

MUMMY MAKEOVER

Dressing for **SUCCESS**

PRIZE-WINNING EXPAT WRITER KAREN OSMAN, TELLS US HOW SHE PLANS TO BALANCE BUSINESS, FAMILY AND HER FIRST NOVEL, ALL WHILE PREPARING FOR HER SECOND BABY TO ARRIVE

Stylist: Gemma Jones Photographer: Stefan Lindeque

THIS 37-YEAR-OLD MOTHER-OF-ONE FROM WALES HAS HAD QUITE A YEAR. Not only is she pregnant with her second child, due in September, but she has seen her copywriting company, Travel Ink, go from strength to strength and, impressively, at this year's Emirates Airline Festival of Literature, she won the coveted Montegrappa Writing Prize and a publishing contract, which means she is now writing a novel too. We are literally out of breath trying to fit it all into one sentence.

A CHANGE IN DIRECTION

"I honestly wasn't expecting this turn of events, or even planning for it. With a business to run and a young family to look after, writing a novel was perhaps something I had imagined when I retired! However, I have always been a big fan of the Emirates litfest and have attended most years. So when I was browsing online and saw the Montegrappa novel-writing competition, I thought I would give it a shot, if only to experiment with different types of writing. The prize was also a bit a motivator – your own publishing agent and a trip to London! With over 170 entries for the competition, I was very surprised to win. But it was a welcome boost as there's not a huge amount of awards in the region for writing. It's a fantastic confidence-booster."



1 Aqua dress Dh309, Seraphine 2 Crop polka jacket Dh735, Mrs Keepa

A letter to my unborn baby...

"I remember very clearly every detail of my first pregnancy. It was challenging, tiring and I was desperate to get your little brother out into the real world. Nine months seemed an incredibly long time. When they finally placed this tiny little bundle in my arms, I felt a sense of responsibility so overwhelming, I vowed to do everything I could to protect him. It was only after I got him home, that I realised I wished he could have stayed in a bit longer. I didn't feel at all prepared for how hard it would be. But after a few months – and a lot of help – your brother and I finally found our groove and now he's the happiest little chatterbox you could meet. He's going to make a really good older brother.

"I feel like a very different person today, compared with two years ago. With you I'm more relaxed and the time is flying by. As tired as I am now, I know it will be nothing compared to when we spend our first nights together. But I'm looking forward to it – there's something special about being cocooned in your own world with your child as you adapt to each others' rhythms.

"As I write this letter, I can feel you kicking inside me and I already feel a bond as we signal to each other through the wall of my bump. I'm so looking forward to meeting you and I can't wait to introduce you to your family. But in the meantime, I'm going to relax and enjoy you, tucked away as a part of me. And when they place you in my arms, I'll welcome that responsibility and, while I'm aware the fear never fully goes away, I know that the initial sense of joy and love as we get to know each other in the first few weeks of your life, will be something I'll treasure for ever."

Mummy



4 WAYS TO STAY STYLISH THIS summer

1

Keep your options open

Stylist Gemma Jones says, "Don't box yourself into wearing only maternity brands – still keep a look out in your high street faves for floaty numbers. Then you can use your trusty maternity vest top and leggings under a non-maternity top."

2

Kaftan it up

"Picking up some kaftans will add more outfit options to your closet. The evening dress that looks fancy on its own can be made more stylish by layering over with a print. Likewise, a casual tee and jeans can be jazzed up with the same kaftan."

3

Empire line all the way

"Empire lines in garments are the shapes you need to beeline for. Ties and belts will give you room over your bump while giving shape."

4

Details in basics

"Pick basics that have details, this way you won't feel too Plain Jane in your white blouse – you will feel more on the Boho trend."

- 1 Mustard top, Dh189, Mango
- 2 Black vest, Dh89, Noppies at smitten-boutique.com
- 3 Big amber/plate necklace, Dh129, H&M



1 White crochet hem blouse, Dh219, Seraphine 2 Peach jacket, Dh290, COS 3 Necklace, Dh199, River Island

“I’ll be spending the summer finishing the book with the aim of getting it done by September, when my second baby is due”



A BLOSSOMING SUMMER

“I wrote the entry for the competition especially. It took two days. The entry requirement was the first 2,000 words and a 400-word synopsis of the overall book. I brainstormed a few ideas and put pen to paper. I wanted it to be a dark, thrilling page-turner, and very emotional. I drew upon my own experiences as a new mother, and then added murder, revenge, and some twists. I was announced as the competition winner in March and since then the award has received a lot of attention. I flew to London to attend the London Book Fair and to meet with the agent. The aim is to publish it before the next Emirates litfest in March 2017. The book is about halfway finished so I shall be spending the summer finalising it, with the aim of getting it done before September, when my baby is due.”

Above left: 1 White jacket, Dh995, Reiss 2 Print fringe dress, Dh100, Vero Moda at namshi.com 3 Bag, Dh59, H&M 4 Earrings, Dh60, Aldo
Above right: 1 Print dress, Dh1095, Reiss 2 Peach jeans, Dh109, Destination Maternity 3 Heels, Dh350, Little Mistress at namshi.com



BUSINESS AS USUAL

“At the same time as I am writing the novel, looking after my two-year-old, Zane, and preparing for the new baby, I’m also running my content and writing company Travel Ink, which I launched in 2011. We now have a team of 10 writers who work on a project-by-project basis, so there’s a lot to oversee. Our blogging packages, which we launched earlier this year, have gone down really well in the market as people realise just how powerful blogging for business can be in terms of lead generation and website visits. The Montegrappa Prize win was good for us as a company too, as it signifies to existing and potential clients the high quality of writing we offer.”



Above: 1 Grey ruche dress, Dh595, Mina Roe **2** Print kaftan, Dh179, H&M **3** Necklace, Dh65, New Look **4** Shoes, Dh345, Aldo
Left page: 1 Black dress, Dh548, Mina Roe **2** Blue heels, Dh230, hot soles at namshi.com