

New Blood

Bringing his more grown-up sensibilities to the *Twilight* sequel *New Moon*, Michael Sheen talks "Twi-hards," Tony Blair, and that pesky Bond rumor. By Sona Charaipotra



The Twilight Saga: New Moon



The Queen



Frost/Nixon



Underworld

MICHAEL SHEEN is known for his chameleonlike abilities, which have had him morphing from Tony Blair, the former British prime minister, in *The Deal* and *The Queen* to David Frost in *Frost/Nixon* to the werewolf Lucian in the *Underworld* cult trilogy. But in this month's *Twilight* follow-up, *The Twilight Saga: New Moon*, the Welsh actor takes on his most stressful role to date. "You realize what a big responsibility it is," says Sheen, who plays Aro, the vicious Volturi vampire in charge, with an understated, "grandfatherly" panache. "All these people devour every word of these books, and they have a very particular image in their heads of these characters," he says.

Case in point: his own daughter, Lily, 10, who's a huge fan of the series. "She pictured Aro as a bald vampire, for some reason, and I have hair in the film," he says. "So clearly, I'm already disappointing people."

You're known for critically lauded turns in serious fare like Frost/Nixon. So New Moon is a bit of a departure for you, isn't it? I suppose most people in America know me for things like *The Queen* and *Frost/Nixon*. But then, there's a whole other audience that's only seen me in the *Underworld* films. So it's quite a mixture, I think. But really, I first got familiar with the *Twilight* series through Lily [whose mom is actress Kate Beckinsale]. She loves the books, so I'd been hearing about *Twilight* nonstop long before the role of Aro ever came up.

Is Lily the reason you took the part? Well, when I was approached to do the film, I immediately knew it was a way to earn major points with Lily. She didn't get to come to the set,

because she was in school, though she definitely lined up her spot at the premiere [early on]. But when I actually started reading the books, I was really drawn into that world.

"Twi-hards," as fans of the series are known, can be quite enthusiastic. Has that been your experience? I didn't really know until I got to the set how much of a phenomenon this is. Rob [Pattinson, who plays Edward Cullen,] and Kristen [Stewart, who plays Bella Swan,] and a few others and I would go out around town, and the fans would be everywhere, following everyone around. But they were very respectful. I think when the cast goes to Comic-Con and premieres, that's when the fans really go mad.

Speaking of cultural icons, you've played Tony Blair in The Deal and in The Queen. And I'm playing him again, for the third time! I'm doing a film for HBO called The Special Relationship, which is about Tony Blair and Bill Clinton. Dennis Quaid is playing Bill Clinton, and Hope Davis plays Hillary, so it should be a fun film.

You play a villain in the upcoming Unthinkable, and you're rumored to play another in the next Bond film. Are you all about the bad guys now? Villains are great fun. They're complex; they're damaged. Just the research itself is so intriguing, especially if you're playing a real person. The Bond thing was just a joke that someone took too seriously. Peter Morgan, who wrote *The Queen* and *Frost/Nixon* and all these other things I've done, is writing [the next Bond film, called] *Bond 23*, which is where the rumor started. But a Bond villain might be fun. You never know.

Vancouver Bites

Care for a nibble? The cast of *The Twilight Saga: New Moon* clue us in on their favorite places to eat while they shoot the film in Vancouver, Canada.

Boneta

1 West Cordova
www.boneta.ca

Whenever the cast members are hungry for a great steak, they hit up Boneta. "The ribs and the 32-ounce steak are amazing," says Jackson Rathbone, who plays Jasper Hale in the series. "Oh my God, they're so good!"

Purdy's Chocolates

Multiple locations
www.purdys.com

Nikki Reed, who plays Rosalie Hale, prefers this Canadian chain when she's looking to satiate her sweet tooth. "[Purdy's has] all these amazing little chocolate shops with the best chocolate-covered macadamia nuts," she says.

Cupcakes

1168 Denman Street
www.cupcakesonline.com

"This is a really amazing cupcake place," says Christian Seratos, who plays school chum Angela Weber. "They have the absolute best vanilla cupcake with rainbow sprinkles."

La Bretagne the Original Creperie

795 Jervis Street
(604) 688-5989

"There's this cute family-run creperie across from the Pacific Palisades Hotel," says Michael Welch, who plays Mike Newton. "I had this awesome crepe with fish and asparagus in a white-wine sauce."

Granville Island Public Market

1689 Johnston Street
www.granville-island.net/en

Kellan Lutz, who plays Emmett Cullen, is partial to the Granville Island Public Market, which is teeming with epicurean vendors. "It [has] all these little market stalls," he says. "A lot of them don't even have store names."