

M  
&  
V

*muses*  
+  
*visionaries*



*TRAVEL*

TO

GOA  
ISTANBUL  
SÃO PAULO  
ROME  
TULUM  
COPENHAGEN

**ESCAPE**  
*to the*  
**BAHAMAS**  
*with*  
**INDIA HICKS**

+

**POP OF COLOR**  
**FORWARD FASHION**

\$6.95



0 174470 26934 2



British-born *India Hicks* has always been known for her free spirit. Moving to the Caribbean 18 years ago only broadened her sense of adventure and purpose in life.

---

By Nila Do Simon  
Photography by Norman Nelson

# The Isle of India

Every so often, India Hicks does what many mothers aspire to do. She scrapbooks. Inside her idyllic, five-bedroom plantation-style villa on Harbour Island in the Bahamas stand upright tomes of scrapbooks, albums that hold tiny memories of a magnificent life that Hicks leads with her family across several countries.

Hicks has a scrapbook for each of her children. Some are on their second volume, like her eldest, 17-year-old Felix, while the anthology of six-year-old Domino's life is just beginning. With the touch only a mother can have, Hicks carefully affixes memories onto the pages: travel mementos, photos from holidays abroad, a child's first drawings and letters, important invitations and newspaper clippings. It's her way of being able to touch moments in life that are no longer touchable. "Not only do I do this for myself, I do this for my children as well," Hicks said. "I look through the books all the time. Scrapbooking is an effort, but I cherish these memories."



Besides being the Bahamas' most prolific scrapbooker, Hicks is one of its most recognized faces. Hicks herself—leggy, beautiful with long blond hair that the Caribbean wind loves to catch ahold of—has lived a life fit for a library of worldly memories. An author of two books, *Island Life: Inspirational Interiors* and *Island Beauty*, the former fashion model turned jeweler and bedding designer has made a name for herself away from her native England and is living the ultimate escape fantasy.

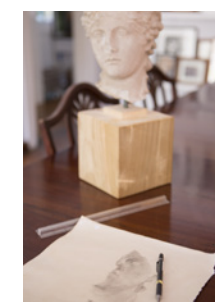
Memories and experiences fill the Bahamian home Hicks shares with her life partner, David Flint Wood, their four children and one foster child: memories like being a 13-year-old bridesmaid in Princess Diana and Prince Charles' wedding, climbing into the Grand

Canyon, and backpacking through India, the country after which she was named (her grandfather was Lord Mountbatten, the last viceroy to India who gave passage to its independence).

For India the individual, it's only fitting that the country itself holds a special place in her heart. She has traveled to India extensively, including in 2007 to attend Elizabeth Hurley's wedding in Jodhpur. She loves the city of Jaipur "for all the obvious reasons, like the color, romance, the people and history." The northern city of Kashmir has what Hicks calls "a remarkable way of life." In her youth, her family would visit and stay on a houseboat on a lake. "The whole way of life was by water," Hicks said. "Selling food, washing clothes by the water...It was extraordinarily beautiful. You are truly one with nature."

Hicks has had a love affair with the Bahamas even before moving there with Wood in 1996. Her earliest memories include traveling to the Bahamas from London, where she and her older brother and sister lived with their famed interior designer father, David Hicks, and mother, Lady Pamela Mountbatten. In her youth, Hicks and her family primarily stayed on the small and exclusive Windermere Island, which Hicks recalled having a "Robinson Crusoe-like feel. There was no infrastructure, and you could walk on the pink island for miles and never see anyone." Designed by her father to resemble an Egyptian temple, the family's Bahamian home forever remains a trigger point of countless holiday memories for Hicks.

"I still remember the smell of the wet sand after the rain, the tropic sights and sounds," she said. Hicks and her family now live in the renovated Hibiscus Hill, on Harbour Island, a few miles away. ▶



But not all of her young travel memories are as indulgent, Hicks is sure to mention. “I remember not being taken to Istanbul as a young girl. My older brother and sister were able to go, but my parents insisted I stay behind. So there I was, waving goodbye to them as I stayed in London.”

It should be noted that if 677 royals ahead of her fall, India Hicks would succeed to the British throne. Her second cousin and godfather, Prince Charles, no doubt hasn't put much thought into it. Neither has Hicks. Instead, she is more likely to be running barefoot on the beach, adding another adopted pet into her menagerie, or going on that family trip to Malibu that her youngest son, Conrad, has been pushing. Hicks has bucked much of her aristocratic traditions, instead trading that life in for one filled with sandy beaches, barefoot children and green palm fronds. Island life suits this noble just fine.

Splitting time between England, the Bahamas, and the United States (where she does much of her business), 46-year-old Hicks admits she has never wanted to feel anchored to one location. She has referred to her pre-motherhood days as being as “gypsy-like” as they come, leaving London for Boston to pursue a photography degree as a teenager, then living in New York and Paris, and traveling the globe as a model for Ralph Lauren, Pucci and Tods.

She is not one to move toward convention. By her own admission, Hicks has not wanted to get married for her own “very weird” reasons. “But I knew I wanted David to be the father of my children,” she added. The two met as youths, Wood being a friend of Hicks' sister, and reunited as adults. As Hicks puts it, both share an ironic, self-deprecating sense of humor (“dark, British humor,” she clarified). After a short courtship, Wood asked Hicks if she wanted to move to the

Bahamas with him, and she said yes, not realizing that “yes” would turn into 18 years and counting of island life. “Some people are told to have five-year plans, and I don't even have a five-minute plan,” she said laughing. She paused, reflecting before admitting, “We do live an unusual life.”

For Hicks, living in the Bahamas has sparked much of who she is today, and it has allowed her to move out of her father's prolific design



she admits a lesser-known venue called the Sweet Spot, which offers fresh produce, has been a go-to option. In Nassau, Hicks loves stopping into the Island Shop at the Old Fort Bay Town Centre for home goods.

Her life in the Bahamas has been inspiring. She has partnered with HSN to produce island inspired home accent linens and bedding, with a new line debuting this season. The collection named India Hicks Island Living features memorable pieces, including a six-piece dotted jacquard towel set (the first in the young collaboration), a quilt set patterned with birds and botanicals, and a striped comforter set as well as decorative pillows and wall decor. “Our family sleeps on the sheets and dreams on them,” Hicks said. Her lifestyle website IndiaHicks.com is home to her fine jewelry collections and eccentric finds from her travels around the world. ▶

India Hicks' entire HSN collection includes the English Garden quilt set in plum and red (on Hicks' bed) and the RunAway Ticking Stripe comforter set (below).



shadow and shine on her own as a designer. The self-proclaimed free spirit has become a successful businesswoman and entrepreneur. Her fine jewelry line is an ode to her island home with fish-shaped pendants and charms. “I was able to stretch and find myself here,” she said. “When I came to the Bahamas, I was able to find a world of my own.”

*“I strongly believe that part of my children's education is to see the world.”*

*“When I came to the Bahamas,  
I was able to find a world of my own.”*

---

Hicks' conscious and overt departure from the noble life she grew up in is not lost on her. She once lived in a world that was literally and figuratively thousands of miles apart from her current life. The pressures of acting like a royal do not apply in Hibiscus Hill. Having her home base in the Bahamas was a decision Hicks and Wood made for their family, which unexpectedly grew four years ago when Hicks became the legal guardian to then-15-year-old Wesley, a Bahamian boy whose mother died of cancer. “I feel blessed and honored that Wesley has chosen us,” Hicks said, and proudly notes that Wesley's name appears on every holiday card the family has sent out since taking him into their home.

“We are living amongst a nation where one sees such a different way of life,” she said. “Hopefully my children will recognize how very lucky we are with what we have. I worry if one lives in a big city, one tends to lose sight of how lucky one is. It's a very good foundation to a lifelong appreciation of how life is diverse and how we can remain grounded and grateful.”

Hicks and Wood have shared their love of travel with their children and take them along as much as possible. Some of their first experiences included accompanying Hicks as she traveled the globe on modeling assignments. “I strongly believe that part of their education is to see the world,” Hicks said. “It's as important as learning their ABCs.”

Mementos of their journeys dot every corner of their home and leap out from their scrapbooks. As a professionally-trained photographer, Hicks has countless travel photos on tables, walls and anywhere else that can hold an 8-by-10-inch frame. Even their furniture has been hand selected during trips abroad, including a dining room table and chairs from a New Orleans vacation. A larger-than-life shark jaw that the family found at a market in Africa ten years ago remains one of their most precious souvenirs. “It was so freshly caught that our bags stank of rotting flesh all the way home,” Hicks said.

“I think my children have grown up very wild in the fact that it's this extraordinary balance of seeing this big world and growing up on this tiny island,” she said.

Still an image of refinement and elegance in her mid-forties, Hicks' well-mannered, well-spoken nature makes one forget that it was her free-spirited, wild-child soul that caused her to leave the comforts of London years ago. She still hasn't made it to Istanbul, but vows she will. No doubt that memory will be displayed prominently in her scrapbooks. ■

