



**THE DIRECTOR:** what *Vanity Fair's* Sara Marks doesn't know about throwing a great party isn't worth knowing.



**ON THE COUCH:** Rupert Murdoch and Nicole Kidman catch up while Keith Urban listens. **BELOW:** the 'Delta'-studded scene shortly before the party guests arrived.



# sofa so good

*Vanity Fair's* Oscar Party organiser Sara Marks tells *VL* how an Australian-made sofa became the star of the show.

**FIRST THERE WAS** an appearance on *Oprah*, and now, King Furniture's 'Delta' sofa is being sat on by some of the world's biggest stars. We spoke to the woman behind it.

**What does *Vanity Fair's* Special Projects Director do?** I wear a multitude of hats that involve all special projects for the magazine. I produce a number of events – the Oscars Party, Tribeca Film Festival opening Gala Dinner, Cannes Film Festival dinner and party, and a number of smaller dinners.

**What's the best aspect of your job?** That I work for someone like [*Vanity Fair* editor] Graydon Carter who has allowed me the freedom to be able to create what we do.

**What's the worst?** Conference calls to far flung places at 4am

**Of all the sofas in all the countries in all the world, how did you find the 'Delta'?** When we were working on the design of the Oscar Party I compiled a list of furniture companies for us to consider. Over the course of a weekend I bought every design magazine from all over the world and created three ring-binders. There were just two companies, which I ultimately short-listed – one was Italian and the other was [Australia's] King Furniture.

**What do you like about it?** Looking at their web site, I responded to the simplicity of the design and the ease with which you could put the pieces together and change a look as well the range of colours.

**How many sofas do you need for VF's Oscar party?** 16 Rectangles, 69 Squares (800x800),

88 Backs in Bayleaf and Mandela colours. They are in storage in Los Angeles.

**What's the best conversation you've had on the sofa and with whom?** I dream of sitting on a sofa! In the 14 years that I have worked on our Oscar Party I've yet to sit on a sofa! I spend the entire evening ensuring that all is running smoothly – this involves liaising with all my team who are manning the entrances as well as production, food and wine managers and our security detail and at times politely having to remind would-be guests that they are not invited and therefore cannot come in!

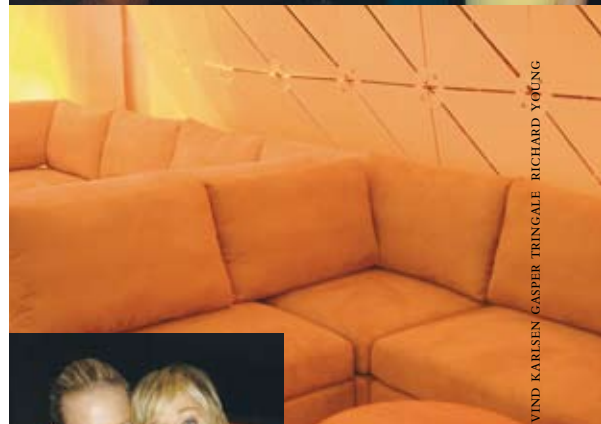
**What make a great party?** An example is our Oscar Party, where we have thought about everything in microscopic detail – there is really nothing that could be needed that isn't available. There should be a sense of relaxation and comfort. Guests should see friends, meet people they want to and enjoy good food and good wine. At the end of an evening when you leave you don't really want to, but it's time to and you've had a thoroughly enjoyable evening.

**And a dud party?** One type of person; no-one you want to speak to; a long line to get into the venue; bad food and wine.

**King Furniture is one Australian-born success story: what's your impression of Australian style?** Interiors in particular are way ahead of the rest of the world. There's something effortless about Australian style. There's a simplicity and at the same time a lot of character.



**ABOVE:** Gwyneth Paltrow and Georgina Chapman. **ABOVE, RIGHT:** Minnie Driver and Naomi Watts.



**ABOVE:** orange gold tones on the furnishings created a cosy ambience. **LEFT:** Portia De Rossi with her partner Ellen DeGeneres.

PHOTOGRAPHERS: BRENDA BELLO, AVIND, KARLESEN, GASPHER, TRINGALE, RICHARD YOUNG