

HOLLYWOOD:

WHERE GREEN IS THE NEW BLACK



TOP STARS, CLOONEY TO
DAMON, MAKE IT FASHIONABLE
TO BE ECO-CONSCIOUS

BY JOAL RYAN



Steering Clear: George Clooney will be tooling around Italy this summer in a lithium-battery-powered Smart Car, which gets 120 miles on a single charge. (Opposite page): Leonardo DiCaprio with Al Gore, whose film *An Inconvenient Truth* won the Best Documentary Oscar in February.

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AYBE IT WAS WHEN CAMERON DIAZ SWAPPED her Porsche 911 Carrera in favor of her 55-mile-per-gallon Toyota Prius. Or maybe it was when Sir Anthony Hopkins plunked down \$1.6 million to help preserve Snowdon, the highest mountain in his native Wales. Or maybe it was when Clint Eastwood — gritty, tough-guy and ex-Dirty Harry — got into organic farming. The precise point of origin is debatable. The trend is not. From the cars in their driveways to the stamps on their passports, today's Hollywood stars are as green as a dollar bill. Or, given market fluctuations, maybe greener.

"It's really become quite cool to be green in Hollywood," says Renee Loux, host of the upcoming special *It's Easy Being Green* on Fine Living this month. "It's no longer a left-leaning, tree-hugging kind of tendency." Even Hollywood's most prominent cigar-smoking Republican, California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, called on his state to sharply reduce its ozone-depleting greenhouse-gas emissions. Schwarzenegger, the original poster man for the diesel-chugging Hummer H1, now owns a customized H1 that has been converted to run on bio-diesel and vegetable oil.

Like many in Hollywood, Schwarzenegger is making green choices. "We're talking about eco-friendly activity,

choosing products that have a lower impact [on the environment]," Loux explains. "This may mean they have less packing, or, if they're beauty products or paper plates, are made from eco-friendly or biodegradable materials."

Loux is just one of several high-profile personalities now sharing the green lifestyle with a wider audience — on television. Robert Redford, whose activism dates back more than 30 years to a local land-use issue in his adopted Utah home, is sure enough of the current eco-conscious climate that he is launching a weekly block of eco-programming on the Sundance Channel this month. "The Green," as it's called, kicks off on April 17 with the documentary series, *Big Ideas for a Small Planet*. "Robert Redford has a long history

"ED BEGLEY JR. GOES SO FAR AS TO TIME WIFE RACHELLE CARSON'S SHOWER BUT BRAGS, 'I HAVEN'T PAID AN ELECTRIC BILL IN 17 YEARS.'"



Green at Heart: (Clockwise from left) Bono, wife Ali Hewson and designer Rogan Gregory started Edun (nude backward), an eco-friendly clothing line; activist Ed Begley Jr. next to solar panels in his backyard; eco-pioneer Robert Redford's Sundance Channel is offering a slate of eco-programs; vegan Alicia Silverstone has sworn off paper and plastic; Matt Damon hosts PBS's *Journey to Planet Earth*, a series about our dwindling resources.



of environmental activism, so ecology is something we've always touched upon," says Sundance Channel's executive vice president and general manager of programming and creative affairs, Laura Michalchysyn. "But the combination of movies like Al Gore's Oscar-winning *An Inconvenient Truth* and Chris Paine's *Who Killed the Electric Car?* — both of which played really well at the Sundance Film Festival — and the resonance of global warming disasters like Hurricane Katrina, we decided that now is the time to take things to the next step."

"We've been very careful not to be preachy," adds *Big Ideas* producer David Meltzer. Not that the likes of Robert Downey Jr. need preaching to. In an upcoming *Big Ideas*, Downey can be seen being fitted for a bamboo-and-organic-wool jacket by eco-designer Linda Loudermilk — and liking it.

OPPOSITE PAGE: COLEMAN; THIS PAGE: BOYD; GREGORY: TERRANNO; LONGUETTY; ERM

If ever there was a Hollywood star who revels in the life, it's longtime environmentalist Ed Begley Jr., who once hooked his stationary bike to a solar panel battery pack and peddled to crisp his morning toast. The star of HGTV's recent eco-reality-soap *Living With Ed* experienced his green awakening after watching California's freeways grow thick with smog. "I didn't know what the solution was, but whatever, I wanted to be part of it," Begley recalls. *Living With Ed* exposes the challenging, less-glamorous and often humorous aspects of marriage to an ardent eco-activist. Begley goes so far as to time wife Rachelle Carson's shower, but brags, "I haven't paid an electric bill in 17 years."

Away from home, a star's downtime is enjoyed with a dash of consciousness. Perrey Reeves, better known as Mrs. Ari on HBO's *Entourage*, takes her vacation respite at her 40-acre, solar-powered Costa Rican jungle retreat. In 2005, Leonardo DiCaprio found an unspoiled 104-acre island near Belize where he reportedly wants to develop an eco-friendly resort. DiCaprio is also looking to erect an entire green community for a reality TV series to be called *E-topia*.

Prince Charles, in comparison, went green by doing nothing and going nowhere at all — scrapping his polo playing in the name of reducing aircraft-emitted carbon dioxide.



Al Gore, the former vice president turned green-movement god, took the opposite approach of Charles. Instead of staying grounded when the time came to promote *An Inconvenient Truth*, Gore winged it around the world, with the film production offsetting his so-called "carbon footprint" by funding renewable-energy projects.

"What I like most is that the stars aren't just taking a stand. This is the way they live their lives," says eco-lifestyle expert Danny Seo, who regularly contributes to CBS's *The Early Show*. "When Cameron Diaz went on *The Tonight Show* and talked about her Toyota Prius, it helped break down stereotypes that it was a weird concept car you had to plug into a wall to charge up. When she explained how it worked, America understood."

"I think the Priuses and the solar panels are important,"

Gentlemen, Start Your Hybrids

Eco-friendly cars replace Rolls Royce and Bentley as Hollywood's status-symbol cars.

In Hollywood, no single purchase defines a star more than the car. **Josh Hartnett** remembers drawing stares while driving an early-model Toyota Prius around his home state of Minnesota when the car first came out. Today, with more than 500,000 Priuses



sold worldwide, the \$22,175 gas-electric hybrid draws a crowd. **Leonardo DiCaprio**, **Cameron Diaz** and **Bill Maher** are all owners. **Larry David** drives a Prius in his real life and did in his TV life on *Curb Your Enthusiasm* — his wife, **Laurie David**, one of Hollywood's leading eco-activists, wouldn't allow anything less. **Sting** has been known to arrive at the Oscars in a Prius, and other celebrities have used ecolimo, a Santa Monica, California-based limousine service that includes the compact hybrids in its fleet.

Ubiquitous as it is, the Prius does not have a green monopoly. Last year, **Steven Spielberg** bought a roomier Lexus RX 400h hybrid SUV, which runs about \$43,000. **George Clooney** managed to go both small and pricey when he parted with \$108,000 for a Tango T600, a two-seat electric car that could pass for your toaster, provided your toaster went from 0 to 60 mph in four seconds. And then, of course, there's **Arnold Schwarzenegger's** experiment with the Hummer H2H hydrogen prototype.

To be sure, gas-needy SUVs and sports cars are still being valet-parked all over Hollywood. "But I think it's become not-so-cool," says **Rene Loux**, host of the special *It's Easy Being Green* on *Fine Living*, "which really marks something pretty significant — when a status symbol has more meaning than just its cost." —J.R.



Loux says, "but it's in our day-to-day lives that we get to make so many choices." It's the little things that her friend, actress Alicia Silverstone, does that impress Loux — from bringing her own shopping bags to the market to the way she buys olive oil and honey in bulk. For Silverstone, Loux says, it's all about creating less waste.

Jason Alexander, one of several *Seinfeld* environmentalists, used washable cloth diapers for his two children instead of disposable ones. Larry David (who made the Prius famous on *Curb Your Enthusiasm*) sacrificed two-ply comfort, not to mention his own tush, to abide recycled toilet paper. In general, Loux says, there's no need to give up comfort, or even luxury, to be green today. Companies such as Seventh Generation and Ecover offer eco- and user-friendly products, from soft scrub to laundry detergent. (And for toilet paper that even a curmudgeon like David might love, Loux recommends recycled, non-chlorine-bleached Green Forest — she says it's white, unscented and, yes, soft.)

In the end, Seo hopes Hollywood's green trend isn't a trend at all. "I shudder a bit when I hear the words 'cool' or 'trendy' when it comes to sustainable living," he says. "Ugg boots and Juicy Couture, now those are — er, were — cool and trendy. Green living, hopefully, is more of a cultural shift."

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Gore Galore



Co-founded by the forward-thinking, globally minded Al Gore, it's no surprise the Current TV network (366) puts a certain amount of emphasis on the environment — and on your participation.

Like something straight out of *Back to the Future*, Current Earth segments like "Bio Diesel Love" look at ways to run your wheels on alternate fuels like vegetable oil and fast food leftovers, and "100 MPG Prius" examines how to plug in your hybrid car for three-digit gas mileage. "Swimming the Hudson River," a viewer-produced segment, stars a brave 22-year-old paddling through the once-polluted New York waterway. Visit currenttv.com for more information, including how to produce and submit your own take on the green scene.—J.R.

CLICK

It's Easy Being Green premieres April 21 at 8 pm ET on Fine Living 232. New programming block **The Green** premieres April 17 at 9 pm ET on Sundance Channel 549. **An Inconvenient Truth** airs April 3 at 1:15 pm ET on Showtime 537. **Living With Ed** airs April 22 at 5 pm ET on HGTV 229. **Red Hot and Green** airs June 10 at 9 pm ET on HGTV 229.



Green Screen



Green living has been growing its television audience for decades. Here's a look at some highlights:

In **1989**, *60 Minutes* aired a segment on the potential dangers of the chemical Alar, then used on apples; Meryl Streep, who later testified before Congress, sat down with Ed

Bradley to voice her concerns.

1990: On Earth Day's 20th anniversary, stars take to primetime to remind people about the joys of recycling. CBS's *Save the Planet* features music acts, including Red Hot Chili Peppers. ABC airs an Earth Day Special, extracting cameos

from Streep, Jane Fonda, Dustin Hoffman, Barbra Streisand, Bill Cosby and Robin Williams — with the divine Bette Midler on hand as Mother Nature.

1990: Mogul Ted Turner launches *Captain Planet* and the *Planeteers* on TNT. The animated children's show, also aired in syndication, makes the environment a supreme concern for a team of superheroes. Stars such as Whoopi Goldberg, Meg Ryan and Ed Begley

Jr. lend their voices.

1995: A pre-*Survivor* Mark Burnett puts together the first Eco-Challenge in Utah. Originally aired on MTV, the adventure game pits man and woman against nature — and shows off some spectacular scenery in the process.

2000: A post-*Seinfeld* Larry David launches his HBO comedy series, *Curb Your Enthusiasm*. Co-

stars include a funny little hybrid car, a Toyota Prius.

2000: Lisa Simpson, who's always been a touch green despite her yellow hue, stars in an episode of *The Simpsons*. Its title: "Lisa the Tree Hugger."

2005: Cameron Diaz talks up eco-topics across the globe in her MTV series *Trippin'*. Jessica Alba, Drew Barrymore and Diaz's then-steady Justin Timberlake join the cause.—J.R.