

Elizabeth Hurley: *Beauty Queen*

As brands become lifestyles and celebrities become brands, Elizabeth Hurley has mastered the art of transformation throughout her career. *GABRIELLE LANE* talks beauty, business and family life in Chelsea with the model and actress

During the course of writing up this interview with Elizabeth Hurley, two members of my team asked me if her name is followed by an acronym, in honour of her contribution to British public life. Scoff if you wish, but I did Google it.

From model and actress to charity ambassador, Hurley's public image has changed many times over the past three decades, but one thing that has remained consistent is her quintessentially British persona.

And whether or not you're aware of her latest projects, you'll be aware of her style signatures: pristine white jeans, a carefully

coiffed blow-dry and a cut-glass accent, to name but three. Indeed, I know quite a few people who would like to be a bit more 'Hurley' – and the appeal transcends generations. And she is fully aware of her stereotypes, in a way that is as likeable as it is self-assured.

“My mother used to drum into me, ‘If at first you don’t succeed, try, try, try again’”

Admitting how she “couldn’t imagine not living in West London”, she confides how she is “obsessed” with Harrods’ personal

shoppers, and regularly frequents Luigi’s (delicatessen) on the Fulham Road. Holidays are spent reading and sleeping at Frégrate Island in the Seychelles, Mustique or the Maldives, and her luxuries are Hermès cashmere blankets and bath oil from Jo Malone London.

Hurley is also not about to protest that her looks have overshadowed her acting roles. “No – it has helped,” she admits. “But I only look glamorous on the red carpet; in real life when I’m off-duty and in the country, you wouldn’t recognise me in a police line-up. Part of my living has been based on representing luxury brands so it’s important I fly the

flag in public. But I wear jeans and a ponytail for the other 95 per cent of the time.”

Arguably, it was the actress’ public image that helped land her a part in *The Royals*: a fictional drama based

on a rather colourful incarnation of the British aristocracy that will return for its second series on E! this year. “I play the Queen of England, Queen Helena, who is intelligent, brave, glamorous, manipulative and dangerous,” she explains. “I wanted my queen to be sleek and stylish, and look very expensive; I wear what I imagine the late Princess Diana would have worn if she were still with us today. But I did channel Joan Collins in *Dynasty* a bit too. Season two is brimming with scandal and intrigue and, of course, my character Queen Helena is right in the thick of it.”

She has, by her own admission, plugged away at forging an acting career. “I’m in an industry that specialises in rejection, especially at the beginning. For every job I was given, I was turned down for dozens more. My mother used to drum into me the old saying, ‘If at first you don’t succeed, ►



This page, l-r: Amber & lavender bath oil, £40 for 250ml, Jo Malone London, jomalone.co.uk; Advanced Night Repair, £50 for 30ml, Estée Lauder, estelauder.co.uk

Opposite page: Elizabeth Hurley Beach, available at elizabethhurley.com and Harrods, *photography:* Pascal Chevallier; cococon-events.com





► try, try, try again'. It must have sunk in as I rarely give up."

Describing her most recent project as a "baptism of fire", she says her work leaves little time for anything else. "Apart from a series of (US TV show) *Gossip Girl*, I had only ever done movies. It's nigh on impossible to have any kind of social life when you're filming as the days are brutally long and there are a lot of lines to learn."

Off-set, there are personal projects on the go. One long-standing professional relationship is with Estée Lauder – she has been modelling for the beauty brand for 21 years and is the global ambassador for its Breast Cancer Awareness campaign, which has seen funds raised used to support the work at The Royal Marsden Hospital and The Institute of Cancer Research. "I've loved every minute of it," she explains. "To know that through my work as the campaign's global ambassador I can help such important research be achieved, is something that I am so proud of and has had a profound impact on me."

Keen to align herself with causes that she's passionate about and to use social media in order to publicise them, on the commercial side, she keeps careful control of her own image. "It's not a license, I own it," she declares when we speak of Elizabeth Hurley Beach, one of her business endeavours that has spawned a vibrant

collection of swimwear each season. "I'm still completely hands on in every aspect of my business, but I have a great team that I can rely on. I love what I do."

I started designing beachwear as most women are paranoid about this part of their wardrobe and I wanted to come up with some way to help... I try to make swimwear that fits well, along with great cover-ups, kaftans and sarongs," she adds.

Of course, it is Hurley herself who makes a glossy appearance in the campaign images for the range; I ask how healthy her lifestyle is. "I'm pretty active and have a lot of nervous energy. I rarely sit still for long,

although I don't do much regulated exercise. I take my four insane dogs on long walks in the country and try to stretch a bit every day. And I enjoy Pilates classes, which I do a few times a week."

What of that famous Hurley dietary resolve? "I rarely think I'm on a diet, but sometimes when I see what some people eat I realise that to them I'm on a permanent one. By that I mean I very rarely eat junk or processed foods, I only have fizzy drinks once in a blue moon and I don't drink much alcohol. I always attempt to eat lots of vegetables and I only have pasta as a treat. I eat delicious foods, but not too much of them. Quality

over quantity... of course occasionally my jeans feel like they're straining at the seams and then I concentrate on not picking between meals and avoiding bread."

Her own beauty icons are Elizabeth Taylor – "she had the most heartbreakingly beautiful face" – and Isabelle Adjani ("she could have launched ships") and true to form, there are Estée Lauder products in her bathroom cabinet. "I've used Advanced Night Repair for 21 years and it is without doubt the best serum on the market. I also smother my body in Estée Lauder's Re-Nutriv Intensive Smoothing Body Crème a couple times a week," she says. But it's clear that it's for her, as well as for her business interests.

"Living a healthy lifestyle helps you feel better both inside and out. It's not rocket science, but drinking plenty of water, staying active, getting enough sleep, eating well and using the right products on your skin definitely helps. Everything working together in harmony contributes to you feeling your best." With a young son who "luckily adores being on film sets", the next series of *The Royals* on the way, cruise 16/17 and summer 2017 swimwear ranges to oversee, life is hectic, but good.

But as we've come to expect, Hurley's last anecdote is self-deprecating in a typically British fashion. "It's true that I have many balls in the air, but so does almost every mum I meet. Occasionally I have enough of everyone and everything, and so I go and camp out in my shepherd's hut without my phone to get a few hours peace." ■

elizabethhurley.com

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Opposite page: Elizabeth Hurley Beach, available at elizabethhurley.com and Harrods, photography: Pascal Chevallier; cocoon-events.com
 This page, clockwise from top: Labyrinth Chevron blanket, £590, Hermès, uk.hermes.com; Re-Nutriv Intensive Smoothing Body Crème, £128 for 300ml, Estée Lauder, as before; Red roses bath oil, £54 for 250ml, Jo Malone London, as before