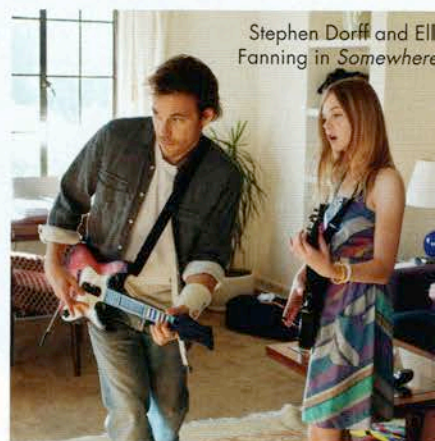


To the CHATEAU BORN

Sofia Coppola's new film, *Somewhere*, takes us behind the facade of the Hollywood lifestyle — and an iconic LA hotel. **BY RACHEL SHARP**



Stephen Dorff and Elle Fanning in *Somewhere*



A scene from the film at West Hollywood's iconic Chateau Marmont.

Wild parties, beautiful people, wealthy long-stay guests and scandalous behaviour: Los Angeles's most famous hotel has seen plenty of action over the decades, but never, thanks to strict privacy rules, a working film crew. That is, until Sofia Coppola decided to shoot her latest movie, *Somewhere*, on location at favourite A-List Hollywood hangout — the Chateau Marmont hotel on Sunset Boulevard.

The film is about a mega movie star Johnny Marco (Stephen Dorff) who lives at the hotel, filling his days and nights with parties, women and drugs until his young daughter from a failed marriage, Cleo (Elle Fanning, *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*) turns up on his doorstep, forcing him to take a cold, hard look at his carnal existence.

It has already won 39-year-old Coppola the Best Picture Golden Lion at the 2010 Venice International Film Festival and is whipping up a buzz in Oscars circles. Its almost fly-on-the-wall style shows the (sometimes surreal) realities of life for an insanely rich heartthrob — as well as life inside the Chateau, which has been home to a long list of real-life Hollywood stars through the years.

It was lucky for Coppola that the Chateau's owner, hotelier André Balazs (Uma Thurman's one-time consort, now dating former Australian prime minister Paul Keating's daughter Katherine), broke his usual rules to allow the crew to film on site; the Oscar-winning director admits she had no backup location.

"It had to be [the Chateau] — it was an essential element, the third [main] character in the movie," she says. "A lot of times, I don't have a plan B; I just have to find a way to make it work. Or then rethink the whole thing."

"I first came up with the main character of the actor and then I thought that of course this kind of bad-boy actor would live at the Chateau Marmont. Pretty much every actor stayed there at some point. I spent some time there myself and see many people there all the time ... The last time, I stayed in Helmut Newton's old room where he would live throughout the winter ... [The Chateau] is so iconic to LA and it really sort of is the centre of show business."

While Coppola says she prefers to make "personal films" informed by her life experiences, *Somewhere*, co-produced by her brother Roman, is only loosely a case of art imitating life.

"The character of Cleo was inspired by a friend's kid that age whose parents are in show business, but also by my memories of having a powerful father [director Francis Ford Coppola], who did things that were kind of out of the ordinary."

The not-so-far stretch between Stephen Dorff and his bad-boy character probably helped him too, she says. "When I was searching for this character, [Dorff] came to my mind and I liked that we haven't seen him in a million movies yet ... [He plays] a character doing movies that he is not necessarily proud of, which I guess Stephen can relate to. I also liked that ... he is known as the party guy who dates lots of girls. He

MAIN IMAGE: COURTESY OF LOUIS VUITTON. INTERVIEW BY SVEN SCHUMANN

WISH LIST

A few pieces of vintage glamour to add Chateau flair to your lair — from Josh & Louis leather chair in canary yellow to chinoiserie teacup and saucer by English fashion designer Jasper Conran.

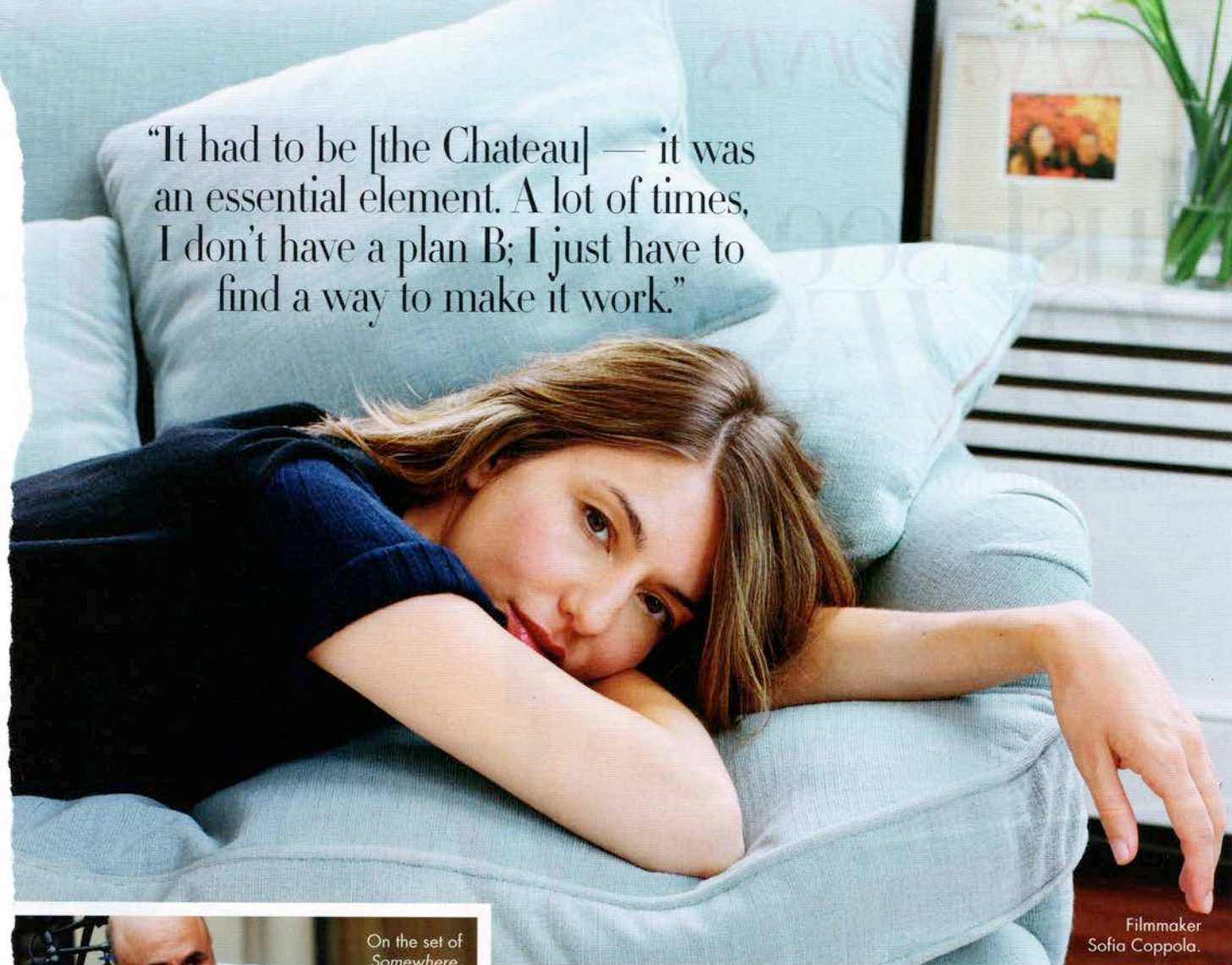


1 Jasper Conran teacup and saucer, \$175, 1300 852 022.



2 Roberts Revival radio, approximately \$345, from www.anthropologie.com.

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Filmmaker
Sofia Coppola.



On the set of
Somewhere.

was a good consultant when I asked him about stuff like that.

"I am interested in characters that are in a moment of transition," continues Coppola, who has climbed to the top of Hollywood in the past decades, starting with *The Virgin Suicides* in her twenties, followed by her Oscar-winning *Lost in Translation* and *Marie Antoinette* in her thirties. She studied fashion, and is a friend and frequent muse to designers, most notably Marc Jacobs. She also recently designed a capsule accessories line for Louis Vuitton. "When I lived in Paris after my daughter was born, I took some time off, so that was a fun creative project to take care of," she says of the

Vuitton collaboration. "I enjoy [fashion]. I love beautiful things in general."

Despite the acclaim, famous friends and awards, Coppola is refreshingly modest. "It was all really exciting, I was so surprised," she says of winning the Best Picture gong in Venice. "I have to say it was one of the more fun moments of my life." Does it live on the mantelpiece next to her Oscar? "No, it is actually at my family's company Zoetrope so all the people who worked on it can see it, too. My four-year-old daughter was actually quite excited about it but I think it had more to do with the fact that it was a golden lion," she concedes. ■

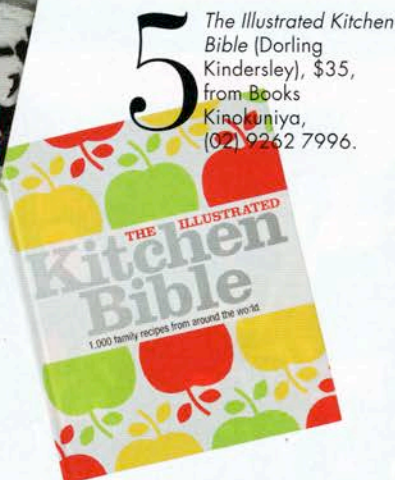
Somewhere is out December 26, 2010.



3 Glasses, \$65 for set of six, from Macleay on Manning, (02) 9331 4100.



4 i-D Covers 1980-2010 (Taschen), \$90, from Ariel Booksellers, (02) 9332 4581.



5 The Illustrated Kitchen Bible (Dorling Kindersley), \$35, from Books Kinokuniya, (02) 9262 7996.



6 Josh & Louis chair, \$3300, from Macleay on Manning, (02) 9331 4100.

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