

The Sunday Times Magazine

JUNE 3 2012

SURF'S UP

Can the Beach Boys regain those good vibrations?

TASTE AND INDECENCY

Grayson Perry gives Lynn Barber a lesson in class

DO THE RIGHT FIN

Jerry Hall and Lizzy Jagger
bare all to save our fish



GONE STRIPPING

Greta Scacchi got there first, with a strategically placed piece of cod. Now Jerry Hall and Lizzy Jagger are doing their bit to protest against the over-fishing that is causing havoc to our marine environment. With a pair of haddock at the ready, **Eleanor Mills** joins the campaign



GILL POWER

Jerry Hall and her daughter Lizzy Jagger with scorpion fish. Lizzy's hair is long enough to do a 'Lady Godiva'. Jerry's isn't

On a drizzly Thursday morning at 9am I am sitting — naked apart from a black robe — in front of a mighty mirror as a make-up artist fiddles endlessly with my face. Meanwhile, two stylists apply gunk to my hair. This is not my natural habitat. The walls leading into the photographer Rankin's studio are adorned with portraits of former sitters: Kate Moss, David Bowie, Adele, Lily Allen. Practically every other face — and body — is familiar from the covers of glossy magazines. In half an hour or so, it will be my turn to pose for him, and it has to be done nude (except for some strategically placed fish).

My heart is thumping, my 41-year-old body — which has brought forth two children — is healthy and functions, but let's just say I have not made a career out of my looks. I look at the call sheet: Jade Parfitt (a tall blonde model), Tom Aikens (famous chef), Jerry Hall (yup, you know who she is), Lizzy Jagger (her 28-year-old daughter with Mick, all endless dark hair and dad's snaky hips), Mariella Frostrup (blonde, sexy telly star), Paola Maugeri, an impossibly glamorous Italian TV presenter, and me.

Months ago, when I was asked if I'd like to "do a Greta" — ie, emulate the actress Greta Scacchi, who posed naked except for a sustainably sourced Icelandic cod for the Fishlove project, which highlighted the disastrous goings-on under our seas — I laughed and agreed. Now I know I must have been mad. Even the PR for Fishlove is so worried that I'm about to back out that for the past few weeks, whenever we've spoken, she's prefaced the call with: "You're not changing your mind, are you?" My stomach grumbles; last night, to quell the terror, I drank rather a lot of champagne at the launch of the new Simon Cowell biography (amazingly, Cowell was there, small and rather Zen, being ribbed by Ian Hislop who kept asking him how he was feeling, as if he were an X Factor contestant). This morning, the rancid edge of last night's fizz combines with coffee and fear to augment the jitters.

Hands trembling, I stiffen my resolve. The pictures of celebrities with fish are part of a new campaign, endorsed by Fishlove, by the pressure group Ocean 2012 to save our seas from the blight of overfishing.

Hidden beneath the waves is an ecological disaster. The truth is, if we continue raiding the oceans as we presently do, there will be no fish left by the middle of the century. Already we have exterminated at least 75% of the big beasts of the sea: the whales, dolphins, turtles and sharks. Other big fish which have



CATCH OF THE DAY
Eleanor Mills (above) gets to grips with two Icelandic haddocks, sustainable, of course. Opposite: the actress Lily Loveless covers up with an octopus

been favourites on our dinner tables are also near extinction — 95% of bluefin tuna and halibut have gone. Bluefin is a species that humanity has taken from abundance to the verge of extinction. Callum Roberts, Professor of Marine Conservation at the University of York and author of a widely-praised new book, *Ocean of Life*, says: "The oceans have changed more in the last 30 years than in all of history before that." This is largely due, he says, to industrial fishing fleets which throw so many hooks into our oceans that the lines

would wrap around the world 500 times. "Fish were once so plentiful in our seas that the early colonists on America's Atlantic coast could wade into the surf with a pitchfork, or 'herd' the fish onto the beach by hand."

It wasn't just in America. Roberts has dug back into early fishing records, kept in England since 1889. "Back then, with only sail power and a far smaller fleet, they caught incredible numbers of fish: if you divide the catches by the fishing effort, it is possible to work out that there has been a staggering



FISH AND FLESH

WE HEAVE THE HADDOCKS INTO A PESCATORIAL CORSET

17-fold decline in the availability of fish."

Mechanised nets, computerised sonar fish-locators and huge modern trawlers have led to the seas being fished-out down to a depth of three miles. The best estimates, explains Roberts, "show that most of the world's major fishery species have been reduced in numbers by 75-95% or more". Figures compiled by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization reveal that two-thirds of the species we have fished since the 1950s have experienced collapse.

Charles Clover, a Sunday Times columnist and author of *The End of the Line*, the book that inspired an award-winning documentary of the same name, first sounded the alarm over the fishing crisis in 2004. He began the Oceans 2012 campaign and says that the time for action is now.

Clover is the chairman of the Blue Marine Foundation, a project stemming from *The End of the Line* which establishes marine reserves where fishing is forbidden in order to give fish stocks and the ecosystem a chance to recover. A network of 127 reserves was supposed to have been established around our coastline by 2012; it still hasn't happened. "At present, Europe uses our money to subsidise big, powerful boats which loot the sea. It's the worst kind of fishing," he says. "We must now encourage fishermen to fish more sustainably and direct the subsidies towards that." Clover points to the dreadful waste, highlighted by Hugh

Fearnley-Whittingstall in his TV documentary of fishermen's discards, whereby 16lb of marine organisms are killed to land 1lb of sole, and perfectly good edible fish is thrown, dead, back into the sea because fishermen are only allowed to land their "quota" of certain types of fish. This all matters not just because we need sustainable fishing to feed ourselves. Healthy oceans also play a key role in preventing climate change, as fish droppings help the sea absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Indeed, the oceans have dissolved 30% of the carbon dioxide produced since the Industrial Revolution, limiting the effects of climate change.

As the stylists prod and poke, I remember the impact of the first Fishlove picture: of Greta Scacchi cuddling a cod. "It's easy to publicise the perils of extinction of cute-looking creatures, like polar bears or tigers," Scacchi tells me. "Fish are less photogenic; these Fishlove pictures try to startle the viewer into realising they need to care about the marine environment too; just because they're slimy and hidden, it doesn't mean that fish don't matter. That picture was a turning point for me; it really made a difference."

With her words ringing through my mind, I gird myself as the make-up artist applies a last layer of lip gloss and invites me to nip into

a private annexe. Here she surveys my naked torso — eek — painting body make-up onto my knees and elbows. I offer a silent prayer of thanks to the friend who suggested I get a pre-shoot fake tan. I'm also glad I went to Charles Worthington and had my hair cut; a girl needs all the ammo she can get in these circumstances. I slip the black robe back on and walk out onto the studio floor. The scene is like something out of the fashion-skit movie *Zoolander*. Rankin isn't a minimalist kind of photographer who just clicks away in natural light. This is all about the uber-manipulation of the image through lighting, make-up, sets and — shhh — electronic retouching wizardry.

If you've ever wondered how fashion models look so amazing, it's because they are augmented at every stage of the process to appear flawless, hyperreal. Rankin employs an army-sized entourage. First up are the three cool young blokes wearing identical black T-shirts which say "Rankin" across the front. They man the massive digital monitor that flashes up the images as he takes them. There are also extra make-up artists, stylists, runners, assistants, cooks, waitresses and general hangers-on. In the middle of the giant studio is a white cube, where a pristine white floor, walls and stool are set up (and slightly screened off). At least 15 assistants, runners and stylists are milling about. Rankin is still in his living quarters above the studio; he ➤➤➤➤➤



SCALE MODELS
Left: the chef Tom Aikens with a wolf fish. Right: the model Jade Parfitt adorned with starfish

VERY SMALL STARFISH MAKE PERFECT STRIPPER- STYLE NIPPLE TASSELS

never appears until all is “camera-ready”. Nicky Rohl, the godfather of the Fishlove campaign and founder of the Moshi Moshi sushi chain, comes to talk to me. It was he who originally persuaded his friend Greta to pose for the first Fishlove shot, as part of publicity for The End of the Line film. The idea to photograph naked celebrities hugging fish came not from Nicky but from the advertising agency Leo Burnett, working pro bono. But it was Nicky who made it happen. Slim and intense, he hovers with Rankin, vying to direct proceedings (Nicky did a screenwriting and film-making degree in Tokyo before starting his sushi restaurant). He guides me outside to choose “your friend for the shoot”. All the fish he has brought have been sustainably caught and supplied by Waitrose, whose fish are certified by the Marine Sustainability Council.

“Come and have a look through the fish,” he smiles as we walk out into a small concrete courtyard. “One of them will just speak to you, you will feel something — that’s the fish to pose with.” I feel a huge guffaw of desperate laughter at the ridiculousness of the whole enterprise. All I can think about is coverage: as in, which of these stinky specimens will be the best camouflage for my mum-of-two wobbly bits? He holds up a tiny eel-like barracuda.

“This is elegant, you could drape it down your back,” he says helpfully. I nod benignly, but inside I’m thinking: “No way, Nicky boy — I’m going to need a whale, not that sliver of a thing.” The fish he has brought are beautiful. A mum and baby pair of bright-orange scorpion fish are iridescent in the light, but when I touch them they’re prickly as razors. Next up are

some elegant, very small, starfish (later that day they make perfect stripper-style nipple tassels for the model Jade Parfitt). Nicky proffers a massive, ugly-looking catfish; it is too brutal for me. There is a live lobster in a bucket of sea water waving its arms (Atlantic lobsters are thriving, cod used to eat them but now cod have been so over-fished, lobsters are flourishing). This one is destined for the Italian TV presenter Paola Maugeri, who is so vegan she won’t cook vegetables and has spent a year existing entirely sustainably and lived through the winter with log fires and candles. She won’t touch anything dead. Nicky is worried about whether the lobster will last until her turn.

The star of the show is a 10ft-long bluefin tuna. It is impossible to get hold of a whole one normally; they are carved up as soon as they’re caught. To source it, Nicky — and Waitrose — had to talk directly to the fishermen in Maldives, who caught one for him specially, with the proviso that he sends them the photo. It is destined for Lizzy Jagger, who bravely straddles it later that day. The image is so sexually provocative that the Pew Group, the American philanthropists who are funding the campaign, begin to get cold feet about using it.

I’m still undecided about which fish to choose when Rankin appears. He is short, well-spoken, a little feral and — unlike his army of minders and underlings — smiley and relaxed. His face lights up when he grins, belying his fearsome reputation. “Got a fish?” he asks. I confess that so far I haven’t fancied



any of the options. Rankin is looking through the boxes. “We’ve never done a shot with two fish,” he says, gesturing to a tray containing two huge, slithery haddocks. I look down at my ample cleavage and reckon, sod it; if I’m going to be snapped by one of the world’s best photographers, I may as well play to my strengths. Rankin grins. “Let’s do it.”

Two assistants pick up the haddocks and carry them onto the set. I sit on the stool and someone slips off my black robe. I pick up the first fish — it is heavy, slithery, fleshy and ice-cold. With the help of two stylists we heave and shunt the haddocks (they keep slipping down) so they make a strapless piscatorial corset. Once the fish have been held on my body for a while, they start to warm up. They smell fishy and feel a bit slimy, but the whole scene is so surreal that the physical sensation is the least of my worries.

The shoot begins. As I try to hold the haddocks in place, a baying mob of camera holders, lighting technicians, make-up artists and assistants cranks into action. In the centre is Rankin. “Chin up, right shoulder down, show me your teeth, point your toes,” he says. “You look like a mermaid! Lovely. Lovely. It’s going to work!” He shoots from above and below, full length and half length. We laugh as the fish slip and are hauled into position; the attention, incongruity and teamwork are weirdly euphoric.

After 20 minutes of snapping madness, Rankin is happy; the image works and is projected on a massive screen for all to see, then taped on to the opposite wall. I’m assured that, in the final product, the fish scales and other blemishes will be miraculously removed.



SEA NYMPH
Lizzy Jagger astride a yellowfin tuna, caught in the Maldives

As I wander off the set, clutching a robe and towel, the professionals arrive. Jerry Hall and Lizzy Jagger are dressed down: Hall’s blonde hair is twined on her head, Jagger is wearing a crochet coat and trainers; she looks like a tiny, scruffy student. They both smoke cigarettes outside with Rankin, then head into make-up. Meanwhile, the chef Tom Aikens, 42, has stripped to his boxers and is outside in the courtyard choosing a wolf fish with Nicky. After a welcome shower, I catch up with him as he waits for Rankin to finish with Parfitt.

“My father and grandfather were keen sailors,” Aikens tells me. “I grew up crab fishing, out at sea; it was the backdrop to my childhood. As a chef I’m surrounded by fish. Most supermarkets are using more sustainable fish, particularly Marks & Sparks, Sainsbury’s and Waitrose. They respond to consumer demand, so everyone has a part to play in this. Rather than choosing cod or haddock we should go for gurnard, dab and sardines. But the real players in all this are the politicians. It is only by reforming the ridiculous EU quota policy that now allows fisherman to overfish and throw so much perfectly good fish back into the sea that anything will change. We all need to hassle our MPs to do something about it.”

Rankin is ready and Aikens croons over his catfish. I sit with Jerry and Lizzy as they get made up. Hall is a veteran, of course, but this, she admits, “is my first time with a fish”. Her long blonde hair is being teased into curls, her bare face made up; it is quite heartening that even the pros need help in this department.

“The depletion of fish is a crucial issue for women,” she says. “It’s usually us who make

the choices about the fish we buy; it has to be sustainable, no dredging, and nobody must ever eat bluefin tuna, choose yellowfin. We all have a responsibility to keep the oceans healthy.” Lizzy nods: “Mum’s crazy about fish and the sea and eating properly.” They reminisce about the first fish Lizzy ever caught, at a lake near her mother’s childhood home in Texas. “There’s a picture of me posing with that fish,” Lizzy laughs. They go outside to choose their companions. Lizzy likes a red gurnard: “It looks like me,” she giggles, squeezing her lips into a fishy kiss. They discuss how to preserve their modesty. “I wish I hadn’t cut my hair,” says Jerry. Lizzy laughs that she will be like Lady Godiva and use it to cover her bosoms. “I’ve just come from a four-day shoot in Cape Town, where I spent the whole time in flesh-coloured knickers,” says Lizzy. “This’ll be fine.” Jerry says: “I’ll use my fish and you to cover my modesty.” Hall’s mobile phone beeps. “It’s Bob Geldof,” she says. There is a flourish of button-pressing. “He says the best way to sustain fish is to not eat them.” Geldof, with his usual brusqueness, has a point.

Jerry is fussed about the nudity. She keeps her jeans firmly on and ties a robe round her midriff to cover what she doesn’t want shown. There is no need: she may be 55, but she is tanned (just back from Australia) and looks great. “My new beau is Australian, so in the school holidays — my youngest child is only 14 — I’m there with him. We’re both very keen on sailing. I’ve just got my skipper’s licence for my new 10-metre boat. I’m passionate about preserving the sea. In

Australia they’re really hot on biodiversity. If you catch a crab you have to measure it to see if it’s big enough to keep; if it isn’t it has to go back into the sea — and people check up on you.”

Rankin is ready. “Let’s do it,” says Jerry. Mother and daughter cuddle each other, both holding — gingerly — super-spiky scorpion fish. The fishes kiss, Lizzy makes fishy faces. Jerry drapes hers down her back. The camera snaps away. Then Jerry catches sight of the screen — there is a tiny fold of flesh on her back because she is twisted around. “Lose that,” she says sharply. She hasn’t been a model for the last 40 years for nothing. Then Nicky brings out the big tuna. Lizzy lies down with it, caressing the monster like a lover, then jumps astride, riding it like some mighty aquatic horse, naked except for a flesh-coloured thong. She squeals at the cold but is utterly professional. The shots are fantastic. Rankin is pleased.

I feel curiously exhausted, rather like I do after a boogie-board session in the cold Devon sea. Despite two showers I still smell of haddock. I complain about this to Nicky: “It’ll take a day or so and three baths to get rid of the pong,” he warns, explaining that fishmongers wear plastic boots and gloves because fish stench seeps into leather and skin. Later that afternoon I have to catch a Eurostar train to Brussels; I am paranoid that the whole carriage can smell me. As soon as I reach my hotel I have another bath, emptying in two bottles of bubble bath. There are fish scales in the water and I still don’t smell fish-free. Greta Scacchi laughs when I tell her about this. “You know,” she says, “it’s been four years since I did that shoot, but men still ask me if I smell of cod.” ■