



from avatar TO THE A-LIST

SAM WORTHINGTON: Hollywood's unlikely LEADING MAN

SAM WORTHINGTON, THE RUGGED 34-YEAR-OLD actor/former bricklayer from Australia is fast becoming the biggest name to emerge from Down Under since Hugh Jackman hit the big screen. Best known for his role as Jake Sully in *Avatar* (a.k.a. the highest-grossing film in history), Worthington has since been cast in 14 high-profile pictures slated to roll out in theatres over the next two years.

Offering an antithesis to George Clooney's Armani-clad slickness, Brad Pitt's tabloid-ic Don Juan ways and James Franco's hipster shtick, Worthington's

unshaven, plaid-and-dirty-boot-wearing look, which reads as a cross between lumberjack and bike messenger, exudes the definition of rough and tumble during his interviews at TIFF.

While chatting about his latest films, *The Debt* (which costars Helen Mirren) and *Last Night* (where he seduces both Keira Knightley and Eva Mendes), Worthington defies the typical Tinseltown mould. "I look at L.A. as my office; I don't go there to rest and relax," he explains. "That culture is based on what you look like or what car you drive, which I've never bought into anyway," he continues before cracking a smile. "If you're going to judge me on the clothes I've got, I'm in a load of trouble!"

For those who remember, Worthington's laid-back style at last year's Oscars did get him into some hot water, causing a handful of fashion bloggers to nip at his heels and post some fighting words on his choice of footwear. Why? Worthington bought and wore a pair of faux-leather lace-ups from Payless ShoeSource minutes before walking the red carpet. However, the incident isn't something Worthington gives much credence to.

"As an actor, you have to be a team player and that means you're not worried about the size of your trailer or what attention or fame you're going to get out of what you do," he says. "You should only care about telling the right story and getting the director's vision right; the rest isn't important."

This strong work ethic spread into the preparation of Worthington's role in *The Debt*, where he plays a young agent whose assignment is to bring a Nazi villain to trial. Aside from reading a handful of books on Israeli Mossad agents (he plays one in the film), Worthington learned

hand-to-hand combat techniques from a fighting practice called Krav Maga.

"It gave me some insight into how the Mossad think," Worthington clarifies. "The system of attack is about putting yourself in harm's way, no matter what, to retain justice and get the job done."

In terms of his seemingly endless shoot schedule, Worthington is attached to a list of productions including

Clash of The Titans 2, a rumoured sequel to *Avatar* ("I still speak to James Cameron when I need advice," he says), a modernization of '80s action hit *Commando* and a *Blade Runner*-esque take on the graphic novel *The Last Days of American Crime* (which Worthington is also producing). Another notable movie he is excited to shoot is an anti-*Twilight* vampire drama, which focuses on the early days of Dracula, called *Dracula Year Zero*.

"It's the history of Vlad the Impaler, whom I play," he says. "It will be extremely bloodthirsty and clever—a *Braveheart* version of the vampire world." —Elio Iannacci