

The logo for the TV show 'mistress america' is displayed in a dark purple box. The text 'mistress america' is in white, and 'now playing' is in a lighter purple color below it.

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FASHION & STYLE

On Instagram, the Summer You're Not Having

By VALERIYA SAFRONOVA AUG. 19, 2015

And how has your summer been so far?

Have you been frolicking in the Hamptons with an Academy Award-winning actress? No?

Then you have clearly not been having as good a time as Amy Schumer, who, as reported by Vanity Fair in an article titled “See Jennifer Lawrence and Amy Schumer Together on the Summer Vacation of Our Dreams,” documented on her Instagram account a trip she recently took with Ms. Lawrence, posting a blurry shot of herself and Ms. Lawrence on a Jet Ski. (There was also one of the two forming the top and bottom of a human pyramid on the deck of what appeared to be a rather sizable vessel.)

Did you have a chance to drift on a yacht off the coast of Ibiza with a rotating cast of guests that included Anne Hathaway, Olivia Palermo and a handful of male models? No?

Then you need to become friends with Valentino Garavani, who, as shown in photos organized under the Instagram hashtag #tmbblue2015, has dedicated himself to a life of maritime leisure, replete with photogenic and oft-photographed pals, a cheeky dog named Poppy and casually elegant clothes

that seem straight out of a fall editorial.

Maybe you were busy attending concerts in Britain with a couple of supermodels and an international pop star? No?

Then it's probably time for you to send in your application to join Taylor Swift's high-profile girl gang. Members of the squad, which include Cara Delevingne, Karlie Kloss, Kendall Jenner, Gigi Hadid and Martha Hunt, organized a short concert tour in June, hopping between music performances in London and the Glastonbury Music Festival via helicopter.

Is all this bringing out the envious side of you? You're not alone. The fear of missing out, which has spawned the #FOMO hashtag, has for years been identified as a prime side effect for the millions of people who have Instagram, Facebook, Twitter or Snapchat accounts.

Yet the condition seems sharper and more pronounced in summer, when various combinations of celebrities join forces; escape to shimmering sunshine-soaked locales; and document their escapades on social platforms. It's hard to ignore the underlying message: They're having a fabulous summer while you, poor soul trapped in a grim cubicle, are not.

"Not only am I not on this epic trip in Cannes, but I'm also not on this yacht in Cannes with Gigi and Bella Hadid and Hailey Baldwin," said Emily Tess Katz, 25, a Huffington Post associate editor. "It exacerbates the feeling. I can't help but have the delusion that they would enjoy me there."

Every day brings a new assortment of images — silhouettes against the sunset, scantily clad bodies floating in clear blue waters, plates piled high with fresh seafood and luscious fruit — from destinations around the world.

Italy, for example, seems to have had a particularly Instagram-worthy year, hosting Derek Blasberg and Karlie Kloss in Positano, Chrissy Teigen and John Legend in Naples and Giovanna Battaglia on the island of Panarea.

“It’s such a constant stream of things coming in through Instagram and Facebook,” said Joshua Galbraith, 22, who works in operations at a New York City law firm and checks Instagram two to five times a day. “If someone takes a really good picture and the colors are radiant and people’s skin is glistening, you want to see that place.”

The extent to which the subjects of summer’s most enviable photos are actually enjoying themselves is difficult to gauge. But on platforms like Instagram, the point is rarely to depict reality. Filters soften harsh lighting and captions hint (often vaguely) at fun that can’t be captured in words.

“People try to create their most desirable selves online,” said Max Wedding, 24, who has been stuck working one full-time and two part-time jobs in Portland, Ore., this summer and has watched longingly as his friends and family made time for long and short trips away. “They want to create a self that looks like it’s having as much fun as possible. The mundane middle ground is lost.”

A study published in the *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General* in February measured the emotional effects of Facebook use, finding that passively using the platform (scrolling through your feed and looking at people’s posts the way you would on Instagram) enhances envy, which in turn makes people feel worse over all.

Ethan Kross, 35, a researcher on the study and an associate professor and director at the Emotion and Self-Control Laboratory at the University of Michigan, said: “There’s a tendency to curate the way we appear online. Constantly seeing all these positive developments in people’s lives is not necessarily good for one’s emotional well-being.”

But it’s not all bad. Maureen Dahl, 22, a client-services technician, experienced deep vacation envy this summer after she was hit by a car in May and all her planned trips were derailed. Ms. Dahl suffered a fractured femur, tibia and pelvis and a torn meniscus. It was six weeks before she was able to

move around on her own using crutches and three months before she could drive again.

Ms. Dahl, who this summer has been checking Instagram 15 to 20 times a day, and follows the Kardashians as well as some of the members of the TV show “The Real Housewives of New York City,” explained the upside of seeing all the trips showing up on her feed: “It’s definitely motivated me to get better and push myself to do things that I might not have been comfortable with.”

Instead of wallowing in her immobility, Ms. Dahl has looked closer to her home base, Saratoga Springs, N.Y., and found ways to capture the excitement she sees in the virtual world by spending time downtown or heading to the city’s racecourse.

Her instincts reflect a finding of the Facebook study and one other that has been linked to it. “What we find is that interacting with other people directly, face-to-face or talking to someone on the phone, has the exact opposite effect on how people feel,” Dr. Kross said. “It’s an improvement of well-being.”

The cure for Instagram-induced vacation envy, it seems, is a return to pleasures IRL (In Real Life).

Related: “The Instagram Archive of Celebrity Summers.”

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