

SARAH IN THE CITY

Actress and style icon Sarah Jessica Parker is back on her A game. *EW* speaks exclusively to Hollywood's quirkiest fashionista about her latest endeavours and newfound love affair with the Middle East

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and both *SATC* films), who is my longtime collaborator, and I were blown away by all lines of women who dressed up and went to see the first film as if they were going to a party and not just a movie. It felt to us as if they were excited to celebrate this special time with their girlfriends – both the ones they came to the theatre with and the four best friends on the screen. We didn’t need to make a sequel but we wanted to continue this party, this friendship between our audience and our characters. I wanted this sequel to be the party. It’s a romp, a caper, an antidote to the first film, and it’s a lot of fun...

But as Carrie Bradshaw, you’re no longer the ultimate single girl. You’re now happily married to Big (played by actor Chris Noth). What’s there left to explore?

I think that Carrie is learning what so many women learn when they finally get married and say ‘I do’. There is a huge difference between having a wedding and being married. This is about what happens after you say ‘I do’ and even more importantly, it’s about how as women and people we are always evolving. Like Carrie, we may spend the majority of our life single and then we are married. And that makes us ask how does the title of ‘Mrs’ affect a woman whose identity has been tied to the idea of being single? What does ‘happily ever after’ actually mean? Luckily for Carrie, and myself since I play her, she gets to go on an amazing holiday with her three best friends to the UAE to figure this all out. ▶

She’s the face and voice of Carrie Bradshaw, the world’s most loved Manhattan princess. She’s the spokesperson for Garnier and has launched seven perfumes including the popular fragrance *Lovely* and her freshly released scent *SJP NYC*. She’s recently signed up for the role of president and creative director of the legendary couture

line Halston. And just a few months ago she became a new mother to two baby girls, expanding her family with actor Matthew Broderick and their son James. Actress and supernova Sarah Jessica Parker, just like her beloved native city of New York, might frankly be the woman who never sleeps. But despite her various pursuits, SJP’s passion for the *Sex and the City* brand, an international phenomenon that captivated millions of women around the world with endearing and hilarious tales of love and friendship endured by four women in the

Big Apple, is still as strong as ever. After 12 years that include six years on the set of a hit television series and a hugely successful film, SJP, optimistic and soft spoken, doesn’t hesitate to admit to *EW* that “it’s truly thrilling to be part of something that people have connected with and have strong feelings about, something that they’ve welcomed into their homes every week and then gone to the theatre to watch. That people around the world are so warm and excited about the characters of Carrie, Charlotte, Miranda, or Samantha is remarkable. It really is.”

Inspired by their fans, SJP, the leading lady and producer of both the *SATC* show and films, and her co-stars Kristin Davis, Cynthia Nixon, and Kim Cattrall (they play Charlotte, Miranda, and Samantha respectively) decided to bring back the fabulous foursome and take them on a glamorous, sun-drenched adventure that whisks the women away from NYC to Abu Dhabi. Over a perfect spring weekend in NYC just days before *SATC 2* premieres in her hometown of New York, SJP shares the invaluable lessons she’s learned from

working and living for months in the Middle East and the fact that she actually loves the way women around the world consider her to be more like a personal friend than a fictional character or movie star.

You’ve been playing the world’s favourite single girl, Carrie Bradshaw, for 12 years. What made you want to come back for a sequel?

Doing a second movie wasn’t necessary, it wasn’t required. But Michael Patrick King (the writer/producer/director of the show

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The UAE is a terrific holiday destination. As the producer of the film, what made you choose Abu Dhabi as the setting of the holiday in the sequel?

It was actually prompted by Michael Patrick King. He wanted to take us out of our comfort zone and put us in a completely different culture so he thought of the Middle East, the new Middle East. And the UAE is now one of the most exotic, sought-after locations in the world, a place that is completely modern and entirely traditional and by having Carrie and company take a holiday in Abu Dhabi, our characters and audiences get to experience a lifestyle that most of us only dream about. And that’s the point of movies, to allow us to escape for a few hours and live vicariously through these four amazing women in a glamorous modern world that we may never have an opportunity to go to. Also, Michael wanted us to go global and portray a bigger world view of women because when we opened the first movie in cities like London and Berlin and Paris and Tokyo, we started to see that it was reaching more than just American women and that women around the world were identifying with these four characters, their storylines, and their issues. We might not all live in Manhattan and wear couture clothes, but as women our emotional experiences are universal.

The outfits in SATC2 are incredible and so fun. What was it like having to dress for the Middle East?

Culture shock doesn’t begin to explain what happens when abayas and Manolos meet under the desert sky. Thank goodness for our costume designer Pat Fields. Even though we used Morocco to stand in for Abu Dhabi in the film, Pat actually flew to the UAE to research the fashion and see what the environment was like so she could dress everyone from us four to all of the extras. She wanted it to be less about reality and more about fantasy, which Pat is so amazing at. But I know that she was really inspired by the UAE’s nightclub scene. Pat calls it a “mult-culti” place with every level of society. She loves that it’s so international.

After all these years with your co-stars Kristin Davis, Cynthia Nixon, and Kim Cattrall, what was it like to reunite once again? There are so many rumours of catfights and stories of the four of you not getting along.

It’s so strange and funny to hear that because by playing Carrie and spending so many hours and years with these three incredible women, I have learned how to be a better friend. I’m not saying that over the years all of us have not been sensitive and feelings haven’t gotten hurt, but at the end of the day I truly don’t have any regrets about how I’ve treated people. Actually, making this second film was such a great experience because for the first time in 12 years we had to live together for two months while on location in Morocco. We were all taken away from friends, family, children, husbands, boyfriends, the extended family, the extended family that is ours as grown-ups, and we lived together in the same hotel. I think it’s the best time we ever had as a group because we knew intimately what our experiences were. We weren’t working and then going home to the people I just mentioned. We were going home to each other and I think it was the best thing in the world for us. I don’t think we ever felt closer or more depended upon in a way that felt really nice. We were together all the time and that’s what we chose to do, eat together and live together and stay at the same hotels. It was just great. It was probably the best time we’ve ever had.

In addition to producing and starring in SATC2, you’re still the spokesperson for Garnier, you launched your latest perfume SJP NYC, you’re the newly appointed president and chief creative officer of the couture line Halston (the Halston Heritage line specifically which is based on Halston’s legendary archives), and you’ve just added two beautiful little girls to your family with husband Matthew Broderick and son James Wilke. How do you do it all?

That’s a good question! Well, I don’t make movies all the time and I only do things I’m passionate about. I guess time is what you make of it and I like to make the most of my time. I never want to stop learning, evolving, growing. I guess in certain ways, I’m a lot like Carrie. It’s all about evolution. ►





Above: SJP strikes a pose in Halston. Below: The latest Halston Heritage collection



Ray Halston (far right) with friends



SJP with her girls donning the latest Halston creations

SJP AND HALSTON

Sarah Jessica Parker is more than just a style icon thanks to Carrie Bradshaw. When Halston, the design house behind one of her favorite fashion idols, offered her the opportunity to head up the archive-inspired Halston Heritage line (the main line is designed by Marios Schwab) beginning with the Spring 2011 collection, SJP just couldn't say no. "You have to realise that growing up in the 1970s in NYC, you couldn't be alive and not know the name Halston."

Ray Halston, who rose to fame after designing the pill box hat that Jacqueline Kennedy wore to her husband JFK's presidential inauguration, became a fashion legend synonymous with classically cut, simple, and elegant designs. He was the first major designer to begin licensing and launched the phenomenally successful fragrance line Halston. After opening his own salon in 1968, he quickly became the toast of New York's fashion society. Halston's close circle of friends and clients included Liza Minnelli, Barbara Walters, Martha Graham, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, Andy Warhol and Elizabeth Taylor. As Halston's career skyrocketed during the 1970s, his creations truly set the standard for American designers and he was seen as the undisputed high priest of fashion. Throughout most of the 70s he epitomised the glamour and decadence of the era and become a central figure in the nightlife scene of NYC's famous Studio 54 disco. While Halston passed away in 1990, his designs and legacy continue to live on and with Marios Schwab and Sarah Jessica Parker on board, Halston is once again creating quite a stir on the fashion and film scene. ■



Left: Ray Halston with Bianca Jagger. Above: SJP wears Halston. Below: SJP and the girls in Halston

