

LIGHTNING STRIKES TWICE

Since appearing on our cover just six short months ago, **Chris Hemsworth** hasn't exactly been idle. He's released his own health and fitness app, starred in the biggest movie of all time and rebooted another beloved '90s franchise. So, what's a man to do when he's secured his position as one of the most recognisable and influential people on the planet? *MH* editor Scott Henderson sat down with the Aussie megastar to find out

Photography By *Steven Chee*

IN LATE 2018, on a hill high above Byron Bay, a barefooted and sweaty Chris Hemsworth sat down to a plate of chicken with the *Men's Health* crew. We'd just wrapped our March cover shoot, but Hemsworth was not done, joking around with the team and personally thanking everyone involved, agreeing to every selfie request without a hint of hesitation. "What's he like in real life?" It's a question I've been asked more often than, "How are you?"

"As nice as you imagine, times 10," is my response.

Fast-forward to the present day and I find myself lunching with Hemsworth again. He's as amicable as ever, although his world has undeniably changed. This time around we're joined by 40 journalists from around the world as we celebrate the launch of the TAG

Autavia watch range in a waterfront Sydney restaurant. There are no bare feet and it's a world away from the calm of our Byron Bay photoshoot. Luckily, I'm able to peel away with Australia's favourite export for a brief 10-minute check-in – a rather tight timeframe given how much Hemsworth has achieved in the six months since we last met.

In the days immediately following the release of his *Men's Health* cover back in March, (a cover that was picked up around the world), Hemsworth and wife Elsa Pataky changed the digital health and wellness landscape with the release of their holistic lifestyle app *Centr*. Drawing on the expertise of Hemsworth's crack team of health and wellness experts, the app alone would represent a banner year for most ordinary men. But Chris Hemsworth, as we've long >

known, is no ordinary man.

Enter *Avengers: Endgame*, a movie that looks set to define a generation and is well on track to surpass *Avatar* as the biggest of all time. Reprising his signature role of Thor, this time around the God of Thunder's storyline carries a little more 'weight' than previous outings [honestly, if you've avoided spoilers up to this point, you are the true hero].

Hemsworth's big-screen dominance was subsequently cemented with the release of *Men In Black: International*, a reboot of the Will Smith-led '90s saga.

With highly anticipated Netflix movie *Dhaka*, lucrative corporate partnerships with TAG and Hugo Boss and a comedy pairing with Tiffany Haddish all still to come in 2019, it's perhaps no wonder the actor has decided to take a well-earned break from Hollywood. Because, as Hemsworth explains, taking a step back is often the most important one in moving forward.

MH How would you sum up the last six months?

CH: Kind of nutty. I mean the last few years, I just keep looking back to what my dream scenario would've been in the future and this is it. I feel so thankful.

MH: Surely this has surpassed even what you dreamt?

CH: Yeah, you're right and after *The Avengers* press tour I had a real moment of like, "Oh, what now? I'm unemployed, what next?" And then I thought, "No, this is the problem. If you keep looking ahead and not enjoying right now, then you're just going to miss it". So, I'm just at home now, taking the next six months off and spending time with the kids and the wife. I'm just going to make school lunches and do school drop-offs and pick-ups.

MH: Does the success you've enjoyed create pressure when it comes to choosing future projects?

CH: It does, yeah. I feel like when you've got nothing to lose that you're a bit bolder in your choices. I definitely feel like when things are just lining up so well, it's like, "Whoa, whoa, whoa, what is the misstep here? Or what if I do this and that?" As I said before, I'm getting out of that head space now and just trying to enjoy every moment and appreciate it. And trying to look for things that are new and challenging without looking at the outcome necessarily. Just looking at, "Am I going to enjoy this process? Does this director look like he's fun to work with? Is the script something that interests me and is different and challenging?"



"The last few years, I keep looking back to what my dream scenario would have been in the future and this is it"

MH: When we caught up late last year you were remodeling your home. Is that finished yet?

CH: In November – then you can come over for that beer. I said to my wife, I'm taking time off right when the house isn't built. I might have to extend it to 12 months just to be there.

MH I imagine you'll fit in some surfing – by the way, how was surfing in a suit [Hemsworth recently took to the waves in a Hugo Boss suit]?

CH: I felt like I was going to drown a few times. I wouldn't recommend it. I had my mate with a jet-ski whip me into some waves, then I paddled a few, but it was challenging. Definitely not suitable attire for surfing.

MH You seem to attract these wild adventures, which are reflected in your movies and in brand partnerships like TAG Heuer. When you're making those decisions to partner with brands, what are the values you look for?

CH: Initially it's about the people that I'm going to be working with. I felt from the very first day with TAG that there was such a wonderful, collaborative enthusiasm within the company. I went to the factory in Switzerland where the watches are made and saw the whole process from step one through to the finished product. There's a great sense of pride.

And as you say, there's an adventurous quality to the brand, very sporty, outdoorsy. Yes, you can dress them up and so on, but it's a great lifestyle product. And I've been able to travel with the brand. I went to the Indianapolis 500, I went to the Monaco Grand Prix, Hong Kong. Later in the year I'm going to Singapore for a grand prix. That's been one of the best things, just being able to travel and that sense of adventure.

MH You've also created your own brand this year in the form of your app *Centr*. Where do you want to take that venture?

CH: Just continue to grow it. It's wonderful getting feedback from people who use it who say how much it's changed their lives and transformed their body or their mental health and wellbeing. That was always the goal. To extend the interactions I've been fortunate to have and people I've been able to work with, to a larger portion of the world.

MH What have been the most popular aspects of the app? Has it been the training, the nutrition, mindset coaching?

CH: I think initially the training's a big one, but what people have really responded to is the food plan and nutrition. We have a number of different chefs there and all the meals line up with whatever you're trying to achieve with your body, while being tasty and unique.

MH They're definitely easy to follow. And with fat Thor now out there... I guess he can go on *Centr* now and get his rig back...

CH: That's right, that's my before and after pics.

MH Given you're taking six months off, would you consider getting behind the camera?

CH: Yeah, something I think I'm going to do in January is a comedy with Tiffany Haddish. I was thinking about directing – my production company bought the script and have been building it for a good year now. It's hilarious. One of the best scripts I've read. It's an Australian male strip group, with these undercover cops. It's an adventure/comedy/action film.

MH Is comedy a space you want to focus on?

CH: I'm open to anything at the moment, you know? I've done a lot lately and so I'm looking forward to also doing a drama somewhere and some simpler things. Comedy is fantastic, there's so much improvisation, a sense of the unknown and a nervous energy that crackles through the whole production, which is different to doing something a bit more predictable. But I'd love to do a drama as well.

MH How much of what we see on screen is spur-of-the-moment Hemsworth?

CH: It depends which movie it is. I mean with *The Avengers* and *Thor: Ragnarok* in particular, they were hugely improvised. We had a wonderful script, which we'd shoot and then also just go off the map and do our thing. It's quite an unusual thing to get comfortable doing, you know? You've got to have a fair amount of trust in your co-star, director, the editor, because you kind of hand them a bunch of stuff, 90 per cent of which is usually rubbish. You don't want it out there in the world.

MH Do you find that doing comedy helps you separate work and family life?

CH: Definitely. I said that to my wife one time. I'd come home and I was just in such a great mood, and I said, "God, this has got to be healthy for you, spending your day laughing and having fun and trying to find the funny things in every situation". There's a different kind of fulfillment in doing a drama and digging deeper into things, which is just as satisfying, but different. You do come home sometimes a little heavier and you just have to shake that off. ■