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SEPTEMBER 2011

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Jonathan Becker & Kate Young

T&C IS A SECOND home for Jonathan Becker, who cut his teeth here as a protégé of legendary photographer Slim Aarons in the 1980s, under Frank Zachary's tutelage. The magazine is honored to have him revisit its pages with this month's cover story, "Surviving Hemingway" (page 110). "There was something bittersweet about photographing Hemingway's robustly healthy descendants on the very anniversary of his suicide," says Becker (in baseball cap), a *Vanity Fair* contributing photographer, of his experience with Mariel Hemingway and Langley Crisman. "One imagined a certain presence in the spectacular Idaho sky." Stylist Kate Young (in sunglasses) was also impressed by the Sun Valley setting. "Idaho is breathtakingly beautiful," she says. "As we were shooting the cover, the sun was setting behind the mountains, and it was magical." Young has worked for *Vogue* and *Interview*. At right is Hemingway's boyfriend, Bobby Williams.



Marcia DeSanctis

IN THIS MONTH'S Social Graces column (page 106), the writer examines the distinction between European and American reactions to sex scandals. "Writing this piece was a great chance to explore my own opinions about men, sex, and power," she says. "As Americans, we love to reveal our public figures to be as sex-obsessed and confused as the rest of us, and yet with each revelation we get so predictably disappointed, as if infidelity is some new social dysfunction. History shows us there's nothing new in any of this. But you have to wonder if Reverend Dimmesdale would have stayed silent for so long if there had been an e-mail record of his indiscretion with Hester Prynne." DeSanctis, whose writing has appeared in *The Best Travel Writing 2011* and *Vogue*, lives in Connecticut with her husband, sculptor Mark Mennin (whose work she is sitting on), and family.

Nell Casey

THE WRITER EXPLORES the Hemingway legacy in "Surviving Hemingway" (page 110). "Bypassing the talent that has come down the line, this 'legacy' is often described as a curse, since mental illness, alcoholism, and suicide run through their history," Casey says. "I found it amazing to revisit the Hemingway family two and three generations after they were first thrust into the spotlight in this way—to talk to Ernest Hemingway's granddaughter Mariel and his great-granddaughter Langley Crisman about their take on it. They weren't given to dark mythologizing about their family. They've moved past the unhappiness that once held the family in its grip, and yet they're still respectful and aware of their powerful heritage." Casey lives in Brooklyn with her husband and two children. She has also written for *Slate* and the *New York Times* and is the editor of *The Journals of Spalding Gray*, out next month from Knopf.



Gully Wells

IN HER STORY "SCENTS OF Time" (page 146), Gully Wells writes about the perfumes that have changed her life. She revisited favorite scents to help bring back key memories she needed to access while writing her recently published memoir, *The House in France*. "Each phase of my life could be represented by a different perfume," she says. "Scent is an essential part of conjuring up your past, and it makes writing a book about your past both easier and more pleasurable." Wells, a features editor at *Condé Nast Traveler*, lives in Brooklyn with her husband and children.



In Defense of European Men

American men are no better than their European counterparts at sticking to sexual austerity plans. Why is it that Old World reprobates survive (and even thrive) in the wake of scandals, while the Yanks Twitter in shame? BY MARCIA DESANCTIS



**LE DEJEUNER
SUR L'HERBE**
The ideal
European business
lunch?

“WATCH OUT FOR THE MEN,” THE travel agent cautioned before I left for Greece. I was 12 and already five-foot-nine, with all the curves of a tent pole. It was my first-ever trip to Europe. And as my mother and I shopped for a gold charm on Crete, a passing man called out, “How much for you and your sister?” My mother thought it was hilarious. I was thoroughly repulsed.

It was years before I returned to Greece. By then I understood—as my mother surely did—that the man wasn’t calling dibs on my virginity. He was flattering *her*. And it was expected of him. The Greeks enjoy sending the puritans home with an anecdote. But I brought back a suitcase full of preconceptions about European men. Basically, I thought they were creeps.

It took a few years and a few men to understand that, despite any apparent American restraint, European men and their U.S. counterparts shared the same obsessions.

When I moved to Europe in my twenties I learned to step down from the moral soapbox. From my Paris apartment I watched first Clarence Thomas and then Bill Clinton in the hot seat. Meanwhile François Mitterrand, swordsman-in-chief of France, tended to his second family and many mistresses on state time.

Silvio Berlusconi of Italy and Dominique Strauss-Kahn are alleged to be satyrs of the highest order. Over here, DSK made colorful copy as a man accused of a grotesque crime. He embodied all that we find threatening and even cliché in the European male: the combination of lasciviousness and bravado. Although it appears at press time that DSK will escape from New York without a guilty verdict, American indignation will rightly continue as he faces more sexual

assault charges back home. But it’s time we recognize that our own national manhood (and womanhood—adulterers need adulterees. But that’s for another column) can be equally erring and debauched. It will remain so, despite the torment that seems to follow the ritual repentance of every busted politician, athlete, or celebrity.

We deride Italians as unfaithful Casanovas and Frenchmen as ceaseless lotharios, but perhaps we just envy how guiltlessly they go about their depravity. I don’t mean accused rapists such as DSK, with

documented patterns of aggressive behavior toward women. I mean regular men. Years ago I interviewed a powerful Frenchman in his office about his famously gorgeous girlfriend. It took 30 seconds before he whipped out something (metaphorically, of course)

As my mother and I shopped in Crete, a man called out, “How much for you and your sister?”

from the born seducer's tool kit. "What a beautiful skirt," he lied. By Paris standards it was unremarkable, and he knew it. But being French, and a man, he left the door of possibility slightly ajar. I sensed he'd done this before.

As a journalist I interviewed many similar men. It often distracted from my work, and in that sense these exchanges could be unpleasant. One feels great compassion for French women who, following DSK's arrest in New York, were finally inspired to confront male bosses whose flirting verges on coercion, something we American lasses have felt emboldened to do for decades. Nevertheless, with this Frenchman I fortunately felt no menace, nor did he appear in the mood for romance. What seemed so French was his acknowledgment that as long as men and women roam this earth, there will be tension between them, even if the man is a public figure, married, or living with a beautiful actress. Sexual chemistry—when it's there—can seem like a tactile, living, breathing entity. The tendency of the European male is to recognize and nurture it, play with the possibilities, come what may.

One could consider these men to be philandering old goats. But you can't help wondering about the American man, culturally programmed for disgrace when pent-up desires surface. Because when they do, he has to face the cameras and wear the confessional hair shirt, just like the latest lettermen on our varsity lecher team: Schwarzenegger, Weiner, Edwards, Spitzer, and Sanford.

"Of course, it's not good to cheat on your wife," a French friend, a middle-aged man, tells me over coffee. "But why do American men always have to apologize and bring God into the conversation?"

We expect a little less shame from the European male. (Raise your hand if you were disappointed when Hugh Grant did the PR machine career-save on Jay Leno after he picked up Divine Brown on a Hollywood street corner.) And yet, at the same time, we castigate them for brazenness, as if

we have some moral leg up.

Anton Chekhov had another take on it, and it may be the reason he's the genius bard of adultery, European-style. In "Lady with Lapdog," the cheating Gurov is not untormented by his affair, but he revels in his double life and the rekindling of desire. He believes that every man's most truthful life is under cover of secrecy, and the rest is a lie. This predates the days when a coward could drunk-dial the object of his lust, and of course long before Twitter, which works at the speed of nerve endings and, hence, has confused everything.

But this could be the crux of the matter, and the reason we judge the European male for being so unapologetically who he is. It insults our sweeping belief in "goodness" and all the American optimism the term implies. We forget that whether it's the French, the Italians, or a Queens congressman, there is darkness—and desire—in the depths of every heart.

"The deliberate consciousness of Americans so fair and smooth spoken, and the under-consciousness so devilish!" wrote D.H. Lawrence, who knew a few things about moral piety and also understood America's deep puritanical roots, so at odds with earthly passions.

Through a century of wars, the world has admired America for embodying all that is right and good about a free society. But perhaps it's time to embrace our own lying, cheating, flawed, sexual, human selves. Shouldn't self-awareness also be a great American virtue? All our mea culpas might not stand up against the instincts of our hearts, the temptation of a porn star, or the need for an aging man to feel that old spark again, even if it's solely expressed in 140 characters. So, Americans, fess up. The only shame is in thinking we're better than all those other imperfect beings, the ones who don't flagellate themselves on CNN. As a daily dose of scandal proves, our high horse is limping back to the barn.



FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Dominique Strauss-Kahn, the disgraced former managing director of the International Monetary Fund, above; Silvio Berlusconi, prime minister of Italy, faces prosecution on a series of sex-related charges.



My French friend asked, "Why do Americans always apologize and then bring God into the conversation?"

WIVES' TALES

A few dishes, served cold...



ANNE SINCLAIR

In 2006, when Sinclair was asked by French newspaper *L'Express* if she was upset about husband Dominique Strauss-Kahn's reputation as a womanizer, she said: *No! I'm even proud of it. It's important to seduce, for a politician. As long as he is still attracted to me, and I to him, it is sufficient.*



JENNY SANFORD

The wife of the South Carolina governor told the AP that when her husband asked permission to visit his lover, she told him: *Absolutely not. It's one thing to forgive adultery; it's another thing to condone it.*



SILDA SPITZER

Her husband's biographer says the wife of Client No. 9 told a friend: *The wife is supposed to take care of the sex. This is my failing; I wasn't adequate.*



DINA MATOS MCGREEVEY

On the publication of her book, *Silent Partner*, she told Oprah: *I think it was all a charade for him... He was a great actor. He kept these two worlds separate and was a master at it.*



VALERIE HOBSON

In 1964 the actress wrote, in an anniversary letter to her husband, John Profumo (less than two years after the cabinet minister under Harold Macmillan admitted to an affair with Christine Keeler): *The whole of time would not be long enough to tell you of my joy in being married to you. Joy is not measured just by lovely things: the birth of babies, the song of birds heard together, the fun of holidays, the lyrical love of lying with you. Joy is to be found, too, in the relief after pain shared, in the good news following bad, in the knowledge of greater closeness after disaster.*