



NOT FADE AWAY

Fifty years ago, the Rolling Stones were photographed by a young Linda Eastman as they partied in New York to celebrate their appearance on the June 1966 cover of Town & Country. Catriona Gray retraces the story of a photoshoot that defined an era

Brian Jones, Mick Jagger and Keith Richards aboard the *Sea Panther* on the Hudson River in 1966, photographed by Linda McCartney (at the time Linda Eastman)

Sometimes a photograph both encapsulates a moment in time and resonates for decades to come. When the Rolling Stones appeared on the cover of *Town & Country* 50 years ago this June, it not only marked the beginning of their transformation from long-haired rebels to members of the new establishment, but also illustrated how the revolutionary influence of pop culture was disrupting American society.

The man behind the shoot was the New York photographer Jerry Schatzberg, whose connections with the in-crowd ranged from Park Lane Princesses to avant-garde artists. Having been told by David Bailey that he 'needed to meet this new English band', Schatzberg was introduced to the Stones on a trip to England in 1963. When the group first arrived in New York the following year, he threw a party for them, which was co-hosted by a young Nicky Haslam and Andy Warhol's protégée 'Baby' Jane Holzer.

'We had 4,000 people in my studio – when they all started dancing, you could see the floor bouncing up and down,' Schatzberg recalls. One of the guests, Tom Wolfe, was so impressed by the party that he made it a central part of his essay 'Girl of the Year', in which Holzer excitedly describes the Stones as 'pure sex'.

Schatzberg realised then that juxtaposing America's richest young women with the raw, classless attraction of the Rolling Stones might make a compelling premise for a *Town & Country* cover story, and set up the shoot to accompany an eight-page feature that paired debutantes with their male idols. 'Earlier on that year, I'd shot the Stones in drag for the [US] cover of the single "Have You Seen Your Mother, Baby, Standing in the Shadow?" he says, 'so I knew that they'd be perfect, as they exuded so much energy.'

Pictured alongside the Stones, beneath the coverline 'Sex and the deb', was the 16-year-old Alexandra Chace, now an artist living in rural Italy, who had surreptitiously taken the day off from her Upper East Side private girls' school to participate. 'I was crazy about rock 'n' roll,' she says today. 'The interview says that I loved ballroom dancing, but that wasn't really true.' Of the shoot itself, she remembers that 'it felt like we were taking a class picture, except that I had an enormous quantity of tissue paper stuffed down the front of my dress to make it fit properly. At one point, Mick Jagger peered over my shoulder and spotted it. And Brian Jones offered me a fag, but I had no idea what he was referring to. When the June issue came out it was huge. One of the girls in my school actually asked for my autograph just because I'd had my photo taken with the Stones.' The rapturous reception reflected the change in the zeitgeist; the liberalism of the decade was infiltrating even the traditional world of New York's elite.



The June 1966 cover of *Town & Country*

Although it was Chace who made the cover, one of the other deb's in the photoshoot already knew the Stones. Christina Berlin was not only employed at *Town & Country* but her father was the CEO of its publisher, Hearst. At the time, her sister Brigid Berlin was one of Andy Warhol's favourite superstars (coincidentally, Warhol also posed inside the magazine for the same feature), who had appeared in his iconic film *Chelsea Girls*.

Several days after the issue was published, the Stones organised a boat trip around Manhattan to promote their new album *Aftermath*. *Town & Country* duly received a pair of invitations: Christina Berlin went along, accompanied by the magazine's receptionist, an aspiring photographer named Linda Eastman. So many other guests arrived that it was decided that all the photographers should be left behind. Eastman, who had brought her camera, charmed her way onboard and made a bee-line for the band. 'The Stones were notorious for being unco-operative with photographers, but they did everything Linda asked,' says the biographer Philip Norman, who has written several books

on the band. 'She had a funny quality – you couldn't call her conventionally beautiful, but she had an aura that made people assume she was part of New York's aristocracy. She came across as carefree, yet very WASP-y.' Later that night, Eastman ended up at a party with the Stones, where Mick Jagger asked her out on a date.

The details of what exactly happened between Eastman and Jagger remain a mystery, but her photographs of the Stones aboard the *Sea Panther* – the only visual records of that much-written-about voyage – launched her career. In her 1992 book *Linda McCartney's Sixties*, she noted that 'Mick was very aware of being photographed, even when he was doing apparently casual things

like chewing the arm of his sunglasses. Charlie Watts, on the other hand, couldn't be bothered to pose and spent most of the time quietly sitting at the stern of the boat. Brian had an incredibly sea-worthy face, and it was this shot of him lolling back with his legs apart that, 12 months later, caught the eye of Brian Epstein and led to my first meeting with the Beatles.'

This remarkable chain of events enabled her to become a professional photographer, known for her images of rock 'n' roll's celebrities; it also, of course, introduced her to Paul McCartney, her future husband. As Eastman concluded: 'That one afternoon was to set the course of my life.' Thus, the ripples of that *Town & Country* shoot and that day on the Hudson River can still be felt half a century later. Not only did it consolidate the fame of the Rolling Stones, it illustrated the social change of a revolutionary decade whose cultural legacy lives on today. □



Above: Keith Richards, Mick Jagger and Brian Jones

Christina Berlin, Jagger and Linda McCartney (then Eastman)



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