



# men in green

GONE ARE THE AGEING HIPPIES, DEDICATED TREE HUGGERS AND DREADLOCKED TEENS. A NEW, ALTOGETHER SEXIER, BREED OF ECO-WARRIOR HAS EMERGED

BY **jo cruse**

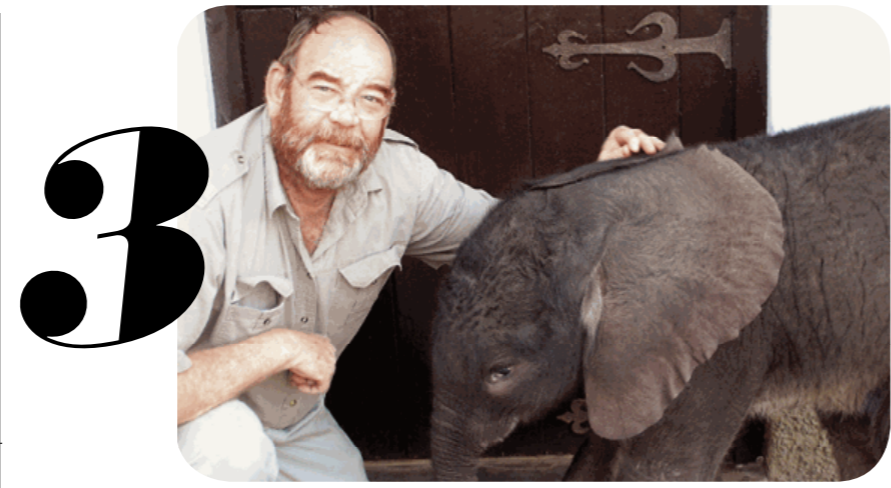
They are an unlikely bunch. An ex-presidential candidate, an A-list heart-throb, a swashbuckling actor and a lifelong environmentalist. But the threat of global destruction has galvanised politicians, celebrities and local heroes to join arms at the picket line. By turning our admiration into action, they hope that we will follow their lead and go green.

## LEONARDO DICAPRIO

The fresh-faced star of what actress Kate Winslet calls "that boat film" has undergone something of a metamorphosis. A few years ago, an enquiry about his after-hours whereabouts would most likely have led you to a noisy bar somewhere in downtown LA. Search for him now and you're more likely to find him campaigning about global warming from a glacier in Iceland.

DiCaprio has used his celebrity status to emerge as one of the world's leading spokesmen on eco issues. In fact his résumé now reads like that of an eco-overachiever – an interview with Bill Clinton for Earth Day 2000, the release of two spoken word pieces, *Global Warning* and *Water Planet*, recipient of the Environmental Leadership Award and board member of the National Resources Defence Council. Along with fellow actor and eco-phile Edward Norton, DiCaprio sits on the board of Global Green – the national environmental organisation founded by former President of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev. Realising that political buy-in is essential for lasting environmental change, DiCaprio has openly supported past US presidential hopefuls with eco-friendly policies in their bid for office.

His 2007 documentary *The 11th Hour* which he co-wrote, narrated and produced, granted him true eco-warrior status. But last May's *Vanity Fair* cover was perhaps his most powerful piece of eco-propaganda. Even those suffering from green-fatigue could not help being struck by Annie Leibovitz's haunting image of DiCaprio atop a melting glacier, polar bear cub at his feet, drenched in clear blue Icelandic light.



## ORLANDO BLOOM

An experience in Antarctica, while filming *Pirates of the Caribbean*, had a considerable impact on Orlando Bloom's attitude towards the environment. So much so, he has subsequently fronted numerous campaigns about the dangers of climate change.

In the colossal presence of a glacier, realising that it may soon be nothing more than a lake of icy water, Bloom internalised the magnitude of global warming. His epiphany led him to join his cousin, photographer/director Sebastian Copeland, in creating a book of images of Antarctica. The aim of the project was to immortalise the landscape on film as it slowly melts under rising global temperatures.

Bloom lives, travels and parties green. When he was unable to find a suitable London home, he decided to build one, complete with green



ELLEMAN

## AL GORE

Since his defeat to George Bush in the 2000 US election, Gore's gone from zero to hero. Having licked his wounds, he re-emerged as an environmental activist. In 2007, the Democrat was a joint recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize for his work regarding global warming, proving that (unlike most politicians) he's more than just hot air.

To his credit, Gore has been trying to raise awareness about the dangers of climate change for more than three decades. Long before it was hip to be green, Gore initiated hearings on key environmental issues. In 2004, he launched GLOBE (Global Learning and Observations to Benefit the Environment), to increase eco-awareness among students. He is a keen proponent of the Kyoto Protocol, which aims to establish a global framework for reducing carbon emissions.

Any businessman worth their corner office knows that greenbacks depend on green business principles. Gore has capitalised on this trend by setting up Generation Investment Management. The company, established in 2004, helps businesses to reconcile financial profitability with social, environmental and corporate responsibility.

Despite decades of environmental campaigning, it was *An Inconvenient Truth* (2006), Gore's award-winning documentary on climate change, which launched him into the environmental stratosphere. Using the momentum generated by the film, Gore helped to mastermind the 2007 Live Earth concerts.

But it hasn't all been Oscars and standing ovations. His squeaky green image was tarnished by allegations that his Nashville home consumed more than 15 times the amount of electricity used by the average American dwelling. Further scandal erupted after it was alleged that he was profiting from his environmental efforts by purchasing the carbon credits used to offset his air travel from his own company.

An Oscar and a Nobel Prize aren't bad consolations for not making it into the White House. Now, instead of addressing Congress on environmental issues, he has a global platform... and the whole world is listening.

## LAWRENCE ANTHONY

In the midst of sandstorms, gunfire and guerrilla warfare, Lawrence Anthony flew to Iraq and drove alone through 500 miles of desert to rescue the animals of the Baghdad Zoo. This wasn't Anthony's first epic animal rescue; and it's unlikely to be his last.

The KwaZulu-Natal conservationist is committed to protecting vulnerable animals. In 2007, when rebels assumed control of the Garamba National Park in the Democratic Republic of Congo, threatening already endangered white rhinos and pygmy giraffes, Anthony boldly negotiated a ceasefire in the surrounding area. Locally, his conservation work is focused on the rehabilitation of elephants at Thula Thula, the luxury private game reserve he owns in KZN.

Sustainability is central to Anthony's approach to conservation. He

has established The Earth Organisation, a non-profit initiative that supports conservation and environmental education projects locally and across the globe. Anthony's work in Iraq and commitment to environmental causes has earned him an Earth Trustee Award, the Earth Day medal and a US Army 3rd Infantry Regimental Medal.

Anthony's environmental exploits read like a movie script. No surprise then that the elephant whisperer (as he's mythically known) is soon to have his life portrayed in the blockbuster *Good Luck, Mr. Anthony*. His Iraqi adventure is already recounted in *Babylon's Ark* (Thomas Dunne, R183). And Anthony performs his environmental work without the pomp and ceremony of other high profile eco-warriors.

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mod-cons like solar heating and energy-efficient appliances. He offsets the carbon emissions his jet-set lifestyle generates by planting trees. He arrives at premieres in a Toyota Prius, the eco-warrior's chariot of choice. Bloom's activities after hours often involve environmentally friendly events, such as the Fuji Rock Festival, described as "the cleanest festival in the world."

Despite his ecological CV not having the breadth of fellow celebrity eco-warriors, Bloom has a unique kind of green appeal. His boyish good-looks are a powerful weapon in the attempt to draw a new generation to environmental causes.

DiCaprio, Gore, Anthony and Bloom – the reason these men are such powerful eco-icons comes down to basic biology. Collectively they represent the alpha male: able to address a packed auditorium, wrestle wild animals, walk the red carpet and want to save the world while they're at it.

