

LOOK SHARP

HOW ANDREA RISEBOROUGH TOOK ON THE IRON LADY, HOOKED UP WITH MADONNA AND DECIDED PARIS IS THE PLACE

Words **MATT MUELLER** Photographer **AJ NUMAN**
Fashion Editor **JULIA SARR-JAMOIS**

The minute Andrea Riseborough graduated from RADA in 2005, she was anointed “One to watch”, landing her first three TV jobs while still a student. Since then, she’s done her alma mater proud, winning the 2006 Ian Charleson Award (for exceptional performances by British actors under 30) for her epic double-bill turn in Sir Peter Hall’s productions of *Measure For Measure* and *Miss Julie*, and making an unforgettable impression with her acutely clever take on the young Margaret Thatcher in BBC Four’s 2008 TV biopic *The Long Walk to Finchley*.

Blessed with an uncanny facility for sharp-eyed character detail, Riseborough is now getting to flaunt it on the big screen. She is following up smallish parts in the Brit-star-studded adaptation of Kazuo Ishiguro’s dystopian novel *Never Let Me Go* and real-life crowd-pleaser *Made in Dagenham* with the two biggest film roles of her career: waitress Rose in a 1960s updating of Graham Greene’s classic *Brighton Rock* and British royal family scourge Wallace Simpson in Madonna’s second directorial outing, *W.E.*

When *Wonderland* meets her at London’s Groucho club, the petite, bird-like actress looks in danger of being swallowed whole by her winter wardrobe, bedecked as she is with thrift-shop jewellery, vintage fashions (and a shimmering green Aquascutum raincoat). She would appear frail if it weren’t for her astute, voracious intellect (she’s always got five books on the go). Riseborough, it transpires, knows her mind and isn’t afraid to speak it.

You seem to move around a lot. Weren’t you in LA for a while?

For the past two years, yeah, but I haven’t really been there. I lived in New York this year, too [doing off-Broadway play *The Pride*]. And I spend a lot of the time of the year in Idaho, which is where my partner Joe’s [Appel, American street artist] family are from. But I am moving to Paris.

How come?

It is purely fuelled by wanting a home. You mustn’t let life slip by because you’re available for everyone all the time. The thing that I love doing is reflecting on life – if I can’t enjoy it myself, then I’m fucked. I’m not sure what Paris will hold for me. If it doesn’t work out, I’ll move somewhere else.

Rose in Brighton Rock is a wallflower, but also strong and tenacious. Was she tricky to play?

This is always a difficult question to answer. Because what you’re asking me is, is what I do easy? With Rose, I just had an immediate response. She is not the centre of her own world and the importance of her happiness isn’t particularly pivotal in terms of her existence. But nor is she a victim. She’s the strength. She has all the bravery of someone who’s in love for the first time.

Have your parents always been supportive of your path?

Totally. My parents aren’t people who have fear of not succeeding. I suppose I only realise that by saying it to you now. There were times when we had a lot and times when we didn’t but they wouldn’t let that impede them and didn’t pass that on to me.

Cardigan and striped top by MARGARET HOWELL, blue skirt by PRADA





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That must help in an insecure profession.

Is it more than any other? I've never worried about it because I don't feel like I can't survive if I don't have nice things.

You seem to like nice things ... you're dressed very fashionably today.

Thanks, although it's slightly different when I tell you where everything's from. This top is my best friend's grandma's from 1960. We've had it for years – most of our clothes are recycled. I think my fashion sense is just a case of putting lots of colours that don't go together together and then people thinking it's quite chic afterwards. [Laughs] I like my clothes to be old friends.

Talking of dressing up, how was it playing Wallace Simpson?

It's funny, I know she was such a style icon but that's probably the furthest away thing in my mind. To me, the clothes and jewellery were just an outlet for her perfectionism ... I did get to wear her jewels in the film. I had six bodyguards following me all the time, even when I had a wee. And Galliano did the costumes. I wear 72 different dresses – the aesthetic is insane. But for me the interesting thing is, Who the hell was she behind all of that? She was so demonised, thought to be ugly, called a man ...

You really vanish into your characters so we can't wait to see what you do with Wallace. Do you ever get fed up being called a chameleon, though?

All I can say is that it fulfils me to really explore people. I would get quite bored otherwise.

Tweed jacket by HUNTSMAN, grey cashmere poloneck by HOUSE OF CASHMERE, trousers by MARGARET HOWELL, socks by FALKE, boots by PURDEY. Left: White shirt by D&G, green leather skirt by CHRISTOPHER KANE, brogues by RUSSELL&BROMLEY, socks by FALKE. Hair MAARIT AT D+V, Make-Up NATSUMI WATANABE at CAREN using GIVENCHY, Fashion Assistance FRANCESCA PRUDENTE, Photographic Assistance ROBERT OUTCH, Digital KLAUS BLUMENRATH, Retouching KASIA KRET at HAPPY FINISH, Set Design VINCENT OLIVIERI, Special Thanks PROLIGHTING