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ALL
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With disarming wit and style to spare, Isla Fisher proves that Hollywood stars can be both funny and fabulous
By Deborah Schoeneman
Photographed by Nino Muñoz
Styled by Samantha Traina

ISLA

t's easy to want to hate Isla Fisher.

In the wake of her breakout role in *Wedding Crashers* (2005), she pretty much never has to audition again. Instead, she takes meetings with top-tier directors ready to offer her coveted roles. She rarely wears makeup or heels, unless it's a command red carpet appearance. At five feet three inches, she may appear tiny, but she's currently larger than life, towering over Los Angeles in billboards for *Confessions of a Shopaholic*, her first starring role, based on the bestselling book by Sophie Kinsella. Oh, and Fisher just took the last eight months off to have a baby with one of the world's biggest comedy stars, her fiancé, Sacha Baron Cohen—also known as Borat.

"This is the happiest I've ever been," coos Fisher, 33, who seems simultaneously ethereal and grounded as she settles into a big chair at Hollywood's Chateau Marmont on a recent afternoon.

She's wearing a high/low outfit of jeans, moccasin style boots from Urban Outfitters, a purple Marni cardigan (a gift from friend Courteney Cox) and two pieces of vintage jewelry from her fiancé: a diamond engagement ring and a gold Cartier Love necklace. The extent of her grooming that day has been to run a brush through her long, naturally red hair.

"I don't buy into that beauty myth thing," says Fisher (who pronounces her first name eye-la). "I don't think I should represent myself to look any differently from how I look, not only because my time is better spent on other things, but also because I don't look perfect and I don't want to give people the illusion that I do."

She pauses to ask the waiter about the hotel courtyard's new weatherproofing. He jokes that they do weddings and bar mitzvahs out there in the winter.

"Do you do brisses?" Fisher asks, looking up at him, widening her puppy eyes in a way that makes him think she could be serious. That's the secret to her comedic timing. It slips in smooth and deadpan.

Fisher's got babies on the brain. Last fall, she gave birth to a girl, Olive, and is already eager for more children. "All I've ever wanted to be was a mum, and it's better than I ever dreamed it would be," she says, beaming. That's where the briss comes in. Fisher recently converted to Judaism, presumably as a step closer to the altar with Cohen, an observant Jew whom she has been dating for about seven years. "I sort of fell in love with Judaism," she

says. "I love the rituals and it's all about family, which is what I believe to be the secret to happiness."

As for breaking the glass under the chupa? There's still no date. "I do have to get married," says Fisher. "I'm planning on it. We're planning on it."

Her favorite designers include Stella McCartney, Monique Lhuillier, Zac Posen and Calvin Klein, but she still doesn't have a wedding dress. "I'd love to make it myself," she says. She's got a new sewing machine and just finished a book on crafting baby clothes. "How could that go wrong?"

She insists she doesn't feel like she needs to compete with her husband or strive to be seen as her own person. She's more involved with his creative process as a supportive mate, rather than a collaborator, though he was the first person to tell her that she was funny and encouraged her to try for comedic roles.

"With any line of work, you end up sharing problems or anything great that happens in work. We're no different than that," Fisher says. "I was definitely very involved with the production of *Borat*. Not that I wrote it or starred in it, but because I was on the road with everyone."

The intensely private couple doesn't seem to get out much, save for dining at a few select L.A. restaurants with old friends. Fisher rarely reads magazines and seems strangely sheltered from pop culture. "We have a TV in the living room, but I don't know how to use the remote," she says, shrugging as if she and her husband were not #12 on last year's *Forbes* list of Holly-

wood's 20 Top-Earning Couples, which nailed their income last year alone at \$20 million.

One movie she did see and love was the critically panned *Australia*. She practically spills over with homesickness whenever she talks about the land Down Under, which is often, and she still uses Aussie words such as "bloke." She grew up in

Perth, one of the most isolated cities in the world, raised by Scottish parents. By 17, she was a TV star in Australia.

Her father, whom she describes as funny, now lives in Germany and her mother lives

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"I don't buy into that beauty myth thing. I don't look perfect, and I don't want to give people the illusion that I do."

starfish, when she moved to California around 2000; to paintings of caves and vines that are complex ruminations on spatial depth. This past fall, Weatherford had two shows—new work and a 10-year survey—at Chinatown's Sister Gallery and Cottage Home, respectively. The two shows garnered not just a rave in the *Los Angeles Times*, but one that recognized a sophistication that "fresh and hot" simply can't attain.

Nevertheless, *The New York Times*, as it turns out, was right about Mary Weatherford, although not in the meteoric (and unrealistic) way the headline meant. Longevity, a steady progress, surprising changes and reinventions, a brilliance that comes across as mature and experienced, are what characterize Weatherford's paintings: terrific guidelines for any collector. *The Box*, 977 Chung King Rd., L.A., 213-625-

1747; *theboxla.com*. Otero Plassart, 820 N. Fairfax Ave., L.A., 323-951-1068; *oteroart.com*. Overduin and Kite, 6693 Sunset Blvd., L.A., 323-464-3600; *overduinandkite.com*. Mandarin Gallery, 970 N. Broadway, Ste. 213, L.A., 213-687-4107; *mandarinalgallery.com*. Sister Gallery, 955 Chung King Rd., L.A., 213-628-7000; *sisterla.com*. Cottage Home, 410 Cottage Home St., L.A., 323-276-1205; *cottagehomela.com*. ●

LA VIE EN VIVIER

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planner in the '20s.

Inside, unexpected touches abound, many of which blur the line between art and decor. In the powder room, collage panels by Texas-based artist Scott Calhoun incorporating tiny personal photographs of Crawford's line the walls; in the wood-paneled dining room, a plaster and porcelain installation of vines and flowers on the ceiling by artist David Wiseman adds an unex-

pected dimension; and a sailboat chandelier from a Paris flea market hangs in the foyer. Crawford and close friend Rodman Primak bounced ideas off each other and kept close tabs on furniture auctions around the world to gradually populate the house's rooms with treasures—a pair of antler chairs from the estate of Madeleine Castaing among their fantastic finds.

Unlike the neighboring homes on the street, all of which spread across their lots from side to side, presenting imposing facades and rolling lawns, Crawford's house

is set on a sideways east-west axis, running the length of the property and creating the impression of a smaller abode when viewed at a glance. A lot like Roger Vivier's elegant insider appeal, as well as the artfully crafted, hand-picked elements lining the interior of the house, the exterior's quirky orientation falls right in line with Crawford's prevailing attitude that one can maintain a low profile but still have extraordinary style. "We kind of like that the house doesn't have any curb appeal," she says. "You would drive right by." ●

ALL EYES ON ISLA

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 116

in Greece. So what languages does Fisher speak?

"Finnish," she chirps.

Really?

She laughs. "Nooooo!"

Even though she considers herself thoroughly Australian and makes London her primary home, Fisher and Cohen rent in L.A. They recently took a trip to the Napa Valley, touring vineyards on bikes. Big Sur and Joshua Tree are among their other favorite West Coast vacation spots.

Like most women in Hollywood, Fisher has some complaints about the dearth of meaty roles and the surplus of girlfriends and bridezillas in the scripts she reads. As a solution, she's started to produce, start-

ing with developing an idea with Amy Poehler called "Groupies," being written by "South Park" veteran Erica Rivinoja. "We're going to cast the best-looking guys and they'll go topless through it and we'll be in it, with no makeup," says Fisher.

What Fisher would really like to do next is direct, and she recently shadowed her friend Judd Apatow on the set of his latest movie, *Funny People*. "Directing is really a two-year-out thing," she says. For now, she's lending her voice to an animated movie with Johnny Depp and director Gore Verbinski (*Pirates of the Caribbean*).

A lot of her future in Hollywood depends on how *Shopaholic* performs at the box office, particularly in a time when shopping has become a politically fraught activity. "The lessons my character learns in this movie are lessons that we've all learned in

the past few months about debt and predatory loaning," says Fisher, who plays a financial journalist in New York City looking for a little credit—plastic and otherwise. "I still think this story has its own twist. It has romance and a bit of action. It's sweet."

Shopaholic's producer, Jerry Bruckheimer, has faith in his leading lady. "She stole people's hearts in *Wedding Crashers* and *Definitely, Maybe*," emails Bruckheimer. "In *Confessions of a Shopaholic*, she carries the movie. It's exciting to see her wit, intelligence and comedic timing in nearly every scene."

As for Fisher, it seems like she's going to be just fine, no matter what happens opening weekend—even if she were the type to obsess over box office numbers. "I am hugely flattered," she says, leaning back in her chair and looking up. "If I never do anything else, at least I gave it a good shot." ●

HAUTE ON THE RANGE

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Vincent Minnelli. Ultimately it was her love-match with husband number three, Prentis Cobb Hale, that lasted more than 27 years.

"Prentis was a man of great charisma, a big game hunter, president of the San Francisco Opera, an outdoorsman, involved in the cultural life of the city," says Hale.

"The ranch was a great escape for him."

The adobe house was constructed in the 1950s to be used for two months a year as a hunting retreat. Hale had a vision for the interiors. "On a visit to an English country house when I was 19, I saw the most beautiful wood floors, fires blazing, fresh flowers, silver candelabra—all in a rustic setting, all very comfortable and elegant," says Hale. "I thought,

"Maybe one day, I could have that."

So between trips to Udaipur and viewing the Taj Mahal at sunrise, she has created this nirvana in the wilds of Sonoma County. And while she may be dazzling in a Gianfranco Ferré ballgown at the symphony, or chic in a Ralph Rucci jacket for lunch at Boulette's Larder, it's certain she's impatient to head for the ranch, to trade sparkling diamonds for stars in the night sky. ●