

A NEW CHAPTER IN CALIFORNIA AFTER 'THE JUMP'
LADY VICTORIA HERVEY
TALKS DATING, HER DESIRE TO SETTLE DOWN
AND PUTTING PARTYING DAYS BEHIND HER



24 Basking in the sun at the California resort of Marina del Rey, Lady Victoria enjoys a rare moment of relaxation. The socialite and one-time party girl – more usually seen sipping iced water these days (inset) – is kept busy with a host of projects including a new accessories line and writing the first of three novels



'I had no structure in my life at all. Now I hang out with my married friends. They're reliable. Since I've stopped going out so much, everything is better'

Considering she is known to be something of a party girl, Lady Victoria Hervey looks remarkably well rested as she sits on the terrace of an elegant beachfront house in Marina del Rey, California. But then the 38-year-old says she has turned over a new leaf.

"I have really wanted to make a change in my life," says the English model and socialite, who has made Los Angeles her home for the past ten years. "I'm really focused on work now and since I've stopped going out so much, everything is better. I find that when I'm not hungover, I'm not anxious and then I'm so much more productive."

Away from the hubbub of Hollywood, Lady Victoria's new home is an oasis. Its high ceilings ensure the house is flooded with light and the sound of seagulls is a constant soothing soundtrack. Victoria says she sleeps so well here that even her Norfolk terrier D'Artagnan nudging her awake at 6.30am isn't a problem. "I'm up and awake by 7am. I've also started learning to surf," she says, adding with a smile: "It's so tiring. So far I've only been paddling out, but it's hard work."

It is a huge lifestyle change, says the daughter of the 6th Marquess of Bristol. As she tells **HELLO!**: "I had no structure in my life at all and now I feel like I have better direction and I know what I'm doing."

In her youth, Lady Victoria enjoyed a gap year in Florence then worked in ad agencies and as a receptionist for film director Michael Winner, before taking to the catwalk and becoming a regular fixture on the party scene. Her pedigree and celebrity friends made her the perfect It girl and she had a regular Party Animal column in *The Sunday Times*.

But times have changed and she has new priorities, including a three-novel publishing deal, a range of accessories and,

not least, she hopes one day to settle down and have a family of her own.

"I would love to have children," she says. "I need to step on it, you know, but I feel like I'm mentally and physically ready to have kids and I think I was definitely not ready, even a year ago. I've definitely thought about having my eggs frozen just to have them there."

Her younger sister Lady Isabella's marriage last September prompted Victoria to take stock of her own life. "It put me in motion to get my life together, because she's five years younger than me," she says. "When that happens, you're like, 'Oh okay, maybe I need to make some changes because whatever I'm doing isn't working.'"

JUMP START

Another big factor in reassessing her life was taking part in Channel 4 TV celebrity wintersports series *The Jump*, where she suffered a high-speed crash during a skeleton bob training run in Austria yet still finished a creditable ninth.

"It was a huge life-changing experience," she says. "We were working on the show through the party season and of course I couldn't go out. I needed to focus. When you've got skis on and you're risking your life, you've got to be really on it, you can't be hungover."

"Then the week I had my crash was during the Golden Globes and I had to shut down my LA phone. It was like, 'I'm facing death and you guys are running around at parties.' Now when I do go on nights out I think, 'Oh my gosh, was this what I was doing?' Since I got back I've barely been out actually."

"Watching the crash doesn't really show how bad it was because they show it in slow-mo and you don't see how fast it was. But literally, your chin is on the ice and all you can hear is this roaring noise and you can only see white cloud, ▶



TOP & SKIRT: ENDLESS ROSE; JEWELLERY: BIZZOTTO; WATCH: VERSACE; SHOES: GINA

'I would love to have children. I need to step on it. I've definitely thought about having my eggs frozen'



"I'm trying something new," Victoria says coyly when asked if she is dating, adding that it's hard to find the right man in LA. But at 38 she is thinking about settling down. "I feel like I'm mentally and physically ready to have kids," she tells us



(LEFT) DRESS: DAR SARA. SHOES: GINA. (RIGHT) DRESS: JANI & KHOSLA. (BOTTOM RIGHT) DRESS: ENDLESS ROSE

which is the ice because you're going so fast."

There were plenty of highlights, however, and she says she enjoyed her time with fellow contestants, including eventual winner Joey Essex and Mike Tindall, as well as his wife Zara, the Queen's granddaughter.

"It was quite surreal. There we are having dinner and it's Joey Essex with me and Zara. Everyone got on really well, it was great. Zara's just a really great girl, really down to earth. She looked after D'Artagnan for me when I was filming, which was so lovely. I think her grandmother has some Norfolk terriers. Zara said the ones she knows are a lot fatter. Princess Beatrice has got one or two as well."

Despite the royal presence, teasing wasn't off the menu. "There was a lot of talk about whether Mike should get his nose fixed," Victoria laughs. "He's really a dedicated dad. He was running around Innsbruck searching for the perfect birthday present for [his and Zara's daughter] Mia. I miss Mike, he's got such a good sense of humour. I miss that face of his."

The lifestyle changes continued



For now, Lady Victoria's prized Norfolk terrier D'Artagnan (below) is her faithful male companion – but she's not giving up on looking for love

on Victoria's return to LA. "Within the past six months I've been hanging out a lot more with my married friends with kids because they have a proper structure and they're reliable. It really gets to me when the party friends say they'll do things when they're drunk at night, but can they deliver at 9am the next day? I want to be productive."

And productive she has been. "My new line of accessories is called Ladyship. I'm working with Scott Henshall, who was head designer for Mulberry," says Victoria as she proudly displays a passport holder from the range. In soft Italian tan leather featuring her family crest on the cover, it fits perfectly with her classic personal style. "We're doing a luggage line and a jewellery line and everything is being made in the UK and Italy."

STORY OF MY LIFE

Then there are her novels. "I have a three-book deal for novels based on reality. I've been writing stuff down for years and wanted to do my memoirs but wasn't sure how to do it," says Lady Victoria, who spent the first two years of her life at Ickworth, the family seat in Suffolk, before her father and his third wife, Victoria's mother Yvonne, went into tax exile in Monaco, where she would go to holiday from boarding school in the UK.

Her first book is due to be finished in July. "It is going to be called *Her Ladyship in Training* and it's about the early years, growing up in Monaco and boarding school," she says. "I'll make it a bit Harry Potter mixed with naughty schoolgirl."

She makes it sound fun, but Victoria's own childhood was blighted by heartache when her father died of emphysema in Monaco when she was eight years old and in her first term at boarding school in Kent.

"I remember being brought into the house mistress's house to be told. His name was Victor and I was born on his birthday so I was actually named after him. I have a necklace that he wore most of the time. My mother had it made for him when I was born and it says 'To my daddy, lovingly baby Victoria' on the front with the family crest and a picture of a stork. I still wear it a lot actually. Life without my dad is all I've known really. I've had to be fairly independent from a young age."

The second book will detail her days on the London party scene, while the final tome will focus on her life in Los Angeles. "I'm calling myself Frederica, which is my middle name," she laughs. "It's great making it into fiction. It's sort of perfect because no one gets offended."

Lady Victoria has certainly gathered some tales to tell while living Stateside. "I've had a baby alligator hatch in my dustbin in West Hollywood and I've witnessed two shootings," she says.

"The first happened when I was in a car going to a party with Alice Evans. Ioan Gruffudd [Alice's husband] was filming *Fantastic Four* at the time. I think we had Gerard Butler with us too. We heard bang-bang-bang and we thought, 'Oh, it's fireworks,' but then we saw a guy running past the car and we realised, 'Uh oh, there's





Walkies with D'Artagnan, Victoria is quite at home with California beach life, but she does miss the British sense of humour – and, more surprisingly, the weather. “I miss the rain sometimes,” she says

‘It’s great making my life into fiction because no one gets offended’

dating anyone, Victoria is coy. “I’m just trying something new,” she says with a smile.

She says she misses the way British men make her laugh. “Sometimes men here just don’t get the joke. I think one of my most disastrous relationships ever was with an American who just didn’t get my humour at all. I couldn’t text him anything because he’d just read it completely differently. You’ve got to be with someone who makes you laugh.”

FIT FOR THE FUTURE

Lady Victoria’s new clean-living lifestyle doesn’t stop at learning to surf – she’s also thrown herself into working out. “My sister was always the gym person and I would be the one going to the parties,” she laughs as she sips her ice water. “But I’ve been really keen to stay in the zone after *The Jump*. I’m definitely a lot fitter than I was.”

The hard work is paying off, as her clear skin is glowing with health, which is just as well with a modelling job for Jean Paul Gaultier in Vienna, plus trips to Cannes and London, on the agenda. “I still travel a lot,” she says. “I go back to Europe pretty often, because I’m so involved in my business and production is based there. I also miss the rain sometimes,” she laughs.

“My mother’s supposed to come out and visit soon and my brother [the 8th Marquess] has been out here a lot. I never hear about his love life because he thinks I’m going to report straight back to my mother. But I think he’s feeling a little bit like marriage. He doesn’t take things too seriously, but he does work really hard in property and oil.

“My sister hasn’t been in a while now she’s married and living in Belgium. It’s hard to meet up because I’m away so much. I even did a year of living in hotels two years ago. Literally 365 days in hotels. It’s funny, living down here by the beach, it really feels like I’m on holiday, but not for long. I’ve got so much to do now.”

INTERVIEW: ANTONIA BLYTH
PHOTOS: WILLY CAMDEN

HAIR: ASHLEY LYNN HALL AT ONE REPRESENTS
MAKE-UP: SIMON RIHANA AT ONE REPRESENTS

BIKINI: NOOKIE; JACKET: GRINGO; JEWELLERY: BIZZOTTO; SUNGLASSES: PORTRAIT EYE

been a shooting.’ We saw a body in the street and ran into the house where the party was. The police taped off the area so the street turned into a crime scene. We were all trapped there for hours.”

The second shooting came a lot closer to harming Victoria. “I was with my brother outside the Hotel Roosevelt in Hollywood when a car drew up, the window rolled down and they just started shooting into the crowd. We all ducked down and amazingly no one was killed, but my friend Michael Beaumont was grazed by a bullet. A lovely story came out of that though. He saved a woman’s life by getting her to duck her head. Now they’re married and have a beautiful child.”

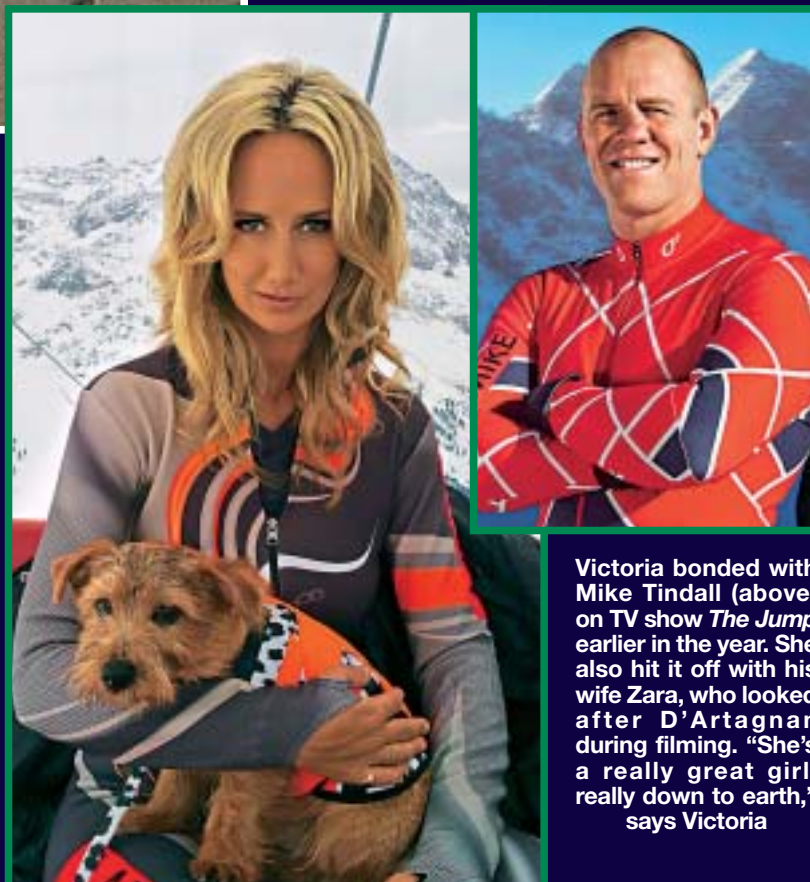
Lady Victoria says it’s been hard to meet the right man herself in LA. “The social scene here is very different to London or Paris or New York. I think the problem is, for

men, they don’t need to make enough effort here because there are so many girls and they get younger and younger. The thing is, the guys lose their manners. They forget what it’s like to be a gentleman. When I go back to London I get so shocked. I think, ‘Oh, wow! They’re opening doors for me. They’re being a man.’ In LA they’re like spoilt little mummy’s boys.

“My biggest love in LA so far has been Shane Brolly. He’s an Irish actor who was in *Underworld* with Kate Beckinsale. We met through friends and he was very charming.

“Every time I have a break-up I just leave town. I did date Sean Stone [son of Oscar-winning director Oliver] for a bit. We went to Africa together, to Cameroon, which was amazing, and I went on a few dates with Shane Lynch [Boyzone singer] but we were never a couple.”

As to whether she’s currently



Victoria bonded with Mike Tindall (above) on TV show *The Jump* earlier in the year. She also hit it off with his wife Zara, who looked after D’Artagnan during filming. “She’s a really great girl, really down to earth,” says Victoria

ADDITIONAL PHOTO: CHANNEL 4