

Mann on Patagonia, pumas and Stefano Ricci

Posted on November 17, 2025 by Alina Trabattoni

FLORENCE — We caught up with Andy Mann at the Teatro Niccolini in Florence on November 17, 2025, after Stefano Ricci unveiled its eighth Explorer collection. Mann, a National Geographic photographer whose conservation work helped establish the world's largest Arctic National Park, was the official lens behind the SR Explorer No. 8 campaign, a 26-day expedition to Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego. He told us that nature was the artist, the gauchos were a dream to photograph, and that four and a half out of five conditions needed to sink a Zodiac were happening simultaneously when their vessel took on water in the fjord.

Source: https://italynow.co.uk/mann-on-patagonia-pumas-and-stefano-ricci/



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Andy Mann (*Credits: Moggi Studio, courtesy of Stefano Ricci*)

Q. What were the biggest challenges shooting in Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego?

“The challenges were obviously the weather, the locations, recovering southern Chile from northern Patagonia all the way down to the end of the world, as they say. Nature was the biggest challenge, but also the greatest reward. For me, nature is the artist. As the photographer, it’s my job to get out of the way and just let it speak for itself.”

Q. You mentioned a genuine emergency on the water. What happened?

“We went out on one of our big glacial days. We were in the fjord, 150-kilometer-an-hour winds, the waves were over a meter, and we started to take in water. We were where you don’t want to be in a Zodiac, which is in the crest of the swell, parallel to the swell itself. I just thought all the camera gear was going to get wet and our day was going to be over. But you’ve got to have a little bit of luck on these shoots. That day we had a little bit of luck. We got out of there and, as they say, the show goes on.”

Q. Fashion brands don’t usually hire National Geographic photographers. Was this brief unusual?

“From the fact that they took me, a natural history, mostly ocean photographer, to shoot a fashion campaign in this environment was completely out of the norm. And also for a brand like Stefano Ricci to leave behind a legacy. We didn’t just go photograph the landscape. We had relationships with the people. We got to meet all the local NGOs doing the hard work protecting the pumas and the gauchos. Those were our fixers, those were our guides. We ended up being one big family.”



Bernal Glacier *(Credits: Andy Mann for Stefano Ricci)*

Q. Tell us about the conservation side. What does the brand's commitment actually mean on the ground?

"The head of the foundation, her name is Kendra, and her and her family were our guides and fixers for the whole trip, our local trackers to find the pumas. They're an institutional family that's been working with pumas for decades and decades. They're the ones who are going to carry the legacy forward, thanks to the foundation."

Q. Do you think more fashion houses could do something like this?

"Absolutely. You could see just the way that the landscape and the textiles were complementing each other throughout the night, and the stories. A lot more brands could step out of the box, get off the runway, get out of the studio, go experience nature. We are one with nature."

Q. What struck you most about the gauchos?

"Style. They're so beautiful. Just their grace, humility, strength. We spent two weeks there and it beat us up pretty good. These guys are riding every day in this environment and they're completely laid back. That's the coolest thing about South America, the people. They're the kindest you could

ever imagine. And as a photographer, it’s a dream, because they’re kind of everything you would want in an iconic character.”

Additional reporting Sabina Castelfranco

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