

# THE A-LIST

*Bazaar* asked the award-winning Magnum photographer OLIVIA ARTHUR to venture beyond London's red carpet and under the velvet rope to capture the stars and star-makers in their private, unguarded moments. And HANNAH ROTHSCHILD considers how this creative elite reflects the collective fantasies and fetishes of an era

PHOTOGRAPH BY TIERNEY GEARON

*MOVERS AND COCKTAIL SHAKERS*  
Guests at Chanel's 'The Little Black Jacket' dinner for Karl Lagerfeld. Back row, from left: Kristen McMenamy, Lagerfeld, Stella Tennant and Amanda Harlech. Front row, from left: Zaha Hadid, Keira Knightley, James Righton and Ralph Fiennes

Creating an 'A-list' is not a simply ephemeral exercise; it creates a portrait of our time and a snapshot of contemporary culture. Looking at an A-list is like gazing into a mirror and seeing the reflection of our alter egos – it is the litmus test of what we value, a pH reading of who we are. The A-list is the index of our collective desire, the barometer of our inner fantasies. Because it is film season, our A-list is about celluloid fame; the stars, star-makers, their stylists, and producers: the people who make that world go round. We also celebrate the love affair between film and fashion, epitomised this year by Karl Lagerfeld and Keira Knightley.

Once upon a time, a star was someone whose name appeared on a movie poster; a person whom little was known about, who lived an impossible dream. The Errol Flynns, Lana Turners and Ava Gardners were only just visible to the naked eye; they shone in faraway constellations. But then a new generation changed the perception of stardom: Marilyn Monroe and Elizabeth Taylor had uncontrollable public-private lives, and audiences loved the blurring of plot lines between fact and fiction, scandals erupting off- and on-screen. Our perception of stardom changed again during the rise of independent cinema in the late 1960s and early 1970s, with the cult of unbidable individuals: Dennis Hopper, Peter Fonda and Dustin Hoffman did it their way, and for a time the studio and star system got unshackled. But when Spielberg and Lucas achieved unprecedented box-office hits with *Jaws* and *Star Wars*, a moribund system was jump-started; it was back to high-concept formulas and bankable leads.

There will always be lower-budget, art and speciality movies, but in uncertain times, when costs have waxed and audiences waned, producers become risk-averse and rely on remakes, sequels or established brands like comic books or adaptations. Employing an A-lister is the best way of hedging bets against failure. Put Brad and Angelina in your movie and it is likely to open strongly at the box office. Secure James Cameron or Christopher Nolan as your director, and the awards are more likely to stack up. Get your project backed by producers Joe Roth, Eric Fellner, Tim Bevan or Jerry Bruckheimer, and you are in safer hands. Have it written by Joe Eszterhas, Peter Morgan or Todd Phillips, and you are halfway to the red carpet.

Promoters, publicists and press can pump money, energy and column inches into manipulating the results, but the real test of who becomes and remains a hit is part of an ever-changing ebb and flow of public mood and appetite. Star machines, talent and determination don't automatically lead to success; fame is often a glorious, unpredictable accident. Few would have bet on the diminutive British actor Dudley Moore becoming a household name for portraying

an ageing lothario in the movie *10*. Or that the pudgy 14-year-old in *The Horse Whisperer* would become the screen siren Scarlett Johansson. Or that geeky Steve Carrell would achieve international fame for playing a 40-year-old virgin. Humphrey Bogart is still a cult figure 50 years after his death, but he wasn't the first choice as lead in *High Sierra*, *The Maltese Falcon* or even *Casablanca*. Peter O'Toole was the fifth choice for *Lawrence of Arabia*. Robert Redford was initially dismissed for the lead in *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* for being 'just another Californian blond'. Charlize Theron was thrown out of her local bank for throwing a hissy fit; luckily for her, it was witnessed by leading agent John Crosby. The utterly, gloriously arbitrary nature of stardom is part of its appeal; why, we ask, did he or she make it? Perhaps there is still a tiny sliver of hope for one of us mere mortals?

In America, the official star rating is collated according to earnings. Since 1932, the Quigley poll has ratified the top 10 actors, ranked by box-office receipts. In 2011, Brad Pitt topped the pops for the first time, despite having garnered four Academy and five Golden Globe nominations over the years. The previous year, our cover girl Anne Hathaway, who was not yet in high school when Pitt made his first film, stormed into Quigley's list at number 10. John Wayne holds the record for a place in the top 10 (25 times), and Tom Cruise has been the box-office number one a record seven times. The first movie star to be paid a million dollars in a year was Fatty Arbuckle, back in 1919; today, a million is what you pay for the leading actor no one else wants. A-listers now expect upwards of \$40 million a picture, and that's before points and after a litany of personal expenses.

For most, getting onto the A-list has involved a long arduous climb; years of audition and rejection; the endless realignment of hope and pragmatism; the marshalling of energy and determination. The only absolute given is that falling off the list is inevitable; it will happen without warning or reason. Going up automatically triggers sliding down and out; promotion is followed by relegation. One of the reasons we value stars is because of their transience and fragility. We are enthralled by their fame, but equally morbidly fascinated by their inevitable car crash into certain obsolescence. How many could now identify the greats of yesteryear, Burt Reynolds, Charles Bronson or George C Scott? Some seem time-resistant – Clint Eastwood has been famous for over 50 years, and George Clooney, Meryl Streep, Johnny Depp and Leonardo DiCaprio have all stayed around for a while. But it only takes one bad movie, one ill-judged remark, to end a career; spare a thought for Mel Gibson, or the fading lights of Meg Ryan and Demi Moore. The bitter truth is that most who fall off the celestial wagon can only look forward to the odd cameo role or tabloid notoriety.

Collating the essential ingredients of a

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### LOOKING BACK

Tim Burton and Helena Bonham Carter at the opening of the 'Hollywood Costume' exhibition, supported by Harry Winston, at the V&A



**HOLDING COURT**

Sam and Aaron Taylor-Johnson and Ralph Fiennes hide away in a private room at 5 Hertford Street

British A-list demands a more complicated, nuanced set of criteria. Our box office is smaller, but our television screens and weekly rags deliver a massive national punch. Money and fame aren't our only criteria; individuality, eccentricity and originality are vital attributes. We value excellence and determination, as well as second, third and fourth acts. Our great stars don't get discarded; they become national treasures. Brits will be surprised to learn that Judi Dench is suddenly an international box-office star – as far as we are concerned, she has never been anything else. Former A-lister Rupert Everett is now overlooked by Hollywood; but on home turf, he remains a much-loved maverick, electrifying television viewers, theatre-goers and readers. 'I am not an A-lister,' he says crossly. 'If anything, I am an S-lister – that's S for survivor.'

For the ultimate personification of the British A-list, look no further than our power couples. The US might have Hollywood royalty like Brangelina, or Will Smith and Jada Pinkett Smith, but we have produced the ultimate duo: our Bafta president and his future queen, Will and Kate. Then there are other homegrown confections: the gloriously eccentric Tim and Helena; Sam and Aaron; or perennial A-lister Mick Jagger with the siren of glamour L'Wren Scott.

Our exclusive peek into the A-list world is captured and framed by three brilliant photographers. In Los Angeles, Tierney Gearon celebrated Florence Welch's unabashed, unadulterated, Gucci-inspired joie de vivre in the A-list crucible of madness and badness, Chateau Marmont. In London, Henry Bourne took a rare, intimate family portrait of our great British success story, Working Title.

Commissioning the right reportage photographer to capture the war zone of broken dreams, the world of blood-stained red carpets, the amphitheatre of damaged, damned egos, was challenging. Enter Magnum photographer Olivia Arthur, who is used to capturing fragility and distress, but in situations where she would be more likely to put on a flak jacket than a little black dress. Her haunting images have been celebrated in books and exhibitions, and garnered many accolades and prizes. She is well known for portraying hardship or conflict; women struggling for their independence in Azerbaijan and Turkey; the world behind the veil in Iran or Saudi Arabia; recording female poverty in India. However, she described the job of portraying the A-list as an extremely testing assignment. 'I am used to spending time with subjects and having some level of interaction with them,' she says, but this time, 'I felt like a bit of a stalker who was treated like one of a rabble of children who have to be kept in their place.'

Working with exquisite insight and unparalleled access, Arthur captured the drama, tension, highs and lows of A-list life. Through her roving lens, the reader finds out who this year's A-listers are, but just as importantly, what it is like to be them. Marvel at Rupert Everett in his dressing room, make-up half off, half on, poised between the private and public persona. Peer behind the scenes at the fragile but crucial alliances forged between the worlds of fashion and film. Glimpse into the private parties, at the movers and shakers, the wannabes and has-beens. Immerse yourself in the delicate, inter-cine webs of talent and ego; the outlandish style; and, above all, love the magnificent aplomb of *Bazaar's* A-list-inspired issue. □



*Andy Serkis, Cate Blanchett, Sylvester McCoy, Bafta president Prince William and James Nesbitt*



*Livia and Colin Firth*



*Mick Jagger*



*Jacquetta Wheeler*



*Ronnie Wood, Keith Richards, Charlie Watts and Mick Jagger*

**HERE TODAY**  
*A constellation of fame and fashion found and photographed by Olivia Arthur at: Chanel's 'The Little Black Jacket' private dinner for Karl Lagerfeld, and the exhibition's opening; the premiere of 'The Hobbit'; the Rolling Stones' 'Crossfire Hurricane' premiere; Charles Finch and Chopard's dinner for the London Film Festival and Banana Tree Productions; and Livia Firth's Green Cut event, with American Express and the BFI*



*Keira Knightley*

*Camilla Rutherford, Philip Astor, Charles Finch and Gillian Anderson*



*Kristen McMenamy and Haider Ackermann*



*Eddie Campbell and Karl Lagerfeld at the Saatchi Gallery*

*Laura Bailey, Alice Dellal, Kristen McMenamy and Haider Ackermann among the guests at Loulou's club*



*Lou Doillon*



### TEN MINUTES TO CURTAIN

Rupert Everett, make-up half off and on, caught between the street and stage, at the Theatre Royal in Bath



### MEASURE UP

L'Wren Scott in her private atelier in London. Her designs have been worn by Nicole Kidman, Oprah Winfrey, Michelle Obama, Sarah Jessica Parker and Christina Hendricks, among others

HAIR BY CURT DARLING. MAKE-UP BY EMMA KOTCH

