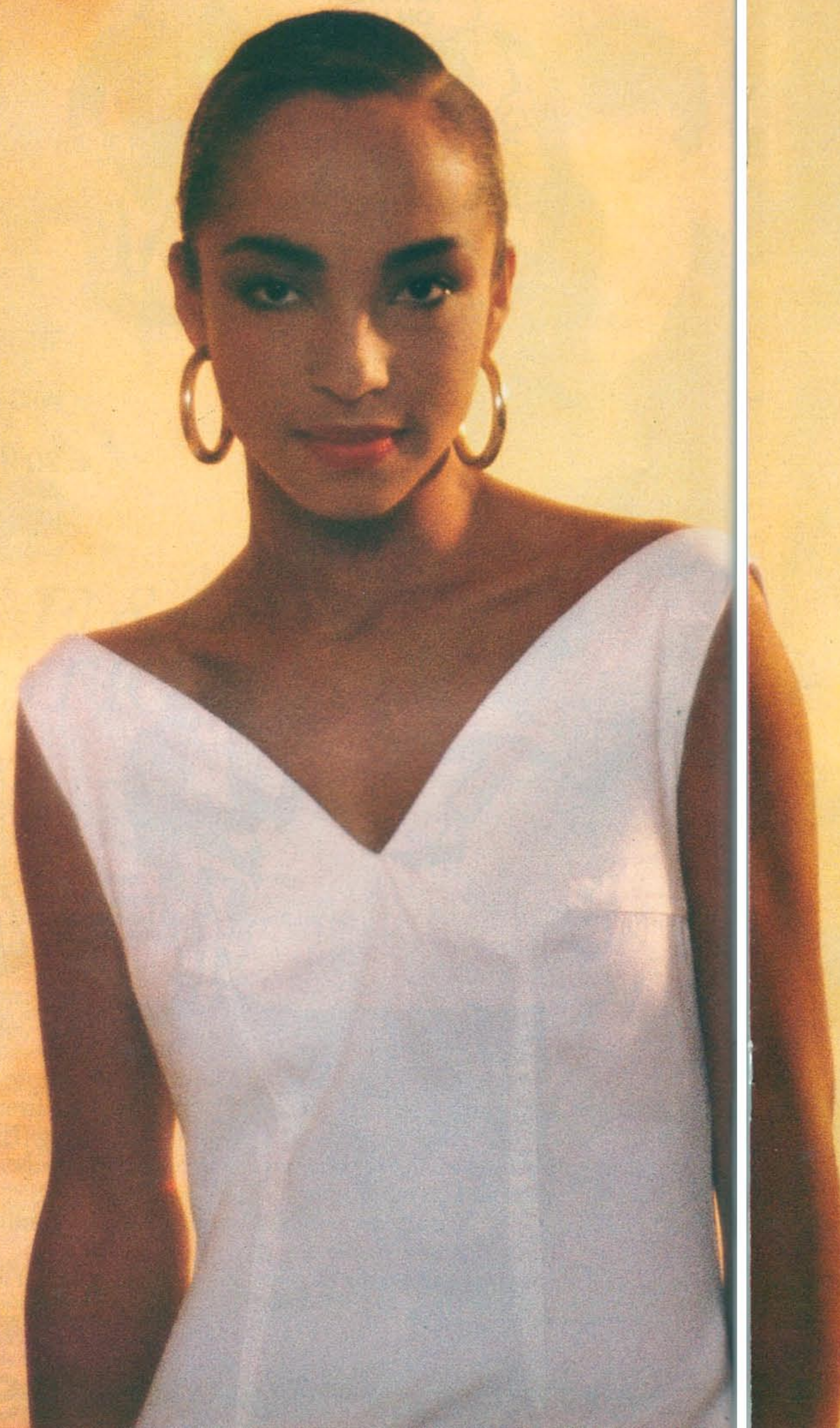


HALF A CROISSANT & A HEAT LOG



Just two of the vital items that make up Sade's travelling kit as she conquers the world. Paul Simper carefully notes down the rest. Photos: Toshi Yajima

What do you always take with you on tour?

Potters' Catarrh Pastels and a Heat Log. That's a disgusting 'mock log' box that we haven't got a bag for yet. It's the ultimate punishment in the band to be the one who carries it through customs.

The reason it's so important is that all these hotels have air conditioning and it messes my throat up completely. So I don't have the heat on. I just have my heat log. Every hotel should have one!

Another essential on tour is my vitamins. I *never* take them, but it's reassuring to know that they're there.

Do you 'whoop it up' much on tour?

Not really. I have to make myself stay in. It's hard when friends come along and don't realise you've been hard at it for months but if I go out for a 'quick drink' I'll stay out all night – just as long as there's somebody dancing or talking next to me.

What do you have for breakfast when you're away?

I started our world tour with great intentions – poached egg on toast, muesli, tea and orange every day – but now it's waning. I'll get through half a croissant and go for the extra lie-in.

Do you call your mum much?

Yeah, I do. And she calls me – usually just before we're about to go on stage! I do make an effort to call because when you're away you create a whole life around you. You're not nearly as aware of how long you've been away as somebody who is doing the same thing every day.

Do you send many postcards?

No. When the group first started I told my mother I'd send her a postcard from wherever we visited. I sent her ones from Hawaii, Ireland and Belgium this time – then I gave up!

Do you do a lot of interviews abroad?

I try and do as few as possible. If you sit for two hours a day talking about yourself it's pretty unnatural. Most people probably only talk for that long in the

whole day – with a few exceptions!

Have you been paid any extraordinary compliments?

A Frenchman once told me I had "beautiful ears" but he was pointing at his eyes as he tried to explain!

What's your passport photo like?

It's alright actually. By sheer fluke it's quite a flattering picture. It's only about a year old though. The one I had before that had this terrible grin – this "honestly I'm not carrying anything illegal and I haven't got any ammunition" type smile.

Have you ever been searched?

Yeah. Heathrow airport is a joke. I rarely go through without my bags being looked into – I don't know what they think I'm up to. One time all our luggage was re-routed so we went through with one saxophone and one small bag – and they still searched us!

Have you had a lot of groups coming backstage to see you?

People have asked but it's really not very practical. I know Ashford and Simpson wanted to come back in New York but it was really impossible. If we'd said 'yes' to them you can hardly then say to the band's friends "sorry, it's alright for Ashford and Simpson and not for you".

Do you protect your voice when you're on tour?

Yeah, basically I just keep my throat covered. Also I don't have ice in drinks or hot soup. That's a real problem in America where even the towels come in ice!

Do you 'perspire' much on stage?

It depends. When we played Birmingham it was freezing. Even Dave our drummer didn't sweat. I sat down at one point and it was so cold I had to get up and walk about again. There was this gale.

I do 'glow' occasionally! But I'm not a very sweaty person – thank God.

What do you miss most about England when you're away?

I miss England – full stop. The atmosphere. Just everything

about the place. I can't imagine living anywhere else but I would like to buy a place in Spain.

It's much more frightening singing at home because you're so close to everyone. I'm glad I was never one of those girls who had to sing in front of her aunties when she was 14. That must be terrifying.

Do you get many presents?

Yeah, quite a few. The funniest was when we were in Philadelphia and this girl gave me a toreador hat. I put it on when we played 'Fear' and then I saw her waving to me as we went offstage. I thought 'maybe she wants it back' but Paul Denman went 'no, no you might offend her'. Ten minutes later somebody comes backstage and says 'there's this girl downstairs who says she wants her hat back!'

Do you worry a lot about your make-up?

Not really. Paul Gobels does a really good job and if there's not somebody good I'll do it myself. It's no big deal. Paul is very creative which is good because you can bounce ideas off each other at photo sessions. It relieves the boredom.

There's a fight scene in the 'Is It A Crime' video. Paul suggested the bloke I'm fighting should smear my lipstick across my face and it worked really well. It's one of the best bits in the video.

Will you take a year off from touring soon?

I don't know. I really like touring. The problem is all the ridiculous things you have to do with it. The 60 interviews and seven TVs on the same day. The most important thing for me is the performance and if I'm allowing things to jeopardise that then I'm a fool. It's got to be memorable for the people who come to see you or it's not worth doing it.

Will you ever write a Sade book?

I doubt it. I would like to write 'a book' – I've always wanted to – but to write one about all this I think would ruin your perspective and your memories. I'll leave it to somebody else then I won't have to read it if I don't want to.