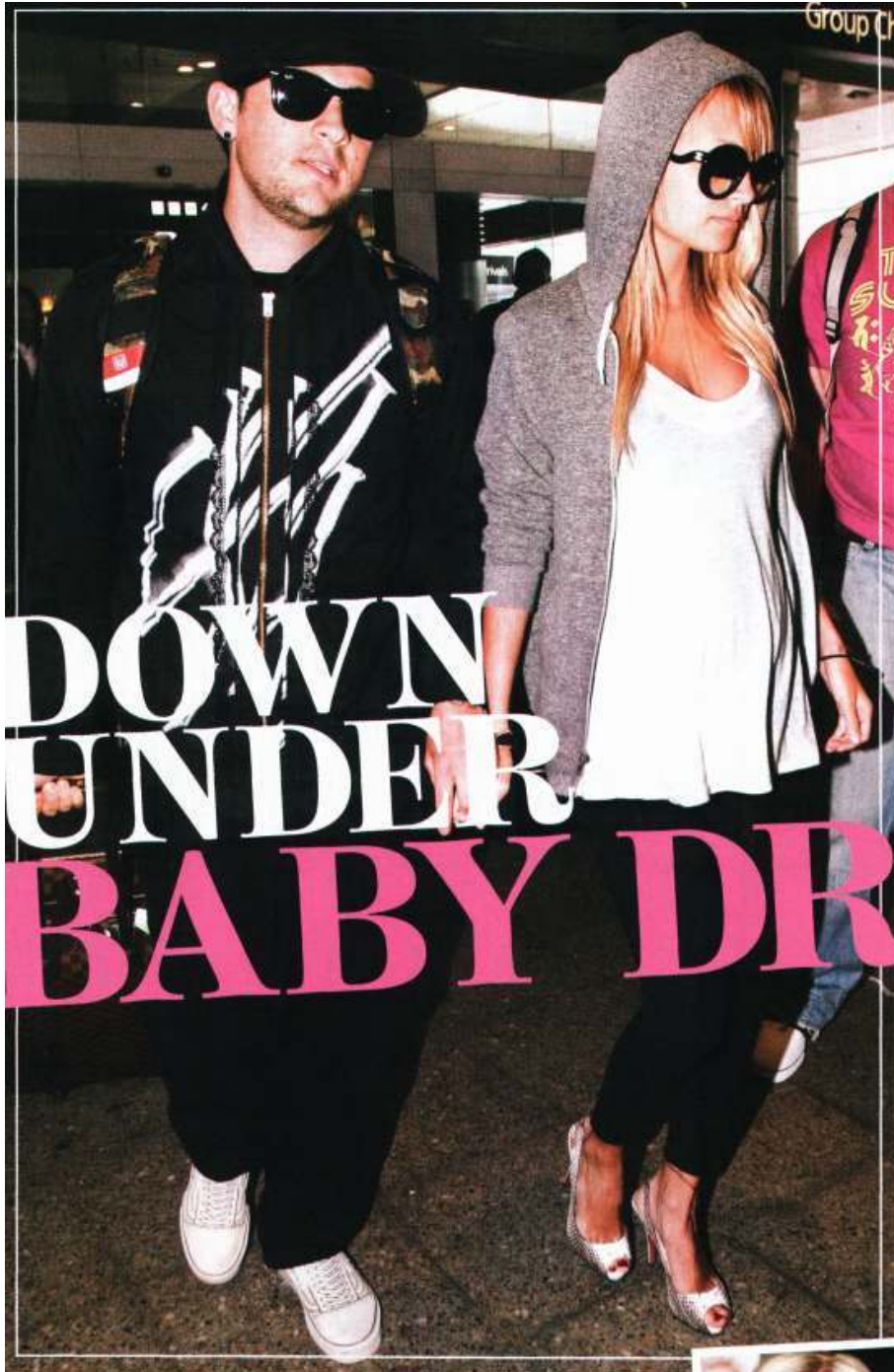




Famous
22/10/2007
Page: 14
General News
Region: National Circulation: 75210
Type: Magazines Lifestyle
Size: 584.21 sq.cms
M-----



Nicole is wiped out by her trip to Oz.

Nicole Richie's trip to Australia – a 14-hour flight from LA – was shrouded in secret drama.

The seven-month pregnant star is said to have battled fatigue as a result of the long flight early in the week. Nicole was fearful that she had over-exerted herself and was not feeling well. She was equally concerned about being so far away from the doctors who have helped guide her through her troubled pregnancy so far, say pals.

At their hotel in Brisbane, *The Simple Life* star did little more than soak up the sun, hoping to recover. "She appeared so lethargic. Even lazing by the pool didn't seem to lift her spirits," says an onlooker.

Nicole and her Good Charlotte boyfriend Joel Madden had massages, pedicures and manicures at the Sofitel Brisbane's Spa Retreat, but neither the warm weather nor

DOWN UNDER BABY DRAMA

pampering put a smile on her face.

"Joel spent most of the time with his iPod on and so did Nicole – they weren't talking a lot," says an observer.

When she arrived in Sydney midweek – several hours later than expected – she was still so drained she avoided red carpet duties at the Nickelodeon Kids' Choice Awards and later at a VIP Good Charlotte gig.

"Nicole's had a rough time with parts of this pregnancy," says a pal, possibly referring to earlier miscarriage scares. "She didn't know making a trip like this would be so

tiring, but she didn't like the idea of Joel being in Australia on his own. So she came to keep him company – and to keep an eye on him."

Reps were unavailable for comment, but a pal adds, "It's hard for Joel because he wants to enjoy himself, but wants to keep her happy, too. It's tough." [F]

Sophie Monk has announced she'll cut short her Aussie visit with fiancé Benji Madden due to film commitments back in LA. But rumours hint all may not be well between the couple. Talk of trouble between the pair – who had planned to look at real estate in Sophie's home state of Queensland – intensified after Lisa Origliasso from *The Veronicas* was overheard discussing one of the Madden brothers supposedly hitting on her sister Jess backstage at the Nickelodeon Kids' Choice Awards.

"Joel wouldn't dare upset Nicole in her condition, so that leaves Benji," says one guest who shadowed the Maddens from one event to another. "Sophie was at his gig later though, so you can only imagine either he'd managed to explain it or that she hadn't yet heard it."

