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TRIPPING WITH... GORDON RAMSAY

QSPIRIT.



Places of the Heart

Decades before the world loved seeing her, the multi-award-winning Australian actor loved seeing the world. These are her happy places.

Jacki Weaver



As told to Di Webster. Photography: Hugh Hamilton. Illustrations: Liz Kay

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On the radar

Since moving to Hollywood with husband Sean Taylor seven years ago, the two-time Oscar nominee has made more than 25 films and appeared in 38 episodes of four different TV series, including the ABC TV comedy *Squinters*, currently screening on iview.



1972 | United States

NEW YORK CITY
I've been to New York City at least 50 times. I first went in 1972 when I was with [the late theatre director] Richard Wherrett and my son, Dylan, was two.

The city was down at heel then and very broke. We stayed at the Algonquin Hotel, which wasn't glamorous then either but I had such romantic ideas about the Algonquin Round Table and Dorothy Parker, I thought I'd gone to heaven.

I used to take just hand luggage and come home with a suitcase full of books and, I'll admit, a few shoes. I once saw 30 [theatre] shows in three weeks.

I've let go of my dream to live in New York. I've been there during serious blizzards and my old bones can't take that cold. I was hit on the head with an icicle as I walked down Park Avenue one winter; it nearly killed me.

Despite that, I'll always love New York City. The restaurants are fantastic and the bars... a Martini doesn't taste the same anywhere else. There's my Dorothy Parker thing again.



1978 | Italy

VENICE

Everyone said, "Oh, Venice is horrible in summer; it's stinky and too hot." Not for me. I found it so beautiful – that gorgeous Piazza San Marco and getting a boat over to the Murano glass factory. It's a great walking city, too.

I was there with [former partner, the late journalist] Phil Davis and stayed at the Hotel Europa. Phil planned this really fantastic trip. We ate and drank and walked a lot.

I've never been back to Venice. I keep saying I must

go back because I loved it so much but sometimes places with great memories can be really disappointing when you revisit them.

Every time I drink a Campari and soda it tastes like Venice. A true lush – every city reminds me of a drink!



1988 | Hawaii

KAUAI

Kauai is one of Hawaii's eight major islands. [Ex-husband, now Senator] Derryn Hinch and I bought a place there in 1988 and we had it for about nine years. It's the garden island. They have a law that no building can be higher than the tallest palm tree. They shot *South Pacific*, *Jurassic Park* and the George Clooney film, *The Descendants*, on Kauai.

I once went for two weeks and was still there 11 weeks later. There's something magical about it. It rains most afternoons for 10 minutes – the most beautifully scented rain – and it's very spiritual. All of Hawaii is, I think.

Just going there used to make me so happy; I was euphoric. We used to travel with hand luggage because there were several muu-muus and Hawaiian shirts hanging in the wardrobe and that's all we needed.

Every time we went to Kauai, I didn't want to leave. I could have lived there. Selling the house was sad but it was the '90s and we were broke. *C'est la vie* – they're only things. ●

Who Knew?

Once an It girl who courted headlines, the now fiercely private Mrs Sam Worthington (and mum of two) is all grown up.

Lara Worthington



If you could do any other job, what would it be?

Something that involved travel. I love that my work has taken me to many interesting spots. Living in the United States has meant seeing a lot of that side of the world, too. Or I'd be a vet – but only for dogs.

What's one thing about you that would surprise people?

My dad was a landscaper and great at manual work so I picked up a few skills and can be pretty crafty with my hands. I constructed a cot for my youngest son [Racer, aged one] and filmed the process and posted it on Instagram. I think that surprised quite a few people!

What's your most treasured possession?

A clipping of hair from my [three-year-old] son Rocket's first haircut. It's extra special, as [hairdresser] Travis Balcke is an old friend who has cut my hair for over five years and now does the boys', too.

What's your idea of absolute happiness?

My three boys, a secluded beach and a delicious prawn taco. We try to do at least one beach getaway a year, usually to Hawaii or the beaches near where I grew up in Sydney's Cronulla.

How do you switch off?

I rarely charge my phone during the day so when it switches off, my digital day is done and I definitely feel a sense of calm. Or a massage, sauna and steam treatment at a Turkish bathhouse.

What's your guilty pleasure?

If Sam sees this, he'll cringe but... reality television. All of it but especially *The Bachelor* and *Wahlburgers* [about Boston chef Paul Wahlberg and his expanding hamburger restaurant business].

Do you have a personal hero?

Anthony Hopkins. I'm so fortunate to have had numerous dinners with him. My husband and children aside, he's the most exceptional person I've ever met.

What would you say is the most Australian thing about you?

I married a boy from Rockingham [in Western Australia] and I'm best known for an Aussie tourism slogan.

Where would we find you at a party?

I'd be going home early. I think all young mums can relate... my party days are done – for now. ●

What is your greatest strength?

Constant self-assessment. I always try to reflect on what I have done well and what I'd like to do better.

And your greatest weakness?

FOMO [fear of missing out]. I'm quite decisive and generally stick to my choices but when I feel like I'm missing out on something, doubt creeps in.

What scares you?

I get scared of losing or not being in control. I really want to try bungee jumping but I don't think I could ever let go and trust that the cord wouldn't break.

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The lowdown

The Sydney-born model shot to fame asking the world "So where the bloody hell are you?" in a 2006 Tourism Australia ad. She's the founder of The Base makeup and tanning products (thebase.me).

PHOTOGRAPH BY RUSSELL JAMES

Interview: Vanessa Lawrence



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Where she's travelling
Sydney to Canberra

What she's doing there
Covering the federal budget in May

On the radar
She presents *RN Breakfast* on ABC Radio every weekday from 6am.

Flight Plan

She interviews newsmakers before breakfast but flying is all about catching up on television for this radio presenter.

Fran Kelly

Are you early or late to the airport?

Veering on early. I hate being late and stressed for a plane. I think it was [former prime minister] John Howard who, when asked how he stayed so young and energetic, said, "Because I always get to the airport early to save myself the stress." I get what he's talking about.

Do you sleep well on flights?

I don't sleep on any form of transport.

Is there anything that helps?

I have [sleeping] pills for occasions when I really need to sleep. I'm a meditator – I do it most mornings – so I can employ relaxation techniques quite effectively but it's not the same as just dropping into a good sleep.

What do you do midair while you're awake?

I only listen to podcasts on planes if I'm in work mode. When I fly for relaxation, I tend to read or watch a movie.

Do you binge-watch?

I love a good TV series. On one flight recently, I watched *Riverdale*, got hooked and watched three more episodes when I came home. That's the level I resort to.

What was your most memorable flight?

I was lucky enough to go to Anzac Cove for the 100th anniversary of Gallipoli [in 2015] on the special Qantas flight that flew the family of veterans [to Turkey]. All the staff had a connection to the story as well. On the way home, everyone was quite uplifted by what we'd been a part of. The whole vibe was very warm and a bit spiritual.

Have you ever felt uplifted on a regular flight?

After I spent two years abroad as a Europe correspondent, I came back to Australia for my current job. There's nothing quite like hearing Aussie accents on the flight and that sense of coming home.

How do you approach packing?

Most of my packing is done very last minute – in fact, some of it's done at 4am before leaving for work.

What's on your checklist?

My No.1 thing is making sure all my devices are correct. I'm a radio reporter and if you travel without the right cord you could be in big trouble. So I always check that I have all my chargers and batteries and plugs.

How do you dress for a flight?

As soon as the lights are down, I put on my tracksuit pants and flight socks and snuggle in. That said, I'm mindful of my tracksuit pants not being too daggy after I flew long haul with a prime minister who used to get changed into his – it just wasn't a good look. ●

31°07'11.047"N / 121°23'06.29"E





Window Seat

RIBBONS OF asphalt twist and turn, rise and fall, fly over and sweep under one another to form a swirling reverie above the Minhang Quarter in south-west Shanghai. Set against lush gardens, the lithe steel-grey roadways are a remarkable juxtaposition of the man-made and Mother Nature. The breakneck pace of urbanisation in China's richest and most populous city – 24 million residents and rising – has led to complex road systems sprouting up everywhere. But the natural environment isn't forgotten; forests and parklands temper the urban sprawl, offering green oases to both locals and visitors.

The Journey

His promise to a condemned man set a course for the Australian-born human rights lawyer that he's still committed to today.

Geoffrey Robertson



Barrister Geoffrey Robertson in the 1970s



I WAITED at Heathrow for three days to begin the journey to death row in Trinidad. I had just qualified as a barrister and been asked to act for Michael X, leader of [Britain's] Black Power movement, who was sentenced to hang. But I could not afford the full fare and had to wait until a stand-by ticket became available. My client could have been

executed at any moment while his impoverished lawyer waited for someone to cancel their Caribbean holiday. I was 26 and an Australian Rhodes scholar and this would be my first death penalty case.

I met Michael X – his real name was Michael de Freitas – when he was one of the living dead on death row with 30 other men, each in a cage that measured eight feet [2.4 metres] by six feet [1.8 metres] with a mattress and slop bucket. They were kept in these cells all day, in 35-degree heat, and subjected to a cacophony of screeching and screaming from other inmates.

As I sat with Michael over several days, I began to appreciate what I later termed “the death row phenomenon”, a form of mental torture caused by alternating hope and despair. Listening to the reading of the other men’s death warrants and the sound of the trapdoor opening in the execution room next door induces mental derangement in doomed men who do not have a kill-by date. It gave me an idea. I said to Michael, “This is actually a place of mental torture. Maybe we should argue that a long stay on death row amounts to torture, which is banned by the constitution.”

I’ll never forget what happened next: Michael smiled for the only time during my visits and put his finger to his lips. “Shhh,” he said. “Listen. This place is always full of noise.” At that moment there was total silence. Every man on that block was pressing against the bars of his cage, leaning towards us and straining to hear. “You must realise that for them, you represent hope,” said Michael, “their only hope. Promise me that one day you will make this argument – for their sake, not mine. They will hang me no matter what.”

They did. The death penalty diminishes all involved with it and they dragged Michael to the gallows as soon as they heard we were planning to seek a stay of his execution. But I kept my promise to him, made that day when silence fell. Years later, the Privy Council [of the United Kingdom] ruled that a prolonged stay on death row amounted to torture and required the commutation of the death sentence. This rule, since applied to cases throughout the Caribbean and East Africa, has been credited with saving many hundreds of lives.

I have taken many more journeys to Trinidad and to death rows elsewhere since my stand-by ticket became available in 1973. But none has been more eventful or influential than the trip that took me to the sink of human despair known as Trinidad’s death row. It made me determined to practise a law that would protect life, not take it. ●

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The journey
London to Trinidad
The year
1973
On the radar
His autobiography, *Rather His Own Man*, is out now.

Tripping with...

Gordon Ramsay

Note to nervous chefs: want to avoid an earful from the world's toughest culinary taskmaster? Have a fluffy bathrobe handy.

Where are you right now?

At The Langham [hotel] in Sydney.

And when you walk into a hotel room, what's the first thing you do?

Check how comfy the dressing gown is. If it's one of those thin and uncomfortable things, I'm already pissed off. So I go straight to the wardrobe to check the dressing gown then I have a shower, get into the dressing gown and relax.

Where did you go on your last trip?

To the Maldives with my family [wife Tana and children Megan, 19, twins Jack and Holly, 18, and Matilda, 16]. The kids dive so it was an amazing opportunity for them to get up to speed with the ecosystem and realise how important it is.

What was your typical childhood holiday?

I was born in Scotland but moved to England with my family when I was five. We came from a very humble background so we couldn't travel that far but when we did, it was always to the beach. Some of my most favourite holidays were staying on a Scottish loch, a beautiful big reservoir – Loch Lomond, Loch Long or Loch Eck. We'd go camping and spend time in my uncle's log cabin. It was beautiful.

INTERVIEW BY ANTHONY HUCKSTEP
PHOTOGRAPH BY JAY BROOKS



Is there a destination you keep going back to?

Vietnam and Cambodia, from a chef's perspective, are some of the most inspiring places I've ever been. India, too. Once, I started in north Rajasthan, went across to Nagaland on the Myanmar border then travelled all the way down to Kerala to spend two weeks in an ashram cooking the most extraordinary vegetarian food with all these monks.

When you're in a foreign city for work, do you try to get out and see the sights?

I'm like a little maverick. Anything shiny that has opened in the past three or four months, I'm there. Whether it's Austin, Texas, for the best barbecue or the latest tapas bar outside Barcelona, I've got to try it out.

Gordon Ramsay became lost in a Mumbai market while sampling dosas (below); he holidayed at Loch Lomond as a child



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On the radar

His latest book, *Ultimate Fit Food: Mouth-Watering Recipes to Fuel You for Life*, and crockery range, the Gordon Ramsay Union Street Café collection for Royal Doulton, are out now.

What are you likely to bring home with you from a trip?

If it's anywhere in Europe, a case full of jamón, olives and freshly pressed olive oil – local stuff through and through. Further abroad, it would be little trinkets from China or silverware that I could incorporate into my restaurants.

Have you ever taken a great road trip?

I drove from the top of France to the south at a thousand miles an hour when Tana and I started dating back in 1995. We stayed away from freeways and motorways for 10 days, stopping every eight to 10 hours at these amazing bed and breakfasts in different regions. When we arrived at the Alps it was summer so we spent a few days at Mont Blanc [Europe's highest mountain]. The oxygen was very thin but the tips of the mountains were still covered in snow.

Have you ever been lost on your travels?

Yes, in Mumbai, India, where I was filming a television show years ago. I was at a market and the food got better and better the further I went. I was so excited about all the different stalls that I got completely distracted and couldn't stop eating dosas [crisp, savoury pancakes]. Two hours later, when I'd arranged to meet the film crew, I was long gone – miles away. I literally lost my bearings through great food.

What's been your most memorable dining experience?

I had the most extraordinary dinner last year at a place called Saison [it has three Michelin stars and is ranked the 37th best restaurant in the world] in the SoMa district of San Francisco. It's something like 22 courses and the food is all seasonal. Talk about a restaurant on another level.

Which destination was a surprise to you?

Cape Town, South Africa. Great food, great wine, great beaches and amazing running tracks, too. It's a nation absolutely packed with energy and that did surprise me.

Is there a city you could have given a miss?

Moscow. The traffic was insane. I spent four hours getting into the city and five hours getting out!

Where is your home away from home?

It would probably be 38,000 feet in the air. I've travelled 3.5 million air miles over the years. People say, "Oh my God, how do you put up with it?" But I f---ing love flying – it's the only time in my life I get a moment to myself. I catch up on my favourite programs, whether it's *MasterChef*, *Top Chef*, *My Kitchen Rules*... I think of flying as going to the cinema. ●