

IRELAND'S CONSUMER MAGAZINE OF THE YEAR

IMAGE

APRIL 2008
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**ERASE AND
REWIND**
LATEST ANTI-AGEING GEMS

BODY
BEAUTIFUL

MEETING ELLE MACPHERSON

**SMART
SHOPPING**
THE IMAGE
BOUTIQUE GUIDE

BRILLIANTLY
BOOKISH
LIA MILLS ON WHY
WE LOVE READING



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COVER LOOK Photograph by Gabor Jurina. Styled by Susie Sheffman. Tan cotton halter-neck dress, €2,060; tan leather and stretch belt, €481; both Donna Karan. Straw Panama hat, Lola, €218 at www.brownsfashion.com. Multi-colour leather clutch, Mogil, €140 at Caru. Brown resin cuffs, stylist's own. Red China shell pearl beaded cuff, made to order, Ali Nash. For stockists, see page 226.

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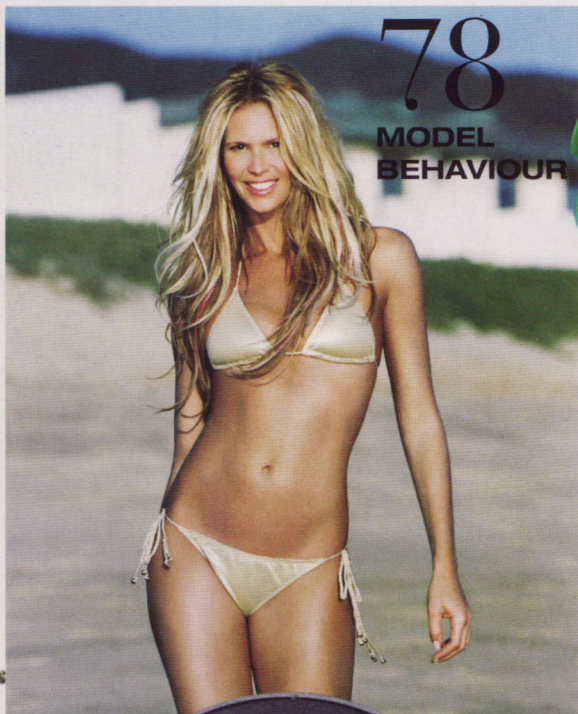
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BODY *of* EVIDENCE

Supermodel Elle Macpherson is 45 and just as beautiful as ever. DEIRDRE MULROONEY meets her in Dublin to talk love, life and the spaces in between. Photographs by JAMES HOUSTON.

“I’m just an Australian chick who is interested in lots of things,” says Elle “the body” Macpherson, in an upstairs room of Dermot O’Connor’s pristine new Santé Médispa on Dublin’s Baggot Street. It’s a bit surreal to have this icon’s chocolate brown eyes peering out at me from under that famous fringe on a rainy Dublin afternoon. From adorning the pages of *Sports Illustrated*, *Elle* magazine, *Playboy*, pin-up posters and calendars, to starring in movies, being Joey’s flatmate in *Friends* and, of course, running her own global lingerie brand, Elle Macpherson Intimates, I can’t help but wonder – what on earth is she doing here?

“We had a mutual friend, hypnotherapist Paul McKenna, and I read Dermot’s book [*The Healing Code*, which charts his journey from being diagnosed with MS, to healing himself through adopting a mind-body approach]. I just thought, wow, his philosophy and mine are really similar ... The combination of Eastern and Western medicine, beauty and health, is worth sharing. So often we focus on trying to look beautiful on the outside but forget that we need to enhance our lives from the inside.” O’Connor asked her if she would launch his Médispa and, *voilà*, here she is in her flat leopard-skin pumps, demure beige trousers and V-neck jumper, with a bo-ho jumble of bracelets piled high up her right arm. Yes, the long free-flowing hair, great skin, and happy, natural look are for real. But, beyond all that, I discover a woman who seems to embody all that a holistically empowered modern woman can be, with a well-thought-out world view to boot.

When her BlackBerry (on silent) goes off during our hour-long chat, she says: “I love working outside of the office.” Forget the pretty face (hard as that may be), this woman is an advertisement for time management – balancing life as astute businesswoman, natural beauty and single mother with grace and poise.

London-based, Elle organises her schedule around sons Flynn, ten, and Cy, five: “I have one week with my children, and then they spend one week with their father [handsome Swiss/French

multi-millionaire financier Arky Busson]. When I’m with them I don’t have a nanny. I don’t go out, I make them dinner, and basically am just with my children. I balance my life like that. When I work, I squeeze everything into a week, and then I don’t do anything for the week that I am with the boys.

“I tell them to look after their bodies the way they feel. They go to acupuncture. It’s really easy with children if we educate them, not from a ‘you can’t have it’ perspective, but ‘you can have anything you want, but how does that make you feel?’

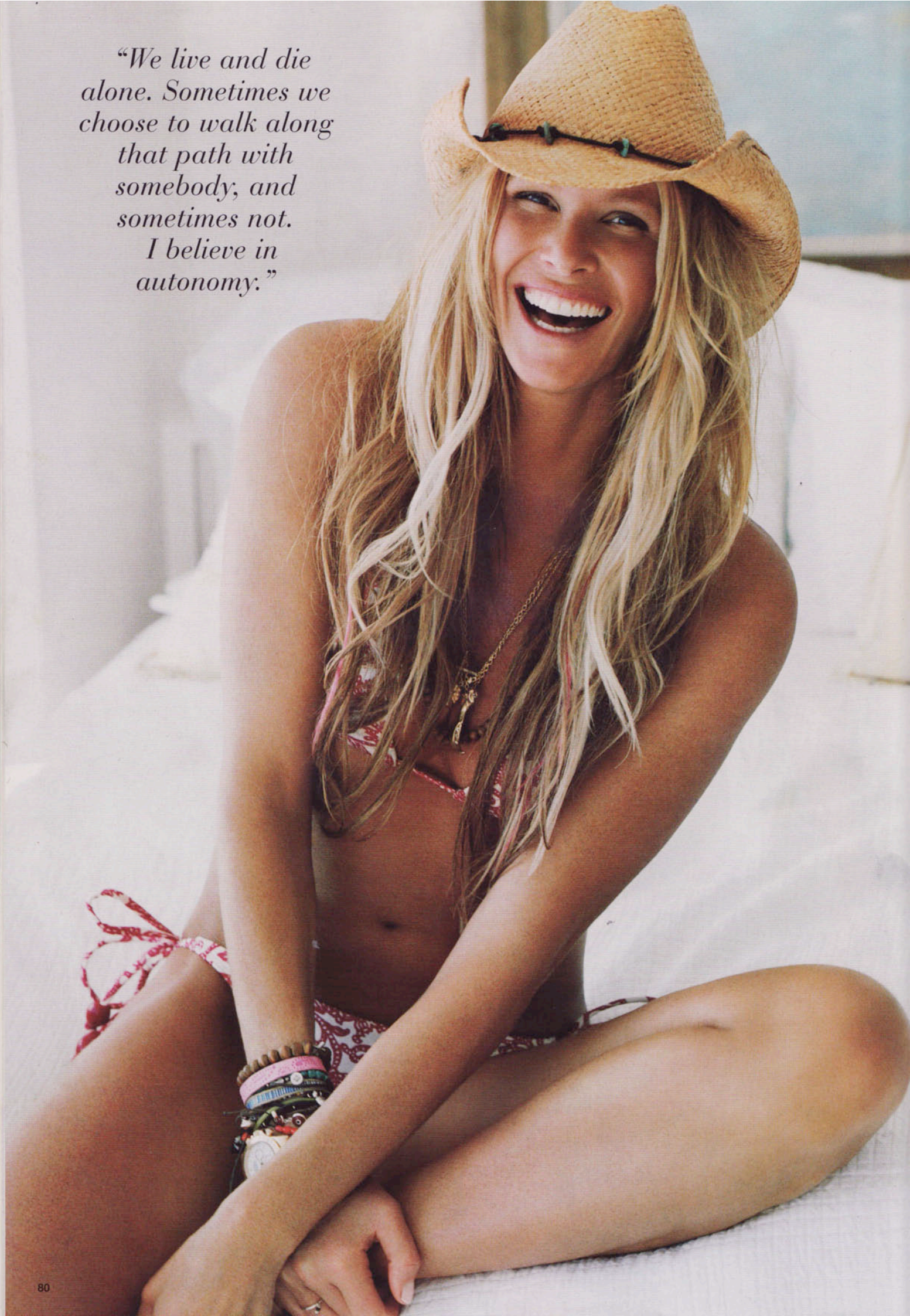
“That’s conscious parenting – actually being able to parent my children with wisdom. Simply because I’m 45, I’ve done a lot, experienced a lot, and I’ve gotten to know myself, to appreciate and respect myself, and to parent with more command, grace and love. Equally, my relationships with people are much more intriguing, interesting, and multi-layered, because I am older.

“To be in your forties is fantastic,” she says. “The best part of my life has been the last five years.” When Elle turned 40, she decided it was time to give up her reckless rock-chick lifestyle. She may now be “big into Eastern medicine – acupuncture, kinesiology, and homeopathy. I don’t put any chemicals in or on my body”, but it wasn’t always thus. “I have spent a life where I did drink, and smoke, and eat food that wasn’t organic. I’m not a virgin to all that. I just decided, when I turned 40, to live my life differently. I stopped running and started doing yoga; stopped eating meat, and started eating fish; then, just vegetables with a bit of fish from time to time. I have a much more relaxed approach to looking after myself.”

Interestingly, this paragon of beauty is single. No Bridget Jones, her rather refreshing attitude to being single later in life than society expects is “how fabulous! Someone said to me the other day, ‘How is your love-life?’ and I said, ‘I love life!’” That is not to say that relationship isn’t important to her: “I think coming from a heart space is incredibly important. Love in life is crucial. Love of self, first and foremost. We can get love from friends, from children, from the environment and, of course, a lover.” She has obviously given the



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topic a lot of thought, because this articulate Aussie, whose command of the English language got her into law school before her modelling career swept her away, doesn't have to pause for thought before spelling out her relationship philosophy: "Well, we are all sort of single. We live and die alone. We have our lives. Sometimes we choose to walk along that path with somebody, and sometimes not. I believe in autonomy. There is nothing worse than Tom Cruise's line to Renée Zellweger in *Jerry Maguire*: 'You complete me.'" Punching her right fist into her left palm to illustrate the exasperation this makes her feel, she elaborates: "I don't see why that's so romantic. No. I am fulfilled, I am complete and I am me, and I choose to walk with you for a while. Or forever. It doesn't really matter which."

Debunking the notion of the ideal man, Elle Macpherson has arrived at the conclusion that "it's more about opening up the heart space and saying, 'I am available to the perfect complement to where I am today'. Not 'It must be X, Y, Z.' It's more important to be in an open space than to define how that space should be filled."

More comfortable with the notion of Mr Right Now than of Mr Right, she asks herself: "Who is right now? They might not be always right forever. I had amazing relationships with people." Her relationships have been well-documented in the press. At 19, Elle married fashion photographer and creative director of *Elle* magazine, Gilles Bensimon. They split as her career began to hit the heights in 1989. Her other major relationship, with Arky Busson, lasted for many years. And there have been many more men.

Elle's daily programme

BREAKFAST Blueberries, a little yoghurt with a few spoonfuls of a flaxseed, sunflower seed and almond mix over the top. Herb tea with lemon, or Chinese tea for balancing "my chi"

LUNCH Vegetables **DINNER** Vegetables, or vegetables and fish **WATER** Three litres a day.

The occasional coffee **EXERCISE** "Bikram yoga, which I love, or Kundalini, which is about breathing. I'm not running at the moment, and haven't been for a while."

She took an equally organic, open approach to business opportunities long before any supermodel thought about synergising their fame. "When Bendon, the manufacturer of my lingerie, came to me 20 years ago, and asked me to be the face of their brand, I thought, I won't do that, but if you produce and manufacture a line of lingerie under my guidance and design, calling it Elle Macpherson Intimates, I'll just receive a royalty on the back end. They were a young company, didn't have a lot of cash, and would never have been able to afford my face if I had fronted the company. I got a chance to be creative, and the opportunity to build a business. But I did it innately."

Her involvement is very hands-on: "I design everything. I am creative director of the lingerie, the packaging, the advertising, the labels, the tags – I oversee the whole thing."

While she is non-plussed about the fashion world, lingerie appeals "because it's something you don't see. It's on the inside, and is really about the way you feel – much like this Médispa concept. I tend to think of the Eastern philosophy, which is, if you feel good and balanced, then it will show on the outside. Even if you are not particularly beautiful, it doesn't matter. We want to feel contented and at peace with ourselves."

She is definitely doing something right. Not only do women of all shapes and sizes find her lingerie flattering, but it is also well-priced, with knickers, for example, starting at €13, up to about €60. "I don't believe that feeling good should just be accessible to the rich. Everybody has the right to feel good. So I create products that are affordable, accessible, and deliver their promise. It's really important to me that everybody has the opportunity to experience enhancing their femininity."

She may be on the Australian rich-list, but Macpherson has learned that "money can only buy you so many clothes, jewels, cars, and make-up. Actually, it's really about what can I do to enhance my life from the inside?"

Meanwhile, displaying a rather healthy appetite, the six-foot-tall, fine-boned and slender-limbed model has practically wolfed down a big plate of sushi during our chat. While some top models go to extreme measures like not eating for three days in preparation for a shoot, it doesn't surprise me to hear, "I just turn up and, you know,

do it. I prepare myself mentally, not to try and do everybody else's job for them."

Her milieu is quite bohemian: "My friends are mainly artists: painters, writers, directors, actors, or musicians. Not because I think that is a glamorous business at all. Some of the most brilliant people are the most discreet, and I really like that."

The future? Expansion into the North American market; launch of a new range called Intuitive Beauty; maybe more acting if the right roles come up; and, who knows, whatever the universe brings her. If her unlikely presence here on Baggot Street is any indication, no possibility is too far-fetched ... ■



Elle on ... body products

and philosophy "Scrub, scrub, scrub; moisturise, moisturise, moisturise – with the Elle Macpherson body range, of course" ... **Botox, Endermology, cellulite treatments** "Nothing invasive" ... **her make-up essentials** "A little bit of concealer, powder and a streak of lip-gloss. I have three things in my make-up bag" ... **her preferred make-up brands** "MAC and Lancôme Juicy Tubes" ... **her favourite treatment** "Acupuncture, every two days, if I can. I don't do beauty treatments. I prefer 'wellness' treatments: iridology, diagnostic and balancing treatments" ... **her favourite jewellery** "Beads my son makes me" ... **her favourite designers** "Graeme Black does fantastic leathers and skins. I love Vivienne Westwood. I prefer English fashion to American, it's more rock 'n' roll" ... **where she stays** "I'm staying at the Dylan now, which is a fantastic boutique hotel. I really like it. But I prefer houses. I like to have my own space. I like the anonymity of a house" ... **her favourite city** "Sydney, Australia, because I'm Australian. I have a lot of kinship with Paris and New York. I like San Francisco" ... **current reading** "Noam Chomsky's *Hegemony or Survival*; Paul Auster's *Travels in the Scriptorium*; Mitch Albom's *The Five People You Meet in Heaven*" ... **visual artists** "I have quite an extensive collection of art and I'm still buying. I buy an important piece every year or so. I love Cy Twombly, Lucian Freud, Damien Hirst, Andy Warhol and Richard Prince."