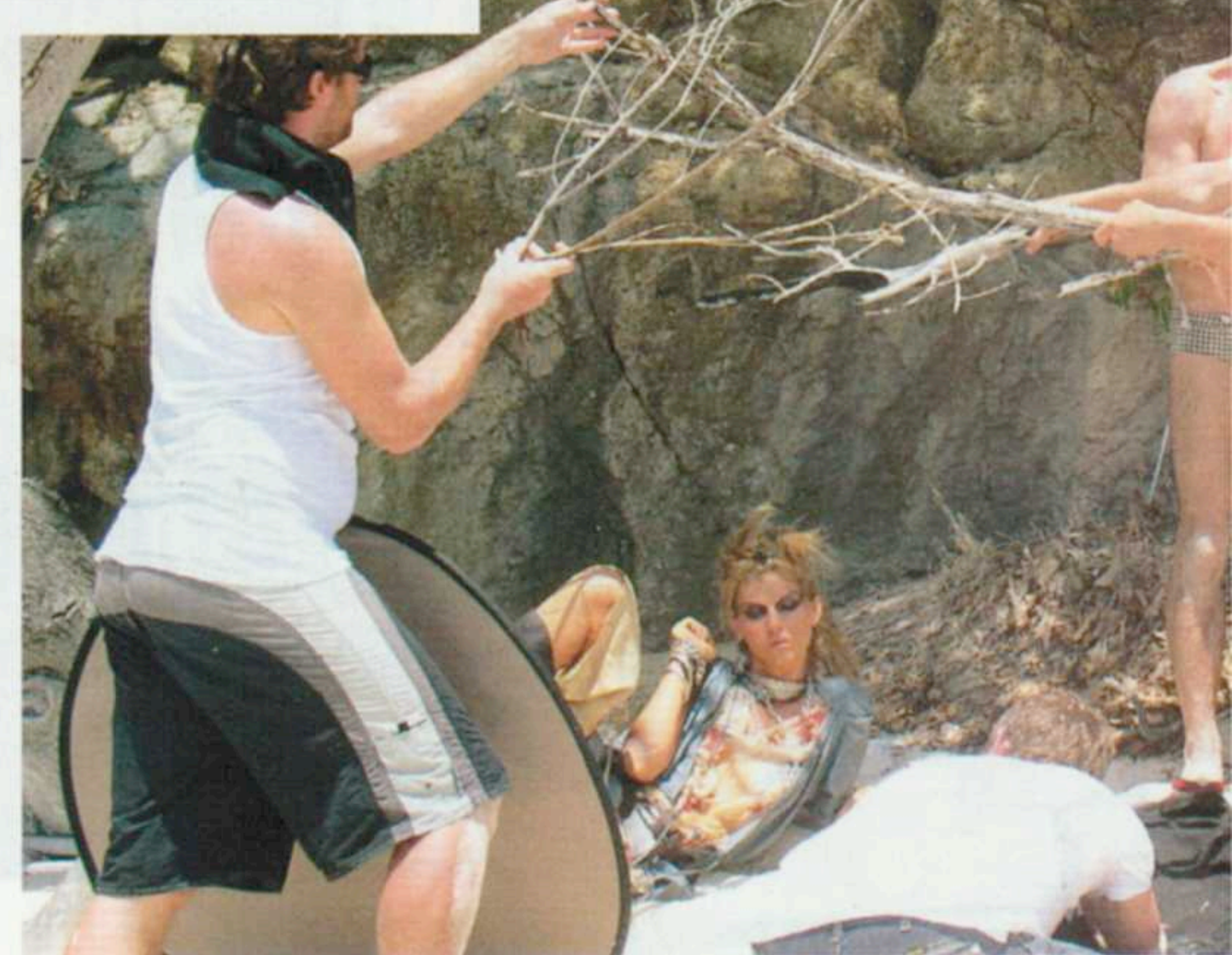


Island in the sun: *clockwise from far left, model Angela Lindvall poses for the shoot; the pool at Necker's Great House; a typical bedroom; setting up one of the photographs; beachcombing*



living fashion travel

Necker Island, Richard Branson's 74-acre home-from-home in the British Virgin Islands, is run as a private residence. A staff of 31 looks after guests' every need and the emphasis is very much on relaxation – as the *Vogue* fashion team discovered when they stayed on the island to shoot the “High Plains Drifter” story for the July issue.

Eleven of us arrived at night by private launch (guests arriving by day can fly in by helicopter) and gathered for a nightcap in The Great House. Some of the team chose to stay there, in the airy, Balinese-style building (it is Necker's central meeting point) while others opted for the three one-bedroom houses on the island: Bali Hi, Bali Lo and Bali Cliff, which, as its name suggests, perches dramatically on the edge of a cliff (it also has a great bathroom which is open to the elements). All the bedrooms, wherever they are, have amazing views of the ocean and islands beyond.

On the first morning, we breakfasted, in the

Stay at Necker Island and be a free spirit, Caribbean style. By Nick Cox

company of hummingbirds, on the sun terrace overlooking the sea. (In fact, food was a highlight of our stay – from sushi at lunchtimes to beach barbecues at sunset.) Next on the agenda was a tour of the island – unspoiled beaches interspersed with arid, cactus-strewn ridges – to choose the locations for the shoot.

We were working during our visit, but for the holidaymaker, there is no end of things to do on Necker. Besides swimming, snorkelling and waterskiing, you can take advantage of the instructors on site and go sport fishing, sailing to a nearby island, or to explore the nearby coral reefs. But there's no pressure to be active – at Necker, it is the guest who dictates the pace. ■

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