

He's the hot cake of the film industry, has a thriving gay fan following and is quite the favourite with the ladies. This is **Imran Khan** after he's delivered his second big hit, *I Hate Luv Storys* and has a movie lined up with nearly every top actress in the industry: a big notch up from his overnight debut success. While *Verve's* camera captures a day in the life of the movie star, Sitanshi Talati-Parikh looks beyond his distracting good looks to discover what makes him tick and makes him the coolest catch in town

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOY DATTA \* STYLING BY NIRALI MEHTA  
ALL WATCHES AND ACCESSORIES FROM TAG HEUER \* ALL CLOTHES (UNLESS MENTIONED OTHERWISE), IMRAN'S OWN

# WHOM WOMEN WANT



*Imran owns a rare edition of his favourite comic book, Batman, a Batman tie and believes that were he to have a superpower, it would be MacGyvering. He's a Star Wars fan and considered being an archaeologist post an Indiana-Jones phase.*

"I've wanted him to be a man women would like," is how Nuzhat Khan begins the conversation about her only child. Even the toughest detractors and hardest cynics would find it impossible to dislike 27-year-old Imran Khan, who admits to have consciously imbibed the best aspects of favourite characters from classic books, movies and comics. So, in a sense, the elusive, romantic notion of the man that women chase from fiction is actively present in Imran's personality. Does that make him perfect? "It's a work-in-progress," he grins. In Nuzhat's ideal lies a fundamental difference that sets Imran apart – while others stop at being good according to their own definition, Imran without self-deprecating, without martyring himself, goes the extra mile to be universally likeable.

This precocious child started speaking long, coherent sentences at a very early age – and in Nuzhat's words, "He was a complete person even as a child, never requiring disciplining – I could talk to him like a grown-up." It doesn't appear to be a statement stemming from a maternal fondness, because she has always attempted to look at Imran as an unrelated person, without bias. "I would hate for him to have grown up thinking he's special because his mother thinks so – it should be because he believes it." And that is what makes Imran self-assured. "I don't think I've ever had issues with self-doubt. What I can't change, I don't let it influence or affect me. Even if it may seem unnatural for a teenager to be so, I have always been a kind of calm, reasonable, logical person – prided myself on being mature. It is something I consciously hold onto, that I've never wanted to lose. I always wanted to be the guy who can handle a situation." And he can do that, MacGyver-style, in any condition, under any circumstance.

This what his fiancée, Avantika Malik, in her light, lilting voice, lists as one of the traits that makes him the

Imran: TAG Heuer 'Grand Carrera Calibre 17 RS' watch, available at TAG Heuer boutiques all across India. Model: Betty Bop camisole, from Promod, Mumbai.

**Imran:** TAG Heuer 'Carrera Calibre 16 Day Date' watch, available at TAG Heuer boutiques all across India. **Model:** Striped jumpsuit, from Promod, Mumbai.



*The geek who's time-travelled from the era of chivalry and into the world of gadgets. He fits in and yet remains an observer.*

man she has known to love for eight years and counting, from the age of 19. She finds that through career choices veering from wanting to remain behind-the-scenes as a director, to embracing the limelight as a hero, nothing has changed in the boy she dated and the man she is soon to be married to. "The great thing about Imran is that at his very core, he remains completely the same, grounded and real, though it's true that he carries himself with more

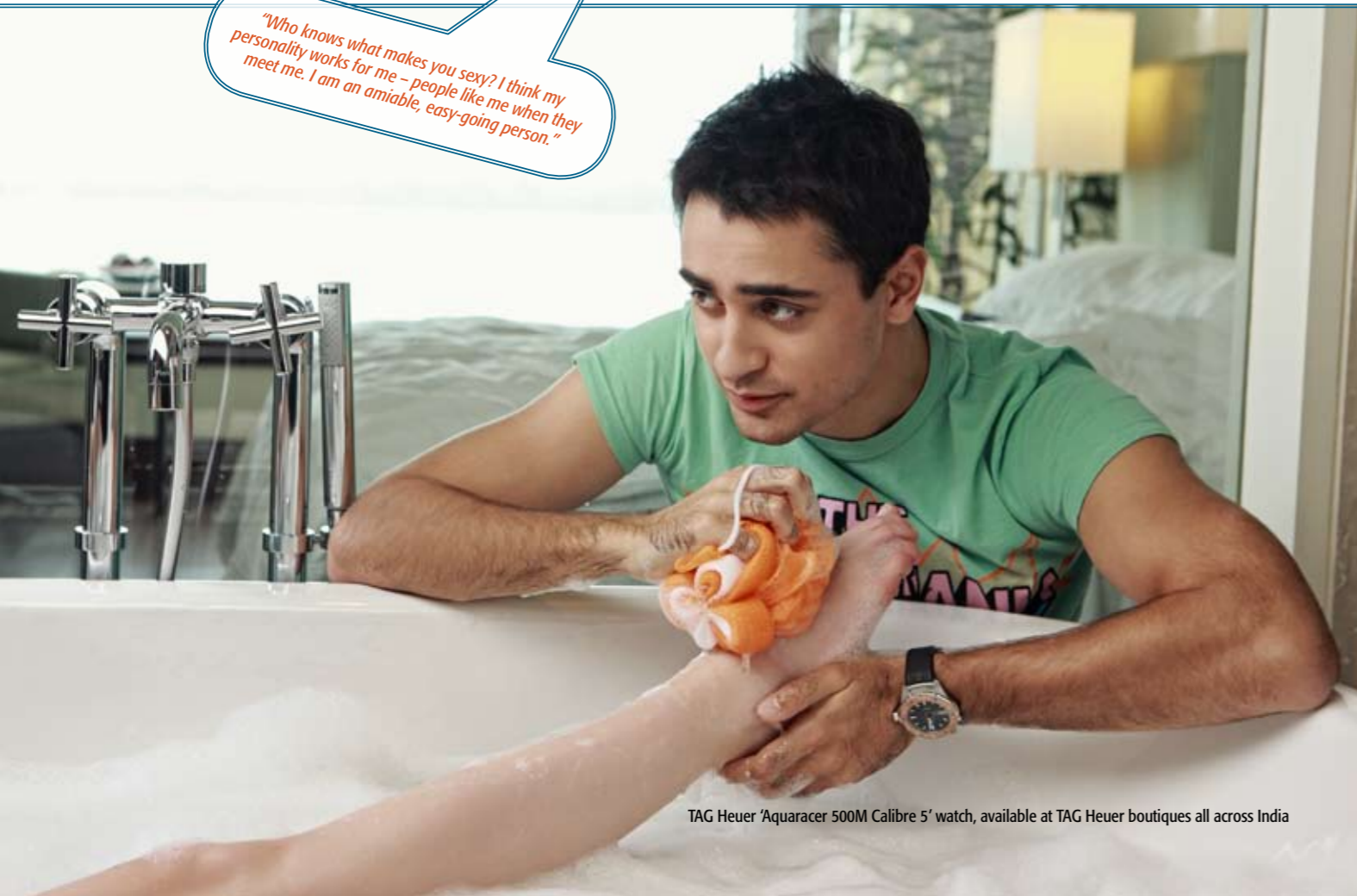
ease and with greater confidence now than ever before." Avantika admits that her respect for him also stems from the vital fact that he has never given her any reason to doubt his intentions, always being honest and forthcoming about his feelings. She quotes her mother, Vandana Malik, here, who describes Imran as, 'one of very few God's good people!' What makes Imran refreshingly undiabetic, though, is his well-controlled moodiness - evidenced by his need for

alone time - his sharp wit, often sardonic and dry, and his toe-the-line principles. You can't cross boundaries he's drawn because doing so endangers the very nature of that relationship and his tolerance towards you. But if you work within these limits, you can find in him a genuine friend - warming your grey cells against his razor-sharp repartees. Sonam Kapoor, his co-star in *I Hate Luv Storys*, marks "his humility and hunger for knowledge, but most of all his quirky sense of humour" as



TAG Heuer 'Link Calibre S' watch, available at TAG Heuer boutiques all across India.

*"Who knows what makes you sexy? I think my personality works for me – people like me when they meet me. I am an amiable, easy-going person."*



TAG Heuer 'Aquaracer 500M Calibre 5' watch, available at TAG Heuer boutiques all across India

appealing, and Deepika Padukone, with whom he has the upcoming romantic dramedy *Break Ke Baad*, finds him a fun, supportive co-star, calling him, 'Mr-Know-It-All.' "Imran likes to know everything about everything and if there's ever a time that he doesn't, he will immediately read up or Google it" Also known as 'Imikipedia' among his friends, intelligence in liberal doses is something Imran prides himself on having: "My dad (Anil Pal, IT professional in Sunnyvale, California) – after all, *mera baap hai* – knows more about everything than I can ever know. Currently it's uncool to know stuff, but I have always considered it to be a good thing to be knowledgeable."

That knowledge extends to supporting causes he believes in, for instance, standing up for one's democratic rights like voting or finding a shelter for homeless animals. With his personal brand of humour and wit, he uses his columns and public forums to inspire people into action – fighting religious myopia and mediocrity; he also contributed an essay on being environmentally-friendly for *Verve* last year. And he walks the talk: ensuring that his house is 'green', adopting stray animals and taking criticism positively to ensure achieving his own potential. It works for him, after all, women haven't given

up on idealism: Saan, co-moderator of his unofficial fan site ([www.imran-khan.org](http://www.imran-khan.org)) is rather taken in by his principles: "I find his honest dedication to good causes and his belief in human beings very hot." Sex appeal? With Imran it's never about the superficial stuff. "Good looks are not it. People are sweet and well behaved. But for my family, we lay a great deal of importance on integrity. It means different things for different people, but he doesn't let go of that principle," says Nuzhat. Imran accurately assesses that people gravitate towards his personality. "People like me when they meet me. I am an amiable, easy-going person. I like people and that translates well. Rakes work for younger women – say until the age of

Imran remains the quintessential dependable Darcy. As Shaima, the founder of his fan site observes, "What I love about him is that he may be your typical heartthrob, but he isn't a heart-breaker." The fact that he has been in a committed relationship for longer than even he can remember may have something to do with it, but as Imran points out, he is quite an unlikely candidate to be "having short-lived affairs with aspiring actresses and models." There is a sense of vulnerability about the boy-man that is carefully concealed. I noticed it when I inadvertently came across him eating a boxful of chocolate bars, trying to calm his nerves before going in front of a live audience, over a year ago. You get barely a moment to notice it, before it

shoulder people cry on; I am the guy who gives advice. Emotionally I am not great – I'm a fairly emotionally reserved person. People bring me things to fix, I'm a mechanic." And where reason is important, experimentation isn't a part of who Imran is – he doesn't choose to tread dangerous waters unless it will take him to the next step in his calculated climb to the top. Despite the fact that the prudence of his choices were questioned when he faced flak for films *Kidnap* and *Luck*, Imran makes every decision after great deliberation – he rarely, if ever, backtracks on that choice. He is quick to rectify errors, learn from the past and lay the foundation for the future, all the while maintaining a stoic demeanour about the present. For

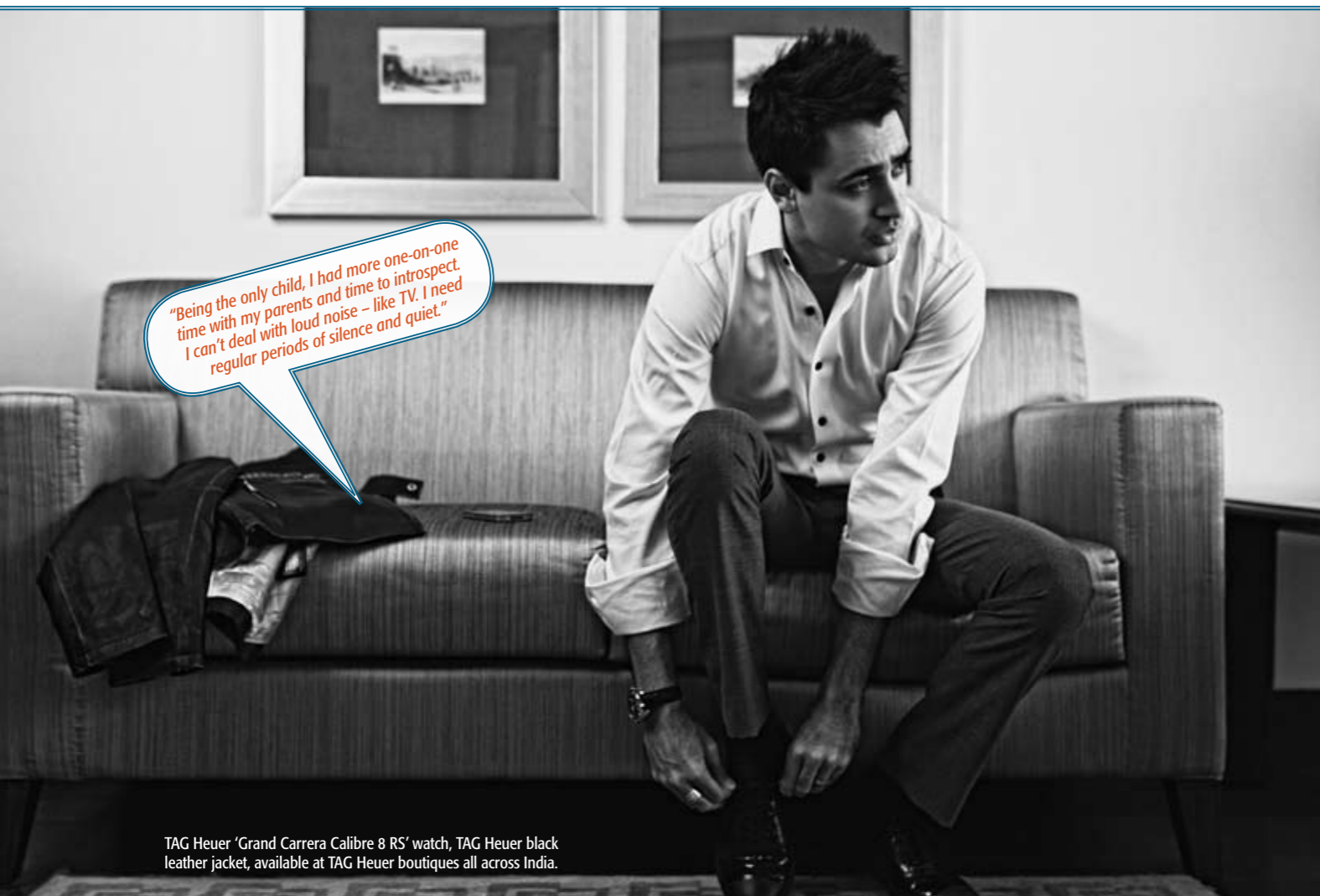
***"I've always been the good guy, and up until a certain time I had absolutely no success with women...and suddenly everyone starts coming forward with, 'You're such a great guy!' and I'm thinking, 'Where were you 10 years ago?'"***

25-26. I've always been the good guy, and up until a certain time I had absolutely no success with women...and suddenly everyone starts coming forward with, 'You're such a great guy!' and I'm thinking, 'Where were you 10 years ago?'" While his contemporaries play the field as cavalier Wickhams and Willoughbys,

flickers away. The face is always composed, the voice is always modulated and the feathers are impeccably unruffled. He is never reactionary: his sensitive personality is reined in by his logic-driven outlook. "My motivations are emotional, but my actions are rational. Both take place simultaneously. I'm not a

instance, his earlier bluntness – stemming from the inability to see the ramifications of brute candour – has now been prudently replaced by tactful replies, truthfulness coated with a barely perceptible paint of diplomacy. The culmination of being inherently good, irrefutably smart, and irreverently humorous





*"Being the only child, I had more one-on-one time with my parents and time to introspect. I can't deal with loud noise – like TV. I need regular periods of silence and quiet."*

TAG Heuer 'Grand Carrera Calibre 8 RS' watch, TAG Heuer black leather jacket, available at TAG Heuer boutiques all across India.



*While his contemporaries play the field as cavalier Wickhams and Willoughbys, Imran remains the quintessential dependable Darcy*

**Imran:** TAG Heuer 'Grand Carrera Calibre 8 RS' watch, TAG Heuer square belt, available at TAG Heuer boutiques all across India. Red slim tie, from Gucci, Mumbai.  
**Model:** Long dress, from Gucci; gold earrings, from The Oak Tree; gold and black sling bag, from Mango. All in Mumbai.

makes him a person you'd want to know despite his potential of being a big movie star. Imran is very clear about stardom: "You have to be a bankable star – to justify the money. You wear different hats. Being treated with deference can get irritating, because it can get too much; but not being treated with deference, bothers you too. I wear no hats in real

life." Twenty months ago, Imran prided himself on being the guy next door, who could roam around town 'practically invisible'. Today, after the aggressive promos and success of *I Hate Luv Storys*, he finds himself the reluctant star – unable to do so anymore. While he believes in positive fan interaction, he's withdrawn from the popular

social networking tool, Twitter, to ensure meaningful conversations over general mass following. Few can be actors before they are stars, few can uphold the integrity of their work over the drug of adulation and you believe he is one who can, possibly insulated by his rootedness. Nuzhat, with sudden maternal candour admits, "Yes, I worry

that his goodness can suffer at the hands of the movie industry, but more so, I hope Imran never becomes content with mere success, but pushes the limits towards better and more meaningful work. And I don't mean that for movies alone – but for it to extend to every part of his life."

Post the success of his first film and the lack-lustre performance of two soon after, he wasn't noticeably insecure, but definitely eager to prove himself once again. He took

the beating in his stride, with the same equanimity with which he handled his overnight rise to fame. Today, there is a sense of retribution inflected in his tone – his choice of words denotes an obviously confident person, who is merely reflecting the assurance that repeat success brings. While he doesn't believe in destiny and can't predict the future, he is secure: in the knowledge that he has everything that he would need to make

his world go around: career back on rails, the power to pick and choose from the best of the industry lined up at his door, the girl, the family, and complete faith in himself. Al Pacino's Tony Montana in *Scarface* famously said, 'First you get the money, then you get the power, then you get the woman.' Imran may have got it all in the wrong order, but for all the right reasons, he's hot, he's wanted and it looks very much like he's here to stay. ✿

**For Imran:** Make-up by Vicky Salvi. Hair by Ayesha Devitre, Milan of Nalini's Salon.  
**For Model:** Make-up by Yves Saint Laurent. Hair by Juice Salon.  
**Model courtesy:** Malu Mello, Anima Creative Management.

*"Emotionally I am not great – I'm a fairly emotionally reserved person. People bring me things to fix, I'm a mechanic."*

**IMRAN STYLE GUIDE**

HE'S BEEN KNOWN FOR HIS QUIRKY TEES, COMFORT-FIT DENIMS AND ONE-OF-A-KIND SNEAKERS.

THE ONES HE IS WEARING AT THE VERVE SHOOT ARE HAND-PAINTED BEATLES NIKE KEDS SOURCED BY AVANTIKA FROM LA.

LATELY, INSPIRED BY OLD MOVIES AND THE RAT PACK'S SHARP "BADASS" ATTIRE, HE HAS DECIDED HE WANTS MORE FROM THE WAY HE DRESSES. HE'S DECIDED TO "BRING BACK THE SUIT BY TAKING THAT STYLE OF DRESSING AND TURNING IT OVER ON ITS HEAD."

"IT'S NOT ABOUT WHAT YOU DO. YOU WEAR THE SUIT, DON'T LET IT WEAR YOU." TO DRIVE THE POINT HOME, HE QUOTES ALEC BALDWIN FROM 30 ROCK, WHO WHEN ASKED WHY HE'S WEARING A TUXEDO AT WORK, SNAPS BACK, 'IT'S AFTER SIX, WHAT AM I, A FARMER?'