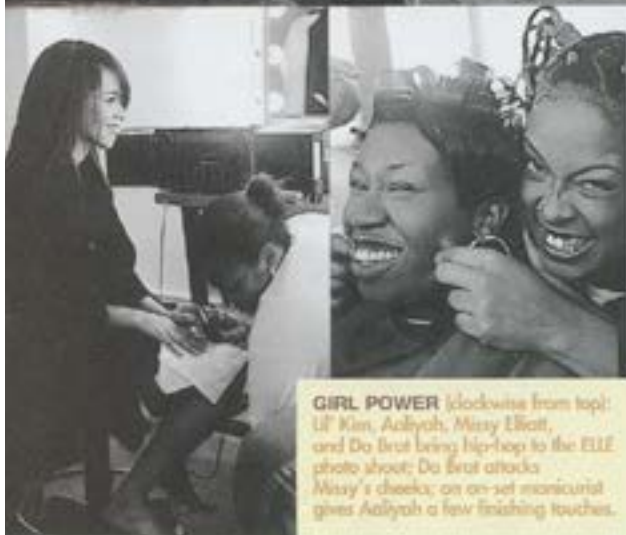


editor's page

the view from the 44th floor

at home with luxury



GIRL POWER (clockwise from top): Usher, Kim, Aaliyah, Missy Elliott, and Da Brat bring hip-hop to the ELLE photo shoot; Da Brat attacks Missy's cheeks; on set manicurist gives Aaliyah a few finishing touches.

Lately, I've been traveling a lot for work, so the question of what constitutes luxury in a hotel is one I'm passionate—and hyperopinionated—about. I've found myself in minimalist feng shui havens, where a single apple balanced delicately on a stainless steel table defines chic. And, at the other extreme, I've spent the night in turn-of-the-century, country-house-style places, awash in swags and gilt, rococo flourishes, and overstuffed everything. Neither one makes me feel particularly comfortable. I was curious, then, to hear from our European editor Vanessa Friedman about No. 5 Maddox St., London's latest high-buzz hotel ("The Suite Smell of Success," First), which, Vanessa reports, "combines the luxury and service of a hotel with the privacy and space of an apartment." I'm eager to check it out because I've discovered on my recent travels that, for me, real luxury entails a tremendous attention to the right kind of details: sumptuous fabrics, a commitment to ease, combined with a little playfulness. This is what I look for in a wardrobe, too, and this season offers plenty to fit the bill. There's a clear understanding in many collections that luxury can be private—a discreetly enveloping fur or cashmere lining, say, that only you know about. For fall, designers are delivering this laid-back type of luxury in spades: chiffon and velvet, leather and fur, beading and fringe trims. These are modern classics, clothes that pamper and lift one's mood, and make getting dressed something to look forward to. It's one more reason to cheer the fact that so many fashion designers continue to hone in on the pure pleasures that make all the difference in how we live at home—and on the road.

Elaina Richardson



Obscene but not heard: Lenny Bruce

The 'L' Files Lisa Kogan on talking dirty and influencing a generation



Before there was Chris Rock and Denis Leary, there was Richard Pryor and George Carlin. But before any of them, there was Lenny Bruce. Savage and subtle, a dark soul and a true believer, Bruce had a predilection for hard drugs, easy women, and riffs of bright, provocative, ironic language. He was a sharp shooter who targeted sex, race, religion, and all manner of hypocrisy. "If God made the body," Bruce told his audience, "and the body is dirty—then the fault lies with the manufacturer." He was profane and brave, riotously funny, and utterly original. He was everything except censored. Bruce fought the law, and as HBO's fascinating new documentary, *Lenny Bruce: Swear to Tell the Truth* shows us, the law not only won—it crucified him.

My advice: Skip summer reruns on August 9 at 10:15 P.M. and let filmmaker Robert B. Weide and narrator Robert De Niro introduce you to lawyers

and lovers, club owners and comics, Honey Harlow (Bruce's stripper wife) and Sally Marr (Bruce's stagestruck mom), as they methodically detail the brilliant satirist's excruciating fall from grace, beginning in 1961, when, following a trumped-up drug charge, he refused to pay off a judge and became a marked man. We watch prosecutors from coast to coast take a stand for "decency" and bust Bruce on obscenity charges; the man who once sold out a midnight show at Carnegie Hall in the midst of a blizzard that paralyzed New York City is finally flat broke and unable to get a job. We come to understand how justice repeatedly denied can mutilate a fragile spirit. Lenny Bruce OD'd in 1966 at the age of forty. The cops marched photographers in two at a time for the ultimate photo op: a lurid shot of his naked body sprawled across the bathroom floor. It was an act far more obscene than any ever performed by Lenny Bruce.

tv

Hence the dark glasses? A Progressive Insurance survey found motorcyclists are five times as likely to cry at movies than non-motorcyclists. Top fearjerk? *The Lion King*.

The Suite Smell of Success A London hideaway that's more home than hotel

Lately, a riddle has been making the rounds of London: When is a hotel not a hotel? Stumped? Here are two more clues when it's located in an eighteenth-century building on a quiet block smack in the middle of the city and doesn't have a restaurant, but does have twenty-four-hour room service. Give up? Here's the answer: When it's No. 5 Maddox St. Composed of twelve suites ranging from one to three bedrooms, all with their own kitchen facilities and high-tech workstations, No. 5 combines the luxury and service of a hotel with the privacy and space of an apartment. The floors are bamboo, the beds orthopedic, the bath products Molton Brown, the telephones cordless, and the modems ISDN. Fridges are stocked with "good" and "bad" choices (Ben & Jerry's ice



Home suite home: London's No. 5 Maddox

cream; Yogi tea), but if neither self-catering nor room service appeals, personal grocery shopping can be arranged, as well as a personal chef—not to mention private visits from Jet Lag Clinic experts. In addition, there is secretarial help, computer rental, and an in-house CD/video library. There may be no place like home, but *this* place comes pretty close. *No. 5 Maddox St., London, 44-171-647-0200. Suites from \$312 to \$792 a night.*—VANESSA FRIEDMAN

secret address