



B

eauty & the BEASTS

Signing on for the 14th year with Estée Lauder; discussing hem lengths with Hugh; raising pigs and knocking off pigeons. A mere 24 hours in the life of Elizabeth Hurley ...

Few pig farmers could carry off a skin-tight vanilla Alaïa dress with panache, but when Elizabeth Hurley steams through the foyer of London hotel Claridge's, all eyes turn. She has that unmistakable gait of someone used to being recognised: head down, sunglasses on, gliding like a shark determinedly oblivious to the curious heads suddenly popping up from the banquettes in the adjoining lounge.

Ten minutes later when we meet upstairs in a suite, she is much more warm and jovial. Clearly, swapping London life for a Gloucestershire farm suits her. The impeccably groomed, glossy-haired 43-year-old boasts flawless everything: perfect skin lightly Lauder fake-tanned; a frightfully posh accent; and a 15-carat Chopard engagement ring that would put J.Lo's to shame. The only thing slightly marring this pristine perfection: the lobes of her ears buckling under the weight of cherry-sized diamonds.

The reason for this trip into town is her 13th anniversary as an Estée Lauder spokesperson. During this time she has fronted everything from Pleasures to Perfectionist, Estée Lauder's latest revamped lifting/anti-wrinkle serum (on counters August 1), formulated to address signs of tiredness and minimise lines in the process. The lotion is a potent blend of peptides, proteins and amino acids by which Hurley swears. "Whatever time my son goes to bed, he wakes between 6am and 6.30am. So regardless of what time I go to bed, that's when I have to be up," she sighs. I know just how she feels.

But juggling a career and motherhood has made Hurley more appreciative of Lauder's "family firm feel", citing it as one of the reasons behind her long tenure. "Leonard Lauder has been a superb friend to me over the years, while his wife Evelyn and I travel around the world together doing breast-cancer events," she says. ▶

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BAZAAR *viewpoint*



Domestic goddess:
Liz Hurley.

BAZAAR viewpoint



Elizabeth Hurley with son Damian.

"When I see an old photo of myself in jeans, I think they look bloody awful, and I thought they were fabulous at the time."

Estée Lauder Perfectionist [CP+] Wrinkle Lifting Serum, \$160, 1800 061 326.



Hurley filming the latest Perfectionist campaign.

Two 1997 campaigns for Lauder.

Hurley with husband Arun Nayar.

Aerin Lauder with Hurley.

A Perfectionist print ad.

Next on Hurley's wish list is lighting up Mumbai's Gateway of India park as part of Estée Lauder's annual global illumination project.

Recalling her first ad campaigns from the mid '90s doesn't have the ex-actor/film producer pining for her safety-pin-dress days. "Looking back, the obvious changes I see [in my face] are eyebrows and makeup trends. Makeup has changed so much since then ... trends like matt, shimmer, gloss. But I wouldn't want to look how I did in 1995 — I'm much happier now. When I see an old photo of myself in jeans, I think they look bloody awful, and I thought they were fabulous at the time."

It's probably a good thing the white-jeans phase has passed. Hurley's current obsession is an organic farm an hour's drive from her Ladbroke Grove residence in West London. She stays on the farm six nights a week with her husband, Indian software businessman Arun Nayar, and six-year-old son Damian (whose father is film producer Steve Bing). Later, over lunch at restaurant Gordon Ramsay at Claridge's, she raves about life on the land. "Once I decided to turn my farm organic, I realised we needed an old-fashioned rotation system where you graze one year, and plant a crop another year. So we had to introduce livestock. I just fell in love with these Gloucestershire old spots [pigs]. They're a very old, rare and slow-growing breed and I have to say the meat is the most delicious I've ever tasted. Lean beautiful pork. I make my own sausages and it's great because you can control the fat and rusk content. And we have our own calves. Plus we'll soon be selling our own lamb — just to local restaurants, pubs and hotels, and eventually online."

You can't fathom chickens topping many women's birthday wish list, but for Hurley, they're up there. "I got some buff orpingtons [a breed of hens] for my birthday on Saturday and one laid an egg immediately," she declares. "I picked it up and boiled it for my son. So it was literally

five minutes old and had the brightest orange yolk. It tasted absolutely divine," she sighs.

Clearly country life has converted her. However, Nayar initially took some convincing. "Oh, but now he loves it," she laughs, jokingly adding that he sits outside all day with a shotgun on his lap. "Both of us work for 45 minutes at a time, then get outside for some fresh air and shoot some pigeons." Apparently they're a nasty pest.

"Unlike London where I get to my office and sit at my desk until I go and pick up my son from school, I'm out and about more now. That 15 minutes is to reward myself. I might do a bit of weeding ... walk down to see how the pigs are doing."

A brisk walk "with little bits of running added in between" is the only exercise she partakes in nowadays, although she adds that "for our wedding, one of our presents was a Power Plate. I haven't used it very often, but I think it might be rather good." Power Plate is probably rubbing its hands in glee with this endorsement — after all, this is a woman whose exercise and diet habits are adopted by fans with zeal. When she announced her svelte secret was the watercress-soup diet, UK supermarkets suddenly felt the urge to stock a zero-fat watercress soup. Then there was Pilates guru and DVD queen Lynne Robinson, who made London's *Evening Standard* Power People list after coaching Hurley through her pregnancy.

"I was very lucky that up until my late thirties, I could get away with zero exercise and stay skinny," she says. "That's not the case anymore. I definitely have to make more effort body wise." For those eager to discover her latest diet fixation, it's apparently a breakfast of herrings on black bread. "We buy them on holidays when we join Arun's mother on her regular vacation to Sylt [an island in northern Germany]. It's like the Hamptons of Germany."

Extra pressure (or incentive, as she sees it) is her beachwear range — a venture about which she's incredibly passionate and in which, incredibly involved. Since establishing the women's and girls' collections, she's now working on menswear, determined to take on Vilebrequin, the iconic St Tropez label favoured by the jet set. A debate on leg length ensues ... apparently Nayar's a knee man, while ex-boyfriend and Damian's godfather, Hugh Grant looks better in mid-thigh.

Other business ventures to ponder? An offer from the UK's Channel 4 for a reality show about life on the farm and the possibility of producing low-fat organic ready-made meals. However, this Donna Hay fan is yet to formally announce these plans — "I'm waiting for the ink to dry on another deal and I'm incredibly superstitious so I don't want to say anything just yet." And then there's her 14th year and beyond with Estée Lauder. Sure, Elizabeth Hurley may not miss that dress, but there's no mistaking she certainly owes it a lot.

MICHELLE PIRIE, AUSTRAL PRESS