

WELCOMING US INTO HER 'COSY' MANSION
CAROLINE STANBURY
 FROM 'LADIES OF LONDON' TO
 LIVING THE DREAM IN DUBAI

'The family is super happy here. What's not to love about this lifestyle?'

(MAIN PHOTO) CAROLINE'S DRESS, RAG & BONE; AT EL COMING DALL'ES DUEMI; BOOTS, SUNGLASSES, DIOR; (INSET PHOTO) SHIRT, ELISABETH FRANCHI; SHORTS, FRAME DENIM; EARRINGS, CHANEL



Lounging by the pool in her perfectly manicured garden, sipping an almond milk smoothie and picking at the immaculately presented crudités and hummus that her personal chef has served up, Caroline Stanbury looks completely relaxed and perfectly at home. Yet this spectacular house is located thousands of miles away from the UK and her well-documented non-stop social life as arguably the grande dame of the wealthy *Ladies of London* of the Bravo reality TV series. "My life is way more laid back now. I just want a different life here," 41-year-

old Caroline tells **HELLO!**. Wearing a simple slip with fun furry sliders, the popular socialite and entrepreneur shows us around the light-filled six-bedroom mansion in Dubai, set in the upscale but low-key enclave Al Barari, where she relocated last August with her husband and children from their home in Virginia Water, Surrey. **NOTHING VENTURED...** Embarking on a "laid-back" life here sounds like a massive change but she says: "We didn't come here with a plan. It was nearer my husband's work in Kazakhstan and we have always been

happy to try out new things. What's the worst that could happen? We could just move back." The former stylist turned TV star and entrepreneur is married to Turkish-born financier Cem Habib, whom she met 15 years ago. He's in full work-out gear as he heads off to his Barry's Bootcamp class; their children, twins Zack and Aaron, seven, and Yasmine, 11, are at school and Buster the pug is taking a nap when we sit down in her soothing white, "cosy" mansion, with its chic accents of bright colour, to talk about stepping out of the social whirlwind and

Caroline, daughter Yasmine, 11, twin sons Zack and Aaron, seven, and pug Buster enjoy idyllic outdoor life in Dubai. The family moved from Surrey last August and Caroline says the children have more friends here than they did in the UK



Caroline loves her chic, open-plan, modern home. "I wanted it to be full of light, very LA - all the doors of the house push back so that it can be completely open," she tells HELLO!. "It is seamless indoor-outdoor living and I wanted it to feel bright and airy, very Californian"

preparing for new challenges... Caroline, was it love at first sight when you entered this tranquil compound in the heart of the Dubai desert?

"Funnily enough, I hadn't been to Al Barari before. I hadn't really ventured further than my hotel."

"When we decided to move, we initially looked at other recommended homes in The Palm Jumeirah and Emirates Hills. While I was away, Cem came to Al Barari, found the house and did everything."

"It's perfect. First of all, it's green and covered in trees, which appeals to the Dorset girl in me. It's also 15 minutes from Repton School, where the kids go, and it has a spa, a restaurant... I don't have to leave this haven if I don't want to."

It's such a huge space...

"It is a big house, a bit bigger than my Surrey home, and it's ironic to say it's cosy but it does feel that way. From a Dubai point of view it's quite modest as houses here are gigantic. If I said that I was living in a 13,000 sq ft home in London, everyone would say I was disgusting but this is the smallest villa in Al Barari."

It must be disconcerting going

from somewhere where everybody instantly recognises you to being relatively incognito...

"There are always people, be it my Instagram followers or those who stream my show, who recognise me here. But that doesn't really validate me as a person, my work does. I have fun with it all but I don't care if I'm recognised on the street. I get my fill of that in the US or the UK. People have lots of preconceived notions about me in London but here it's almost like starting with a fresh slate."

"It is, however, easier when you know that people recognise you. I prefer it when people come up and say something. Sometimes I get messages on my Instagram saying, 'I saw you out last night here.' Once I got one on Twitter that said, 'I am sitting behind you on a plane' - that was a bit uncomfortable!"

Did you know people who lived in Dubai?

"I hardly knew anyone. That was my goal as I wasn't looking for a social life when I moved here; I was coming from a non-stop social life."

"We were looking to take a step back and spend time

(RIGHT) DRESS: SELF-PORTRAIT; EARRINGS: ALEXIS BITTAR. ALL FROM BLOOMINGDALE'S DUBAI



'For Dubai this is quite modest as houses here are gigantic'

'It's a big house but, believe it or not, it feels like a cosy home'



"The house was full of dark woods so I painted everything, from the window frames to the doors and walls, white," explains Caroline.

'I wasn't looking for a social life when I came here as I came from a non-stop social life'



"I love colour," says Caroline. "It makes me happy. I'm very lucky that my husband can live with anything and lets me do what I like." She also never wanted a formal sitting room. "I want friends to feel they can take off their shoes, sit on the sofas in jeans..."

with the kids and have a relaxed life. It wasn't a concern whether I knew people. I started from scratch."

So you're not in a similar social whirlwind? "I get a lot of invites, which is really nice, but I don't go out much. I think people are getting sick of me saying no! I moved here for a different life."

"But when I'm abroad, I travel and still go out a lot. I'm doing a huge event in London in December and in Cannes I was out every night, from the de Grisogono bash to Harvey [Weinstein]'s party. I've met really nice friends here, whose places I pop into, but I want to relax in Dubai."

How have your children adjusted to life here? "They've taken to it like ducks to water. They have more friends here than they did in the UK, they're outside, they're happy. I don't think you could feel unhappy in this weather. We go to Ibiza for a month then LA, so we won't be here for the height of summer, which is probably a good thing."

Have your fellow "ladies" visited? "Ladies of London has been a giant part of my life for the past four years. Making a show like that is a rollercoaster; lots of ups and downs. I brought most of them to the show so they were my friends or family but it definitely strains relationships. Caroline ▶

TOP: ALEXANDER WANG. SHORTS: 3.1 PHILLIP LIM. ALL FROM BLOOMINGDALE'S DUBAI





The master bedroom and the sleek, streamlined bathroom (below). "I love those cushion buttons," says the proud lady of the house. "I always knew I wanted that detailing on my bed as it looks rich, no matter what"

'Making Ladies of London is a rollercoaster; lots of ups and downs. It definitely strains relationships'



Fleming has come out to stay. I'm still in touch with them. I see the ones I'm close to. Time is precious when I'm there." **Your home here is stunning. It must have helped that you had a luxury interiors company oversee it...**

"I was having lunch with my friend Bianca Ladow – who is the CEO of luxury project management and design house Earlcrown – and told her I was moving and she said she wanted to do my house.

"Together with Kate, her partner who lives in Dubai and who I've become great friends with, we picked everything, designed all the furniture together, but they did everything else, from getting it built to putting it in, putting up the curtains... They did everything. Five weeks, turn-key. They managed it in five weeks. The beds were made. They even unpacked most of my boxes – I had over 200!"

And now you going into business as a partner with them...

"My parents were into interiors so I've always been around beautiful spaces. I grew up in houses that were in magazines as my mother [Elizabeth Beale, whose great-grandfather was the 1st Baron Vestey] is a known interior designer. So it's not totally foreign to me but I didn't come here with the notion that I was going to go into that business." **So how did it come about?**

RIGHT: JACKET & TROUSERS: ZARA



'In Dubai, I've not been asked once where my clothes come from'

Caroline in her walk-in closet, converted from a bedroom, where she stores her array of designer shoes, bags and clothes. She says she got rid of a lot of her stuff as she doesn't need it in Dubai. "No one cares here whether something is five or ten years old," she says. "It's really liberating"

'My parents were into interiors so I've always been around beautiful spaces'



Zack and Aaron are delighted to have their own rooms (above and below). "They are so excited to be near my bedroom. They can shout out to me," says Caroline. "Everything in my house is from my range, ECmyLIFE," adds the entrepreneur, who was determined to combine chic design with practicality. "I think a lot about little details. Because I have kids all my chairs are suede and leather but they're faux suede so you can wipe them down"



(LEFT) DRESS: ELISABETTA FRANCHI. RING: MARCIA MORAN AT BLOOMINGDALE'S DUBAI

"I made a serious investment in my last house and someone else is sleeping in it. I'm too old to have a house full of Ikea – don't get me wrong, I'm a huge Ikea fan – but I don't want a whole house full of it. So I had to come up with something and created this range, ECmyLIFE, which is above Ikea but below big designers. It's affordable luxury. Everything in my house, from the furniture to the accessories, is from the range."

You already have plans to take it international...
"We're in talks with projects here and New York. It's really exciting. It's evolved already as we were

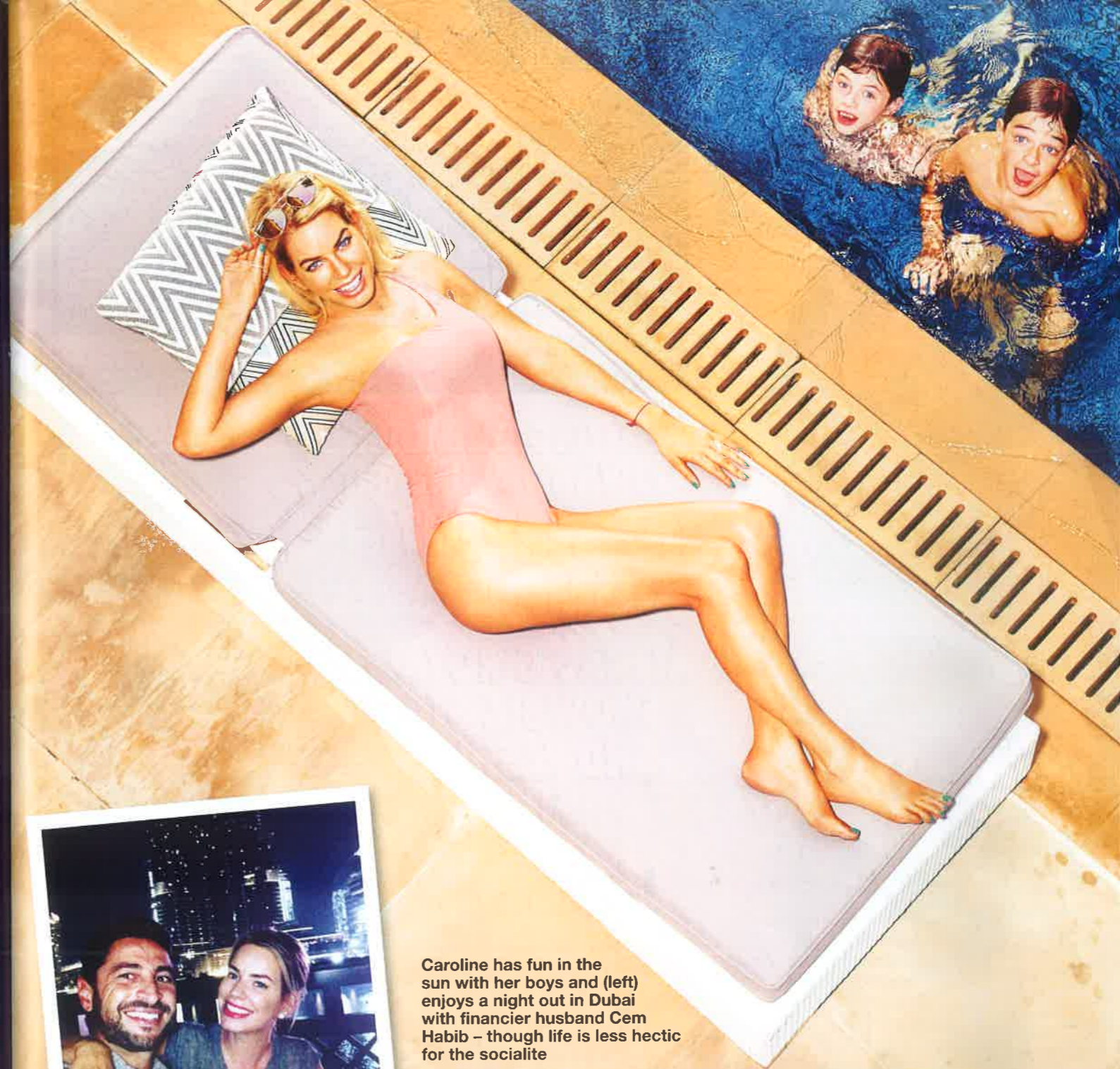
originally just launching a furniture line but, after seeing the house, people are now approaching us as an interiors company and I am the face of it."

You had 200 boxes shipped here and you've converted a bedroom into a walk-in closet.

"I got rid of a lot of stuff before I came here. In London, if you go to a party and you're not in the latest thing it's noticed. No one cares here whether something is five years or ten years old. That's one of the things I was pleasantly surprised about in Dubai. I've not been asked where I get my jewellery or clothes from since I



FLOWERS: LOUAY MARDAM BEK AT LMB EVENTS, LMB.AE



Caroline has fun in the sun with her boys and (left) enjoys a night out in Dubai with financier husband Cem Habib – though life is less hectic for the socialite



got here. The friends I hang out with haven't asked – either that or they don't like my style! I'll go with the former."

Will you make your life here for a good few years?

"We've rented out the home in Surrey. I didn't want to let anything go in case it didn't work out here. Right now the whole family is super happy, we have made amazing friends and I can't see how I would go back. What's not to love about this lifestyle?"

INTERVIEW: NATASHA FARUQUE
PHOTOS: DAVID VENNI

STYLING: CHEE SMITH AT MMG ARTISTS
HAIR & MAKE-UP: BIANCA HARTKOPF AT MMG ARTISTS
USING DIOR MAKE-UP

For more on Caroline's range, visit ecmylife.com.

ADDITIONAL PHOTO: CAROLINE STANBURY

