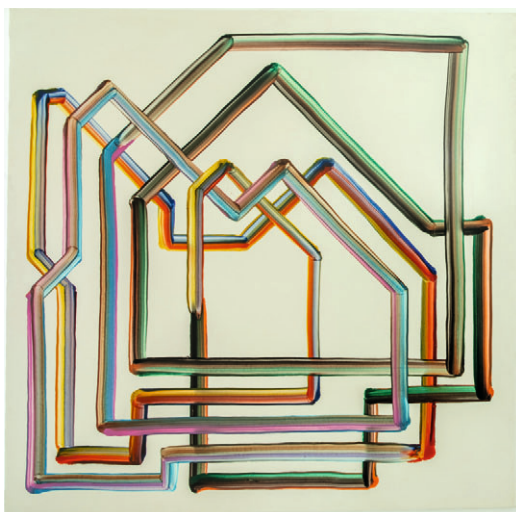


Fresh CANVAS

*Unwrapping tales of fashion, art, marriage and empowerment, **Caroline Stanbury's** new Al Barari home is a window into her candid, unedited self*

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Caroline stands by her home's entryway which is adorned with green wall décor complementing the lush greenery in Al Barari

The formal living area features a turquoise Art Deco-inspired rug from Caroline's new collection; A travertine coffee table and dining chairs from Caroline and Blush International's furniture range; Colourful plaid cashmere cushions by Trilbey Gordon Interiors and LOVE artwork by Jessica Lichtenstein





Brought up conservatively by her English family, Caroline Stanbury wasn't always the self-confessed rule-breaker that she is today. In the countryside outside of London, in what seemed to be the middle of nowhere, the now-stylist and mother-of-three attended an all-girls boarding school from the age of six to 18, where for nearly twelve years, everything in life was carefully planned: from when she slept to what she ate. In the footsteps of familial values, Caroline tied the knot at the young age of 25, before facing a divorce at 42. "I equate it to having spent my whole life having to please everybody else," she opens up. "It's taken me until now, when I'm 44, this amount of time to build who I am, without having to answer to everyone. And I'm absolutely loving it."

Her new home, since last July, is also the first belonging solely to her in 18 years. "I think when anyone gets divorced, they want a fresh house without any memories, a fresh space to build on," she shares. "Over the years, my perception on life and what's important has completely changed."

Situated in Al Barari's jungle-like The Nest neighbourhood, the luxury villa, bursting with bright chalky shades, artworks and books, is her new beginning. "It's a warm home," says Caroline. "Everything is colourful, happy. I think a happy home is a happy life."

The yellows, pinks and baby blues boldly reflect Caroline's unfiltered personality, and are the same colours the *Ladies of London* alum swears by in clothing. "Fashion is an extension of who you are, and your house is the first thing that people see and judge you by," she says. "When I walk into someone's house,



The staircase has become a gallery space for Caroline's ever-expanding art collection, including works by Bernard Frize and Emre Namyeter



The black teak pool decking is styled with coral pink furniture from Rattan House

I know exactly who they are as a person. I think mine screams exactly who I am.”

All the furniture is tailor-made, in collaboration with Kate Instone of Blush International. “I started working with Kate a few years ago, and we have a partnership in styling houses which is great,” reveals Caroline. “In my position, the luxury of starting again and having a new life is that I get to choose everything in this house. I love that even though it looks like this, you can throw yourself anywhere; and that’s the whole point of it. The pouffe in the living room is so that my children don’t feel they can’t sit anywhere. Every piece of this house is meant to be comfy. I can’t be too precious.”

Over at the dining table is where Caroline can be found recording *Divorced, Not Dead*, her own podcast which has fast rocketed up to the top 20 list of relationship podcasts across Apple, Spotify and Stitcher since launching in July 2020. “It really started as something that was just for me because I’d never done a podcast before,” she says. “I had no idea how many women it would move. It’s really, really helping them.” Bravely discussing touchy topics including when to end a marriage, each episode sees a raw, candid Caroline. “I don’t listen to the episodes because I don’t want to over-edit or overthink and I don’t want to correct myself. I don’t know why it has taken me so long but I hope, by having the guts to do it and to take this long to do it, I empower other women to

Below: Upon entering the villa, a Hermès sculpture bought from Sotheby’s greets visitors. Above it hangs a custom-made artwork by Punk Me Tender which depicts a streak of light cutting through a butterfly

understand you don’t have to wait to take your life back into your own hands. If you’re not happy, you don’t have to stay.”

A ton of art sourced over time from travels, galleries and auction houses is showcased on the large walls, including from White Cube in London, featuring artists like Tracey Emin. There’s a bold Hermès sculpture bought from Sotheby’s upon entrance, an early testament to her passion for collecting. “I just love art,” she admits. So much so, she was inspired to create her own affordable luxury rug line, aptly entitled *The Next Step*. Brought to fruition in collaboration with carpet house Çınar Rugs, the new line will be unveiled this March. “I think you can see from my home that I love art, furniture and colour,” she smiles. “For me, it was really hard finding fun, beautiful, chic rugs. You have art on your walls, why not have art on your floor?”

One of her own rugs is placed upstairs leading to the master bedroom, adorned with black swirly lines on a cream-beige “blank canvas”, as Caroline puts it. “I think the rugs make a home,” she shares. “Until I put the rugs down in this house, it was quite stark and cold. And when you put a rug on the floor, somehow it warms the house and feels really cosy.” On the floor of the master bedroom is another statement rug made using the same tweed as Chanel. “I think there’s a huge relationship between fashion and interior design.”



"WHEN I WALK INTO
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EXACTLY WHO THEY ARE.
I THINK MINE SCREAMS
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Caroline stands in her downstairs living room. Behind her is a coral pink lacquered Chanel-inspired console, self-designed in collaboration with Blush International



“YOU HAVE ART ON YOUR
WALLS, WHY NOT HAVE
ART ON YOUR FLOOR?”



Caroline sits in her downstairs living room. The banana-yellow statement dining table and chairs in the background are tailor-made by Caroline and Blush International



Upstairs is a monochrome silk and wool rug from Caroline's The Next Step collection; A lacquered piano desk designed by Caroline and Blush International; Bright pink vintage swivel chair with a textured woven back fabric sourced from an antique market in Paris



A 'Love' sculpture welcomes guests into the downstairs living room



In the bedroom is Caroline and her dog Taz's daybed, designed for snuggling.



Vibrant art is dotted throughout the home, perfectly paired with contemporary furniture



A Chanel-inspired artwork hangs upstairs in the common area

In July, the beauty mogul is set to launch her own shoe collaboration. Also falling in the affordable-luxury category, Caroline Stanbury by Black Suede Studio is designed to cater to all heel-lovers (and haters) in the region. "Some shoes are low and some are high, but they are all on-trend, timeless and comfortable," she reveals. "Some people don't like wearing heels especially with Covid - I think all of us are so used to wearing flats." She laughs, "You put on a pair of heels and you're crippled in half an hour. I like to have a bit of both and with Black Suede Studio, they are super comfortable and at the same time, super stylish."

There's a long pause when I ask what her favourite piece is in the home. "That's a hard question," she smiles. "One piece on its own doesn't really do anything. They all come together to make a home. It's also little things - all the accessories, the cushions, blankets and the candles. Your children and dogs make your house a home."

Like Caroline herself, upon entering, the abode seems to be nothing short of perfect. After leaving? "It's real." ■ @carolinestanbury

The master bedroom is filled with warm and inviting colours. The pet-friendly rug is tailor-made based on a Chanel jacket



Placed downstairs on the coffee table, colourful hydrangeas are Caroline's favourite flowers



This stunning coral pink lacquered console has been designed by Caroline and Blush International, with a quilted design inspired by her collection of Chanel handbags



HAIR: I LUV ME. MAKE-UP: JEYANNEY. JEWELLERY: JACOB & CO. SHOES: BLACK SUEDE STUDIO