



PORTOFINO

Step into the magical world of Portofino...



PHOTOS BY PETER LINDBERGH

THE GOOD LIFE

Peter Lindbergh evokes the spirit of la dolce vita in a star-studded photo shoot set in Portofino, Italy, to mark the relaunch of IWC's classically elegant Portofino watch collection. Last spring, the storied Mediterranean port reclaimed the glamour of its heyday with a dynamic cast of characters fittingly chased by paparazzi.

| By Laurie Kahle |

Time moves at a gentler pace in Portofino. The Mediterranean fishing village in the heart of the Italian Riviera has long been a favorite playground of the glitterati—actors, writers, musicians, artists, athletes and aesthetes. Since 1889, when the French author Guy de Maupassant sailed into the tranquil cove, Portofino has attracted those seeking to immerse themselves in beauty and a relaxed lifestyle. “Never have I felt the way I did when I walked into that green indefiniteness, with such a sense of peace and fulfillment,” he wrote of discovering Portofino. While the yachts in the harbor have changed considerably over the decades since, the town’s verdant tree-lined cliffs, terracotta-shaded houses and sapphire waters are preserved in a virtual time capsule. In the Fifties, Portofino lit up with the visits of high-wattage luminaries including Clark Gable, Ingrid Bergman and opera diva Maria Callas. In the 1960s, swarming paparazzi did little to discourage Elizabeth Taylor, Richard Burton, and Audrey Hepburn from strolling through the Piazza Martiri dell’Olivetta, better known as the Piazzetta.

The fun-loving spirit of la dolce vita is precisely what legendary photographer Peter Lindbergh sought to capture in a series of black-and-white photographs taken last summer with an international cast that included actors Cate Blanchett, Kevin Spacey, Jean Reno, Eric Dane, Hiroyuki Sanada, Mark Forster, Tim Jeffries and Matthew Fox, model Elle Macpherson, sports champions Boris Becker, Luís Figo and Zinedine Zidane, as well as singer Ronan Keating. “This was the sort of shoot I became a photographer for,” wrote Lindbergh in the book about the production. “The sort of shoot I dreamed of as a teenager.”

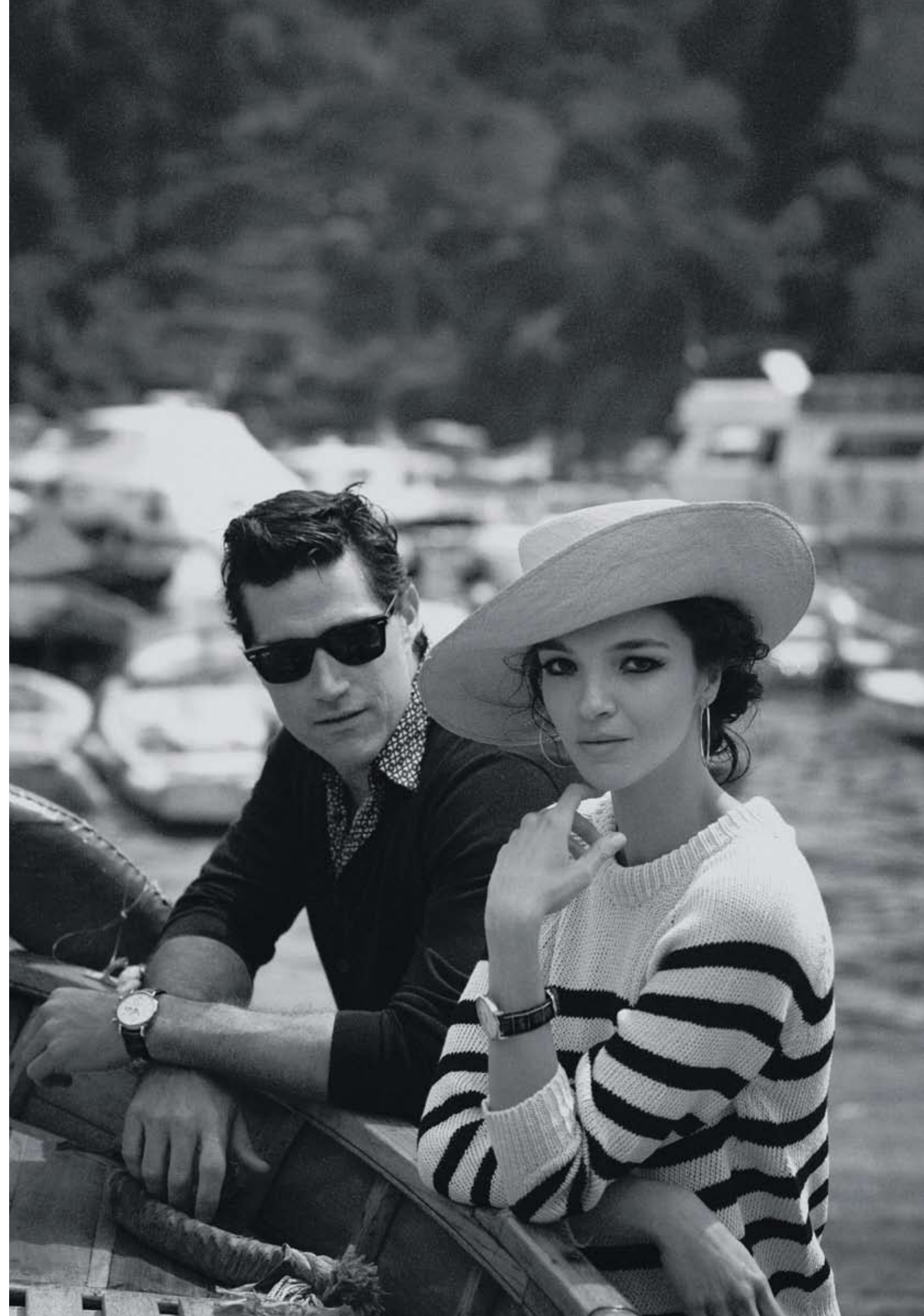
While they hail from different countries and backgrounds, the stars of “Peter Lindbergh’s Portofino” all share an affinity for Swiss watchmaker IWC, which has relaunched its classic, entry-level Portofino collection with four new models: Portofino Automatic, Portofino Chronograph, Portofino Dual Time and Portofino Hand-Wound Eight Days. “The watches are designed a little in the style of the ’50s and ’60s—they are not vintage, but they have a touch of discretion and elegance,” said IWC’s CEO Georges Kern at the brand’s A Night in Portofino party in Geneva, where the images were unveiled last January. “We wanted to recreate the real glamour of the Fifties and Sixties, which is much more upscale, much more real, and much more genuine than what we live today.”

For three days, the cast worked under moody gray skies from the ultra-luxurious base of the Hotel Splendido, a former medieval monastery perched





“When I sit by the harbor at Portofino, time seems to stand still.” — Peter Lindbergh



on a cliff overlooking Portofino's crescent-shaped harbor and Tigullio Bay. Lindbergh's concept was to portray a behind-the-scenes perspective of a film set. "With this kind of shooting, the whole soul is backstage more than onstage," he explained last winter at Geneva's La Reserve, his lively blue eyes sparkling behind wire-rimmed glasses. "I always like the backstage part better. You get all the people there like a movie is going on and offer a look between the scenes. There is a shot plan, but this kind of shoot is very improvised—everyone is friendly and real."

Cate Blanchett and Kevin Spacey relished the chance to channel their screen idols, who previously had worked and played in Portofino. While Blanchett imagined Elizabeth Taylor eating ice cream and Ingrid Bergman sipping champagne, Spacey thought of Bogey. "Humphrey Bogart made 'Barefoot Contessa' in Portofino," he said. "It was a thrill to be walking in the footsteps of Bogey."

Actor Eric Dane, who made his first trip to Portofino with his wife and baby daughter for the project, was charmed by the town's retro vibe. "It's really a special place, it's kind of suspended in another time—as if everything stopped in 1950-something," he said. Dane, a laid-back heartthrob who plays Dr. Mark Sloan on "Grey's Anatomy," particularly took note of Lindbergh's trademark subtle style. "He is so

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easy to work with and be around," explained Dane. "I usually don't like to do still shots, standing in front of a camera and posing. Peter loosens you up real quick, and you barely notice he's there. We were just having conversations with each other, and letting Peter do his thing."

One of Lindbergh's many gifts is his ability to perceive and capture the essence of his subjects. For example, he mentions that he is close friends with French actor Jean Reno. "I want to shoot how Jean really looks," explained Lindbergh. "There is a moment when you are looking through the camera when he looks like he really looks, and you capture part of what you know about him."

With so much star power in one spot, it wasn't long before the paparazzi showed up in force. Yet, given the pretense of the shoot, their presence naturally became part of the production. Lindbergh relayed how they were shooting in the town's piazza when a scuffle broke out among the photographers. "All the paparazzi started screaming," he recalled. "Then Zidane walked over into the middle of it, went up to the guy who was screaming the loudest and got right in his face. Very calmly and softly, with a toothpick in his mouth, he said, 'It's not nice to scream. You shouldn't scream like that.' The guy just froze and became very quiet."

To epitomize the Italian films of the La Dolce Vita era, of which Lindbergh is a fan, he staged a group shot around a tiny vintage Fiat 500 convertible. The image is one of his favorites in the portfolio of dozens of photos that will be exhibited in Milan, Los Angeles, London, Dubai, Hong Kong and Cannes this year.

When the shooting was complete, the cast celebrated with a wrap party at Hotel Splendido, where the bartender mixed the last bellinis under black-and-white photos of screen legends who frequented the hotel in days gone by. "Time moves on," writes Lindbergh in his introduction to the photo essay. "Only in Portofino does it stand still."





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