I couldn't control was to feel people's aura. There was nothing more eerie than standing somewhere and feeling an evil aura behind me. It would be just as disturbing to be doing someone's makeup, which had an austere aura, as it was hard to ignore it when working so close to someone.

Back to another mediocre summer in England, armed with a wallet filled with a multitude of currencies, I was again plane hopping, packing and unpacking suitcases, swapping raincoats, sarongs and overcoats, switching between boots and espadrilles, my hectic schedule was on track.

The idea of spending ten days in the Bordeaux region for a British Vogue promotion was appealing. Guests at a gourmet resort, we were to photograph within its lavish surroundings. The chef was so excited at the elite exposure, that he would exceed his culinary prowess, gorging us with foie gras and truffle dishes. After a few days of rich lunches and dinners, for the first time in my life I was wishing for a green salad.

It came to the point, when our team would dread walking into the restaurant, as an overenthusiastic chef would predictably pounce on us and proceed to stuff us with food we could no longer digest. It was exquisite food, but one can only take so much of a good thing! Trying not to offend the cordon bleu master became difficult as the "Grande Bouffe" scenario progressed. After ten days and a few extra kilos later, we were escaping from a situation that many people would fantasize about.

La Digue

Packing for a two-week job in “La Digue” in the Seychelles, I was preparing for the worse, as I was to undertake two commercials with thirteen models in twelve days.

It was to be directed by the Hollywood master Tony Scott. The call sheet detailing crew, equipment and shooting schedule was as thick as a bible.

The models were “la crème de la crème” and the idea of controlling thirteen prima donnas didn’t appeal to me. The various members of the crew and models were flying from all over the world, all scheduled to meet at a small airport in the Seychelles, before the final flight.

After a gruesome journey of three plane changes, I arrived at the meeting place with my much-needed assistant. The weather was abysmal and the open hangar didn’t offer much protection from the pouring rain as we waited hours for the assembly to be complete. As models arrived, they would all bitch about the various airlines and their flight experiences. I queried one of the male models about his flight.

“Who did you come with?”

“I came by myself” was the reply, warning me that any discussions on Einstein’s theory of relativity were to be avoided.

The plane, which was to take us to the remote island, was small and two trips were required for all to be transported. Three times we boarded, to be told that due to weather conditions, it couldn’t take off and we were asked to return to the hangar.

Lugging our luggage through the downpour, going back and forth on the tarmac, we were all soaked to the skin. After more hours of waiting, the fourth trial was successful. As we were taking off, we were enlightened about our setback.

“Sorry about the delay, but the previous plane crashed on landing and we had to wait for the wreckage to be cleared from the airstrip to allow us to land”.

A profound silence was the response to this disconcerting message and not a peep was heard during the whole flight. Although resembling a Yoyo ride, it was a short flight and thankfully we landed safely. It was well-past midnight, drenched and weary, the glamorous jet set team waited in the deluging rain in pitch-blackness for the plane to return with the rest of the crew. Fortunately, it was so dark that we couldn’t see the debris of the previous plane and didn’t know that everyone on board had been killed.

Boasting of its unspoiled setting, La Digue was a tiny secluded island with no cars. The only means of transport were two rustic open trucks, used for transporting people and supplies; a single hotel was the sole accommodation for visitors. As soon as the rest of the team arrived we were tossed into the open truck, to enjoy another downpour. By the time we arrived at the hotel, we were soaked to the bone, cold and very tired. Little did we know the best was yet to come.

As the twenty-five persons team stood outside the hotel, the producer awkwardly announced that there had been a “slight mix up” in the reservations and there were no available hotel rooms for a week. This news landed like a ton of bricks.

Having bribed some of the locals to let their home for a few days, we were all to be dispersed around the island in various dwellings. Being in the middle of the sticks, there were no roads or lights, just a million palm trees shedding their coconuts.

Having been allocated a bicycle and a flashlight, my assistant and I were then given directions such as, “pass the large dead tree and turn left” to find our new abode in the middle of the jungle. In total darkness, pouring rain, our luggage fastened to the back, trying to hold the handles and the flashlight, slaloming our way around coconuts and potholes, we heroically found our way to our lodging.

The humble home was rudimentary to say the least; a bucket of water being left by the door rightly suggested that the plumbing didn't work. After heating up this water, it would have to suffice for my assistant and I to wash and shave, it would then be recycled to fill the toilet system, giving one crucial flush. It was 2.00am and we had to get up at 4.30am; exhausted we went to our equally primitive bedrooms and crashed.

The next morning at 5.00am, we had to face the challenge of finding our way back to the hotel, where we were to meet the crew. After getting lost, yet again slaloming our way around coconuts and potholes, we eventually found our way. Having just missed a couple of falling coconuts, we were told that they crushed people's skulls and were the main cause of death on the island. This might sound funny, but the great big thud of a coconut missing you by a few inches, can be quite alarming.

Each day was filled with daily rainstorms, eighteen working hours, lots more cycling and very little sleep. Between all of us and a ton of equipment the trucks were kept very busy. Two days after our arrival we were deprived of these trucks for a few hours, as they were used to bury the bodies from the fatal crash prior to our landing.

As expected, with work overload and little sleep, daily dramas, tantrums and petulance took place. An enterprising local provided one of the models with some marijuana then proceeded to inform the police about the illegal holder. All bags were searched and the culprit threatened with imprisonment. The producers were obliged to give a large donation to the police fund to prevent this disaster.

The following day the same model was “on set” in front of everyone, smoking a joint. It was the only time that I have seen a producer physically attacking a model. I spent the next few days, covering his scratch marks and bruises for the shoot.

Another model on a self-destruct mission had daily accidents, from bike accidents to falling off rocks. After a few days she was covered with bruises, scratches with grazed knees and elbows, not to mention an eye infection. As per usual my job specification rotated between nurse and makeup artist as I was forever covering wounds, bruises or tattoos. I couldn't wait for this episode to end. After a week, we eventually left our primitive abodes and moved to the hotel and I can't say that I missed our jungle slaloms. It felt almost glamorous; to have running water was a sheer luxury, a flushing loo a bonus and an extra hour of sleep pure bliss.

Once deposited at our location, we were left all day to fight the elements. Being the rainy season and having nowhere to take shelter, we endured the daily downpours. Wrapping the model's hair & make-up with plastic bags was yet again the only way I

could protect my handiwork.

Although the location was spectacular, I was glad to see it from the window of our small plane as we left.



Au revoir London

After the eighteen strenuous days in the Seychelles I was happy to be home. It was my first day off for months and I had many overdue errands, from basic shopping, paying bills to stocking up on hair and makeup products. Bright and early I was at the ATM machine to get some cash; as per usual the only person in front of me took ten minutes to withdraw fifty pounds. Returning to my car a large sticker on the windscreen and a huge yellow clamp decorated the wheel. I was fuming that in such a short time I had been clamped.

Being peak hour, finding a taxi took forever to reach Hyde Park to pay the hideous fine. After taking another taxi back to my car, I waited an hour to be unclamped, giving me plenty of time to peel the dreaded sticker off my windscreen.

Realizing that I was going to be late for an appointment, I ran to the nearest telephone. I hadn't been away for more than five minutes when I came back to my car, to find yet another sticker on the windscreen. As I wondered as what happened? A passing motorist informed me that the clamping unit had unclamped my car, gone around the square and two minutes later re-clamped my car.

Frustrated and furious, I had to repeat the entire exercise. Two hours later, my car was finally unclamped and I could resume my errands.

I had to collect some makeup in South Kensington, which was a tricky place to find parking. I parked the car in an out of the way square and raced to the shop as fast as I could. Ten minutes later, I returned to find the familiar sticker on my windscreen, even multilingual cursing couldn't relieve my anger. I felt as frustrated as a handless mute trying to communicate.

Going through the same routine again, I was unclamped two hours later. I had spent over five hundred pounds in fines and taxis and getting only one task accomplished, the whole day had been an expensive waste of time.

To top it off, the next day I went to see my accountant, to be told that due to the greedy "conservative" government, I was to receive only 20% of the fee from the "La Digue job" as the balance had to be donated to the taxation department. Out of the 20% my agent fee had to be deducted, leaving me with very little.

This being the straw that broke the camel's back, I decided that it was time to depart the British shore.

It was the late eighties and Aids had taken its toll on many of my friends and colleagues. It was a shock and a rude awakening, making me aware that life had to be enjoyed for the moment, as tomorrow was a gift sparingly given.

Tallying up my life, I realized that working incessantly, forever travelling, living out of a suitcase, I rarely had a chance to enjoy my home, I had sacrificed a lot of precious moments with loved ones, I didn't have time to maintain a relationship and was giving out eighty percent of my hard earned money to Maggie Thatcher's fund. I was very successful but at what price?

Within those few years, the handful of makeup artists had grown to mega proportions. Every man and his dog were or aspired to be a makeup artist. Hundreds of schools were churning out so-called makeup artists who couldn't paint a wall, let alone a face. The standards were dropping at an alarming rate and I was embarrassed of the profession I used to be proud of.

I had planned to live in Australia and was aware to its strict immigration laws, the later I applied for residency, the more difficult it would be.

Within a few days, I was at the Australian immigration office filling out the countless forms for a business migration. Reading through all the documents, I found out what the requirements were:

“Assets of a minimum of half a million dollars” Being 1987 this was a lot of money and: “Under twenty-five years of age, highly skilled and qualified at a sought-after profession”.

Somehow I didn't think there would be many people fitting these specifications within that age group. Apart from being twelve years older than the ideal age, I fitted all the other requirements. A letter would be sent in a few months to confirm one's progress. It also pointed out that “personal references” and “harassing” would not be effective. I hadn't realised that the POM convicts had it so hard!

Looking at the huge collection of antiques, pictures, books, bric-a-brac and memorabilia I had collected though the years and travels, I decided that if I were to move to Australia, it would have to be greatly minimized. I also realized that being in London I had decorated my home to bring warmth within, this approach would not be necessary in a warm climate. EVERYTHING would have to go. The idea of such drastic measures appealed to my extreme nature.

Three months latter, not hearing any news about my application, taking the bull by the horns, I decided to call the immigration office to be told that they were still debating on the validity of my application and further calls would jeopardize my chances.

Born in a Tiger year and an Aries, this jet-propelled tiger wasn't going to take this affront lying down. My weighty references, should I ever deign to collect them, would have glowed in the dark, demonstrating that I was a rare asset to any country.

After making a few calls, days later, I had received rave references from all the top magazines such as British & Italian Vogue, the biggest cosmetic companies such as Guerlain, YSL, Revlon, L'Oreal and Max Factor, companies such as Harrods, DeBeers, Harvey Nichols and of course David Bailey. From Australia, Vogue, David Jones, Maggie Tabberer, Sportsgirl and the daily Mirror also contributed to my acclaim as one of the world's leading hair & makeup artists.

At the same time I also received an offer from the Australian Wool board, to fly to Sydney for the “Bicentennial Fashion Show” at the Opera house, hosted by Prince Charles and Diana. I was to direct and organize a team to makeup seventy models for this unique event. Surely if I was chosen for this commission, this would prove how unique my status was.

Obstinately going against their instructions, I sent my well-deserved references and

a copy of the Wool Board letter to the department of Immigration.

Within a short time, I was advised that after the completion of a half million-dollars bank transfer, a residency visa would be stamped in my passport.

After selling my house, most of my furniture, giving away tons of stuff, I was packed and ready to go.

Indulging in a mammoth-shopping spree: new furniture, china and half a Bang & Olufsen store, a huge container was to follow me.

Numerous farewell dinners with my dear friends followed and before I knew it, I closed the door on twenty years of my life.

Sydney

Being a guest at my dear friends Hinke and Wout's home, I had a loving reception in Sydney. A Christmas holiday in Bali and a hectic January attributable to the Bicentennial, I had a month to find and buy a home. At the speed of a bionic kangaroo I went hunting for a new abode. Discovering the complexity and ordeals of auctions, I kept a close eye out on properties "for sale".

After hijacking a real estate agent for a whole day, seizing every key they possessed and seeing every property on their book, I eventually found what I had been looking for.

It was love at first sight! A massive garden apartment with a sitting room the size of a ballroom, overlooking the harbour. Armed with a solicitor and a huge bag full of cash, I proceeded to entice the owner to a quick sale by emptying the entire bag's content, covering his desk with more cash than he had ever seen. Relentlessly hassling solicitors, having couriers standing by for exchanges of relevant papers, within two weeks I was the proud owner of 650sq meters in Bellevue Hill and had performed the fastest sale Sydney had ever seen.

The place needed total renovation, which was my forte. Leaving detailed instructions to a team of workmen, I departed to Bali for a well-deserved rest.

On my return, the disappointment of seeing how little had been achieved during my absence was an eye opener to the "laid-back" Australian attitude. It was going to take months for the restorations to be completed.

The preparations for the "Bicentennial Wool Collection" were in progress at the opera House, Rick Birch was the overall organiser of this "world first" event. Michael Parkinson was to be the host and presenter for the live broadcast. Most of the catwalk supermodels had been flown-in for the occasion joining the best local models in displaying this extravaganza.

An international mix of the world's top couturiers had also been invited with their entourage: Jean Muir, Claude Montana, Sonia Rykiel, Gianni Versace, Bruce Oldfield, Kenzo, Donna Karan and Missoni, having all these egos in one room was going to be stifling and take a lot of diplomacy to deal with.

The designers were requested to design an "Australian themed" collection. Local designers: Covers, Stuart Membery, Wendy Heather, Adele Palmer, Jill Fitzsimon and

George Gross were also featured in the show.

Organizing a team of the best makeup artists, which were to beautify the forty-five models and sixteen dancers, I was delighted to find that my dear friend Richard Sarah was in town. Having such a formidable right-hand made me feel more at ease, as I knew if worse came to worse the two of us could handle the entire cast.

The next task was to meet up with each of the designers to find out their preferred look. Limited to time restrictions, I had to explain to them that major makeup changes were impossible. This news wasn't well received as each one of them was only concerned about their segment and had precise ideas how the models should look.

To complicate matters the tiny backstage wasn't designed for fashion shows, it was too small to accommodate such vast number of people, clothes and accessories. The preparations and changes had to take place in a large room downstairs; a lift would bring the models up to a foyer next to the backstage door, taking up more valuable time for the model's changes. A further hindrance was added as most of the designers wanted the same girls to model their clothes.

Endless dramas and tantrums were to take place, as they would each compete to get their chosen models. Adding to these difficulties, the sequence of the show would have conflicting styles following each other, such as Kenzo's collection being romantic and bucolic preceding Montana's dramatic and theatrical collection. The make-up would have to be drastically altered within a short time. As rehearsals evolved, tempers would flare up, as designers would be reluctant to compromise, Donna Karan winning first prize for being the vilest.

The 'red carpet treatment' of the international models would aggravate the local models, causing jealousy and even more tension during rehearsals.

Adding to these dilemmas the eye-catching stage was tilted at a thirty-degree angle to the horizontal, playing havoc with stilettos and dancer's stability.

Sitting with Claude Montana during the first dress rehearsal, I couldn't help overhearing his enquiry to his sister:

"What's my last year collection doing here in these hideous colours?"

I had the embarrassing task of informing him that it was an Australian label called Covers, leaving him baffled.

Surviving those strenuous rehearsals, it was show time and utter organized chaos. A multitude of hairdressers, makeup artists, dressers, stylists were bustling around models and dancers. Embarrassingly, most models, ignoring the other makeup artists, would queue for Richard and I to do their makeup. To add to the commotion, photographers and a film crew were capturing these moments.

Lift repair staff were standing by in case the crucial elevator failed.

Due to the lack of space, only two of us could be backstage for makeup alterations. Minutes before the show started, I grabbed one of the makeup artists to assist me and took the lift upstairs.

As we emerged from the lift, we were confronted in the foyer with a royal blue dressed Princess Diana, entering the hall with Prince Charles. I thought my overwhelmed

assistant was going to faint. Propelling him through the backstage area to our standby position, one might have thought he had seen an apparition, as he was deliriously proclaiming, “ I saw her, I saw her, I saw her” and I thought he’d never recover.

As Princess Diana sat next to Bob Hawke (Prime Minister at the time) the two-hour show commenced and fortunately progressed without a hitch.

A huge party followed the event; the models could finally meet a prince and chat to a princess. Having experienced this privilege on previous occasions, after a glass of champagne, I decided I had seen enough faces for one day and went home.

Aware that moving to Australia was going to alter my workload, I was prepared to adjust to a less high profile situation, and exchange a lower income for a contented lifestyle. What I hadn’t counted on was people’s reaction.

Repeatedly being asked, “why did you come to Australia?” made me realise that Australians were insecure and unconfident about their country and couldn’t comprehend my actions. It felt that only people, who failed elsewhere, were expected to end up in Australia.

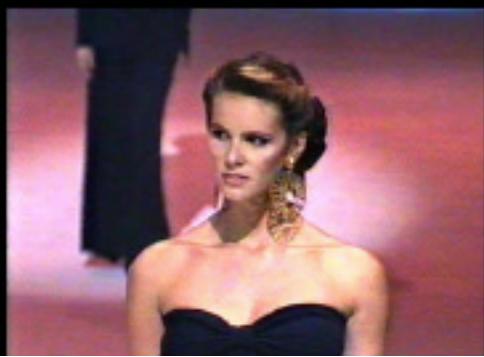
Before this negative attitude had any effect on my self-confidence, my loyal European clients were offering me various location works. Valuing my professional talent, if a job was abroad, clients worked out that getting me to fly from Sydney was worthwhile.

I wasn’t attracted to the offer to do a “blockbuster” film in Hollywood with Tony Scott. I had just settled in Australia and couldn’t face living in Los Angeles for three months. Instead of declining the job, I made my usual outrageous demands of excessive fees, luxury accommodations, first class tickets etc... To my amazement all was accepted and to the horror of my Sydney agent, I still turned down the proposal.

A higher payment was even offered to lure me to change my mind, to no avail. Refusing a fee that would have easily bought a couple of Porsches; I don’t think my agent ever recovered from the loss of such a substantial commission.



the Australian Bicentennial fashion show





the Australian bicentennial fashion show



Kenya

Returning from shooting a fashion story in Bali, I had a couple of days to repack my suitcase for an impending trip to Kenya. These days were spent giving the washer and dryer a good run, answering messages and paying bills. To add insult to injury a 50 page “call sheet” detailing my next job was to be absorbed. Sleep didn’t come into it, as I knew that a few days of flying were ahead.

My assignment was a TV commercial for a Timotei shampoo for the UK, to be directed by my old friend Stuart MacLeod. Having the theme “honey”, it was to be shot in golden grass, with a glowing sunset as a backdrop, silhouetting a symbolic African tree.

After signing an alarming insurance form, covering any fatal accident that might occur on this particular shoot, I was ready to depart on my venture. Loaded with a burdensome amount of equipment, safari wardrobe and every repellent I could lay my hands on, my life was now in Air Zimbabwe’s hands.

Headphones on, I had made myself at home in my business class seat, cushioned, slipper’ed, belted, a large glass of scotch in hand, cigarettes and sleeping pills standing by. My musical program was suddenly interrupted by a voice, announcing that on our way to Harare (Zimbabwe), we had to stop in Perth for a couple of hours. This rescheduling turned an international flight into a local flight, requiring one to follow the Australian law of “no smoking”. The flight was five and a half hours and for a nicotine addict, such as myself, was torture and I wasn’t amused. Adding to my frustration, this diversion made me miss my connecting flight to Nairobi, ensuing an overnight stay in Harare, adding more hours to an already lengthy journey.

Eighteen hours later, I finally arrived in Harare. Having filled in a currency declaration of every cent I was carrying and waiting an hour for my luggage, I went in search of the Air Zimbabwe’s counter to collect my complimentary “overnight coupons” for my hotel.

Glancing around the smelly, sticky, dingy, bedimmed hall/airport, I spotted a few distressed people in front of the ONLY desk in the whole place. Could this worn, wooden structure, reminiscent of my school days, be the Air Zimbabwe’s counter? For the lack of other choices I made my way there and patiently waited my turn, watching the 3 clocks (all giving different times) my Bali trained sweat glands were getting a work out.

An hour went by, while the one-man operation attended three customers. Eventually “coupons” supplied, I asked where I could get a taxi. The bewildered expression on the man’s face sufficed as an answer, so I asked him how I would I get to my hotel? BUS was the reply. Realising there would be as many Air Zimbabwe’s buses as there were counters, I didn’t ask which bus?

Sure enough, leaving the so-called airport, I was faced with a pre-war rusty mobile, which made Bombay’s buses look futuristic.

For the lack of another choice “Aequo Animo” I boarded the archaic construction, hoisting up my colossal suitcase onto the heap of luggage, piled together like a game of fiddlesticks.

The only available seat was right behind the driver. My jaw dropped as I spotted the 'internal engine' next to him, covered with a genuine 50's carpet remnant.

Lurching forward at a speed of 30km an hour, we were off. Wiping my perspiring brow, the pungent native aroma was overwhelming and waves of nausea swept over me. At this point of time, the driver began to disappear into a thick fog, reminiscent of the "Scottish Moors". I wondered if this was a normal occurrence generated by this ancient vehicle. An explosion stopped my thoughts... and the bus.

The obsolete engine had blown up, burnt rubber, melted carpet, suffocating smoke, caused the over-heated and over-stressed locals to hastily exit the bus, leaving me baffled, mystified and disconcerted.

Survival being the priority, I grabbed my luggage and leapt to the side of the road in pitch-black darkness. I knew I was going into the jungle but hadn't expected to be there so soon. As the driver hitchhiked to retrieve another bus, we waited in this isolated site for an hour.

Rescued by an equally antiquated bus, twenty stops later, I eventually arrived at the gates of my hotel, showing my ID and vouchers to the armed guards, I was allowed into the hotel reception where, another mountain of forms had to be filled. I was famished and thirsty, but told that room service was closed.

Four hours after landing I was at last opening the door to my bedroom. Outside my window the blue glow of a swimming pool looked inviting, but gazing at a sign beside it: "YOU ARE ENTERING THIS POOL AT YOUR OWN RISK" I decided enough was enough, took a shower and collapsed into bed.

Within a flash it was morning, I gave breakfast a miss, as it wasn't offered! The stifling bus, taking me back to the airport at 7.00am, journeyed through every street in Harare until it was full, eventually arriving at our destination.

More forms had to be filled out. The compulsory law was that all local cash had to remain in the country, my luggage was scrupulously searched, in case I was hiding some of their precious currency, which I pointed out I wouldn't even use as toilet paper, let alone 'collect it'.

Entering the sweltering and stifling first class lounge, I discovered that the English 50's bed-sitter look was still in vogue and revealed where the 50's engine carpet remnant came from. In-between the worn to shreds armchairs and a couple of ineffective ventilators, stood a picnic table placed in front of a window, keeping a few soft drinks warm and undrinkable.

I didn't mind this distressing environment for a short while, however in the recesses of my mind I knew that I was to be back there, in transit for 7 hours (it actually turned out to be 9) on my return journey.

Finally arriving in Kenya I was rewarded by staying in a fabulous hotel outside Nairobi called the "Safari Park Hotel".

In the early hours of my third day of travel, I met up with the rest of the crew, freshly arrived from London. Hiring a few jeeps we drove to our location.

After a few problems with missing equipment, flat tyres, towing one of the jeeps and

slaloming our way around one million potholes, exhausted we arrived 10 hours later at our 'jungle camp'.

Conveniently close to the filming location, the camp had been erected that day in the middle of the thick jungle. No fencing, no armed guards, just a few hundred wild animals sharing this ideal little spot with us. Although it was a beautiful setting, I knew from that moment that this adventure spelt D.A.N.G.E.R.

Knowing my day started at 4.00am with using a noisy generator and hairdryer, I was relegated a tent furthest away from the centre of camp, next to a swamp. Three days of travelling for that?

As I requested my first 'jungle shower' the helpers put some hot water in a large tin roped over a large tree branch and hoist it up, I had commenced my Indiana Jones' training. This might have been idyllic for a holiday, but I was there to do a shampoo commercial, these conditions were hardly ideal for keeping the model's precious head of hair in top condition.

After drinks by a fire and a surprisingly good dinner in an open tent, torch in hand, confronting the pitch-black jungle, I nervously trotted down to the end of the camp to my new abode.

Checking thoroughly (at least ten times) that my tent's zipper was firmly closed. I went to bed, listening to the fauna's cacophonous symphony: baboons, crocodiles, bush babies, hyenas, were all in full chorus. Every time a new sound came closer, I nervously tried to identify it. Isolated as I lay there, in the middle of this hubbub, I decided that the only way I was going to get some sleep was with two sleeping pills down my throat.

I kept thinking of what the camp's chief said: "Animals see a tent as a solid structure. If it is zipped and you stay inside during the night, you are safe!"

Minor problem! I was starting work at 4.00am and that WAS night!

Timorously, I eventually fell asleep.

At 3.00am I was awakened by a foul smell. This potent wild odour reminded me of a "menagerie" a flashback of visiting the big cats at the zoo.

Alarmed, my heartbeat picked up speed, then, the furtive sound of a heavy animal prowling around my tent turned my nervous state into PLAIN TERROR.

"It" suddenly stopped; all I could hear was "it" smelling me. These hefty sniffing nostrils had amplifiers at full volume. This loud snuffling was right next to my face, one foot away or was it one mouth away?

The canvas separating me from the intruder felt VERY THIN; my heartbeat felt very loud, the rest of me felt numb. The jungle racket had stopped, making this "tête a tête" even more poignant.

Thinking of what I had in my tent to defend myself, a pair of tweezers and hairdressing scissors came to mind as the most threatening weapons I possessed.

Feeling defenceless, I knew something big and cat-like was out there and I wasn't going out there to find out what "it" was.

Assessing its every move, I was praying that my tent looked like a "solid structure".

The pacing was getting faster and a deep roar of frustration turned terror into a

paralysed state, breathing became arduous while my heart was sprinting for a gold medal.

If animals can smell fear this one was getting an overdose.

This “close encounter of the beast kind” went on for some interminable long heart-rending minutes.

Eventually, deciding that my after-shave wasn't the flavour of the moment, or my “solid structure” impenetrable, “it” went away, leaving me more petrified than I had ever been.

As I lay there still anxious, my alarm clock went off and almost gave me a heart attack. It took me quite a while to get the courage to unzip my tent and in total darkness switch on the generator, hoping it would chase away any more visitors.

The tracks were eventually identified as lion's paws and I could identify FEAR.

Driving to the location that morning, as I was recounting my ordeal to the crew, our driver told us that he had seen some lions around the camp while we were dining and had decided not to tell us in case it made us nervous. Just as we were talking, he stopped the jeep and there, a couple of metres away, were a whole family of lions, resting. So, I shot them... with my video camera and captured great footage.

Respecting the compulsory rules, tourists were safely tucked away in their jeeps, as getting out of one's vehicle was hazardous. A large contribution given to the reserve allowed us to stand on firm ground exposed to predators. This explained why I had to fill all these insurance forms beforehand.

Preparing for the first shot in our spectacular location, the camera operator was adjusting the focus on the background behind our model, standing in golden grass 15 metres away from camera.

I was preparing the model's hair for the shot as I was signalled to come over to the camera “speedily but without running”. Going all around the field, not to damage our foreground grass, puzzled, I reached the camera crew.

While showing me through the lens, the cameraman asked me to get the model as quickly as possible ‘without running’ to the nearest jeep. Looking through the lens, sharply focused, were two lioness' ears, protruding out of the grass, only a few metres away from our model.

Apparently ‘running’ was the first thing that would encourage a lion to chase, unfortunately it also one's first impulse.

Therefore, I walked as swiftly as possible back to our model, warning her of the problem whilst escorting her to the jeep. Informed of this predicament she turned ashen, however recovered once the ‘unarmed’ guides had chased away our ‘set crusher’ with the help of jeeps and hooters.

As the days turned into a week, we developed an acute sense of preservation making sure a jeep was close at hand, as lions persisted with their visits.

We became quite blasé with the countless ticks crawling all over us, vultures tearing up putrid carcasses, baboons trying to pinch our equipment, elephants threatening to crush our precious golden grass and scorpions hiding in our shoes.

The second most unnerving moment was being surrounded by a herd of buffalos, wondering if they were going to charge.

The beginning of the commercial was a sunrise shot with hundreds of flamingos taking off on a misty lake. This required the crew to get up very early, to get to the location and set-up the equipment very quietly not to disturb the resting flamingos on the water.

As the crew was almost ready to start filming, one of them felt a cough coming on. Making sure he wouldn't scare off the flamingos, he conscientiously went to his jeep, closed the door and even put his head under the dashboard to muffle the cough. Unfortunately by doing so, he accidentally pressed on the hooter and the loud horn caused a premature flight of flamingos and great discontent from the crew.

Flamingo-less, they would have to repeat the early exercise another day.

Getting up at 4.00am after short nervous nights I pursued my mission. With the assistance of countless hair swings and headshakes we shot continually from sunrise to sundown whilst I did my best to keep the hair bouncy, shiny and perfect. After all, this was the reason why we were there! It all mounted up to a stimulating escapade and within a week we had all the magic takes in the can.

However tiresome, this adventure provided great footage for my video collection as per usual I made a movie about the crew and all the activities behind the making of a thirty second commercial on location. Unfortunately due to the video quality not being "broadcast quality" the final version never made it to air.

The only thing left to dread was the journey home. It didn't surprise me one bit that the plane was delayed in Nairobi. The first class lounge had a Gestapo trained hostess who refused to serve drinks and also had the TV and paging system turned so low that, passengers could neither hear the news nor their flight being announced. One of the exasperated travellers whispered something to her and was slapped. If this was first class what was happening in economy?

Once on board, thirsty and starving, Air Zimbabwe true to first class form served me lamb after I ordered chicken, both looking equally inedible. I couldn't help throwing a sarcastic gastronomic comment when the hostess came to pick up my untouched tray. Overhearing my remarks, the lady sitting next to me (whom I had conveniently ignored) introduced herself as an Air Zimbabwe controller and asked me if there was anything I had to complain about?

Well! Talk about throwing the Christians to the lions! The rest of the flight was filled with her taking down notes.

The next thing I knew, I was back in the dreaded Harare's first class lounge with sixty people, only twenty-five armchairs, 40°centigrade and 9 hours to waste. This was a tedious experience I'd rather not recall.

When time came to finally board, people were requested to go on the tarmac in groups of ten, to do "a luggage identification". There I was, after nine excruciating hours of transit, on the tarmac, in total darkness, trying to identify a black suitcase.

Departing on our way to Perth once again: Headphones on, cushioned, slipper'ed, belted, a large glass of scotch in hand, cigarettes and sleeping pills standing by, wearing

my mask tagged with a large sticker "do not disturb". My musical program was suddenly interrupted by a commotion next to me. Two stewards had just deposited a colossal, bulging eyed woman, hissing and puffing, exuding more perspiration than a whole Zimbabwe bus.

This overwhelming, crushing apparition was on her first flight. After ten minutes in the sardine box (economy class), squeezed into a standard seat, she had discovered (60 years and 150 kilos later) that she was claustrophobic and was having an attack. Subsequently upgraded, there she was, contributing to the heavy breathing saga of the week.

Feeling sorry for her, I spent the next eleven hours playing nurse, I tried to give her some sleeping pill but she wouldn't have them... Shame!

The poor woman's brain didn't match her size. She didn't know that claustrophobia or headphones existed, tourist class seats only came in size 10 and showering was a daily routine.

By the time we were to land in Perth, she was fully trained how to use: headphones, volume button, channel surfing and how to pull out the armrest table. Unfortunately she couldn't use it, as her stomach was an obstruction. She also acquired the best collection of salt & peppershakers, cutlery and every jam jar that was served and more.

Just as things were running smoothly, she suddenly started another panic attack at the thought of landing and flying from Perth to Auckland. We landed with her full performance and didn't exchange addresses.

After two more boring hours of transit, we left Perth on our way to Sydney, headphones on, cushioned, slipper'ed, belted, a large glass of scotch in hand, sleeping pills standing by. My musical program was yet again interrupted, by the screeching of a hyperactive baby, on his mother's lap, BOTH sitting next to me... My patience had run out and I asked to be moved upstairs.

Because of all the delays, we landed in Sydney at 2.00am, for the lack of taxis, waited another hour before I could be driven to my house.

After five travelling days and seven working days to produce a thirty second commercial, worn out, I arrived home at 3.30am to the query "DID YOU HAVE A NICE HOLIDAY?"



Becoming an editor between trips

A friend called Viteck, convinced me to do a beauty video. After writing my own script, we filmed all the step-by-step makeovers, giving all the tips and tricks of the trade for all types and ages.

Promoting it in the USA was the next thing. Arriving in Fort Lauderdale during “Spring Break” was ill timed but enlightening on Americans’ culture. Thousands of students had invaded the city. This might explained why everything in our hotel suites was glued down. From the fake flower arrangements, bedside lights, mirrors, pictures, TVs even to the remote controls, everything was tightly fastened to the furniture. Obviously the visitors had a penchant for souvenirs regardless how trivial.

Scripted live interviews being the American way, we were soon memorising pages of speeches, which had to be delivered in a natural way in front of a live audience. The auto-cues saved the day but failed to convince the American public to buy the video.

The Sydney lifestyle I had longed for was as rewarding as expected. Being able to park legally was a daily joy. The lack of traffic jams, wheel clamps and kamikaze bike riders were appreciated. The delectable seafood, tender meat, tasty wines and fresh fruits enjoyed. The brilliant sunshine and blue sky were never taken for granted. The local work? Well that’s another story.

During all my years in Europe, my reputation was such that I could count on one hand the times that clients had asked to see my portfolio. Although through my regular visits I had built an Australian clientele and a status, new clients were asking to see my book. To build a good portfolio took years, as it would display an assortment of work and preferably impressive editorials and clients.

My portfolio was filled with worldwide glossy covers, cosmetics adds, famous faces and avant-garde beauty pictures. It wouldn’t be an understatement to say that it was an impressive body of work one could be proud of. Therefore it came as a shock when my Sydney agent told me to ‘tone down’ my portfolio. It seemed that my imposing work was intimidating photographers and clients, causing me to loose jobs to lesser-qualified people. While anyone in Europe would have killed to have such portfolio, there I was, taking out all my ‘threatening’ Vogue covers and tear sheets.

To add insult to injury while doing editorial, I was stunned to have editors asking me to copy the look from some European tear sheets. Editorial was supposed to be innovative, directional and avant-garde, that’s why pacesetters like myself, were constantly challenging their creativity and churning out new ideas, this was a final affront to my creativity. I had to come to terms with the knowledge that I was in a young country that was still insecure and had yet to trust its convictions.

I suddenly understood why so many talented people were going to further shores to express their gift. Thankfully, I’d been there and done that and accepted this predicament.

The fashion clientele being so fickle seemed to dislike the fact that I had become a

local and no more a 'two-month exclusive' and would prefer to use anyone else who was visiting.

Doing advertising was also different. In Europe art directors would show you their artwork of the intended result and one would work towards achieving the best result. Australian art directors seemed to favour a less directional approach, opting for various alternatives. All roads led to Rome, but if you didn't know where you were going, it was pointless. Instead of concentrating in doing one great shot, one would be doing a dozen of weak alternative pictures with indistinct results. Being a very decisive person this use to drive me round the bend and tested my patience to the extreme.

My yearly stopovers to London became briefer, as most of my friends had passed away from the dreaded AIDS and going out to restaurants had become a 'mortgage experience'. Opting for longer stays in France, I would visit family and friends. Now living in a young country, I suddenly saw Paris in a different light, admiring all the beautiful old buildings that I had failed to appreciate for all these years, I felt like a tourist and rediscovered the thrills of "marchés".

I could no longer eat the ten course meals at family functions and ransack the patisseries' shelves. I had forgotten how much time French people devoted to their favourite pastime EATING. Catching up with family and friends all over the country, I would get back from my European holidays bloated and exhausted.

Having just returned from such a holiday, I was asked to do another commercial for Timotei UK, this time it was to be filmed in the Rocky Mountains in Montana.

Having endured two days of the usual travel dramas, I reached the ranch, met up with the crew and started working within the first hour of arrival. Although it was the end of the summer, being at the top of a mountain, the weather was cold. We were told it was bear territory and if faced with this dangerous beast, to stay absolutely still. This brought back some African memories. Who'd ever thought that making a shampoo commercial could be so perilous?

The visuals required a man and a woman showering under a waterfall, with the Rocky Mountains' peaks as a backdrop. Easier imagined than done!

To get this panoramic background, we had to shoot at the top of a hill and create a waterfall at the crucial spot. With the help of meters of pipes, a water tank, a pump, gas heaters, intricate showerheads and a large tank, our manmade waterfall would flow.

To make this task harder, the weather was abysmal, making the filming of this sequence more tedious. In this cold setting, having to stand under a tepid shower for hours, the models were freezing.

Like all models they had the professional trick to help them endure these harsh conditions. Called "think of the money" it was proven to be most effective. Considering that the fee earned for one of those commercial was around \$250,000, they had a lot to think about.

Enduring ceaseless rain, wind and storms it took several days to get a few seconds footage.

The commercial having a sequence where the couple dived into a crystal pool, a

gigantic tank was built on a ranch at the bottom of the mountain where the weather was warmer. The four meters-deep pool had taken days to be built and for the water to get lukewarm, so our models wouldn't die from hypothermia. To complicate matters the camera was set half under water to capture over and under water, our couple diving-in fully clothed. This shot kept the wardrobe stylist busy with the spin dryer and a film crew rather wet, as each dive caused an overflowing wave.

After a few days of models plunging, countless head flips, constant drying and changing, we finally seized the five seconds "magic take". Within two weeks we had captured enough footage to fill those precious thirty seconds and once again lugging a ton of equipment, we could return home.

As per usual we filmed till the last minute and left minimal time to get to the airport. A raging rainstorm slowed our drive and missing our plane became more imminent. Fifteen minute away to the airport and half an hour to departure, all of a sudden we were faced with a new obstacle. A massive petrol tanker had skidded across the driveway and was blocking our route. The road being so slippery, it took ten minutes of manoeuvres for the truck to straighten-up. Unsurprisingly we arrived at the airport five minutes to take-off time. Aware that it took fifteen minute to unload our equipment and twice longer to check-in the massive load, we knew we had missed our plane.

The arrival of a film crew with fifty silver cases always produced an expression of dread from the check-in officer at the best of time. It was also the opportunity for the producer to exercise his diplomatic skills and negotiate with the airline. Film equipment "excess luggage" fees could run into tens of thousands of dollars, sometime paying for a dozen seats was cheaper. It was always a time consuming exercise, which we all were use to.

On this rare occasion the bad weather was in our favour and the flight had been delayed for two hours. Enjoying this brief moment of good luck we happily departed.

Never short of facing a challenge, I was quite inquisitive when approached to have a meeting with the editor-in-chief of glossy "Studio" magazine.

Walking into the stylish office and meeting the equally smart Marcello Grand was intriguing. Impressed with my resume, knowledge on cosmetics, hair, beauty and photography, he wanted to know if I would be interested in creating a beauty magazine. In my usual directness my first question was "can you afford me?" After lengthy interaction, we agreed on a fee and on him giving me total "carte blanche" on the project.

The scheme was to publish two issues per year, this only taking a few weeks of my time, allowing me to pursue my other work.

Being frustrated to the lack of originality of Australian magazines, the idea of having free rein on a glossy beauty magazine was awe-inspiring and with my usual efficiency, a week later I handed out a mock-up of how I thought it should look. The look was new, original, stimulating and aesthetically appealing. Each section had an opening page out of focus, creating an impressionist mood of this particular segment. The beauty pages were to be photographed in an impressionist style, bright and very close in, some of them being just an eye or a mouth, each bearing the title of a mood.

Aware that a beauty magazine was dependent on its advertisers, the images were aimed to promote all the new cosmetics colours (which were actually used). The lay out was also very new, streamlined with minimal type.

Marcello, agreeing with my ideas, gave me the go ahead and introduced me to some of the magazine's staff at a board meeting. Visuals being my priority, I was to deal primarily with the art director, meeting her was important; surprisingly she wasn't asked to the meeting.

Being employed on a temporary basis, I wasn't given a desk and my huge attaché case was to be my portable office. Being the beauty editor and creative director, this didn't make my job easier as I had to cast models, see photographers, go through all the new release of cosmetics and products, organize photographic sessions, get all the props, clothes, go through all the pictures and layouts and write all the credits.

The only spare space was next to the art director, to whom I was to introduce myself to on my first day. Her name was Raewyn Watson and from the minute I shook her hand I sensed her dislike towards me. As I proceeded to elaborate my plans her aversion became stronger. In a quandary about this situation I was at a lost why someone would dislike me without any reasons.

After a few days of getting the cold shoulder, I had a tête à tête with her, to clarify the situation. I was stunned to learn that Marcello had promised her the undertaking of the beauty issue and there I was, taking "her baby" away from her, hence the reason why she disliked me.

Explaining to her that we'd both being duped, I couldn't see any reason why we couldn't both work on "the baby" together. This joint venture started a great partnership and a long friendship.

Being proficient, professional and effective she made a terrific accomplice.

Weeks were spent on photographing the beauty shots. My knowledge of photography came in useful to direct photographers in achieving the wanted results. Introducing understated sex appeal in the editorial content, I used couples photographed in moody lighting, exposing subtle sensuous nudity.

I was also appointed beauty editor of "Studio Collections", making my workload chock-a-block.

I gave great attention to crediting all the cosmetic companies, while the editorial content covered the multifaceted aspects of beauty and health. Spending hours in a dark room I traced every photograph for exact printing, while Raewyn meticulously cut and pasted every word.

Knowing exactly how the cover was to look, I created an Irvin Penn look on a sculpted face, resulting in a strong graphic image. Predominantly white and dark blue, the only bright colour was a fuchsia mouth and the "STUDIO BEAUTY" title. As I presented the cover to Marcello, he pointed out that he needed other "cover trial" shots to decide which HE would chose. I was fuming, why spend time, money and energy on other photographs when I knew I had "the shot"? What happened to my "carte blanche"?

If I weren't going to have the choice of the cover I would resign.

Headstrong Marcello wasn't used to having such opinionated staff and being the boss was use to get his way. As far as I was concerned, he needed me more than I needed him and I wasn't going to compromise. Tension started building up as both of us stood by our guns.

Marcello asked Raewyn to do other mock-ups of covers with other beauty shots, using various colours for the title. As we lined up the covers, I couldn't help pointing out that I had been right all along and the other covers didn't measure up to my choice. Facing the evidence, a vexed Marcello had to agree.

As the magazine was coming to completion, we were checking the layout of the personnel credits, I noticed that under "creative director" was printed Marcello Grand. Disheartened and infuriated that someone else was getting credit for my concepts and hard work, I handed in my resignation.

Keeping his title, Marcello offered to give me the "visuals director" title added to my "beauty editor" credit, I agreed and came back to finish the magazine.

As we waited for the first proofs I had almost completed the dummy of the second issue, editorial content and visuals. Released in 1990, it was going to be very edgy with computerized images.

My self-confidence, autonomy and determined manner had made some of the head-staff nervous to say the least. I was asked to a meeting where they pompously gave me a three-page contract to sign. Highlighting the "boundaries" of my responsibilities, my "inter-relations" with other departments, "relationship" with the art department, writers and cosmetic companies and rapport with staff. It pretty much said that I had to be a puppet and they would be pulling the strings and tell me to whom and when I could talk. No strings attached, this man wasn't going to be anybody's pawn. I smiled, walked out and never returned.

The magazine was a success; the advertisers were delighted and bought more pages for the next issue. Another issue was released; not nearly as successful it was to be the last one.

Enjoying once again the freedom of self-employment it wasn't long before another call from London was enquiring if I would be available for filming another commercial for "Timotei Germany" in Yellow Stone, Wyoming. Packing for all extreme temperatures I was off for another jetlag adventure.

A blue-black mood with mist, smoke and water as a backdrop were to be the atmosphere of this shampoo commercial. To achieve this ambience we had to film very early in the bitterly cold mornings, by waterfalls and mostly around steaming caustic pools and alarming spurting geezers.

Starting hair & makeup in my room at 3.30am and long days filming was my schedule for the next two weeks.

After paying a hefty fee, we were allowed to film in "forbidden areas" owing to their unsafe nature. Crossing over warning signs reading "DANGEROUS THERMAL AREA KEEP OUT" made me wonder what was ahead for this venture.

While filming the first take, a reflector caught in the wind rolled into one of the

corrosive pools and to the crew's consternation, melted within a split second. Realising how lethal they were, we treaded carefully in these threatening surroundings. Dealing with sudden geezer bursts, avoiding pools' edges and trying to work at the same time was a constant challenge. The model wearing a cotton blouse and espadrilles in sub-zero temperature was freezing, while 'thinking of the money' kept her breathing.

Fighting against steam and wind, I tried to keep the glorious mane in prime appearance as best as I could. Once again, a zillion headshakes and hair swing would fill the days. The waterfall location was at high altitude and climbing to it with all our equipment, left us gasping for air and wondering why we had chosen such a glamorous vocation. The usual downpours held us up for hours on end.

Whenever we had a break, trying to fight the elements, I would set the model's hair onto huge rollers and with the help of a plastic bag, kept it as dry as possible. In two weeks we only managed to get a few hours of good light, to capture enough footage needed for those final "thirty seconds". Thanks to the crew's alertness no major accidents occurred.

On my way back I had an overnight stay in Salt Lake City. After two sleepless weeks, been cold, wet and spayed by geezers, I was looking forward to the luxury treat of a five star hotel. Slipping into the fluffy bathrobe I ran a bubble bath and ordered a grand meal. Requesting with it a half bottle of wine I was stunned to be told that, being a Mormon state they could not deliver alcohol to my room, but I was welcome to go to the hotel bar and purchase my wine and drink it in my room. As I couldn't be bothered, I ordered a bottle of soda instead. Thinking about these absurd rules, I switched on the cable TV, to my surprise witnessing a rather explicit porn movie. I couldn't believe the hypocrisy! It was a sin to have a glass of wine delivered to one's room, but it was OK to have porn on a TV that a child could have switched on.

There was nothing more rewarding than returning home and sleeping in one's own bed, especially after weeks of having little opportunity to indulge in such a luxury. I was looking forward to return to the comfortable and safe routine of studio work.



The price of notoriety

Having been given the rare invitation to go to a casting, I found out that “Sunsilk” were looking for a hairdresser to feature in a commercial advertising their products. Not giving it a second thought I went along to the studio, where placed in front of a video camera, I answered various questions. A few days later my agent rang to inform me that I had been chosen to do the commercial. Use to European TV fees, I was surprised to learn how little they paid. Being only one day’s work I went along with it. After signing a lengthy contract, I was handed out a call sheet and a script. Learning the long tongue twister made me realise how hard it must be for actors to memorise pages of scripts.

An early call was to start the day of filming; a hairdressing salon was the set, the story being that I was preparing models for a fashion show. I was to be in constant motion, going from one model to another, doing various actions, whilst delivering my lines. Each action and word had to take place within the precision of a quarter of a second.

Every take was followed with comments as such as “perfect, but can you redo it within a second shorter?” Trying to synchronize each movement with each word, looking at the right angle to the right camera, all with the accuracy of a half second was hard, but I eventually succeeded. Leaving the studio, I hoped I would never have to say that script ever again. Unfortunately my wish didn’t come true and a few days later, I was in a sound studio doing “lip sync” voiceover, which proved to be just as hard.

Seeing the advert for the first time, I was horrified to see that “Régis hairstylist” was in big letters at the start of the commercial.

Happily leaving my Hollywood career behind me, I was glad this episode was over; little did I know worse was had yet to come. I had thought that the advert would be played a couple of times, to my embarrassment if was played endlessly, at all peak times, on all channels, for months.

I couldn’t go anywhere without people recognizing me. Somehow when one’s face is plastered on TV every night, folks eventually think they know you. Being a very private person I used to get terribly uncomfortable with their reactions. Disguised with caps and sunglasses, Jacky O had nothing on me, as I would venture outside.

Getting “the look” was a three stages reaction.

First the person would gaze at you.

An absent look followed as their mind was searching.

Within seconds “Tilt” they’ve identified you, their gawk turned into an intent stare that would linger till you disappeared.

The campaign proved to be so successful that they asked me to do another commercial. Instead of refusing I did my usual trick and asked for twice the money, to my dismay it was accepted.

Once again, I was trying to get my tongue around an unpronounceable script, such as this two-second phrase: “ the all day protective treatment helps prevent the damaging effect of blow-drying and styling ”. Spending a whole day of cutting short half a second

of my deliveries and putting accentuation on key words, I hated being on the wrong side of the camera, but it was my turn to “think of the money”. I had become familiar with the “lip sync “ voiceover and it went effortlessly.

Predictably, the commercial was played ceaselessly and my disguises became more elaborate. To top it all, a comedy show called “Fast Forward” took my persona as one of their regular characters. Every week my “character” bearing my name, would go from drinking the shampoo to “psycho” shower scenes. I must admit that the satire was well done and was very funny. It’s a good thing that I could laugh at myself as this made me even more recognized.

Never wanting notoriety, I was ill at ease with this predicament. Not making any distinction between the character and myself, people would tell me how funny I was on TV. A radio show had also taken my character and with a French accent, would deliver funny stories. Needless to say this made the “Sunsilk” adverts even more popular and I couldn’t get away from it.

Taking advantage of this momentary fame, the “Sunsilk” people approached me to do a campaign, including another commercial, advertising, interviews and personal appearances. It was time for me to make an enormous decision, to go ahead with this charade or stop. I figured out that if I was going to be lampooned and harassed, I might just as well get paid for it. Putting a price on my privacy and autonomy, I asked for eighty thousand dollars “not negotiable”. It seemed that the client hadn’t budgeted for such a request and after long negotiations via my agent, came up with sixty thousand dollars, as a final offer. Deciding that my anonymity and peaceful life was more precious than sixty thousand dollars, I told them they couldn’t afford me and to go elsewhere.

Aghast my agent and client couldn’t believe that I turned down such money but then; they were not “Moi”, not everybody wants to be in the limelight. Never regretting my decision, a few months later, someone else’s face was on the TV and I was back in blissful anonymity and happier for it.



From the canvas to more Timotei adventures

Looking at the blank canvas a guest had left behind, I wondered what it would be like to paint? I had painted many faces but never a canvas. Buying a few brushes and three tubes of oil paint, white, black and French ultramarine, I pondered if I needed to acquire anything else, to use this new media.

Ringling my friend Richard Sharah who was a great painter, I discovered that I had to get linseed oil and turpentine to use the paint. Once equipped with all the necessary products, I started to paint what I knew best, a face.

Within a few hours I was entranced in the feeling of painting. The oil paint having a life of its own was hypnotic to use and I was hooked. Using my makeup technique, I would buff every stroke, until it would blend into a smooth finish, before I knew it I had done a portrait and couldn't wait to start another painting.

No matter how intricate a makeup was, one's hard work always ended up in a sink, this new medium was to remain and a new experience. Buying bigger canvases, I became obsessed with painting and within three months squeezing out the last ounce of my 'three tubes' purchase, I had accomplished a dozen paintings of nudes, predictably all blue, black and white.

Feeling more confident about my painting abilities, I went ahead with investing in a vast range of colours and started a series of flowers. Painted from the bee's eye view, I zoomed into the flower resulting in a bright and powerful image. A few months later, establishing my reputation as a painter, I was having my first exhibition. Finding out the politics of the "ART WORLD" were as trivial and superficial as the "FASHION" industry, were to be a disappointment. The humongous commissions that galleries took, defied the chances of making it a lucrative profession. I still went ahead to create over 60 paintings and had other three exhibitions within 2 years.

I grew more and more appalled at the intellectual snobbism of the art world. What was on a canvas was irrelevant, it was how the painter was promoted and how the artist's work criticised, and especially who "critiqued" it. Witnessing the outrageous sums paid for a squiggle on a white canvas and hearing praises on the stupendous masterwork infuriated me. Some of the artworks looked straight out of the kindergarten and was an insult to anyone who could paint and I realized that people were at their most gullible when it came to art.

Distracted from my canvas, I was called to do two commercials, one in Budapest and another in Norway with Stuart. Packing the warm clothes section of my wardrobe, I was off to London for an overnight stop, leaving with the crew the next morning to Hungary.

My delayed flight from Sydney landed in London late in the evening; I was to be back at Heathrow the next morning at 7.00am. Giving the taxi the name of the hotel where I was booked to stay, I discovered it was in the heart of (by then) fashionable Soho. Taking over an hour and \$200 to reach the hotel, I couldn't understand why the P A (production assistant) hadn't booked me in a hotel closer to the airport. After the hurdle of getting

through Soho's busy streets, I finally arrived to the intriguing venue.

The quaint Victorian hotel was famous for being Oscar Wilde's favourite and hadn't been touched since, décors and amenities were all original. Having no such indulgence of having a porter or a lift, meant that I had to negotiate three flights of narrow stairs with my large suitcase and working bag. Less than impressed as I arrived to my room panting, I was hungry and thirsty. As I glanced at the old-fashioned room I realised that keeping within the authenticity of the décor, no mini bar had been hidden in the Victorian cupboards. Spotting the only modern convenience, I grabbed the phone and enquired about room service to find out, that it too, was nonexistent. Looking at the antique brass taps, I considered that the plumbing was probably as authentic and negated the idea of drinking the tap water. By then I was parched, famished, bushed but above all infuriated.

It was 11.00pm, checking my call-sheet, I soon found out that the P A had listed her home number in case of emergency. This WAS an emergency! Unluckily for her she was at home and received the verbal abuse of my wrath. Telling me that Japanese clients were especially keen on the quaintness and history of the place, made me even angrier. After informing her that I was neither Japanese nor tourist, I told her that after a 24 hours journey, I was dissatisfied with the rudimentary accommodation and most unhappy to having to rampage through Soho's busy street, to find a bottle of water and some food and slammed the phone down.

Getting back to my stifling vintage room, custodian of a bottle of Evian and a pork pie, I opened the window to realize that the busy street racket echoed louder upstairs and had to choose between noises or swelter. Thinking that watching TV would distract my anger, I realized that the purist surroundings didn't offer such contemporary luxury.

The next morning, after struggling down the staircase, I left the quaint hotel at 6.00am to continue my journey and meet up with the crew.

Arriving in Budapest's airport we were given the VIP treatment, while being served refreshment our passport and luggage, were taken care of by officials and a limo took us to our hotel. Ironically, the commercial was for Sunsilk Europe with an American hairdresser as the artist. Being, until recently, a communist country, the film studios were rudimentary. I asked one of the local makeup artists if her lifestyle had improved with the new regime, her reply was an eye opener.

"I have waited thirteen years to have a telephone installed, now I can have one tomorrow, but I can't afford it as it will cost me one month salary".

It seemed that after many years of being subsidised, people couldn't get their heads around being independent.

Within four days we had finished the commercial and were heading back to London, where after an overnight stay we would be on our way to Norway. By then the forewarned P A had booked me in a five star modern hotel.

This was to be another "Timotei" adventure for the Japanese market. After landing in Norway, we hired cars and trucks and drove to a small village close to our location. It was a tiny town and we filled the single rudimentary hotel to its maximum capacity.

The visuals were to be once again a picturesque experience. At the top of the fiord a

rock protruded over a two thousand feet drop. At the edge of that rock, a girl was strolling, flipping her magnificent hair in the sunshine, the panoramic landscape being the backdrop.

Owing to its scenic value, the location was dangerous and treacherous to get to. Taking only three people at a time, a helicopter would have to do continuous journeys to get everyone to the top of the fiords and then, packed in a huge net the equipment would follow. Overloaded we would climb the rest of the way to the final location.

Making matters worse the weather was abysmal, interminable downpours and blustery winds making work impossible. From sunrise to sundown, the long days were filled with hours of waiting for the sky to clear, wind to drop or rain to cease. At the end of each day the tired and frustrated crew would wait infinite hours for an insipid dinner to be served, as an inundated chef tried to cope with the numerous orders. The lack of sleep and sunshine made us all irritable and ill tempered. Having no access to electricity, I protected the precious head of hair from the hostile environment by persistently setting it in rollers and covering it with plastic bags. The weather conditions turn out to be so bad that the helicopter couldn't fly, stranding the team at the top of the fiords. Soaked to the bone, in darkness and knee-deep mud, loaded with equipment, we slowly made our way down a narrow pathway, between the threatening abysses. Some members of the group had vertigo and had a terrible time dealing with it, as if anyone slipped, a deadly fall was imminent. After a couple of horrendous hours, the exhausted, frozen, soaked, mud-covered team made it to the cabin, wandering if all this was worth a shampoo commercial.

After two long arduous, sleepless weeks, the weather worsened and we returned to London knowing that we didn't have enough good footage. Standing by, we were to be advised where the shoot would be continued, maybe in Canada? I took advantage of these few days to visit my family in France.

A phone call informed me that owing to weather improvement, we were to return to Norway to the dreaded Hotel. Knowing too well what to expect, a disenchanted crew was meeting at the airport and checking-in a ton of equipment. Going ahead with this déjà vu, we were rewarded with more clement weather and eventually captured the required "magic takes". It had taken three weeks to acquire those valuable thirty seconds. Catching the first available flight, I finally could return home.

After recuperating from my ordeal, I was off to tropical Cairns to do an advertising poster for a sun cream "A beautifully bronzed girl walking on a deserted beach at sunrise". This had to be a cinch.

Arriving the day before, we were to start very early in the morning, to capture the sunrise and more importantly 'the deserted beach'. Having started on beautifying our model at 4.00am, camera, team and model were standing by at 6.00am at our deserted location, waiting for the sun to rise. As the sun rose, so did a buzzing noise. Standing right in the middle of our scenic backdrop, a man with headphones, pushing a metal detector, was ruining our shot. Time being of the essence, our stylist rushed towards him, tactfully explained our predicament. The chap replied that he had been combing this

beach every morning for the last ten years and wasn't going to alter his schedule for anyone. The obstinate man was immovable. Saving this vital moment and solving our quandary with ingenuity, I held a palm leaf at the crucial position, hiding the offensive intruder... Did anything in this business ever go as planned?

Loving a bit of glamour, I was delighted to accept a project with Baz Luhrmann and Catherine Martin doing the first signature issue of Australian Vogue. A one off, he was to be given complete freedom on designing a whole issue. In pure Luhrmann style, the sessions turned into major productions with swimming pools, giant seashells and a zillion flowers. Collette Dinnigan was in charge of the skimpy outfits and was making them on site. Using Australian celebrities from film, television, opera, pop dance and comedy, we photographed a "calendar girl" pin-up lift-out. Each shot was quite involved and the days turned into nights.

The hardest was the cover, which had to be shot as a "whole". Being a purist, Baz wanted all the credits of the cover to be hand painted "cut outs", suspended in the photograph. A six meters cut out of Nicole Kidman was to be the focal point, joined with Baz, Catherine, Bill Marron and the massive "VOGUE" banner. To get all of this in the right perspective was arduous and time consuming. After a couple days of failed trials, we achieved it by working twenty-four hours non-stop. The cover looked great, but I wondered how many people realised that none of it was computerised and the whole cover was one photograph.

I seemed to be tagged with the "fantasy makeover" label, as I was constantly requested to do famous makeovers. One cannot say that I wasn't flexible as I turned Lisa McCune as Grace Kelly and also painted a suit on her naked body, I transformed Isla Fisher as Rita Hayworth, Deborah Conway as Medusa and Catherine Warren into a tiger. I also did countless Mona Lisas, Audrey Hepburns, Marlene Dietrichs and Marilyn Monroes.

My leisure time was utilised by painting, having progressed from nudes and flowers to landscapes and still life. Trying to get the right colour glazing or the right colour background was a constant frustration. I decided to buy a computer to facilitate my options in a painting. I would be able to change colours and backgrounds in seconds, easing the final decision.

Within days, I was just as hooked on the computer as I was with my painting. I became addicted to the boundless possibilities of this technology. Reading dozens of mind-numbing computer books and constantly upgrading, I became quite familiar with all the various applications. The creative tools were sensational and soon I was a confirmed addict of Photoshop, Illustrator and 'i' anything. From iMovie to iDVD, there was an array of exciting programs and endless potential. Being a makeup artist and a painter, it was a natural progression to retouch and manipulate photographs. My knowledge about anatomy, faces, skin, makeup, colour, light and photography, all came to grasp this new medium.

Having a creative imagination I also could take a photograph to a further level, creating 3D backgrounds and adding dimension. Becoming a Jack of all trades, I became

quite a whiz at power point presentations, editing and producing digital videos, concept and graphic design, audio editing, layout design, constructing website, digital show production and even teaching others how to operate a Mac.

A call from London distracted me from my computer and once again getting me packing my bags for another “Timotei” adventure.

This time it was to be filmed in the middle of the Arizona desert, being the middle of summer it was going to be sizzling. The storyboard was of “*a woman riding her horse in the desert’s scorching heat, at the site of a waterfall and with the help of “red clay” shampoo, washes her hair. Her mane restored to glorious condition, she rides off in the sunset over the Canyon*” (like anyone would).

After globetrotting via a few planes for a day and driving for another, I dropped my luggage at the Hotel and drove straight to the location, to start filming.

Resembling a mini Grand Canyon, the location was called “the Little Painted Desert”. Being in the middle of utter arid wilderness, the temperature was the hottest I’d ever experienced, an unbearable 55° centigrade made the air stifling and sweltering. A blistering wind covered everything in a thick sticky red dust and glued to every pore. A makeup artist’s and hairdresser’s nightmare was unrolling before my eyes. In these harsh conditions, the large crew was to shoot from sunrise to sundown. An enormous amount of equipment, cranes, generators trucks and horses were standing-by.

To avoid dehydration, one had to drink two litres of water before venturing outside. Jetlag, sleep deprivation and heat exhaustion were the glamorous order of the day. Having to shoot with a horse made the filming trickier as animals are always unpredictable. Having another horse as its “stand in”, this particular stallion must have been a big star. The day was to be filled with doing the same shot again and again, until model and horse became synchronized. To add to the uncomfortable heat, the special effect man, creating a moodier atmosphere, was throwing an extra haze of orange dust in the air. Within a few hours, resembling a bunch of Indians, the crew and model had turned ginger and very gritty. As the sun finally set, our first long tiresome day was at an end.

Looking forward to a shower and a good meal, the crew carried the equipment up the steep hill to their transport as quickly as they could. By the time we had packed the extensive equipment, it was 8.00pm; our remote hotel was one-hour drive away and the restaurant’s kitchen closed at 9.00pm. Desperate to make it on time, we speed through the rough terrain. Arriving at the hotel around 8.55pm, to our consternation, the restaurant was closed.

The “American” management of the hotel explained to us, that the restaurant was under Indian ownership, and abided “Indian time” which was one hour LATER, making their time being 9.55, hence why it was closed. There we were, in a hotel, with a restaurant, with a time lapse of one hour (Imagine the confusion at New Year eve!) Tired but starving, we drove for another hour to end up in a MacDonald. By the time we drove back it was well past midnight. Once showered and unpacked, I can’t remember sleeping as the next day started at 4.00am.

Stuart MacLeod had a great knack of picking the right crew. They were the best at

what they did but also had a good sense of humour; this made tough times easier and the long days more tolerable.

Owing to the extreme heat, the simplest shot became difficult. One take was a close-up of our heroine perspiring, however the heat was so dry and intense that as soon as I would spray water on her face, it would evaporate in a split-second. The only way to solve this predicament was to add some glycerine, which I didn't have. The closest chemist was one hour away; hence we waited two hours for the assistant to bring the precious solution, allowing me to finally produce a perspiring brow.

Still in the middle of the desert, we were setting up for another close-up and a product shot, which needed a clean, sharp picture. Just as we were about to capture the first take, the sun disappeared, all went murky, and within seconds we were caught in a violent dust storm. Sand whipping our faces, all surroundings had vanished, in vain, desperately trying to protect our precious equipment, we couldn't see further than a couple of metres. Grit getting into every orifice made it impossible to see, breathe or hear. We endured this free exfoliation for what seemed hours, until the storm died down.

All looking dishevelled, every cavity filled with sand, we were bewildered as to what we had experienced. Looking most unglamorous, we drove back to our hotel, to salvage and clean up our equipment.

After a longed-for shower, I opened my tightly zipped bag, fearing the worse; inside the bag was my makeup box. As I unfolded the case I couldn't believe how the rough dust had penetrated everywhere. Even my foundations and lipsticks, which were in containers, were filled with grit. Cleaning up the best I could, I knew that replacing all the damaged goods was going to be an expensive and time-consuming exercise.

The extensive filming equipment had to be dismantled bit-by-bit, to remove the inexorable dust, even the horses had to go through a complete scrub.

Forever finding new ways of getting 'flowing hair shots', we saddled up our model to gallop in the sunset.

To film the crowning glory in full riding action a "starshot" mobile was used. A 'super truck' with a stabilised film crane attached to it, would allow the crew to follow and film close-up our model in action. Once again it took days to get a few seconds "take". In these extreme conditions it was difficult to keep the model's mane full, bouncy and perfect, being on a horse, I would have to climb on wooden boxes to brush her hair for every take.

Within two weeks of long exhausting days, we finally had enough material to fill the costly 'thirty seconds' commercial and thankfully only one person was taken to hospital due to heatstroke. Flying back over the desert I couldn't help wondering where my glamorous profession would take me next?

The one thing I knew, that year, my flying hours totalled 270 hours.

New Zealand

It was good to be back home in more temperate weather. I hadn't anticipated that having a large garden would be so much work. Green fingered, I had planted shrubbery as I used to in Europe, not realising that in Australia nature grew at tremendous speed and in great density. I had created a monster! Exposed full north with a very efficient watering system, plants supposedly growing to knee height, were towering over my head. After an absence of two weeks, lawns, bougainvilleas and hedges would take over the garden. I had to employ professional help to keep the matter under control.

The extensive parquet floors and tiled terraces were also an enormous upkeep and needed expert personnel. Soon, I was employing a small army of staff to maintain my lifestyle.

As I pottered at the bottom of the garden, I came face to face with an enormous snake. Panic stricken, I flew to my office to call for help. Eventually speaking to a snake expert, I was asked description of patterns and colours of the snake. I had to clarify that being from Europe, I was not use to have tête a tête with huge snakes and hadn't taken time to give it an inspection. After being told that the snake had probably been just as scared and was most likely gone, I couldn't help being on edge for a while, as I walked through the garden.

A few days later, as I was cutting some flowers, I came across a blue-tongued lizard as long as my arm. It seemed quite at home and in no mood to move elsewhere. Judging that he'd possibly lived there longer than I had, I christened him Cesar and with mutual respect, shared this idyllic spot.

Adopting the Australian ways, I bought a barbecue and was preparing for my first attempt by doing lunch on the terrace. Having the large meat platter standing by to be charbroiled, everything was ready to receive my guests. Returning from greeting a guest, perplexed, I noticed that one of the steaks was missing. As I looked up I saw in the near by tree, a kookaburra hitting the stolen meat on a branch, presumably making sure that it was dead. I was use to the odd pigeon stilling a chip and sparrows eating crumbs but this took the cake.

It wasn't long before I was leaving again for another 'Timotei shampoo' job. This time we were filming two commercials in New Zealand. Most of the crew were flying to the UK and had a long trip ahead. For once I was the only one having the shortest journey.

The extensive 'call sheet' forewarned me of the many locations we were to film in. The visuals of these commercials described the following:

"Girl canoeing on crystal clear lake reflecting mountains."

"Girl lowering herself into the water from canoe."

"Girl under water, her hair floats behind her."

"Girl walking through grass shimmering in the sunlight"

These visions flashed in my mind as an alert sign saying:

"It's going to be a tough one."

Having previous experiences of New Zealand's unpredictable weather and how cold it can get by the lakes, I packed winter and summer gear with my extensive equipment.

The crew met up in Queenstown, as we were to shoot at Glenorchy and Paradise lakes. All wrapped up in our warmest gear, we placed our pristine wooden canoe and our goose pimpled model wearing a swimsuit on the glacial lake. Having to constantly brush the hair, I too was to board the small canoe and do a disappearing act when filming, by lying flat on my back at the bottom of the canoe.

Unfortunately a grey sky and icy wind was causing our model to turn blue and the lake to be choppy, therefore no reflections were to be seen on the water. We persevered filming in those conditions for a few days.

As the weather wasn't improving we were to move to our next location to film the wheat fields sequences. After many hours of driving we arrived at our next location in the Hakataramea Valley.

Being miles away from civilization, there were no hotels anywhere. Hiring a large farm and renting every caravan available in the area, an instant camping site had been created for the crew to live in. Rudimentary showers had been built, to keep us spick and span and a large tent was to be our dining room.

The farm's power source wasn't equipped to cope with twenty caravans, so heating couldn't be used and most of the crew slept fully dressed during the freezing nights. Ah the glamour of it all!

Starting my day at 3.30am, I had the model ready at the location by 5.30am for the first take to be filmed at sunrise. Unfortunately there was no sun to rise. For a few days black clouds, heavy rain and arctic winds were instead to be endured. Endless hours and days were spent in those fields waiting for the sky to clear, the wind to drop and the rain to cease. Standing in this freezing landscape, counting sheep became the most exciting part of the day.

Eventually our patience was rewarded and we had one clear morning. Grabbing this precious moment the crew was standing by, ready for action to capture this rare sunrise. Model waiting for her cue, the smoke machines in full force in the background creating a mystical haze in the horizon, I gave the final brush stroke.

"Rolling camera!"

The sun rose.

"And... ACTION!"

Our model did her action flawlessly and at last we captured our first long awaited take. Doing as many takes as the weather allowed us to, yet again hundreds of headshakes and hair swings were to be filmed. As our wheat field was finally shimmering in the sunlight one of the smoke machines blew up setting alight the operator. Professional to the end, the crew ran all around the field not to damage our background and rescued the panic stricken man.

Taking advantage of more clement weather, we drove back to the lake location to film our canoe scene. Blessed with a breathless day, the lake mirrored the magnificent mountain, creating a breathtaking panorama.

Having neglected to send our model to canoe training we experienced navigation problems, with the aid of invisible wires the canoe was eventually pulled back and forth by the special effects team.

After a zillion takes of “girl canoeing”, “girl shaking her hair” we had to make our way to our next location.

Happily leaving behind our camping site we drove to Christchurch for the next set-up. We had to deal with the tricky part of the storyboard:

“Girl lowering herself into the water from canoe.”

“Girl under water, her hair floats behind her.”

At the risk of our model getting hypothermia, we had to film the underwater scenes in a more suitable environment. A swimming pool was to be our next setting.

After bringing half a forest and plenty of camouflage the set designers meticulously recreated the lake backdrop around the swimming pool. A large crane was erected to hold the camera for the overhead shot and within a few hours our canoe was floating in warmer waters.

Once again I was standing by for plenty of action, as each take of the girl getting under water would require a new makeup and, her long hair to be washed and groomed to it's glorious beginnings. A whole day was spent on that exercise which was to be a three-second take.

The final day was the awkward overhead shot where the girl was to be pulled through frame “her hair floating behind her”.

This called for the model to be lying flat in the water with a harness attached to her feet pulling her through frame, feet first. Our model discovered this was a great way to get half a swimming pool up her nostrils and a most unpleasant experience. A few tears were shed over this one, but reminding her of the “money” helped a great deal. Also being under water, she couldn't hear her cues and the whole crew would shout together “action!”

As I would comb and hold her hair till the last minute for ‘artistic floating’, this final take proved to be quite gruelling for her, but we stopped at nothing for those precious 30 seconds.

After two long weeks the words “it's a wrap” were music to our ears, we had accomplished two, 30 seconds commercials and waved goodbye to the Kiwi land.



Adieu Fashion

The fashion industry's reality was that most people involved in it, were as sincere as the outfits they wore. Loyalty was a word, which was not applicable in that business. Between the air kisses, "darling you look fabulous, we must catch-up and I love your work", there was as much honesty as people looking at a shrivelled newborn saying "what a gorgeous baby".

One's success could be as brief as the lifespan of a magazine on a newsstand. To get to a pinnacle in a career in fashion was easier than retaining it on a long-term basis, only the tough and the ruthless survived.

Looking at the Sydney newsstands, I realised something died in the nineties: Fashion!

What happened to it? What happened to the creativity, innovation, taste, style and professionalism?

Heroin chic! Who'd ever thought those two words would be ever been used together! Diana Vreeland must have been turning in her grave.

Couldn't designers, creators and editors originate anymore? How many times were they going to rehash retro? Fashion was once innovative and directional; it had become the playfield of ridicule and bad taste. Fashion victims were no more, as fashion itself was the victim. Gone were the days when one could browse in a bookshop and identify a magazine by the look of its cover.

Same of the sameness was now the go, most of it included: bad photography, gaunt looking model, sloppy makeup, trashy hair and tacky clothes. This unsightly outcome materialized with one hardly noticing a difference between issues or seasons.

A fashion magazine was once upon a time an inspiration to its readers with the main target to be directional, original, stimulating and aesthetically appealing. Well, it had been a long time since I had experienced that occurrence.

Gone were the days when one kept magazines like precious possessions, loosing oneself in images of ephemeral beauty. Photography was art! The models were inspiring, the fashion was new and styled, the makeup was flawless and the hair was done. The reader aspired to the look! Fashion was a driving force. Editors had a style of their own and actually knew about fashion. Photographers had a distinctive style; hair and makeup people were artists (a word so casually used these days).

Australian magazines having a tendency to over kill a trend would publish pictures which were just plain hideous.

After years of performing the art of beauty to its perfection, I was asked to do bad makeup and bad hair. Greasy faces, blotchy eye shadow and scruffy hair were the go and I couldn't bring myself to do it!

There is a difference between edgy and ugly, but most editors didn't seem to know it. Some of those editors were yesterday's secretaries and had hardly any or no fashion training what so ever.

With my background and the people I had worked with, I simply couldn't respect

them.

Thirty years after pioneering this art form, they were thousands of “so called” makeup artists. Anyone who could hold a brush was an “artist”, for me a title that had to be earned.

I became ashamed of the profession I used to be so proud of. Makeup was for me the art of beautifying a face and not making one look unattractive. Some of the beauty shots in the magazines used to revolt me. Maybe I was getting too old for this game? I never thought I'd see the day when I would have to alter a makeup because it was too perfect. The idea of making models look like junkies was to me, unacceptable.

For these reasons, I slowly moved towards computer work and digital manipulation.

I had kept doing hair & makeup for some of my loyal clients, who hadn't fallen victims to these trends. I would accept the odd editorial story when I felt that it was worth it and I could beautify the subject.

Retro 70's and 80's meant that I was redoing the make-ups I'd created decades ago and was less than stimulating the second or third time around, this left me frustrated and infuriated.

Because of digital technology, clients didn't need to use the best anymore. Instead they could use the cheapest and have the results retouched.

By then, there were hundreds of greedy agencies, thousands of hair & makeup “people” and countless fashion disasters. Quality was replaced by mediocrity and cheap was the magic word.

My patience with spoilt teenage models, ghastly photography and heinous fashion was running out. Because of my high fees, clients would try to compensate their budget by making me work at a faster rate, giving me no time to give them the quality and integrity of my work.

After all those years enjoying expressing my artistic contribution to an art I was so devoted to, I was disillusioned, disgusted, disappointed and over it. I had reached the stage where I hated being a hair & makeup artist. So, I decided to retire from this profession!

I would unleash my frustration on my computer artwork and grateful for this new media my creative juices were flowing again. From movie and music editing, image manipulation to website designing, I was kept busy and challenged.

I had been through some crazy times and unique experiences, wouldn't it be fun to write about it and share those moments. No publisher in his or her right mind would print a book written in English by a Frenchman. Wanting the story to be told my way, I wouldn't want a “ghost” writer to write it on my behalf. I had done some daring things in my life, but this one was too foolish, so I decided to put that thought on hold for a while.

Reaching the age when gravity made its impact. I lost my waistline along with my jaw line. My body was ageing but my mind wasn't. Whenever faced with my reflection, the inner younger person use to wonder what was this middle age man doing there! This generation gap within oneself was most disconcerting but since, I discovered quite

common, it's just nobody warns you about it.

People depreciate, as one gets older, one gets more selective and less desirable. Life is a bitch, but let's face it, it's the bitch that spices up the movie.



I wish to thank all the people who have help to contribute to this book. To list all the photographers, models, add agencies and friends would be as long as this book. You know if you have contributed to this book and I thank you for it.
For any comment from anyone please click on the E-mail icon in the web site.