

Photography

My father, Yul Brynner

As a new exhibition opens of the legendary late actor's intimate A-list snapshots, his daughter **VICTORIA BRYNNER** recalls growing up surrounded by the great and good of Hollywood

From an early age, I knew there was something special about my Dad. When he came to pick me up from my boarding school in Switzerland, the older girls got really excited. But in the early days, he was just this warm, funny guy I watched shave his face and head every day and who always took his porridge with a chunk of butter and salt.

I later found out he'd starred in *The Magnificent Seven* (1960), Cecil B DeMille's *The Ten Commandments* and *The King and I* (both 1956). This meant he had lots of famous friends, and he loved to photograph them: Elizabeth Taylor, Mia Farrow, Grace Kelly, Audrey Hepburn, Salvador Dalí, and Frank Sinatra, who Dad snapped in Palm Springs teaching my mother how to make a cocktail – one of my favourite pictures.

My Dad took shots around the world, although most of the ones of me were taken in Switzerland, where I was born in 1962 and raised. He took more than 8,000 pictures, from the 1950s through to the 1970s, of film stars in moments of downtime. Nobody else was doing it back then. My theory is that he'd always secretly wanted to be a director. Shortly after he died in 1985, his friend Karl Lagerfeld suggested I compile the photos into a book. I ended up with four volumes of *Yul Brynner: A Photographic Journey*, which

I've now turned into an exhibition. Today we tend to call these people 'celebrities', but I hardly ever saw them in that way. Audrey Hepburn, for instance, was my mum's best friend. She lived four blocks from our house and picked me up when I had my tonsils out.

Then there was Elizabeth Taylor, my godmother. She was so special, and nobody – man or woman – could resist her. Yet she was so unadorned and natural in her private life, and you can see that in Dad's pictures. She was very generous with presents. Every birthday, right up until last year when she gave me amazing white orchids, I'd get things like Hermès sweaters, Kelly bags and beautiful pieces of Loree Rodkin jewellery.

Richard Burton taught me to drive when he lived in Switzerland. I was in my teens and scared because the Swiss are strict about rules, even though I was on farm roads. I kept saying: 'But we're going to get caught!' and he'd boom: 'Of course we're not! I'm Richard Burton and you're Yul Brynner's daughter!'

My mum, Doris, was a stylish Chilean model and part of the set that included



ALL ABOUT YUL
Clockwise from far left: a 1956 self-portrait of Yul Brynner. His picture of Deborah Kerr on the set of *The King and I*. Elizabeth Taylor at her Hollywood home, shot by Brynner in 1959. His 1961 photo of Ingrid Bergman. Brynner's 1963 shot of his wife Doris Kleiner with Frank Sinatra



Dad snapped Frank Sinatra in Palm Springs teaching my mother how to make a cocktail – it's one of my favourite pictures

Marella Agnelli, Gloria Guinness and Lee Radziwill. She was very loyal to Balenciaga and mainly dressed in his clothes. It was a simple, fresh look: capri pants, flat shoes and great pieces of cashmere. Apparently, that was Dad's first present to my mum: a suitcase full of cashmere sweaters in different colours.

I was very close to my father. When I was a child, he'd take me off on crazy mystery car rides, where we'd set out to get lost. We'd laugh so much. We were together a lot until I was eight, when he split from my mum, his second wife. Transitions are never easy, but we made the best of it. I made friends with his third wife, Jacqueline Thion de la Chaume,

and also his fourth, a Malaysian ballerina called Kathy, who was in her twenties when they married, although my relationship with her wasn't easy at the end, when he was ill.

We had a house in Normandy, where Dad indulged his love of animals. He had a million bullfrogs, some penguins and a lot of pigeons. Serge Gainsbourg and Jane Birkin used to visit. Serge smoked a lot and wore white plimsoles, and I thought he was weird when I first met him. My Dad was Charlotte Gainsbourg's godfather, and I worked with her recently via my LA-based celebrity photo agency, Stardust Visions.

It's funny how you don't pay attention... You think your parents are going to last for ever. Dad went through a lot of pain at the end of his life, when he had lung cancer. But he was a very deep man. He'd studied philosophy in Paris, where Jean Cocteau was his best friend, and before he died at 65, he became a Buddhist. I remember some very good advice he gave me about heartache. He didn't believe in ruminating. He told me that a thought doesn't last that long. And if it does, you're making it last longer than you should. AS TOLD TO STEPHANIE THEOBALD □ *'Yul Brynner: A Photographic Journey' is at the Little Black Gallery, 13a Park Walk, London SW10 (www.thelittleblackgallery.com), until 11 February.*

PHOTOGRAPHS © ESTATE OF YUL BRYNNER; JAMIE MORGAN; MANOLO BLAHNIK. IMAGE COURTESY OF ADIDAS BY STELLA MCCARTNEY; PHOTOGRAPHER: GLEN LUCHFORD AT ART PARTNER; MODEL: LEO MIE AT PREMIER; GETTY IMAGES

Place

It's Bath time

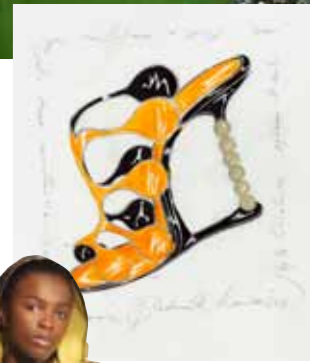
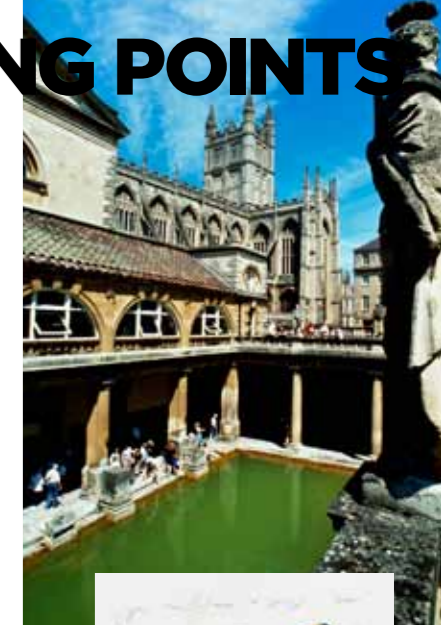
The elegant, ancient spa town has long been home to fashion leaders. Now a series of one-off events is celebrating its style credentials **BY IAIN R WEBB**

'adore Bath!' says shoe designer and resident Manolo Blahnik, echoing fashionista fans of the city reaching back to Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire – the Kate Moss of her day (played by Keira Knightley in *The Duchess*).

Bath's neoclassical splendour has always made it the natural home for peacocks and sartorial flair, and to highlight its stylish side, 'Bath in Fashion 2012' presents a series of events (talks, exhibitions and catwalk shows) from March, featuring, among others, Blahnik, Stephen Jones, Biba founder Barbara Hulanicki and Pearl Lowe (another local).

From February, the city's Fashion Museum taps into one of this season's key trends with 'Sport and Fashion', an exhibition showcasing sportswear-inspired designs from Stella McCartney, Victoria Beckham and Helmut Lang, along with an exclusive 'Buffalo' photography show dedicated to influential 1980s stylist Ray Petri.

'Bath in Fashion' (www.bathinfashion.co.uk) runs from 24 to 31 March. 'Sport and Fashion' is at the Fashion Museum (www.fashionmuseum.co.uk) from 4 February.



SPA QUALITY
From top: the Roman Baths in Bath. A sketch for a Manolo Blahnik shoe. A look from Adidas by Stella McCartney. A photograph styled by Ray Petri, shown in the exhibition 'Buffalo'

Bath ESSENTIALS

Browse the market every Saturday at **Walcot Street**, a treasure-trove of unique fashion, antiques and bric-a-brac, such as rare dresses by Ossie Clark. Nearby, scour for finds at vintage stores **Scarlet Vintage**, Queen Street (01225 338677), and **Black and White** on Broad Street (01225 789158). For fashion, **British Designers @ Fashion Capital** on Milsom Place (01225 489009) is great for labels including

PPQ, Jean-Pierre Braganza, Emma Cook and Felder Felder. Find literary respite at independent bookshop **Mr B's Emporium of Reading Delights** on John Street (01225 331155), which offers a rentable reading booth with leather chair and biscuit barrel. Take tea (and curative spa water) on the terrace of **The Pump Room**, Stall Street (01225 444477), overlooking the adjoining historic Roman Baths. Retire to your suite at

The Royal Crescent Hotel on Royal Crescent (01225 823333), before dining at **Olive Tree** on Russell Street (01225 447928), known for its fine produce, including sensational Cornish fish. If shopping tires you out, take a dip in the mineral-rich spring water at **Thermae Bath Spa** on Hot Bath Street (01225 331234), where the rooftop pool affords panoramic views. □ **For more things to do in Bath, visit harpersbazaar.co.uk**