

A Latin Lover

Looks at American Women

**Rossano Brazzi's
candid observations come from
firsthand experience—
his wife will testify
to that.**



Rossano and Lidia Brazzi

by Peer J. Oppenheimer

AH, WOMEN! Now there's a subject you don't talk about without doing a considerable amount of research, says Europe's No. 1 screen lover, Rossano Brazzi.

And before you can arch an eyebrow, he adds, "Academic research, of course."

In the background, his wife of 17 years, Lidia, smiles patiently like a woman listening to a precocious child.

"You're never too experienced to learn about women, either," Brazzi continues. "For example, what I learned on that auto trip I just made across the country would surprise you!"

But he adds hastily, "I made the trip with my wife, you know."

Brazzi wanted to learn more about Americans—particularly the women—so he and Lidia motored from New York to Los Angeles, meeting folks of every sort along the way. "Yes, I discovered much about your women," Brazzi recalls. "My wife is very broad-minded, you see. She lets me look all I want, and she never says a word."

That's a disappointing start, all right, but as you begin to know Brazzi better you accept his "academic" observations on women as more valid than the field surveys conducted by some Hollywood Lotharios.

And why not? In 17 years, Brazzi's charms obviously have not dimmed in the estimation of his wife. Her ample proportions are matched by her abundant devotion to Rossano and her happiness. Is there a better recommendation for an expert on women than his wife?

Brazzi's sex appeal got off to a bad start in Hollywood. That was in 1949 when he was brought here from Italy and promised a big romantic build-up. Instead, he wound up playing the aging Professor Behr in a remake of "Little Women."

His Latin and masculine pride injured, Brazzi

stormed back to Rome. But American womanhood was not to be denied. Subsequent pictures skyrocketed his fan mail (it now averages 65,000 letters a month in six languages) and led to top romantic roles, including his latest, Universal-International's "Interlude" with June Allyson.

In the period when Brazzi was cooling off and American women warming up, Rossano made a remark about U.S. girls which he has since regretted: "Women are the same everywhere. You can't separate them by continents."

Since his safari through the U.S. studying the natives at close hand, Rossano has changed his mind. "Before, I knew only professional women," he explains. "They were all the same. Ah, but wives and mothers, they are different from continent to continent!"

For one thing, American wives do not confine their careers to the kitchen as Italians do. "American women," says Brazzi, "work eight hours a day, come home, and open a package of frozen food..." He pauses as if expecting an attack of indigestion.

"Not that I'm saying American women can't cook," he hastens to add. "I love your hot dogs, but... well, let's say I'm used to Italian cuisine. On the other hand, your women are neater and better organized. It's strange, though, that with all their gadgets and do-it-yourself items, they're quite impractical compared with Italians."

When it comes to clothing, Brazzi is a typical husband. He likes the way American women dress because "it is beautiful—and doesn't cost a fortune like in Europe."

Unlike many Europeans, Brazzi lauds American women for being intellectual, and he vehemently

denies that they are "bossy." He also contradicts the continental idea that European women are more temperamental than Americans.

"I think the opposite is true," he says, eyes lighting up. "And being Italian, I like it!" Then his expressive face darkens. "If only American women weren't so jealous! They should learn the joys of broad-mindedness."

Brazzi is as much a diplomat as a student of women. He concludes his observations by saying, "But Italian or American, all women are wonderful. I love them all! Of course, there is none I love more than my wife!"

He means it, too. Which makes you wonder if it wouldn't be wiser to interview the woman who has held the love of a matinee idol for 17 years. But Mrs. Brazzi, like women the world over, has more sense than to discuss the opposite sex in generalities. "That's for you men," she says.



June Allyson, Brazzi's costar in "Interlude," is a typical American woman, he reports. "So impractical." Is that bad?