



ACTOR, DIRECTOR, PRODUCER, 47

RACHEL GRIFFITHS

The Aussie star on how her “obsession” for telling jockey Michelle Payne’s story paid off

winning – it’s fantastic. Michelle’s brother Stevie is such an inspirational character, too. He’s an inarguable advocate for what adults with disabilities can achieve with their lives. **And it’s an inspirational story for women in sport.** Michelle told me

what colour handkerchief they should wear in their pocket! **It’s nice that they care about their appearance. Do you think we’re having a cultural moment around gender equality?** Yes, I do think there is a conversation being had – look at the picture of [Prime Minister Turnbull’s] new cabinet, which definitely looks a lot better than our government did two years ago.

You’re also in pre-production for a film about Julia Gillard, but it’s yet to be picked up by local TV networks. Why do you think that is? TV has

been fantastic for female showrunners, writers and characters. I can’t criticise [US networks] HBO or ABC for creating great female stories that I’ve been really happy to tell [in *Six Feet Under* and *Brothers & Sisters*]. But movies do have a way to go!

Are you happy living in Melbourne after so long in LA? I love being so close to my family. There’s nothing like having your mum around the corner, who can pick your six-year-old up from school, take her to the op shop to find a man’s shirt for Be What You Want Day, take her home, turn it into a panda zookeeper’s outfit, and then turn up at eight o’clock in the morning to do a panda zookeeper’s hairdo. I didn’t have that support in LA!

📍 HANNAH JAMES

Rachel Griffiths is the Longines Golden Slipper Carnival ambassador; australianurfclub.com.au.

👉 FOLLOW HANNAH ON TWITTER @HFJAMES.

We’ve heard you’re making a film on Michelle Payne’s historic Melbourne Cup win. Michelle’s book, *Life As I Know It*, is out in April, and thanks to my fortunate meeting with her at Randwick late last year – and my obsessive passion for her story and for the moment she won the Melbourne Cup – I’m thrilled we’ve been given the rights to shoot her book. I’m producing and directing, and we start filming next year. **What drew you to her story?** Everyone [who has met her] is touched by her quiet confidence, determination and sweetness. She’s one of the most hardworking athletes around. She comes from a family of jockeys who are involved in that backstage part of racing that we don’t always see – it’s a very *Downton Abbey* world. You have your big, glossy house, then you have all the people actually running the place, and we don’t always get to know those characters. You’ve got your trainers, your wealthy owners, your superstar jockeys flying in, side by side with country people who also have a horse in the Golden Slipper and a chance of

people used to think women weren’t strong enough to ride, especially in the long races. But she said it’s not about the strength, it’s about the relationship you have with the horse. It’s a sport women can compete in – as breeders, as owners, as jockeys. They’re competing equally, and that’s exciting.

I know Michelle wanted to move on from her comments about racing being chauvinistic. But it is, isn’t it?

Historically, it has been, but my friend Julia Ritchie is one of the top breeders in the business, and won the Slipper last year. And there’s [trainer] Gai Waterhouse... It’s not that we won’t celebrate women, it’s just that things that go fast have traditionally been a male domain! Those perceptions are broken by women like Julia, Michelle and Gai. When you have women, it attracts women, because they realise it’s not just about Fashions on the Field – although getting dressed up is fantastic. I love seeing everyone looking so damn fine, especially men. Bring back waistcoats! I love that straight men are actually thinking about

MY SUNDAY STYLE: ALLEY PASCOE. PHOTOGRAPHY: KEN BUTTI, CHLOE PAUL/CHADSTONE. COURTESY OF ELYSE KNOWLES

MY SUNDAY STYLE / ELYSE KNOWLES *My ideal Sunday, from sunrise to sunset*



Elyse is a model and features in Chadstone’s A/W ’16 campaign.

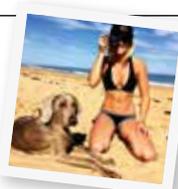
11am After an aerial yoga class at Studio 3 Australia in Moonee Ponds [Melbourne], it’s brekkie at Lux Foundry in Brunswick.



12pm Head down to Ocean Grove for a paddle or to Preston Market to stock up on fresh produce for the week.



3pm Take my crazy dog, Isla, for a walk. Brighton Beach is always a winner, as your pets can run amok in the water with the million other dogs there.



4pm An acai bowl from Soul Press [in Brighton] on the way home, then a Vietnamese salad from Tom Phat [in Brunswick] for dinner. Perfect.

