

# The simple LIFE

*Forget the bright lights and red  
carpets of LA's nightlife.  
Daryl Hannah's more at home  
with the flickering candles and  
grassland of her mountain hideaway*

By Britt Collins. Photographed by Jeff Lipsky







‘I stay in big cities and have a hectic schedule. Coming home to a place like this definitely grounds me and helps me put things into perspective’



**H**igh up, amid the pines of the Colorado Rockies, lies actress Daryl Hannah's ranch. The secluded road that leads there winds through wild flower meadows with tangled strawberry patches, where azaleas flame against the sky. At the end of the path, you find a magnificent combination of rustic buildings, fruit groves and mountain views.

Hannah shares all this with her collection of rescued animals (five horses, two cats, nine dogs and two birds), abiding by the eco principles that have shaped her life. She's been a vegetarian since the age of 11 and spent her childhood holidays touring the same mountains that she now travels round in a biodiesel truck, fuelled with vegetable oil: "It doesn't increase the amount of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere," she says.

She grows fruit, vegetables and flowers and lives in a solar-powered house with beautifully dilapidated outbuildings, comprising a hut from an old stagecoach stop, a bunkhouse and a barn she calls her "winterised dwelling" or "artbarn", surrounded by ponds and creeks. Much of her time is spent reading, dreaming or watching the wildlife. "In the mornings, the trees and flowers are full of birds and butterflies, and at night, bears, lynx and coyotes come out to play under the

stars." For Hannah, it's the perfect retreat. "I travel a lot for work, stay in big cities and have a hectic schedule. Coming home to a place like this definitely grounds me and helps me put things into perspective."

She discovered this rural idyll a decade ago, when a friend mentioned a piece of available land in Colorado (she wants to keep the

exact location a secret). It turned out to be a glorious 1,000-acre forest and home to a great variety of wildlife. Hannah was thrilled. "I'd never seen anything like it. It was like the poppy field in *The Wizard of Oz*. When I discovered it was going to be broken up into small parcels and destroyed for redevelopment, I bought as much as I could afford to save as a refuge for all the wildlife."

Hannah spent the next couple of years living in a teepee while she worked on her new homestead. She reused many of the original materials, such as the rock and the scrub oak, which was removed to create the house's foundations. Now the rocks form her fireplaces and even a "living couch" – Hannah stacked stones to make a sofa base and covered them with velvet cushions for comfort. "Every few days we pull the cushions off to water the lichen and moss."

One person could easily be content here, but Hannah is rarely alone. Her caretaker and his wife also live on the property and friends often come to stay. "Living in the mountains isn't as solitary a life as one would think," Hannah says. "Sometimes I have to dis-invite people to get a little rest."

Although she enjoys an active social life, she admits it isn't the celeb-packed kind usually associated with Hollywood stars. "I love to disappear," she confesses. "I never liked parties or crowds." In ▶

*Clockwise from bottom left, 'A teepee is a beautiful, perfect dwelling,' says Hannah, who sleeps in hers in summer and fall; her solar-powered home is a reconstructed 19th-century coach house; the sun-filled, grotto-like bathroom; Hannah chills out in a wild flower meadow; a recycled aspen fence surrounds the ranch*







## 'Living in the mountains isn't as solitary a life as one would think'

fact, the ethereally beautiful and shy Hannah, now 43, never wanted to be a movie star, but acting allowed her to withdraw from the world. She spent a lot of time as a child watching old films. At 16, she packed her suitcase and took a Greyhound bus from Chicago to Hollywood. Her big break came in 1982 when she played the acrobatic android Pris in *Blade Runner*. Two years later, she portrayed a lovelorn mermaid in *Splash*. Then she appeared in several lower profile movies until last year's Quentin Tarantino-directed *Kill Bill: Vol 1* and this year's *Vol 2* forced her back into the limelight. She played assassin Elle Driver – a kick-ass character completely at odds with her real-life hippy persona, who lives by the seasons.

"I still use the tepees in summer and fall," says Hannah. "It's so nice to open the smoke flaps and see the rainbow of the Milky Way at night. I hardly ever sleep in one place. I like my bedroom, which feels like a cave. There's a small fireplace and lots of books. But I like to sleep everywhere – on the porch, by the fire, in the artbarn and, on a hot night, outside beneath the pines. In the fall, I go to the local festivals, mushroom hunting and bathe in the hot springs. And in the dead of winter, I write, play music, bake and watch movies."

A stream runs through her lounge and concrete floors are decorated with impressions of horseshoes, dragonflies and paw prints of her cats and dogs (she describes her animals as "kind of like having kids"). The whole house is light and romantic, and filled with faded oriental rugs, ivory beeswax candles, flowers, wind chimes and coloured jars dazzling like jewels. The vintage kitchen is elegant

and simple, with a rickety antique stove and glass-fronted cabinets stashed with hand-painted glasses and mismatched china.

Hannah didn't bother with an interior designer: "The furnishings are things I had in my room as a child or in previous homes". The bathroom is her favourite spot. This sensuous, grotto like space is a mosaic of rocks and pebbles, covered with ferns and Spanish moss. "It feels like you're in some tropical place," she says. "Living in harmony with nature, the Indian way, is the only way to live." Looking at her mountain home built under turquoise skies, you have to agree. ■



*Clockwise from left, the kitchen is full of flea-market finds that Hannah used in her previous homes: 'I didn't have to buy anything'; one of the outbuildings comes from an old stagecoach stop; Hannah's hoard of hand-painted glass and china; the actress in front of the 'artbarn', which is being rebuilt and is where she will paint and watch films*