ForeWord Reviews

Elizabeth Taylor: The Queen and I
Gianni Bozzacchi
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“Elizabeth called me Gangster and I called her Baby Boobs,” writes the author in the brief text that complements this treasure trove of photographs of the legendary actress. Bozzacchi began his career as a photographer in Italy, learning the profession from his father; he once worked for such prominent magazines as Look, Life, and Paris Match.

In 1965, he was sent to Africa to handle what he called the “special photography” for “The Comedians,” a film based on a Graham Greene novel. It starred Peter Ustinov, Alec Guinness, Richard Burton, and Elizabeth Taylor. After the filming, Taylor asked him to become her personal photographer and to travel with her and Burton. “We virtually lived together for eight years, from 1966 to 1974, spending long amounts of time in London, Paris, Los Angeles, New York, Puerto Vallarta, and Gstaad; living in villas and on their yacht, traveling by limousine, private plane, and helicopter,” he writes. Burton and Taylor were married during this time and Bozzacchi says that initially Burton disliked him, but later they became good friends. Bozzacchi describes the time that his father met the actress: “She ran out and hugged him, giving him a big kiss on the mouth. He was entranced for twenty minutes afterwards. Ã”Don’t tell your mother she kissed me on the mouth,’ he kept saying.”

Many of the photographs are close-ups; in one of the best Taylor is wearing a fur cap and looking pensive, her wavy hair lining her exquisite face. In other photos she is sitting on a rock at the beach in Puerto Vallarta, wearing a 69-carat diamond ring in Monte Carlo, and posing with Burton, with other film stars, and with her children.

She is photographed in bed, in their private plane, on their yacht, holding a kitten up to her face, and holding her grandson. In one photograph it appears that she is making a rude hand gesture, but Bozzacchi assures us that Taylor is only showing off a ring.

Bozzacchi is also a writer, producer, and director. He has collaborated on feature films with Truffaut, Fellini, and other great filmmakers. Currently, he and Roy Scheider are producing for television The Renaissance, a twenty-four-hour drama and twenty-hour documentary.

Fans of Elizabeth Taylor will find The Queen and I irresistible.

George Cohen