



Early starter

Kirsten Dunst has lived most of her life in Hollywood, had her first kiss with Brad Pitt aged just 11 in *Interview With The Vampire* and is a regular magnet for paparazzi. Yet she claims to be so down-to-earth that she goes out in her pyjamas. *Stylist* gets a peek at her low-key life over a bowl of cereal

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KIRSTEN DUNST



KIRSTEN DUNST: LIVE AT
THE HOLLYWOOD BOWL

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Kirsten Dunst doesn't usually do breakfast. That's not to say she isn't a fan, just that setting the alarm for an early-morning date isn't the most appealing prospect. "I don't want to be confronted by people before I've taken a shower or gone to the loo," she explains, altogether reasonably over a cranberry juice at the Airloom Bakery, a quiet upmarket cafe in Toluca Lake, LA, where she lives. We're thankful then that today, Dunst has broken her routine to meet *Stylist* for breakfast in a favourite low-key spot. "I come here for brunch with my boyfriend. They don't have mimosas, though! Isn't that what brunch is about?"

It turns out Kirsten Dunst is more of a morning person than the breakfast ban might suggest. She's as spritely and appealing as you remember from her big-screen hits like *Bring It On* (somehow now 15 years old) and *The Virgin Suicides*. She is also quite into breakfast after all. She loves a full English, but admits to messing up her eggs, whether her first choices of poached or fried. "And I love beans. Ooh, I love beans with eggs all cut up. Love it."

That's a far messier affair than Dunst's childhood breakfasts, which consisted of bacon sandwiches and granola, imposed by a health-conscious German father. What about favourite kids' cereals? She struggles to think of one, then offers. "I loved Kix [an American corn cereal a bit like Rice Krispies], that was my favourite," which makes sweet sense because she started out acting in a Kix commercial as a toddler.

The other reason Dunst might not be up for a breakfast date is due to the paparazzi looming around her venue of choice. The day after this interview took place, several celebrity gossip sites pictured Dunst with a 'gal pal' (me), reporting that she was wiping tears of joy from her eyes after sharing news of an alleged engagement to her actor boyfriend, Garrett Hedlund. She met him filming the 2012 adaptation of the cult Jack Kerouac novel *On The Road*. Today she wears no ring and makes five casual references to her 'boyfriend' throughout our meeting. "They follow you when you've got something coming out," she explains, conscious of maintaining some privacy. Indeed, her public absence in

the past year is due to a number of forthcoming releases she's been working on. They include a film directed by the Rodarte sisters, her friends and founders of the luxury fashion brand. There's also her upcoming directorial debut. But first among them is her role in the second season of the Coen brothers' television series *Fargo*, coming to Channel 4 in October.

Originally a 1996 feature-length film, *Fargo* was adapted into an Emmy-winning TV show last year. With a brand new cast, story and location, series two is completely fresh but still bears that quintessential Coen brothers oddball atmosphere. "It's totally different [from the first season]," Dunst enthuses. "And very funny." Set in 1979 in South Dakota, it features Dunst as small-town beautician and hairdresser Peggy Blomquist, who's caught up in a local crime gang investigation. "I only read two episodes,"

to various sun-stained boulevards redolent of the suburban life of her character Lux Lisbon in *The Virgin Suicides*. "My mom lives in there, I live in there, my best friend lives over there. It's easy here and I'm like a little old lady. I walk to everything. There's my favourite sushi place, a bar with great hamburgers. We need a good restaurant, though."

That's where Inez, who lives only nine doors down, comes in handy. Dunst shows me a text she received from 'Mom' on her iPhone last night – an old iPhone 5 her friends ridicule her for. It's a snap of a dish that contains pasta, bacon and 'fancy' broccoli made for herself, but, as many mothers do, she made extra with her child in mind (her parents are divorced and her father lives elsewhere in LA). "But that's just the noodles. Then we put pot roast on top of it," she explains, her dimples growing huge.

"Then we had pickles and ketchup! I was supposed to go over to my girlfriend's house but..."

Despite growing up in the public eye, Dunst may as well be the person sat next to you on the train right now. Yes, it's a cliché to describe a Hollywood magnet as 'normal' but in Kirsten's case, she's normal to the point of abnormal. She answers every question with another question, more interested in the local gems you can recommend to

her. She makes relaxed and breezy conversation. Unless there are insects lurking. "There's a bee chilling by my salad!" she jumps. "I think he likes my moisturiser! Why does he like me? Oh God. Let's move inside. I'm sorry. I'm the worst." Upon mention that her career has been illustrious, she pokes fun. "Illustrious!" she repeats, then in that most LA of ways, considers how the universe has been guiding her career lately. "Wait," she pauses, horrified. "I can't believe I just said that. The *universe*," she scoffs, mocking her own Californian hippiedom. "Sure."

Ironically, it's Hollywood that keeps Dunst grounded. Inside the cafe, an older man comes over and gives her a humongous hug, like it's been a while. "That was my first teacher," she says, dropping down to a whisper. "He got me the role in *Interview With The Vampire*." Dunst's cinematic breakthrough came playing opposite fellow vampires Brad Pitt and Tom Cruise in the 1994 fantasy. "That was the most intense auditioning process of my life," she says. She revealed on David Letterman's talk show that her on-screen kiss with Pitt, when she was just 11, was her first kiss. "I kept thinking, It's Tristan!" she says, referring to Pitt's *Legends Of The Fall* hunk. "I peaked at an early age," she laughs.

Dunst is still in contact with Cruise. "Yes, I run

she says. "The description of Peggy was so amazing." Dunst has been proudly showing off the first of 10 episodes to her family and friends, despite being told to keep it to herself. "You wanna watch? Come on over!" she smiles, genuinely extending the invite.

WHOLE SOME ROOTS

Born to German parents Inez and Klaus in New Jersey where she grew up with younger brother Christian, Kirsten Caroline Dunst holds German

"Tom Cruise sends me a cake every Christmas. I call it the Cruise cake. It's so good, it gets eaten within a day"

citizenship but only speaks "children's German". She laughs, "I mean, I say *scheisse* [sh*t]!" She's lived most of her life here in San Fernando Valley, a wholesome neighbourhood that's home to many celebrities, not that it's common knowledge. Even Dunst herself is unaware of her fellow neighbours, including previous colleagues. "Kristen Stewart lives in the Vall'?" she asks of her *On The Road* co-star. "I don't leave the Vall'!" From where we sit, she points

into Tom. He sends me a cake every Christmas. I call it the Cruise Cake." Sorry? "It's so good – a coconut cake with white chocolate chips. It gets eaten within a day in my house. When the Cruise Cake gets delivered, it's like, 'Cruise Cake's here!'" she says, arms waving hyperactively in the cafe. "My friends know what that means."

BREAKING OUT

As well as film sets, Dunst attended Notre Dame High, a quintessential American school like the one depicted in her breakout hit, *Bring It On*. It's also deep in the heart of Hollywood, located near Universal Studios and as the cafe fills up, she peers at another guy in a baseball cap. "Wait, I think I went to high school with him." It was one summer during the school holidays that she broke from being a real-life cheerleader

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at Notre Dame to playing one in *Bring It On*, a teen classic which celebrated its 15th anniversary two days before our meeting. Kirsten is excited about the milestone. "I can't believe I was in a movie that's organising a reunion photoshoot!"

From starring as Mary Jane opposite Tobey Maguire's Peter Parker in director Sam Raimi's *Spider-Man* franchise ("a huge deal") to her proudest moment in Danish film-maker Lars von Trier's *Melancholia*, Dunst has always carved out a diverse on-screen career. Her partnership with Sofia Coppola on *The Virgin Suicides* and period piece *Marie Antoinette* proved that the two women made a successful Hollywood pairing. Dunst confirms she and Coppola have discussed working together again. "Of course!" she says. "Sofia feels like home."

"I choose movies like a kid would: what's fun?" she says. "Also I say 'no' a lot." She balks when asked to recall some examples. "I hate when actors do that in interviews." She adopts a mocking 'jock' voice. "Dude, I totally turned this down... 'OK, no-one cares! You sound like a [mouths the word 'dick'] Ha! I made mistakes, put it that way. Sometimes you read a script and it's a pile of s***, it's bad." Her care with the way she words things leaves me wondering why Dunst is so intensely polite. She rarely swears. It's probably a remnant of child actor training, or perhaps she's conscious of her mother so nearby, though she insists her upbringing never left her pressurised to act like America's sweetheart. She was just "a good girl".

"I didn't try pot till I was 18," she shrugs. She did once get bullied into a cover shoot for US men's magazine

Maxim, appearing bra-less beneath an open denim jacket. "I was too young, I didn't like it." And it was for *Bring It On*? She nods.

"Not good. But then I got a whole new team of people!" Today, she views herself as a 'friend' to the Fanning sisters, Dakota (21) and Elle (17). At 33, Dunst is in mentor territory, something she doesn't overthink. "I just love them, especially Dakota, she's so cool."

SWITCHING ROLES

After *Fargo*, Dunst will be seen in a small sci-fi film called *Midnight Special*, which co-stars Adam Driver and Joel Edgerton. She can't say anything about her next project, *Woodstock*, directed by the Rodarte sisters, Kate and Laura Mulleavy. But she has just started directing a feature-length film of her own. "It might happen next year," she says of her mysterious literary adaptation, which for now is staying under wraps. "It's hard, it's such a famous book for women. I can't say what it is. If I heard it was being made, I'd say, 'That should never be made into a movie!'" Did the *On The Road* project spark this? "Why would you think it's period? Wahaha! We'll see."

She quickly changes the subject. "I like coming to work and not being the one in hair and make-up. I wanna do the other side of it. I need to. I've been acting for so long now and sometimes you get frustrated. I'm giving all this to someone else who gets to decide what to do with it. It's my turn. But I'm also scared because it's hard to make a good movie, and I'm very hard on myself."

Yet it's not work that keeps Dunst awake at night. "I think about having children. I hope that's easy for me. That's the stuff I worry about. Health. Am I dying?! I'm like a Jewish mother." In 2008, Dunst checked herself into rehab in Utah to deal with depression. Mental health issues in Hollywood remain taboo. I ask her if it's hard to maintain privacy in her life but also whether she feels able to voice concerns relevant to her own experience? "I know what you mean. I feel like I can be open without giving away everything. I do have a boundary – limitations just to protect myself because people do really inconsiderate things with information."

She brings up the recent Amy Winehouse documentary, *Amy*. "That poor girl. It's scary what that level of fame can do. I feel like I can live a very under-the-radar life here in the Valley."

Unsurprisingly, Kirsten has no interest in ever leaving low-key Toluca Lake. It's a rare part of LA, far removed from the red-carpet world of nearby Hollywood. And it's so chilled that it even draws the reluctant Dunst out to brekkie. "We're not in West Hollywood where everyone is on their frickin' cellphone taking pictures," she says. "Everyone in the Valley is normal style. It's not super-cool here. I got dressed up for you, but I usually wear my pyjamas and no-one cares."

Fargo returns to Channel 4 on 19 October



GIRL NEXT DOOR: DUNST IS ONE OF THE FEW STARS WHO WE BELIEVE WHEN SHE SAYS SHE'S JUST A NORMAL GIRL

PHOTOGRAPHY: TERRY RICHARDSON/ART PARTNER, REX FEATURES STILL-LIFE PHOTOGRAPHY: PIVELEYES

KIRSTEN'S GUIDE TO LOW-PROFILE EATING OUT IN LA

Escape the paparazzi by dining Dunst-style



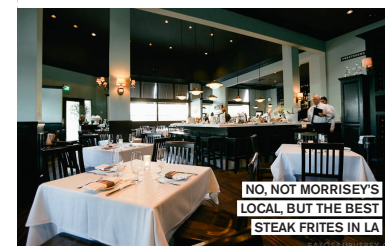
ARTISAN CHEESE GALLERY, STUDIO CITY

"Oh my God, I love Artisan Cheese. It's just so cute, and not as busy as the more popular places nearby."



PETIT TROIS, MELROSE AVENUE

"It's a little French place in a strip mall. You feel like you've just stepped into France. They serve a great omelette."



OSTERIA MOZZA, MELROSE AVENUE

"It has the best steak frites and it's so pretty inside. I wish it was here in Toluca Lake. That's what we need here!"



JOAN'S ON THIRD, VENTURA BOULEVARD

"It's great. But that place is so loud. You need to be prepared for a madhouse the whole time!"