

Sunday Times Magazine

Wish you were here: Miv and Naomi (below, top left) on the beach at St Tropez in 1971 with Pink Floyd and friends.



Naomi Watts, actress, and her mother, Miv, interior designer. By Ann McFerran. Photographs by Ed Reave

Naomi Watts (above left), 34, won two reviews for her part in the film *Mulholland Drive*, and stars in *The Ring*, which opens in the UK next week. She grew up in Kent and Australia and now lives in Los Angeles. She has a brother, Ben, 36. Their father, Peter, who managed Pink Floyd, died in 1976. Their mother, Miv, 55, is an interior designer; recent projects include revamping the foyer of Hampstead's Everyman cinema and designs for the Victoria hotel, Holkham. She lives in Norfolk.

MV: I did it all wrong. I was 19 when I got married, because I was pregnant, which was an accident, and I was only 20 when I had Naomi. After a very strict upbringing in Tonbridge, Kent, I'd been dying to get away from home. I moved to London and met Peter.

I loved the '60s scene, but I was never a groupie. After I met Peter, I was a girl on the road having a great time. We got an E-type Jag for £150 and drove to the south of France. When I got pregnant, my parents were very upset. First I had Ben and, the next year, Naomi. She was an easy birth. She came into the world very pink and blonde, and all the nurses called her Marilyn Monroe and insisted she'd be a huge success.

Peter was on the road with Pink Floyd, who were about to do their first tour of the US. The day after she was born, I heard Peter at reception saying: "My wife's in here. I think she's going to have a baby!" I lay there thinking: "How am I going to cope?" I knew he'd be straight off with Pink Floyd, and there I was, far too young to be a parent, with my second baby.

While Peter was away, I was left alone in a cottage in Kent for six months of the year. But you didn't complain in those days. I made up the rules about mothering as I went along, but with two babies it was hard. Sometimes the only conversation I had was with the grocer a mile and a half away. My mother would say: "Just get on with it. As long as your nipples are white, hanging on the line, you're all right."

When Peter came home it was hard to adjust because I was so needy. Eventually I gave up on the marriage and I had to be both parents, which I minded a lot. The children didn't stop me going to parties - I took them with me - but I remember thinking: "When will I have a train of thought that won't be interrupted?"

Naomi was a great little girl. She wanted to be independent from... **BB**