

SWAY

ISABEL LUCAS ISN'T YOUR AVERAGE STARLET — SHE REGULARLY PUTS HERSELF IN THE FIRING LINE TO SAVE THE PLANET, AS EUGENIE KELLY DISCOVERS. PHOTOGRAPHED BY SIMON LEKIAS. STYLED BY CHRISTINE CENTENERA

Isabel Lucas wears **Viktor & Rolf** dress, made to order, price on application; on Lucas's left hand, from top: **Swarovski** ring, \$425; **Lester Brand** ring, \$9280. On Lucas's right hand, from top: **Cerrone** ring, \$13,000; **Lester Brand** rings, from left, \$7195 and \$7015.





Givenchy top, approximately \$1985, and skirt, approximately \$1429.

sabel Lucas may be an earthy type at heart, but as she spits pieces of grit out of her mouth and shields her eyes to protect herself from the sandstorm that's just shrouded our shoot on the windswept dunes of Kurnell, south of Sydney, you couldn't blame her for wishing she was somewhere a little less challenging.

When the shoot finally wraps, the jetlagged 24-year-old actor, whose body is still operating on Los Angeles time, heads straight to the airport with her mother, Beatrice. Their plan: to fly to Melbourne and drive up to the Yarra Valley, where her father has just finished building a cabin on a block of pristine wilderness.

Although clearly exhausted, she's still all Swiss milk gorgeousness — the flawless olive skin, the sun-kissed toffee hair piled in a messy knot, the piercing green eyes. Naturally you'd assume her quirky, pleasantly scruffy clothes would downplay her beauty, but if anything they have the opposite effect.

You'd peg Lucas in the serious fashionista category, right? After all, she was personally invited by Karl Lagerfeld to sit front row at his haute couture 2009 show. Judging by pap snaps, however, she's more at home in tie-dyed T-shirts and cut-off jeans, constantly photographed with the denim-clad cool kids who make up Hollywood's eco movement. Lucas has fast emerged as a key player on the scene — her speciality, ocean-based causes. Her highest-profile campaign to date involved her paddling into a "killing cove" in Taiji, Japan, last year with actor Hayden Panettiere and surfer David Rastovich "to create our own small ceremony to honour the lives of the dolphins and whales that had been slaughtered". ▶

Boss Black top, \$359;
Elery shorts, \$1200;
Burberry Prorsum boots,
\$1295; from left:
Swarovski ring, \$425;
Lester Brand rings, from left,
\$7015 and \$7195.

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Dion Lee dress, \$1980.
Beauty note: L'Oréal
Paris Glow Minerals
Illuminating Powder.

"[I WAS] OBSESSED WITH HORSE FILMS AS A KID. I KNEW PRACTICALLY EVERY LINE FROM THE MAN FROM SNOWY RIVER."

The footage was beamed around the world and there is still an outstanding warrant for her arrest in Japan, but Lucas is adamant the drama was worth it. "I attended the *Transformers 2* premiere in Tokyo in June and I was fine. We just flew into Osaka — no problems at all," she dismisses.

Her passion for ocean causes extends to issues closer to home, too, and has seen her lend her celebrity weight to efforts to establish an officially protected marine park in Queensland's Coral Sea. "My dad was a pilot and we moved from Melbourne to Cairns when I was 10, so we'd often go out to the Barrier Reef," she says. "The reef and the Coral Sea are two separate areas, but the reef I remember, with colourful coral and teeming with fish, is so different to how it is today."

Lucas is obviously well-read on her causes, and spills facts like a Wikipedia page. "Ninety per cent of our oceans have been depleted of their large-growing fish, like tuna and marlin, over the past 50 years," she explains. "[The situation] is not irreparable, but we're getting close to it. They need to be given a large space to breed and replenish — that's why they need this large [ocean] space."

"[Federal Environment Minister] Peter Garrett has announced that the Coral Sea is a conservation zone, but it still means commercial fishing, mining, oil and gas exploration — any kind of extraction — can happen. We want to make it a no-go zone, a fully protected space. At a million square kilometres, this would

be the biggest marine park in the world."

The *Transformers* star might bring a fresh glamour to the science-heavy world of marine conservation, but she's not alone in her group of celeb friends.

"My circle — Adge, Gerard Butler, Kenna, Dave Rasta [Rastovich], Hannah Mermaid — they're all innovative and active regarding issues and causes ..." [Adge is her ex-boyfriend, *Entourage* star Adrian Grenier, who split with Lucas in July 2008 after she was involved in a car crash with actor Shia LaBeouf.]

"I'm still great friends with Adge, and he's seeing a nice girl now who's a photographer," she says.

And how does Gerard Butler, now increasingly known for his fondness for partying and beautiful women, fit into the social spectrum? "He's really funny," she sighs, referencing his spiritual rather than social exploits when she describes him. "He travels to India a lot — he does trips to spiritual places there and is friends with Deepak Chopra."

Kenna Zemedkun is the Ethiopian-born American musician responsible for pulling together the likes of Jessica Biel, rapper Lupe Fiasco and Lucas to climb Mount Kilimanjaro for Summit on the Summit, an initiative to raise awareness of the billion people worldwide with no access to clean drinking water.

Tanzania is a long way from her early acting days playing Tasha Andrews on *Home and Away*, dating her co-star Chris Hemsworth (whose brother, Liam, is now dating teen superstar Miley Cyrus) and scoring a Logie in 2004 for Best New

Talent. In 2006, she packed her bags for Hollywood, appearing in commercials until she caught international attention as Alice in the blockbuster *Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen*. She comes across as well-read and cerebral, so how did she cope playing a creature with a 10-metre tongue and "scanning tentacles"? "Nina, my sister, thought it was really funny that I did it, but Alice was a new and fun character for me," she says.

"Nina's my best friend, 18 months older and an arts/law graduate. The two of us were obsessed with horse films as kids. *The Silver Brumby*, *Black Beauty*, *National Velvet*. We knew practically every line from *The Man from Snowy River*."

From special-effects wizardry and explosions to a challenging independent project such as *Kin* (a film to be released in 2010 in which she plays a Russian woman desperate to stay in Australia), Lucas is content as long as she gets to experience different genres. "I just finished shooting *Red Dawn*, a remake of a 1984 film that starred Patrick Swayze. Connor [Tom Cruise's 15-year-old son] is in it — he's a very enthusiastic teenager. Very cool." In a full-circle twist, her ex Chris Hemsworth also stars in the film.

Cruise isn't the only big name she can drop. "In April *The Pacific* comes out. It's a 10-part series produced by Spielberg and Tom Hanks. It's kind of like *Band of Brothers*." And then there's the just-released vampire thriller *Daybreakers*, in which Lucas plays one of the world's last living humans, co-starring with Ethan Hawke, Willem Dafoe and Sam Neill. "We shot it long before *Twilight*," she insists. "Everyone seems to be obsessed with vampires these days."

Shooting at home in Australia is a rare bonus for Lucas now, and although she enjoys living in LA's Silver Lake with her friend, actor Ali Williams, Lucas says life in California is just "a transitional phase. I'd love to live in New York. I'd love to live in Barcelona. But maybe Melbourne is where I'll eventually settle."

Until then, she's happy to embrace a nomadic existence, walking the green carpet and lending a little star wattage to the latest crusade wherever she can. Wearing Birkenstocks perhaps. And if there's one person who would ever persuade us to don a pair instead of Louboutins, it may just be Lucas.

For information on the *Protect Our Coral Sea* campaign, visit www.protectourcoralsea.org.au. ■

Jasmine Di Milo dress, approximately \$12,974; Kiriily Johnston top, \$380; from left: Cerrone ring, \$14,100; Swarovski ring, \$285. In this portfolio: hair by Sophie Roberts at 2c Management; makeup by Jody Oliver at DLM. See Buylines for details and stockists.

