

THE GREENING OF LONG BEACH

LONG BEACH

LUXURY • LIFESTYLE • LIVING

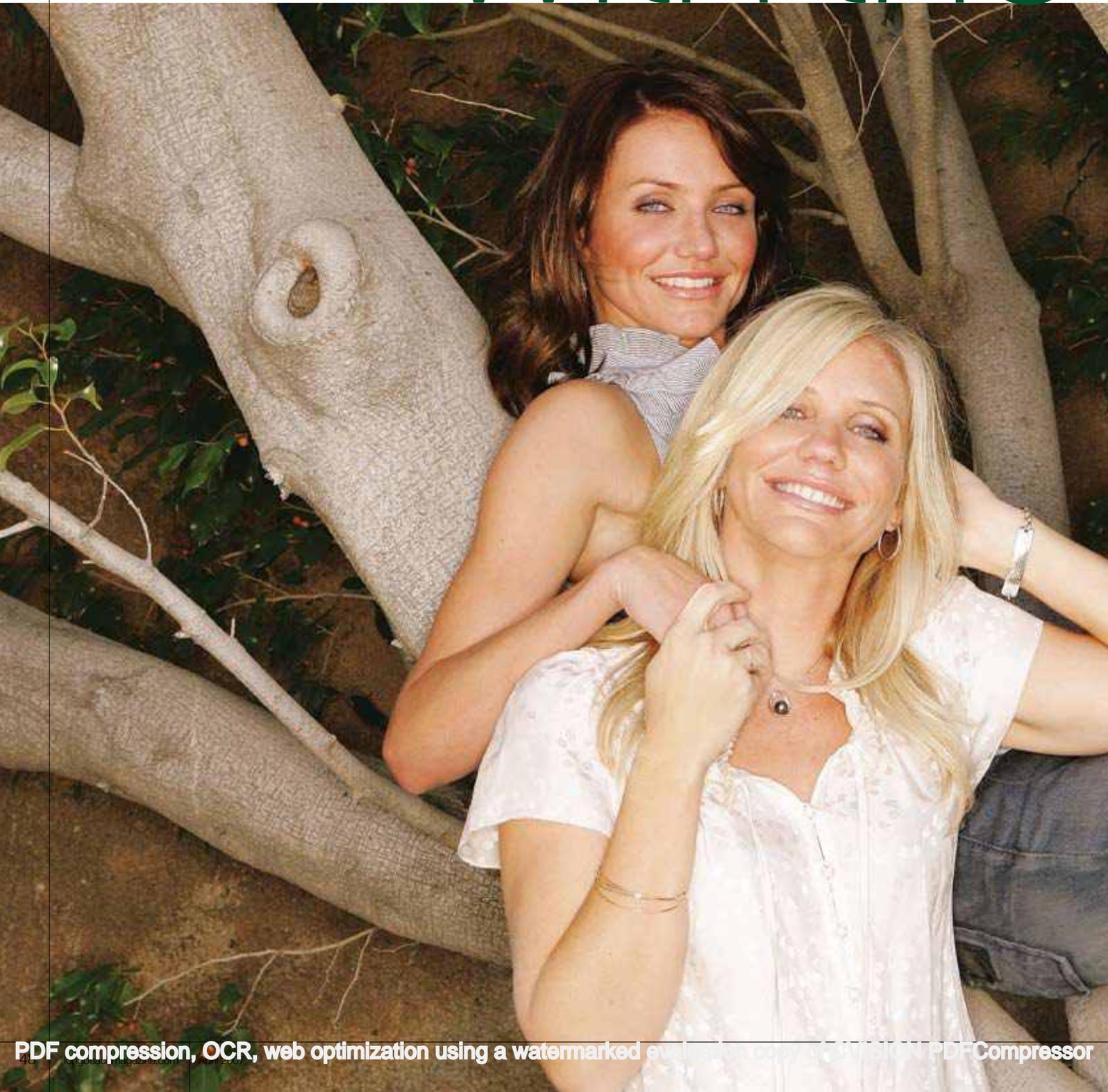


Face to face with the
Diaz Sisters

LUS LUXURY HYBRID AUTOS FOR THE FUTURE
CARROLL SHELBY'S COBRA RACE CAR



Face to Face with the



By Leona June Christensen
Photography: Lauren Avila



Diaz Sisters

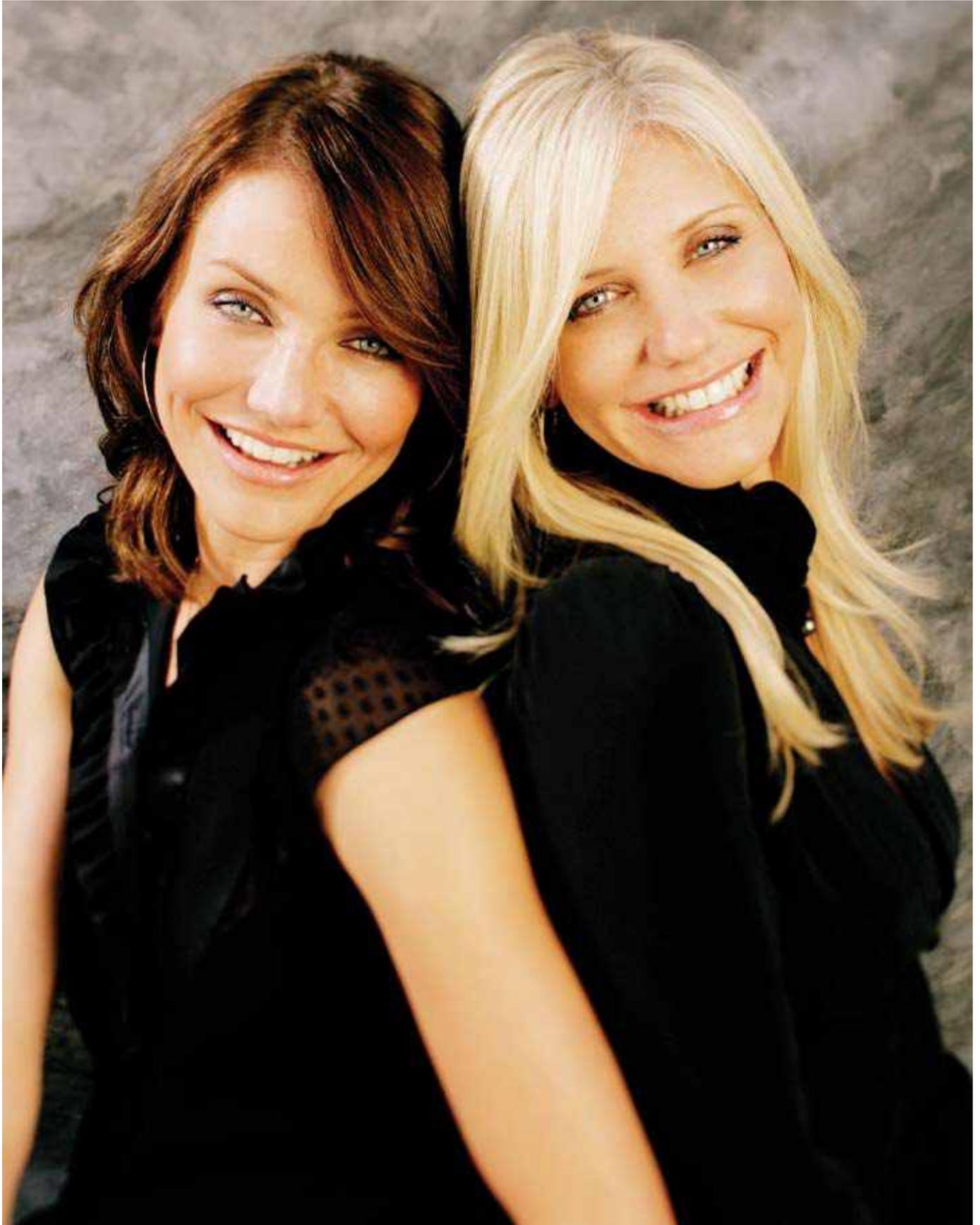


he has strolled down the red carpet at the Oscars and turned heads around the globe, yet despite her international acclaim as one of Hollywood's leading actresses, Cameron Diaz's heart is never far from her Long Beach roots and her sister, Chimene Armstrong.

Their bond transcends challenges ranging from a demanding celebrity lifestyle to juggling motherhood with "saving the world," one child at a time.



Cameron: "I have a lot of girlfriends"



who are close and like sisters, but I only have one sister.”



Throughout an exclusive interview with Long Beach Magazine, the Diaz sisters finished each other's sentences and beamed with pride while praising each other's accomplishments. This is the first time they have been publicly photographed together. Posing cheek to cheek, the women cracked jokes worthy of scene-stealing comedic actresses, while their proud mother, Billie Diaz of Seal Beach, looked on.

Daily telephone calls are the lifeline that maintains their close connection.

“We talk every day,” said Armstrong, the mother of three. “I love her!”

“I love her, too,” Diaz cut in. “I don't know what I would do without her. I have a lot of girlfriends who are close and like sisters, but I only have one sister.”

“We respect each other and what the other does,” added Armstrong, who is married to Robby Armstrong and stays active in various fundraising causes in Long Beach. “We are two incredibly different people. I went with her on her first photo shoot, and she was amazing the first time with the camera. I respect

and admire what she does. I could never do it.”

Without missing a beat, Diaz expressed admiration for Armstrong as a wife and mother and for her work with Children Today, a comprehensive childcare and preschool program for Long Beach's homeless children age 6 months to 6 years. Last year, the Armstrongs hosted a Halloween costume benefit featuring The Robby Armstrong Band, an alternative blues rock band, and raised \$15,000, three times the expected outcome.

“Long Beach has such diverse economic span,” said Armstrong, who is often mistaken for her sister. Despite this, she maintained that “a lot of people are helping hands in Long Beach. It's a close-knit neighborhood.”

Diaz's world-famous blue eyes lit up as she flashed a heartfelt, million-dollar smile.

“Our lives are so different,” said Diaz, who in 2002 became the second actress, after Julia Roberts, to join the coveted \$20 Million Club for the film “Charlie's Angels: Full Throttle.”

Every day is Earth Day for Cameron Diaz.

The outspoken environmentalist and self-proclaimed “tree hugger” says simple habits can make a big difference and help the planet.

“People shy away from those funny little curlicue light bulbs, because they are not what they grew up with, but they last 13 times longer than conventional light bulbs,” said Diaz, who wears a gold globe pendant testifying her lifelong commitment to the environment. “They save a lot of money and our environment.”

In addition to her parents, Diaz credits her now-deceased grandmother and Al Gore as her role models in her crusade. She said now there is no other choice than to work as a team for environmental protection.

Consciously think of each resource you use and how you can use it more efficiently, advises Diaz. Her simple tips to help the Earth include

- turning off the lights when not in use,
- not allowing the water to run when not being used,
- recycling aluminum and steel cans, glass bottles, newspaper and corrugated cardboard and
- not washing your car yourself, but visiting a commercial car wash that treats and recycles the wastewater and uses up to 60 percent less water.

“We all know fuel efficiency is important,” said Diaz, who drives only hybrid cars and grew up riding her bicycle or public transportation. “Buy cars that are either a hybrid or more fuel efficient, not ones that guzzle gas.”

See our Hybrid Featured Cars on page 18.

Chimene: “We respect each other and what the other does.”



"I am in total awe and so proud of her. It is amazing what she accomplishes in her life and [with] her family. We have never been competitive or envious. Never."

"Never," echoed Armstrong.

The sisters credit their close relationship to their parents, who instilled values of cooperation and selflessness.

"We shared a bedroom for forever," said Armstrong, who is two years older. "When we tried to split up, we ended up back in the same bedroom. When I was 14, I finally threw a fit and wanted my own room. It lasted six months and then we moved back in together. We shared a room until I was 18 and a senior in high school."

"It was fun!" exclaimed the sisters simultaneously, recalling their youth in a culturally diverse working-class neighborhood near Wardlow and Magnolia, where the 710 and 405 freeways, Los Angeles River and train tracks converge. Playing football and riding their bikes with the other kids was more important than race, religion or ethnicity.

"I started traveling the world while I was at Poly (Long Beach Polytechnic High School)," said Diaz, who was a member of the drill team. "It was a huge lesson. I can go anywhere in the world and feel comfortable because of what I learned from the quad at Poly. We learned how to adapt and accept people for who they are."

At 16, within a week of being discovered by photographer Jeff Dunas, Diaz signed with the Elite Modeling Agency. Her parents gave their blessing for the svelte beauty to globe trot and strut the catwalk for five years, accompanied only by another model.

"Our parents felt Cameron was prepared at 16 to go off because of our experiences growing up and not being sheltered," said Armstrong, who shares her sister's good looks and charisma. "They had respect for her and knew she would be responsible."

Throughout their childhood, their father, Emilio, taught them to conserve and recycle. Those habits have continued as adults.

"We always recycled when we were growing up," said Armstrong. "We did not do it for the Earth, we did it for the money. Our dad was always on us to turn off the lights and the water while we brushed our teeth. Looking back, we were doing what is right. Now, it's not about affording it, it is about saving our environment."

Diaz's voice resonated with passion when she spoke of her efforts with friend and former vice president Al Gore on the benefit concert Save Our Selves (SOS)—The Campaign for a Climate in Crisis. This 24-hour concert slated for July 7 across seven continents will reach more than 2 billion people through attendance and live broadcasts. The concert features 100 of the world's top musical acts, including former classmate Snoop Dogg.

"Cameron has always been a nature girl," said Armstrong. "Her passion for the environment is not something that happened because she is a celebrity. She has always been this way since we were little kids."

Chimene and Cameron are living proof; when it comes to motherhood or the environment, the two are real naturals. LB

Help for the homeless

Since June 15, 2000, Children Today has helped Long Beach's most neglected segment of the homeless population—children.

Nationwide, more than 1 million children are homeless; in Long Beach alone, more than 20,000 children have nowhere to call home. In contrast to the stereotypical image of a single, substance-abusing male, the fact is that more than 40 percent of America's homeless are struggling families with young children.

"One thing just broke my heart—that the kids are so excited about getting their own toothbrushes," said Chimene Armstrong. "It's the only thing that is theirs. Their toothbrush is the one thing they don't have to share."

The organization also helps parents take positive steps towards rebuilding their lives and providing a safe, nurturing environment for their children.

Children Today accepts donations of baby food, diapers, formula, clothing, books and toys. Financial contributions provide children's meals.

For more information or to make a donation, log on to www.childrentoday.org.