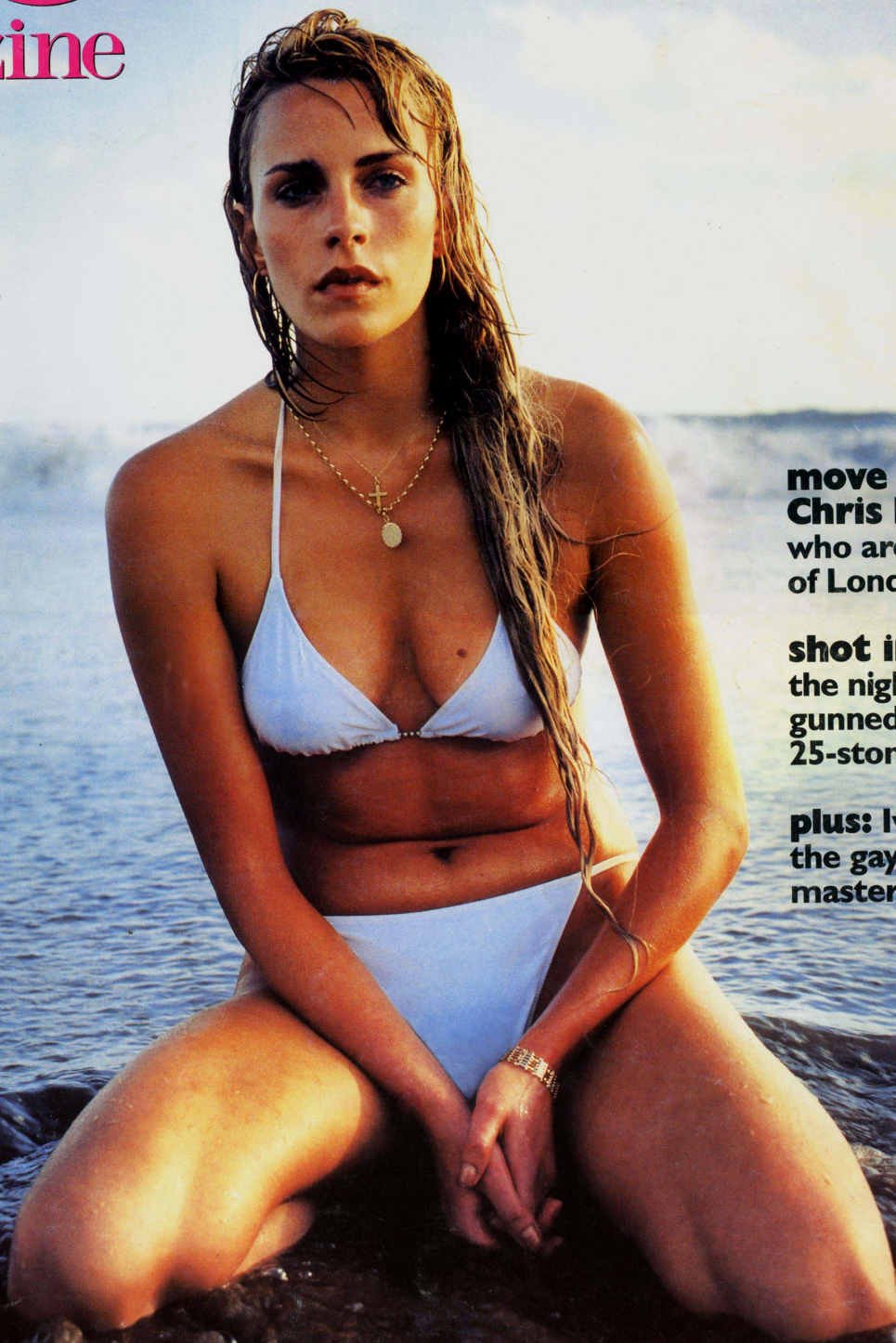


FREE WITH THE EVENING STANDARD

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magazine

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**move over
Chris Evans**
who are the new stars
of London radio?

shot in the dark
the night a crackhead
gunned down a
25-stone bouncer

plus: Ivan Massow
the gay, fox-hunting
master of the arts

GOLDEN GIRL

splash out with a tan, a string bikini and a beach in Bali

information

street life

PHOTOGRAPHS BY LUKE WHITE

Alex Shaw's Shoreditch

Having worked on the conversion of this Victorian clothing factory into spacious apartments, property developer Alex Shaw now enjoys the light, space and flexibility of his loft

'I was involved in the development of this building. It was originally a clothing factory, built at the turn of the century, and it had been empty for five or six years. There are 30 flats and none is smaller than 1,500 sq ft.

I grew up in California so I was used to a lot more space than you usually find in London. The best thing about this building is that it has lots of staircases and therefore no corridors. The flats feel like real lofts, whereas the building next door is the same size, but is converted into 50 flats.

There's a lot of activity in Shoreditch. It's packed with arty design and media businesses, and masses of interesting leading-edge companies are starting up. There are more working artists within a half-mile radius than anywhere else in Europe. It's getting increasingly expensive and trendy; property has rocketed since we've been here. There are great bars like Home and a new organic pub has just opened. We often eat at the Great Eastern Dining Room or the Shoreditch Electricity Showrooms. We're near Soho, Clerkenwell and Camden and well-located for the City and West End. Clerkenwell has great buzzy bars like LED, and restaurants like Moro and Maison Novelli. Angel has the Screen on the Green. It takes me ten minutes to get to my office in Camden and at night it only takes 15 minutes to get to Notting Hill. Friends coming to supper: imagine it's further away than it is, but there's less traffic in the evening and actually they get here quite quickly.

More people are coming round to the idea of living in a loft space. You're inhibited by the nature of a house; you can't create space from hundreds of rooms. You can have a lateral conversion, but it's not the same. The great thing is you can do anything with this sort of space. Everyone in the building has done different things.

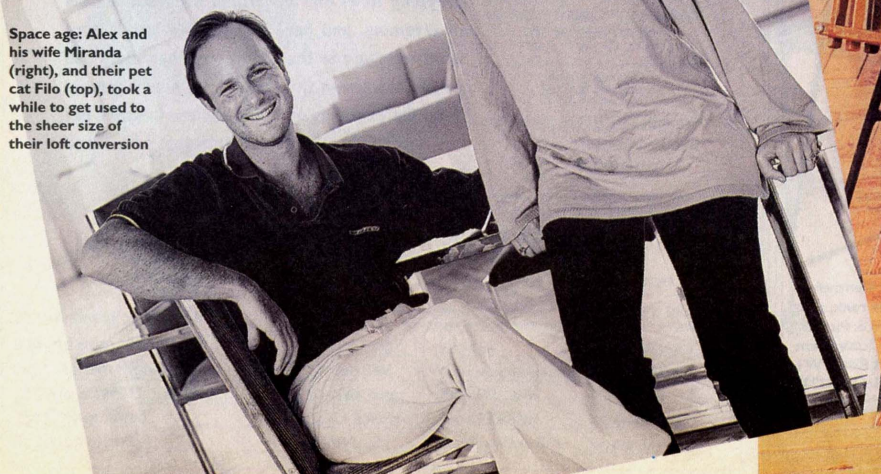
As this is a Victorian industrial building we wanted to stick with plain, industrial materials. We kept the steel pillars silver and did the kitchen in brushed steel.

The bathroom is in limestone to keep it simple and natural. It seems to work well with the Twenties steel taps. We kept the big industrial doors to our bedroom and put a big mirror where there was a doorway so it seems as if you can walk straight through. My uncle once banged into it.

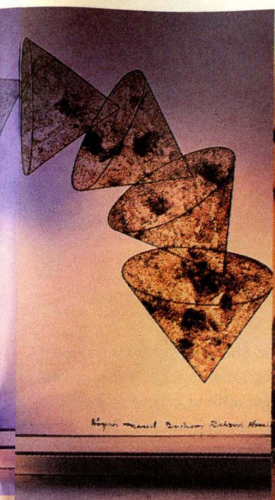
The floor is parquet and took three months to do. It was a big solid floor, but in really bad condition. For the time it took it would have been easier to put in a new floor, but it seems a pity when the original one has so much character.

Keeping the walls plain is good for art, though we haven't got much yet. It's difficult choosing a painting as it will make such a statement. I was thinking of having a big roaring fire. We're going to get big vertical floor-to-ceiling slatted blinds – you get fantastic light here from all the windows reflecting off the floor. We have yet to do our roof garden. It's a great place for parties. You don't have to limit numbers, so if a friend wants to bring someone it's fine. It takes time to get used to being in such a big room. When we first moved in, Filo, our Burmese cat, would slink around the outside of the room. Now he skids across the middle.' **LAURA CAMPBELL**

Space age: Alex and his wife Miranda (right), and their pet cat Filo (top), took a while to get used to the sheer size of their loft conversion



Loft life: (below, from left) the plain walls are great for displaying art, but Alex and Miranda have bought very little so far as a painting 'will make such a statement'; the bathroom is in limestone, which was chosen to give the room a simple and natural look



Steel meals: (above) the building was built as a factory at the turn of the century and the kitchen has been made of brushed steel to match its industrial beginnings; (left) the parquet floor in the loft is the original flooring and it took Alex and Miranda three months to restore it; (below and bottom) the Great Eastern Dining Room is a favourite local restaurant; (right) a robot stands guard in the living area

