

# Yoga breathes new life into fine body of work

A veteran of 30 films, American actress Yvette Mimieux has released a yoga video, writes **Nancy Nash**

**R**EMEMBER, breathe," veteran American actress Yvette Mimieux says on her new instructional yoga home video.

Not in the breathless way a magazine writer once described her as actress, archaeologist, animal trainer, skydiver, business woman, painter, linguist, dancer, poet and movie star (leaving out activities in photography, scuba diving, world history, architecture and wildlife conservation), but as a breath-conscious yoga student wishing to sculpt their body and find peace of mind.

"I've never felt better in my life, I have more strength, stamina and flexibility than I have ever had," the Academy Award-nominated actress (for *Light in the Piazza*) said on a recent quick stop in Hong Kong.

For all of her activity in all forms of sports and passion about outdoor exercise, she said her discovery of yoga 15 years ago "combined all the best elements into something I enjoy doing on a daily basis".

Her *Harper's Bazaar Yoga Workout With Yvette Mimieux* hit the huge health and fitness market in the United States this winter, and immediately won rave reviews.

"Beautifully done ... makes yoga look like ballet." "Instructions give everybody a shot at doing it right." "Starts with a mini-history lesson about the centuries-old practice to improve the mind, body and spirit."

## Martial arts expert

Yoga master Szabolcs Atzel-Bethlen, her teacher and video partner, is both a martial arts expert and clinical psychologist.

Born in Hungary, at an early age he was drawn to Oriental philosophy and began studies of Hatha yoga.

It is his unique "cosmic workout", combining strength, flexibility, stamina and concentration, that is highlighted in a series of "meditation in motion" that students at all levels can master with practice.

The 45-minute video takes viewers through an easy, guided tour that sculpts the figure and reduces stress.

The program combines elemental



**LIMBERING UP:** Yvette Mimieux and Szabolcs Atzel-Bethlen stretch out in their new yoga video.

structures of both India and China — Hatha yoga and Tai-Chi.

Atzel-Bethlen has taught yoga to a list of clients that reads like a Hollywood Who's Who, including actresses known for both brains and beauty, among them Barbra Streisand, Raquel Welch, Shanghai-born Irene Tsu and Olympian, model and TV personality Suzy Chaffe.

A glance through a stack of his accolades makes it clear that if Oscars were given for promoting mind-body fitness and wellbeing, "Saby", as he is affectionately known to his students, would have run out of space on his mantelpiece long ago.

But he reserves his greatest praise for his video colleague Mimieux.

"She has reached such heights, come along so quickly, she could have taught yoga years ago," he said.

Mimieux's talent and physical fitness have seen her star in about

30 films, including *The Time Machine*, *Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, *Skyjacked*, *The Reward* and *Light in the Piazza*.

Her notable co-stars have included Charlton Heston, Glenn Ford, Max von Sydow, Albert Finney and Tommy Lee Jones.

## Television success

Over recent years she has added success in television, appearing in many popular TV movies, some of which she has written and produced, as well as starred in.

Apart from her work in theatre, she is well known in the music world for her interpretation of *Persephone*, from the oratorio by Igor Stravinsky, with text by Andre Gide, performed in French in London, New York and the Hollywood Bowl.

Mimieux discovered Asia in her

youth and it is an exploration she continues to renew at every chance.

"I never stop travelling, in the old-fashioned sense of physical journeys, as well as intellectually," she said.

Mimieux said her experiences were so rich and varied it was difficult to single out any single one.

She was among the last visitors to enjoy a peaceful Cambodia, reaching Angkor Wat on elephant back.

Other adventures have taken her to China's panda territory, trekking in Nepal and painting in Japan.

When the Hong Kong Hilton was hauled down, a part of her heart went with it.

"I always stayed there in Hong Kong!" she said.

But the lure of the Orient holds more than monuments, as her yoga video shares with everyone.