

To Cannes With Love, Peggy Siegal

The untiring guru of movie publicity hits the French Riviera for the 64th annual Cannes Film Festival. There, she once again mixes it up beneath sparkling skies with cinema's brightest stars. In her exclusive diary, Siegal shares movie-worthy moments spent rubbing shoulders with Robert De Niro, running into Johnny Depp numerous times and orchestrating Jane Fonda's runway debut.

TUESDAY, MAY 10

Arriving to the 64th Cannes Film Festival on the Côte d'Azur (my fourth trip there), I am picked up by **Sebastian**, my **Brad Pitt** look-a-like driver. We head to the Carlton Hotel on the Croisette, smack in the middle of the action.

The festival is the world's most prestigious 12-day convention of cinema, giving us the perfect excuse to slip on an evening gown nightly, strut our stuff on the red carpet, network till dawn with endless flashbulbs in our face and chat with reporters posing as friends. I fall into that category of over-dressed film aficionado, fan and friend with a pencil.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 11

I fly down the Carlton's stairwell in a spectacular **Dennis Basso** sequined-and-fur get-up, overloaded with mother's inherited diamonds, and head to **Woody Allen's** premiere of Sony Classics' *Midnight in Paris*. I accidentally crash into **Barry Levinson** coming from a financial meeting on *Gotti: Three Generations*, which he'll be filming in New York this winter with **John Travolta** as **John Gotti Sr.** and **Al Pacino** as his mentor. Three years ago, Barry's film *What Just Happened*, produced and written by **Art Linson** and starring **Robert De Niro** (this year's jury president), closed the festival. Barry walks me to the paparazzi-infested Palais. He has no tuxedo or tickets for tonight. I tell him to meet me at the dinner and Sony Classics co-presidents **Michael Barker** and **Tom Bernard** will get him in. My date, eccentric Italian investor **Jean Pigozzi**, arrives by boat from his villa.



Jane Fonda, Peggy Siegal and Naomi Campbell

There's total Woody-mania on the red carpet. Woody is very calm. This is his 42nd film and his first shot entirely in Paris. It's about the struggle to deal with the present while romanticizing the past. **Owen Wilson**, **Rachel McAdams** with real-life lover **Michael Sheen**, **Adrien Brody**, starlet **Léa Seydoux** and Woody climb the mythic red steps to be greeted by festival Director **Thierry Fremaux** and President **Gilles Jacob**, who receive every actor every evening in the exact same spot. Notably absent are French first lady **Carla Bruni**, who is pregnant with twins, and Oscar-winner **Marion Cotillard**, who gives birth to baby boy **Marcel** eight days later.

French actress **Mélanie Laurent** serves as emcee, introducing the jury at the opening ceremony. A reel of Robert De Niro's iconic performances is shown as he emerges on the stage to receive an emotional five-minute standing ovation. Jury members **Uma Thurman** and **Jude Law** cheer. The first recipient of the Palme d'Honneur, an honorary career achievement award, goes to **Bernardo Bertolucci**, who declares the festival officially open.

Lady Gaga, oblivious to the Woody worship, is performing on the adjacent beach.

THURSDAY, MAY 12

I attend the 8:30 a.m. press screening at the Palais of the eagerly awaited *We Need to Talk About Kevin*, directed by **Lynne Ramsay**. **Tilda Swinton** gives a tour de force performance as a mother whose life is shattered after her teenage son goes on a killing spree at his high school.



Milla Jovovich

Robert De Niro

Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie

JOVOVICH: AN GAVAN/AP/GETTY IMAGES FOR AMFAR; DE NIRO: VALERY HACHE/AP/GETTY IMAGES; PITT: VENTURELLI/WIREIMAGE; KURKOVA: ERIC FRANZ/GETTY IMAGES; MCADAMS: FRANCIS GUILLOU/AP/GETTY IMAGES; WILSON: DOMINIQUE CHARRAU/GETTY IMAGES

That night, Sony Classics' *Restless*, **Gus Van Sant's** latest exploration of smart-but-troubled young people, premieres. **Dennis Hopper's** talented 20-year-old son, **Henry**, stars as a moody kid obsessed with death and who's in a quirky relationship with luminous **Mia Wasikowska**. **Ron Howard's** pregnant daughter, **Bryce**, produces.

FRIDAY, MAY 13

Press run to a midday screening of the controversial documentary *Unlawful Killing*, the unapologetically one-sided view of conspiracy theories about the deaths of Princess Diana and her boyfriend Dodi Fayed in the fatal 1997 car crash in Paris. At the press conference at the Carlton, journalists yell questions challenging the movie's accuracy. **Mohamed Al-Fayed** paid \$5 million to underwrite the entire film, which tries to prove that 90-year-old **Prince Philip** had Diana assassinated because the royal family didn't want her to marry Al-Fayed's son, a Muslim. The film is banned in England.

The Weinstein Company throws a packed cocktail party for buyers and media at the Martinez to showcase the clip reel for their 2011 slate. **Victoria Parker** greets me. C.O.O. **David Glasser** introduces **Harvey Weinstein**, who describes **Quentin Tarantino's** *Django Unchained*, **Paul Thomas Anderson's** untitled film, **Simon Curtis's** *My Week with Marilyn* and **David O. Russell's** *The Silver Linings Playbook*. **Sarah Jessica Parker** shows scenes from *I Don't Know How She Does*



Rachel McAdams, Woody Allen and Owen Wilson



Karolina Kurkova



Owen Wilson, Léa Seydoux, Woody Allen, Rachel McAdams, Michael Sheen and Adrien Brody



Lady Gaga and dancers

Henry Hopper and Mia Wasikowska

Melanie Griffith

Ryan Gosling and Nicolas Winding Refn

L'Wren Scott

It. Harvey highlights his last-minute Cannes competition entry, *The Artist*, a stylish silent black-and-white movie about 1920s Hollywood.

TWC's acquisition of *The Iron Lady* starring **Meryl Streep** as **Margaret Thatcher**, Britain's only female prime minister, has early Oscar buzz for the actress based on a five-minute teaser showing her extraordinary ability to assume Mrs. Thatcher's tone of voice and pattern of speech. Would one expect less from the world's most gifted actress?

SATURDAY, MAY 14

Another 8:30 a.m. press screening, this one for blockbuster *Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides*. Captain Jack Sparrow is back, and this time he's looking for the Fountain of Youth. (Who isn't?) **Jerry Bruckheimer** has invited me to the premiere later tonight, which is at the same time as English entrepreneur **Charles Finch's** dinner. So the trick is to be in two places at once. How? See Jerry's entire film at 8:30 a.m. and repeat half of it at 6:30 p.m., then head to dinner.

But first, Russian billionaire **Len Blavatnik** and Harvey Weinstein host a lunch on board Len's yacht, the *Odessa*, to celebrate the festival. Tenders ferry us on choppy seas from the Carlton dock to the mother ship. Skinny **Melanie Griffith** is in skinny jeans accessorized with sparkling light blue stone-and-diamond earrings, matching necklace and a ring just gifted from **Antonio Banderas** for their 15th anniversary.

I ask **Jane Fonda** why she didn't respond to my email about being the surprise finale at **Naomi Campbell's** Fashion for Relief event on Monday night. Naomi is on the boat and ready to kill me for pushing Jane. Jane says her email is down, but that's a very interesting idea. It's a done deal, and Naomi and Jane are already organizing fittings.

It's another night of bedlam on the red carpet for the *Pirates* premiere. I sit next to Jane, who is wearing a Chopard 53.5-carat diamond necklace with a whopping 160-carat cushion-cut blue sapphire pendant. We are right in front of the cast's reserved seats, watching their arrivals on the huge screen. **Johnny Depp** (no one cooler), **Penélope Cruz** (no one more beautiful), **Ian McShane**, **Geoffrey Rush**, **Rob Marshall**, Jerry Bruckheimer (no one richer) and **Keith Richards** (he could be cooler than Depp, but not richer than Jerry) dutifully pose and smile.

This is the off-year for **Graydon Carter's** biennial *Vanity Fair* shindig, so **Sydney** and **Charles Finch** fill the slot with their *Finch's Quarterly Review* filmmakers' dinner. Guests include *Quarterly's* **Nick Foulkes**, honorary producer **Jeremy Thomas**, **Paul Allen** with a new book out titled *Idea Man*, **Mick Jagger** hinting at releasing new music in the fall, producers **Cassian Elwes**, **Lawrence Bender** and **Ed Pressman**, directors **Simon Curtis** and **Bertrand Tavernier**, **Vanessa Hudgens**, **Boris Becker**, **Kevin Spacey**, **Christian Louboutin**, **Dominic Cooper**, **Glenn Close** and newcomer **Emily Browning** and **Max Irons** canoodling on the terrace.

Back at du Cap's bar, Art Linson and Bob De Niro are ensconced in the actor's favorite corner. Linson, who produced *The Untouchables* featuring Bob as Al Capone, remains his close friend. Bob has been seeing two films a day

in town and attending numerous dinners at night. Now he relaxes with his daughter, **Drena De Niro**, Jane Fonda and her boyfriend **Richard Perry** and Melanie Griffith (still wearing the new jewelry) and Antonio Banderas. **Grace Hightower**, Bob's wife, is by his side at all times.

In walks Jerry and **Linda Bruckheimer**, followed by Rob Marshall and Johnny Depp. The lounge is heating up. De Niro is the Godfather, but mysterious and beautiful Depp is the matinee idol—who happens to be staying on his own 156-foot sailing ship, *Vajoliroja*, that even you can charter for 84,000 euros a week. Depp settles on the terrace with Rob Marshall and Disney Studios Chief **Rich Ross**. Producer **Graham King** oversees the scene because he's got Depp on a plane to London the next day to start shooting his **Tim Burton**-directed blockbuster, *Dark Shadows*.

After 2:00 a.m. a gang of young people come off **Steven Spielberg's** new yacht. My first kid-to-adult kiss comes from director **Jake Paltrow** and his girlfriend, art-photographer **Taryn Simon**. They are headed to London shortly because she has a show at the Tate Modern. **Sasha Spielberg** also bestows a kiss. She tells me it's her 21st birthday and her boyfriend of two years, **Max Winkler** (son of **Henry** and director of *Ceremony*), has given her a little jewelry—nothing like Antonio's gifting to Melanie or Jane's Chopard stuff, but the real thing nevertheless.

The Godfather's circle, the *Pirates* entourage and the children of the beloved famous are all having so much fun, saddening only when the hotel bartenders blink the lights at 3:00 a.m. and throw everyone out.

SUNDAY, MAY 15

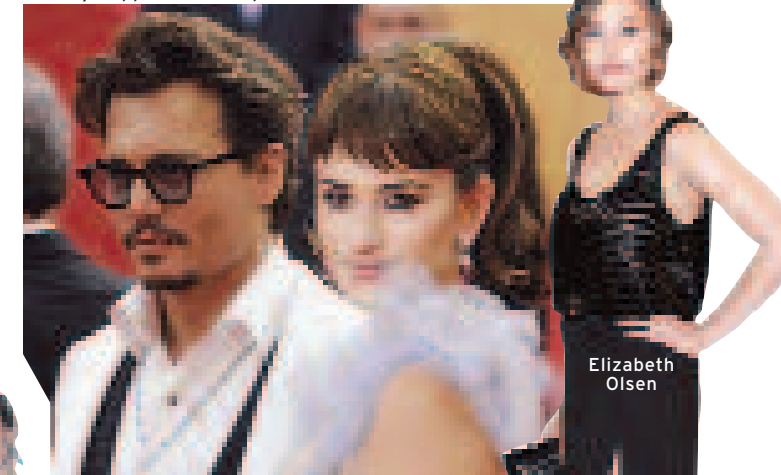
I bump into **Jessica Chastain** in the Carlton lobby. She has made 11 films in the past 4 years. I hop into her huge black van to go one block to a screening of Sony Classics' *Take Shelter*, in which she co-stars with **Michael Shannon** as an anguished husband experiencing apocalyptic visions.

Lunch is around a pool overlooking the Mediterranean at Jean Pigozzi's Villa Dorane, where Mick Jagger is the annual house guest. Jean is a large, loveable host who chronicles his every social move with a tiny camera. Italian *Vogue* Editor **Franca Sozzani**, **L'Wren Scott** and Mick Jagger lounge on double outdoor day beds. Others chatting include Bob De Niro, **Denise Rich**, Mia Wasikowska, Henry Hopper and Google C.E.O. **Eric Schmidt**.

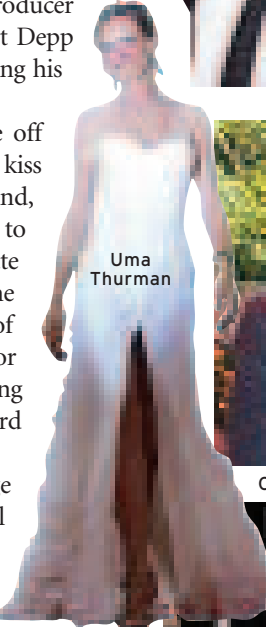
Bob and Grace, plus **Fiona** and Art Linson, **Brian McNally** (visiting from Saigon) and I are given a private tour of Microsoft Co-founder Paul Allen's 414-foot boat, the *Octopus* (staffed by ex-Navy Seals), by the man himself. In his screening room, Paul shows us films of his explorations, including melting glaciers in the Arctic and Antarctic. De Niro cannot resist climbing into the yellow submarine, resting in the hull and sitting in the captain's seat.

Later, I see *Martha Marcy May Marlene*, starring 22-year-old ingénue **Elizabeth Olsen**, sister of 25-year-old billionaire twins **Mary-Kate** and **Ashley**. Elizabeth plays a young woman

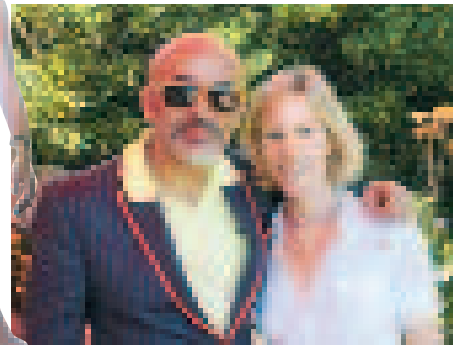
Johnny Depp and Penélope Cruz



Elizabeth Olsen



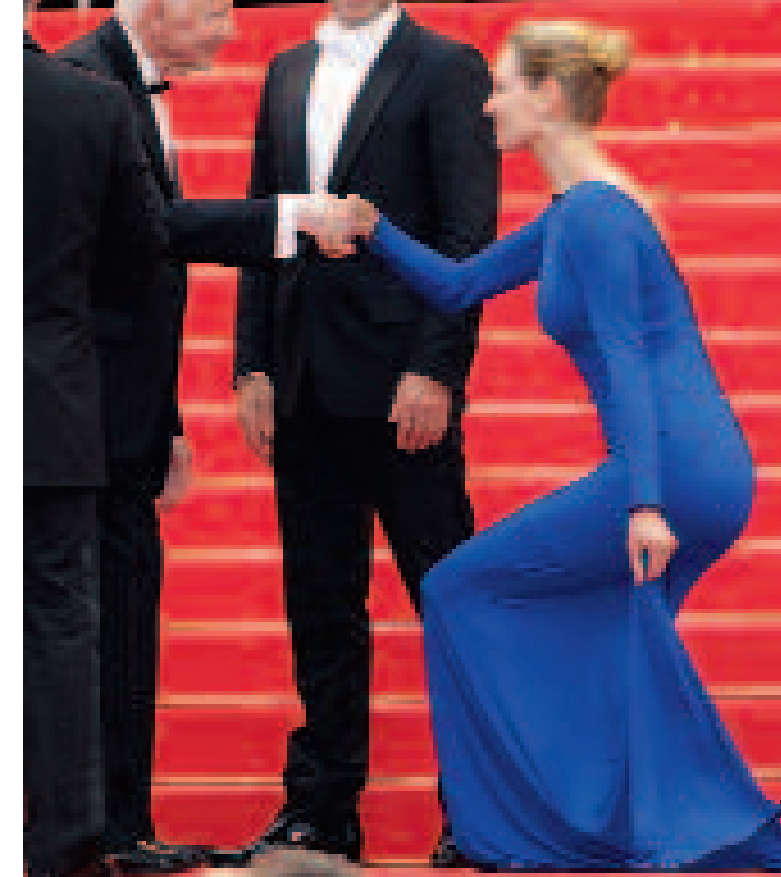
Uma Thurman



Christian Louboutin and Sydney Finch



Gilles Jacob, Jude Law and Uma Thurman





Sam Claflin, Astrid Berges-Frisbey, Geoffrey Rush, Penélope Cruz, Johnny Depp, Rob Marshall and Jerry Bruckheimer



Georgina Chapman



Lars Von Trier

who escapes from a cult and is never the same. Fox Searchlight's *Nancy Utley* and *Stephen Gilula* know they have a serious hit.

MONDAY, MAY 16

It's the morning screening of **Terrence Malick's** artistic *Tree of Life*. This is the film to see from Fox Searchlight. The press, jumping barricades in a punching frenzy, arrive early enough to take a power nap in their coveted seats. The film is a visual sensation set in a small town in central Texas circa the mid-1950s and tells the story of a stern father (Brad Pitt) and a beatific mother (Jessica Chastain) and their three boys.

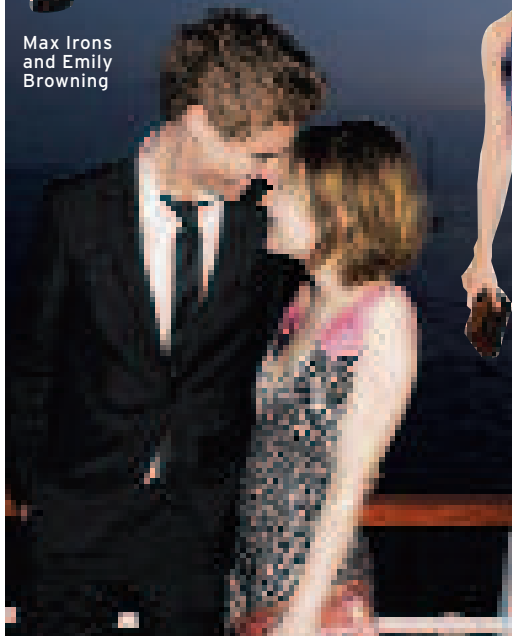
At the press conference, Brad Pitt, dressed in white, is charming as he uncomfortably explains that his famously private director is just too shy to come talk to the reviewers and company. Producer **Bill Pohl** explains that **Sean Penn** is en route from his humanitarian work in Haiti. The press is pissed.

Lunch is at du Cap. Sean Penn, just off a plane, eats on the terrace with his agent, fashion-icon **Bryan Lourd**, sporting a seersucker suit and straw hat.

Then I'm off to the Carlton for **Wendi Murdoch's** cocktail party promoting the film she produced for Fox Searchlight, *Snow Flower and the Secret Fan*, a timeless portrait of female friendship in 19th-century-China. Wendi poses for photos with **Gwen Stefani**, **Gavin Rossdale**, **Shala Monroe** and her best friend **Dasha Zhukova** (Russian billionaire **Roman Abramovich's** significant other). Dasha and Roman have recently restored the white-washed Chateau de la Croe, next door to Jean Pigozzi, where Edward VIII lived with Wallis Simpson after abdicating.



Jodie Foster



Max Irons and Emily Browning

Bedecked in a **Luisa Beccaria** organza gown with an impractical flowing train, I and my escort, **Angus Aynsley** (producer of last year's *Waste Land*), charge across the Croisette to the Film Society of Lincoln Center's cocktail party and then on to the *Tree of Life* premiere.

Amid red carpet hysteria, Brad (again, minus Malick) leads Jessica Chastain and Sean Penn up the Palais steps. But, surprisingly, he turns on his heels, descends and treks back to the street. Out of nowhere, **Angelina Jolie** emerges onto the carpet in a low-cut, strapless Versace gown, slit to reveal her entire, perfect leg. The king and queen of fame slowly work the walk, giving their adoring subjects every ounce of drama and glamour they have been panting for.

Angus and I slip out to attend Naomi Campbell's all-star Fashion for Relief show, benefiting those affected by the devastating tsunami in north Japan. Leave it to super model Naomi to pull off a Cannes red-carpet event opposite *Tree of Life*. Co-host Franca Sozzani helps style the models backstage. The girls include **Karolina Kurkova**, **Yasmin Le Bon**, **Nadja Auermann**, **Sessilee Lopez**, Japanese model **Tao Okamoto**, **Rosario Dawson** and Grace Hightower. It is 73-year-old Jane Fonda, 50 years older than any runway girl, who steals the show as the surprise finale in a white see-through-lace Marchesa gown. The crowd erupts as Jane sashays past Harvey Weinstein, who is pointing to his wife, **Georgina Chapman**, and proudly mouthing, "This is the designer!"

TUESDAY, MAY 17

Tonight, on a launch to Paul Allen's annual party on the Octopus, **Ryan Gosling** sits next to me with his *Blue Valentine* producer, **Jamie Patricof**. Their next film, *The Place Beyond the Pines*, will be directed by **Derek Cianfrance**, and is shooting in Schenectady this summer. Co-starring with **Bradley Cooper**, Ryan plays a motorcycle stunt rider who robs banks. I ask him for a walk-on as an innocent bystander who he throws to the floor before yelling, "Stick 'em up!" Ryan loves it. Patricof agrees.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 18

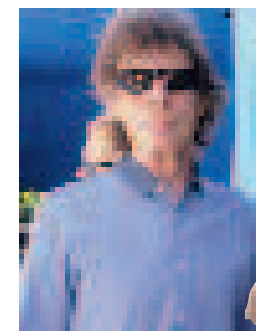
I attend the morning screening of Magnolia Pictures' *Melancholia*, in which wedding guests witness a planet (Melancholia) hidden behind the sun that is now on a collision course with Earth . . . and that's the good news. At the press conference, Danish director **Lars von Trier** announces, "Okay, I'm a Nazi," sending shock waves through the media. He had been asked to comment on a recent interview in which he expressed interest in the Nazi aesthetic. His mother, on her death bed, revealed that the Jewish man he thought was his father actually was not. Lars then found out he's German. Making matters worse, he says he has an "understanding" of Hitler. Co-stars **Kirsten Dunst** and **Charlotte Gainsbourg** (Jewish) are horrified. Possibly Lars' English is rusty. Reuters later prints that the comments were made in jest. What a sense of humor this guy has; he could do standup. Festival officials promptly throw him out and cancel his post-premiere party that night. What a sorry mess for such a good film.



Naomi Campbell



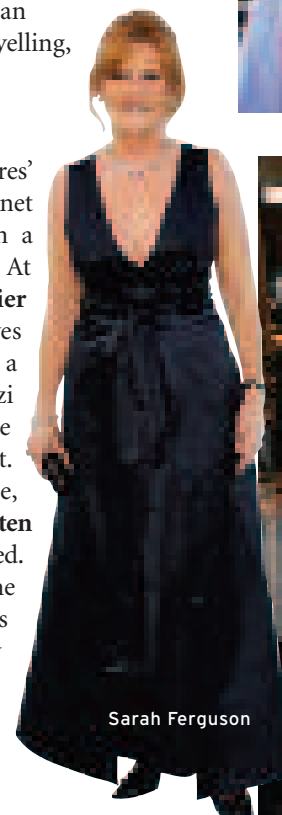
Tilda Swinton



Mick Jagger



Jane Fonda



Sarah Ferguson

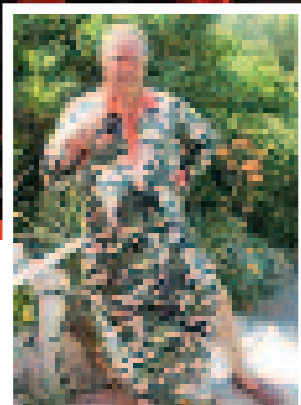


Gwen Stefani, Wendi Murdoch and Dasha Zhukova

CLAFLIN: ANDREAS RENTZ/GETTY IMAGES; CHAPMAN: GEORGE PIMENTEL/FILMAGIC; TRIER: FRANCOIS GULLOT/AF/GETTY IMAGES; IRONS: DAVE M. BENNETT/GETTY IMAGES; REQUIRED: FOSTER: JAY GAWAN/GETTY IMAGES; CAMPBELL: JAY GAWAN/GETTY IMAGES; SWINTON: VALERY HACHE/AF/GETTY IMAGES; FONDA: VITTORIO ZUNINO/CELOTTI/GETTY IMAGES; FERGIJON: TONY BARSON/WIREIMAGE; STEFANI: MICHAEL BUCKNER/GETTY IMAGES



Kirsten Dunst, Robert De Niro and Jean Dujardin



Jean Pigozzi



Antonio Banderas and Pedro Almodóvar



HRH Prince Albert II of Monaco and Charlene Wittstock

This story is as crazy as the other hot gossip of the day: **Arnold Schwarzenegger**—a.k.a. the Terminator, a.k.a. the Sperminator—had slept with the maid of 20 years and had their love child around the house so **Maria Shriver** could watch the half-brothers (her son with Arnold is about the same age) grow up together. This is the reel to real suspension of disbelief.

Hollywood Reporter Editorial Director **Janice Min** and Publisher **Lori Burgess** host a cocktail party at the Hotel Martinez beach for **Jodie Foster** in honor of her directing *The Beaver* with **Mel Gibson**. Keeping with the Nazi theme, Mel, the son of a Holocaust denier, got a standing ovation the night before at the Palais for his profound performance as a tortured soul. Not a stretch.

Countess Nathalie von Bismarck (an Israeli Jew and married to **Count Carl**) throws a cocktail party at the Carlton to celebrate a screenplay she has written about her husband's Swedish grandmother, Ann-Mari Tengbom (a.k.a. Princess von Bismarck-Schonhausen) and her sympathetic efforts to help displaced people after the war. Can't wait to see it. I've never been to a cocktail party for a first draft script.

Cinema for Peace holds its inaugural Cannes dinner and auction at the Carlton, where Sean Penn's humanitarian work in Haiti is acknowledged. Sean hosts an impressive oval table in the middle of the room with **Leonardo DiCaprio**, Harvey Weinstein, **Roberta Armani** and Naomi Campbell's boyfriend **Vladislav Doronin**, who each pledge \$75,000 to the \$750,000 total raised. Also sitting with them is Robert De Niro, Ryan Gosling, Uma Thurman, Rosario Dawson and **Faye Dunaway**. Leo tells me he is excited to go to Australia to start work on **Baz Luhrmann's** *The Great Gatsby*.

Oddly, there is another Haitian cocktail party and auction on the same night at the same time. This one is hosted by **Paul Haggis** to benefit Artists for Peace and Justice. **Milla Jovovich**, **Ryan Kavanaugh**, Karolina Kurkova and Jane Fonda co-host at the Chopard Lounge at the Martinez. Celebrity supporters include **Peter Fonda**, **Kenneth Cole**, **Patrick Dempsey**, **Angela Lindvall** and **Michelle Rodriguez**. Haggis raises \$400,000 to support the country's first free high school (children's education is terminated in the sixth grade).

THURSDAY, MAY 19

Yet another early morning screening on four hours of sleep. Beloved **Pedro Almodóvar's** *The Skin I Live In* stars Antonio Banderas as a wealthy, cultured and respected Madrid plastic surgeon. This highly anticipated film explores themes of sexuality and identity. I immediately campaign to Sony Classics that I need to promote it, being somewhat of an authority on anti-aging.

The worlds of film, fashion and music unite at amfAR's annual Cinema Against AIDS gala at the Hotel du Cap hosted by Kenneth Cole, Harvey Weinstein, Bold Films and Chopard. AmfAR sets a record by raising \$10 million. Every celebrity I have mentioned is here, as well as **Janet Jackson** and **Sarah Ferguson**. The evening's highlight comes when **HRH Prince Albert II of Monaco** and fiancée **Charlene Wittstock** offer personal tennis and swimming lessons, with lunch at the palace thrown in, for \$1.4 million (it sold twice). I wonder if they play doubles.

De Niro is back at his favorite corner in the du Cap bar with Naomi Campbell and **Brooke Shields**. It's fascinating to see two of the most famous faces in the world discussing the longevity of

their careers. Naomi talks about her 41st birthday on Sunday, and tries to figure out Vlad's surprise destination celebration (it's Capri). Last year, for her 40th, he played host to 300 of the world's chicest fashionistas at the du Cap, which I crashed (only because I didn't know her) and wrote about. This year, Vlad has his security guard hand me (and the other guests) a 30-pound, limited edition, lavender and pink coffee table book featuring the black-and-white party photos. I pray I'm not in it.

FRIDAY, MAY 20

I have invited **Debra** and **David Reuben** (normal people, not in the business) to the premiere of Sean Penn's *This Must be the Place*. Sean daringly plays a 50-year-old American former rock star who still dresses as a cross between Kiss band members and **Alice Cooper**. He's living in a castle in Ireland until the death of his father, a Holocaust survivor, brings him back to his Jewish roots in Brooklyn. He discovers his dad was obsessed with a German guard living in the Midwest, whom he then tracks down for revenge.

I take the Reubens to the after-party at Cherie Cheri Beach, where **Courtney Love** explains to us that Sean's character is based on a friend of **Bono's**. They also meet co-stars **David Byrne** and **Judd Hirsch**, who plays the Nazi hunter. It's a bit overwhelming for non-pros, so we bolt to the Croisette for steak frites.

SATURDAY, MAY 21

Last lunch on the du Cap terrace, and Harvey Weinstein walks by to give Jane Fonda and the Reubens tickets to *The Artist*, his hottest film. Finally, a screening where we can wear jeans. Harvey introduces the film and warns me not to hype it. Okay. It's sensational. We end up at the famous Michelangelo in Antibes for pizza. The walls are covered with signed photos of international movie stars. Jane sits under a young **Al Pacino**, but swears to me it's not him. She talks about her new book, *Prime Time*, published in August, about love, health, sex, fitness and friendship. If she's so healthy, how come she doesn't recognize Al?

SUNDAY, MAY 22

Jane gets me a backstage pass to go with her to the closing night ceremonies at the Palais, where she introduces an award in perfect French. Kirsten Dunst wins best actress for *Melancholia* in spite of her director's Nazi comments. Famous French actor **Jean Dujardin** wins best actor for *The Artist*, a silent film by **Michel Hazanavicius**. Best director goes to *Nicolas Winding Refn* for FilmDistrict's brilliant but bloody *Drive*. His star, Ryan Gosling, grabs his face and plants a wet kiss on his lips. Best screenplay goes to writer/director **Joseph Cedar** for Sony Classics' *Footnote*. **Jonathan Sehring's** IFC Films *The Kid With a Bike* and *Polisse* **Maiwenn Le Besco** win awards, too. The big award of the night, the Palme d'Or, goes to Terrence Malick's epic visual poem, *The Tree of Life*, which took four years to shoot.

I have seen 14 movies that expand the imagination, mirror our society and convince us that cinema is the very best reason to visit Cannes. Twelve days of four of hours sleep a night leaves me in a state of total cinematic euphoria and social exhaustion. Next stop, the Venice Film Festival in September where Al Pacino's being honored—I'm already packed. And then there's always Telluride and Toronto . . . ♦

Check out Peggy Siegal's Cannes scoops online at www.avenueinsider.com



Jessica Chastain and Sean Penn



Sarah Jessica Parker



Charles Finch



Brooke Shields and Kenneth Cole



Harvey Weinstein and Franca Sozzani