

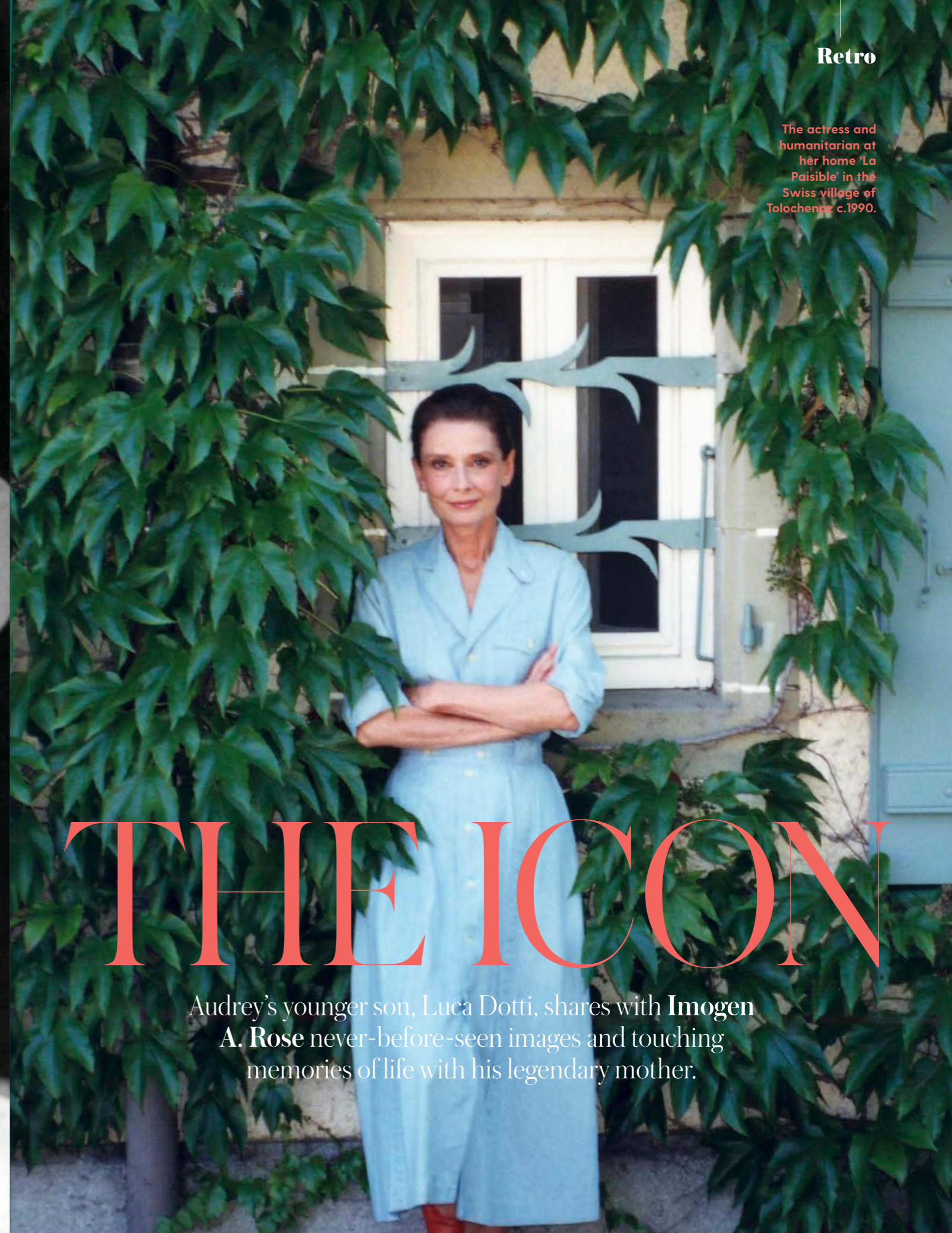
Audrey Hepburn BEYOND



Audrey at Villa Rolli, on the outskirts of Rome, in 1954.

Retro

The actress and humanitarian at her home 'La Paisible' in the Swiss village of Tolochenaz c.1990.



THE ICON

Audrey's younger son, Luca Dotti, shares with **Imogen A. Rose** never-before-seen images and touching memories of life with his legendary mother.



The unavoidability of her fame with “her face looking out at me from every newsstand” was so intrusive at a personal and emotional level that Luca could only “mourn for her now and then”. It took time for him to come to terms with his mother’s iconic status; to resolve the public and private impressions of a woman he’d known and loved only as his mother.

Luca was born in 1970, after Audrey married her second husband, Italian psychiatrist Andrea Dotti. Audrey had made the decision to retire from films, choosing to focus on her family. It was an easy decision and one she never regretted.

Luca remembers a “wonderful mother” who was “present and loving”, and he remained mostly unaware of his mother’s star status as a child. Thus, despite the comings and goings of many famous friends including Julie Andrews, Hubert de Givenchy and Roger Moore, Luca grew up in a relatively normal world.

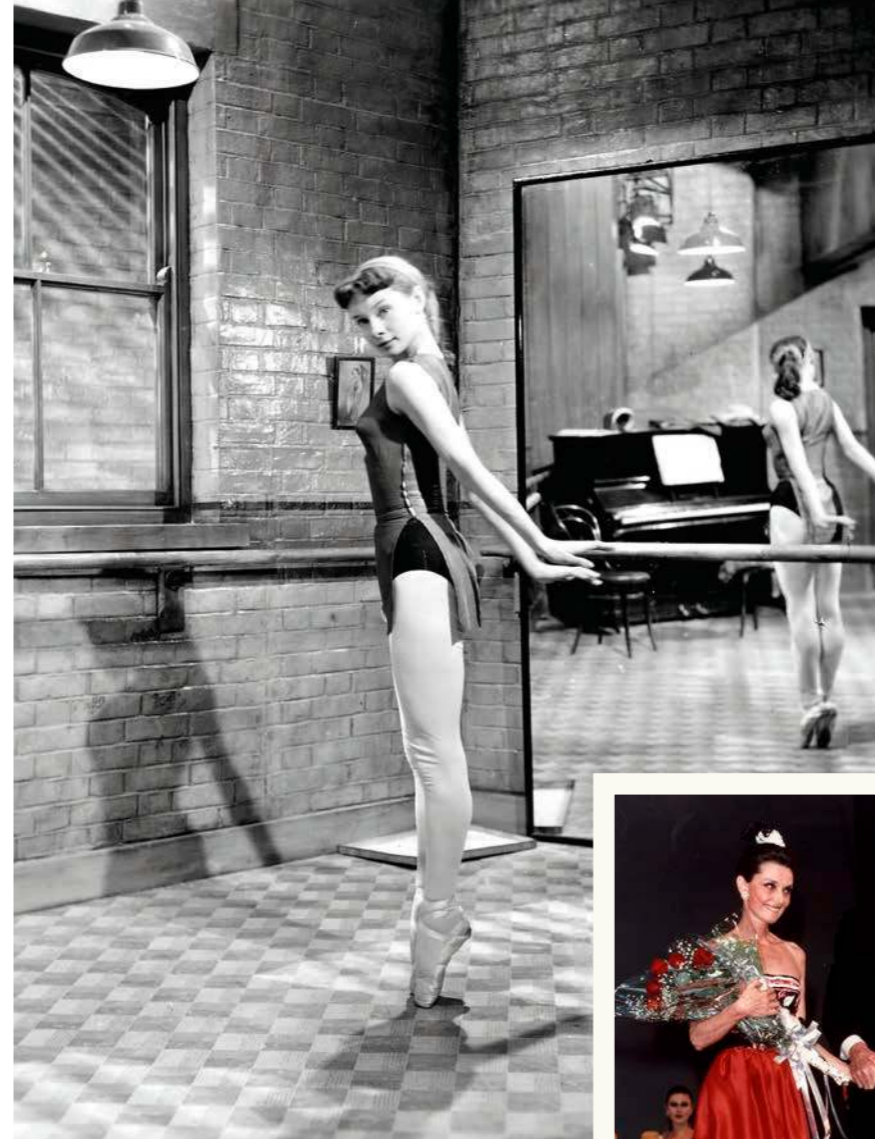
His mum might have been an initial curiosity to school friends whose parents were familiar with her glamorous image, but illusions soon dissipated when they realised how “ordinary” she was.

Luca describes Audrey as “in a sense very British or Anglo-Saxon” and says she held a fundamental belief in the importance of education. Like every parent, she had “cares, reservations and worries”. Although there were the usual teenage “misunderstandings”, ultimately, Luca knew his mother believed in him.

She was also able to communicate in such a way that Luca “wanted to comply”. For instance, she never pressured him or shouted about study. She simply provided meaning through experience and context, saying: “I couldn’t study because of the war; now I am able to send you to school and it’s a wonderful thing!”

Luca says his mother really did see herself as a working woman, rather than a star. She worked hard so that she could have a home and a family, and look after both well. Audrey’s insistence on the right of every child to an education was something →

IMAGES COURTESY OF LUCA DOTTI, FROM HIS BEST-SELLING BIOGRAPHY *AUDREY AT HOME*, AS PUBLISHED BY HARPER DESIGN, AN IMPRINT OF HARPER COLLINS PUBLISHERS.



The life of Audrey (clockwise from above): rehearsing for *Secret People* circa 1951; with Hubert de Givenchy in Tokyo, 1983; with her father in Belgium, 1938; with Luca in Los Angeles, 1979; in Giglio, 1968. Opposite: Audrey on a gondola in Venice in 1965 – photographed by actor Yul Brynner.



She had an undeniable and extraordinary impact upon the world, especially in film and fashion, and to this day Audrey Hepburn remains one of the most iconic symbols of elegance, dignity and style.

In *Breakfast at Tiffany’s*, *Sabrina*, *Roman Holiday*, *Funny Face* or the countless breathtaking Givenchy designs, she provided the fashion template for so many stars and styles.

And then, of course, there were her distinct, defining hairstyles – the sweeping updo or the perfect pixie cut that magnified her exquisite face. Such was the extent of her influence that, chances are, even those who have not seen an Audrey Hepburn film would recognise her image instantly.

But behind her fashion and film persona, what was Audrey Hepburn really like? The star’s younger son, Luca Dotti, along with her dear friend and UNICEF colleague Christa Roth,

share rare and exclusive insight into the woman beyond the star.

An intensely private person, Luca is warm, sincere and determined to make a difference. He lives in Rome with his wife and three children.

As a child, he boldly challenged journalists who were unrelentingly questioning him about being the son of Audrey Hepburn with the retort: “You are mistaken. I am the son of Mrs. Dotti!” It was a telling remark, for one detects the same sentiment today when he says: “Sometimes you just wish your mother was the one you knew, which was enough.”

Luca was 23 years old when his mother succumbed to cancer in 1993. The death of a parent is a traumatic experience for any child, but Luca’s grief was compounded by the sudden confrontation with the enormity of his mother’s fame. It was, he says, like waking up and being told: “By the way, your father is Superman.”



Clockwise from above: Audrey and actor Peter Ustinov celebrate Christa Roth's 50th birthday at Audrey's home in Switzerland; Audrey and Christa at a fundraising event, 1990; Luca Dotti, Audrey on a UNICEF mission in Somalia in 1992.

she passionately fought for during her subsequent work with UNICEF.

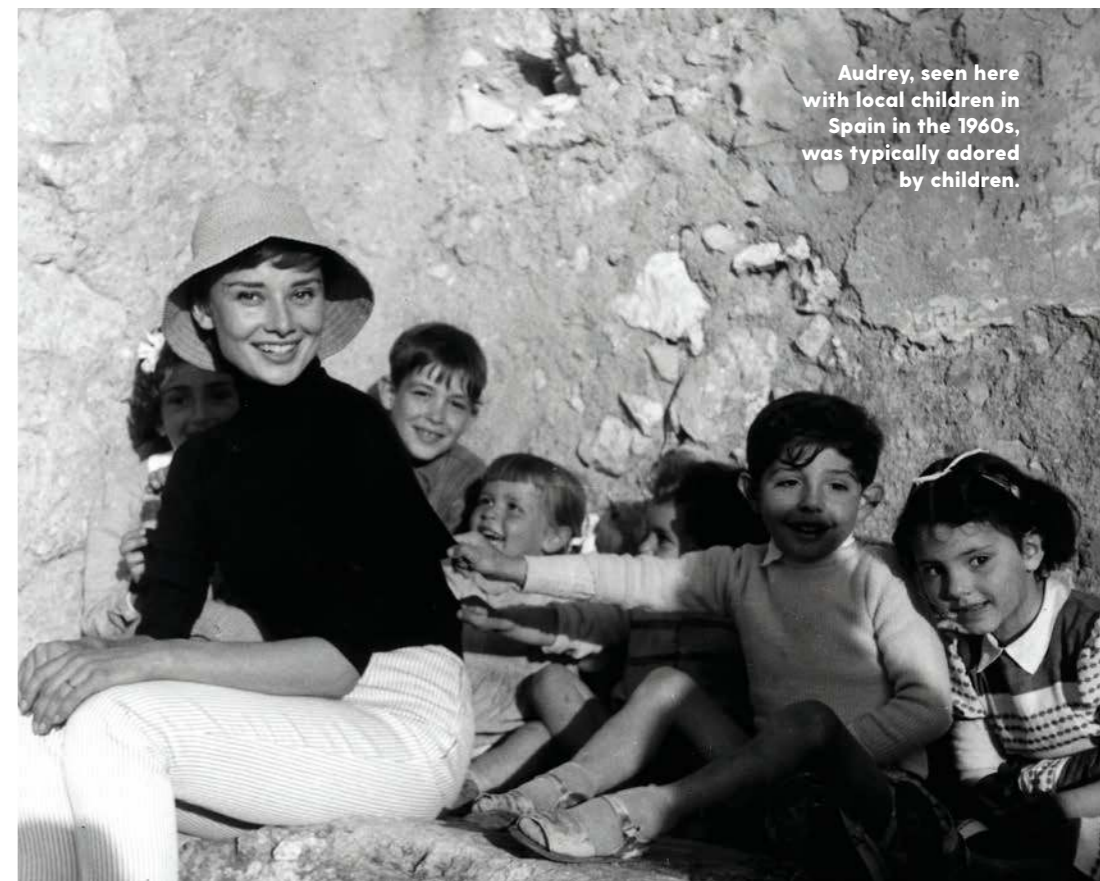
Audrey did not seek the limelight – life somehow led her there. Her career appeared to be one Cinderella moment after another, and indeed her face, her voice, her presence and her charm were such that she might as easily have stepped forth from the pages of a fairytale. Yet, like most people, she experienced her own insecurities.

Luca says that, as an actress, his mother would always rise early, between 4am and 5am in order to learn her lines, to accomplish her look, and as a response to a sense of inadequacy. She never really overcame her professional self-doubt or what she saw as a lack of experience and expertise. As a consequence, Audrey felt obliged to work even harder.

She remained a morning person throughout her life, and those first hours of the day provided the opportunity for Luca and his mother to share many meaningful conversations and confidences. This was especially true during the final years of Audrey's life, when Luca says he came "to better know and understand my mother as a person" around the breakfast table.

Audrey was an intelligent woman and she understood the power of image, though importantly, she was not a woman defined by fashion. In fact, both Luca and Christa recall a woman more comfortable in jeans, ballet flats and with her hair loosely tied back. She was dedicated and driven, renowned for her punctuality, courteousness and strong work ethic, but her heart revolved around love of family and home.

Luca describes his mother "as a very hands-on parent". They enjoyed and would laugh about the sense of smell, "good and bad smells, flower smells or a certain perfume, orange blossoms". It was a strong connection



Audrey, seen here with local children in Spain in the 1960s, was typically adored by children.

"Sometimes you just wish your mother was the one you knew."

that remains with him. Indeed, he describes regularly feeling his mother's presence in his garden. Luca says Audrey had immense respect for nature and for food. She would "explain how things are alive, how things, including food, are a gift". His mother "rarely talked about her career," says Luca. "But she talked a lot about the years during the war when, especially by the end of the war, food was gone. And that stayed with her. Hunger stays with you."

Audrey loved to cook and it was a passion she shared with her son. "One of her favourite recipes was always tomato sauce for the pasta, with the smell of basil and ripe tomatoes," he recalls. Indeed, many of Audrey's best recipes can be found in Luca's book, *Audrey at Home: Memories of My Mother's Kitchen*.

Interestingly, it was not until quite late in her life that Audrey had any real sense of the enormity of her fame.

Luca says she understood that by being 'Audrey Hepburn' she could attract attention to humanitarian issues and "keep people focused" on areas of crisis. He remains struck by the impact she had and by what he describes as "the strength of her aura". He says: "There are parts of it that you can explain and others that you know are a little bit of magic."

There was something simple and personal about her magnetic appeal. There was an inclusiveness – a feeling of belonging. Audrey made audiences feel part of her world. What's more, she emanated an enthusiasm for life. One finds it in the films and photos, and most of all, this joie de vivre exists in the memories and hearts of those who knew and loved her.

As a former graphic designer, Luca has a particular interest in imagery. "It's true," he says of those ubiquitous images of his mother, "you do feel that sense of being happy to be alive." →

PORTRAIT SHOT OF LUCA DOTTI © JASMINE BERTUSI. IMAGES COURTESY OF LUCA DOTTI, FROM HIS BEST-SELLING BIOGRAPHY AUDREY AT HOME, AS PUBLISHED BY HARPER DESIGN, AN IMPRINT OF HARPER COLLINS PUBLISHERS. IMAGE SUPPLIED BY CHRISTA ROTH AND USED WITH PERMISSION.

“I always felt, when Audrey walked into a room, the lights went on.”

In March 1988, Audrey was appointed UNICEF Special Ambassador. The following year, she became a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador. Life had come full circle. UNICEF symbolised her gratitude for the life-saving aid she received from the United Nations and the Red Cross on Holland’s liberation in World War II. UNICEF allowed her to contribute in a way that truly came from her heart and soul.

In her role in UNICEF’s Goodwill Ambassadors and Special Events Section, Christa Roth liaised closely with Audrey. Their first in-person meeting occurred in Tokyo and Christa recalls her “wobbly knees” and nervousness beforehand. However, “Audrey was immediately so welcoming,” she says fondly.

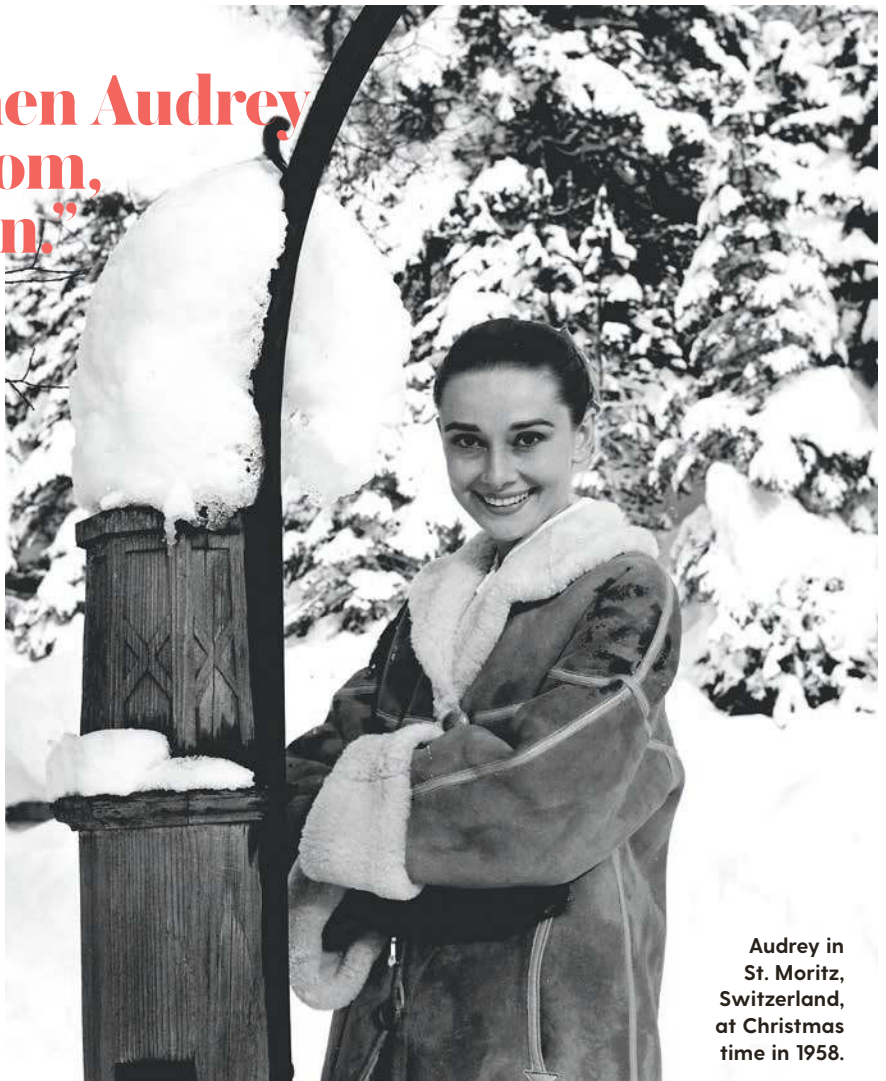
The two women found they had much in common and developed a close friendship. “Audrey was so special,” says Christa. “There was something that came from her that touched everybody immediately.”

It was a goodness that was not lost on the children in the many impoverished countries Audrey visited; places where the characters of Holly Golightly, Eliza Doolittle and Princess Ann would have meant nothing. Audrey was a woman with no history there – she gave only of herself and the children embraced her.

“There was something that came from her which they realised they could cling to, and be with her,” Christa explains. “She would sit among them and she was always very much at their level.”

The international response to Audrey’s involvement was phenomenal, and enabled issues of desperate need to receive invaluable funding and awareness.

“I always felt, when she walked into a room, that the lights went on,” says Christa, who recalls with joy the



Audrey in St. Moritz, Switzerland, at Christmas time in 1958.

trips they shared and the private moments when they talked – the moments of meaning, when deep bonds were formed.

She will always cherish her 50th birthday celebration, which Audrey made unforgettable. Originally intended as a small gathering at a restaurant, Audrey instead organised a celebration for Christa at her own home. “She really did everything,” says Christa of the wonderful day she created among friends, including a jovial Peter Ustinov. It may have been winter in Switzerland but the sun was shining on Audrey’s “very comfortable but simple” 18th-century country home, which had a beautiful garden with a magnificent weeping willow.

Audrey understood the value of life. She believed we have a responsibility as individuals and as part of a global community to make a difference for

the better. Although Audrey died at only 63 years of age, she had, says Luca, lived a “complete life”.

Audrey Hepburn was a woman who touched the lives of millions because of the way she lived her life, valued her friends, valued humanity, the world, nature and indeed, through the way she dedicated herself tirelessly to the rights of children and UNICEF.

Her powerful legacy continues to create meaningful change and alleviate suffering throughout the world. **AWW**

Audrey at Home: Memories of My Mother’s Kitchen by Luca Dotti & Luigi Spinola, Harper Collins, is available in bookstores and online.

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