

AT HOME IN BEVERLY HILLS

PRISCILLA PRESLEY

SHARES HER MEMORIES OF

THE KING OF ROCK'N'ROLL AND HER

JOY IN BEING A GRANDMOTHER



Welcome to my world: Having lived here for more than 40 years, the laid-back Beverly Hills home naturally reflects Priscilla's personality and is nothing like the grand temples to fame that surround it. Instead, it's a cosy, comfortable space where she loves to receive visitors. "I don't like really big, monstrous homes," she tells HELLO!. "This is homey and it still feels right for me"

Concealed behind an imposing gate on one of the most prestigious streets in Beverly Hills, Priscilla Presley's home is the antithesis of the modern McMansions that surround it.

The Italianate villa that the actress and humanitarian has called home for the past 41 years sits in lush, landscaped grounds and the interior is a testament to her love of collecting. The property's dramatic exposed beams and intricate metalwork create a striking backdrop for a curated mix of antique tapestries and objets d'art, accumulated during Priscilla's world travels.

Softly spoken and impeccably turned-out, HELLO!'s hostess for this exclusive shoot looks remarkably youthful for a woman who turned 70 earlier this year.

"Of course I didn't celebrate that milestone," she laughs. "Who enjoys getting older? Not me."

In the sitting room, photos of Priscilla's children – daughter Lisa-Marie, from her marriage to Elvis Presley, and son Navarone, from a relationship with

producer and director Marco Garibaldi – and grandchildren add an intimate feel and she clearly delights in her family.

She says she is "extraordinarily proud" of her oldest granddaughter, actress Riley Keough (Lisa-Marie's daughter from her first marriage, to Danny Keough), who wed stuntman Ben Smith-Petersen in an intimate ceremony in California's Napa Valley in February.

PICTURES OF HAPPINESS

"I love spending time with them all," Priscilla says of her four grandchildren – Lisa-Marie also has a son, Benjamin Keough, as well as seven-year-old twin daughters Finley and Harper with her fourth husband, Michael Lockwood. "They're Nonna's angels," Priscilla says of the little girls, whose photograph takes pride of place in her living room.

Still, it is the discreetly situated images of Elvis that offer a window into Priscilla's extraordinary life.

"Elvis was the love of my life," she tells HELLO! of the singer, who wooed her at

just 14, after meeting in Germany. The couple married in 1967 and separated five years later.

"Even after our divorce, we remained very good friends. He would come to this house often," Priscilla recalls. "That's one reason why I can never leave this place – I have too many memories here."

In this exclusive interview, Priscilla reveals all about her relationship with her daughter, sharing her late husband's legacy, working on a new album that the legendary singer always wanted to do in his lifetime, coming back to the UK to do pantos, why she is happily single, and why Elvis will always be the love of her life.

Your home is very inviting, Priscilla...

"Thank you. I have been here since 1973 and I raised both my children here, so it's really hard for me to leave. I have so many memories. Every time I worked, I always did something to make it my dream house. I don't like really big, monstrous homes – some of them are just a monument to excess. This is homey and it still feels right for me." ▶



'Elvis would come to this house often. That's why I could never leave - I have too many memories'

Ain't nothing but hound dogs: Like Elvis, Priscilla – pictured with Luna and Jerry – loves dogs and the actress is often seen out in her luxe neighbourhood on a relaxing stroll with hers



Like mother, like daughter... and granddaughter (left): Priscilla, daughter Lisa-Marie and granddaughter Riley at Riley's country wedding to stuntman Ben Smith-Petersen in February. "Riley wanted it to be intimate and it was perfect," Priscilla says. "That's our family - we're not into big, extravagant things"

Did Elvis visit you here?

"Yes, he would come quite often. It was always in the early morning hours as he suffered from insomnia. I couldn't replicate those memories elsewhere."

Tell us about *If I Can Dream*, the new album of Elvis's music, orchestrated with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra...

"It's an album that Elvis always really wanted to do. In a lot of his stage acts, he had about a 26-piece orchestra, his band, back-up singers and gospel singers... there was very little room left to put in a full orchestra, but if he'd had his way he would have done that, for sure. The album is showing the diversity in his music - we have blues, we have gospel, we have rock'n'roll..."

Do you think Elvis would have approved?

"Elvis was a big embracer of technology... he would have gone crazy with the things that we can do in music today."

"On this album, his music hasn't changed, the Royal Philharmonic have just been added to make it bigger and to embellish it with this incredible sound. The orchestra showed him so much respect - when they heard Elvis's masters, they were blown away. They let him take the lead."

Is there a song that particularly affects you?

"*Bridge Over Troubled Water* is so personal to me. One night I was watching Elvis perform in Vegas and just before he went on stage his father came over to tell me that my horse, Domino, had just died. Elvis gave him to me and he was my pride and joy; I was devastated. About halfway through the show Elvis looked over at me and said, 'This is for you.' He sang *Bridge Over Troubled Water* and, whenever I hear the song, it makes me emotional."

"I also love *Fever* - it was one of the first songs I heard him sing in Germany when I was 14."

You turned 70 earlier this year...

"It's amazing for me to even say it. I don't feel my age at all and when you put that big old number on there it's like, 'What? I am so not!'"

How did you feel about the milestone?

[*Laughing*] "I hate it! I think it's horrendous. I still feel like a kid inside; I have such a zest for life. People will say, 'Don't you get tired?' but I never sleep. I hate giving up the evening and I love getting up very early in the morning, while everyone else is still in bed. It comes and goes so fast: I want to appreciate reaching this age, but I don't want to be reminded of it."

Did you celebrate?

"Lisa-Marie said, 'We have to do something,' and I said, 'I am not celebrating!' I want to celebrate life, not age. I think we put way too much emphasis on age; Americans in particular. They put you in a box - you need to look and act a certain way. I think it's very suppressive."

Is Los Angeles a hard town to grow old in?

"Oh yes, absolutely. Everything is geared towards youth."

Both of your parents are still alive, so you have longevity on your side...

"My dad's 90 and my mum's 89 and they're still going. When my granddaughter got married I went to pick them up and they were already walking out of the house with their suitcases."

Tell us more about Riley's wedding - how did it feel to be grandmother of the bride?

"It was absolutely beautiful. Riley organised it all herself - she didn't want a huge event; she wanted it to be intimate, with only family and close friends present. That's our family - we're not into the big, extravagant things. I've never been that way and Riley is very much the same. My son, ▶

'I think Lisa-Marie appreciates me more than ever since having her children'



DRESS: LOUIS VERDAD. EARRINGS: ROYAL. RING: SYLVIE COLLECTION. SHOES: CHRISTIAN LOUBOUTIN

Priscilla says the beautifully decorated mansion feels every bit as much a part of her life as Graceland, her late ex-husband's iconic house in Memphis. "When I walk in that door, it still feels like home," she says

'I loved Elvis with all my heart, we were very, very close. He was absolutely the love of my life'



In the sitting room, Priscilla loves to relax with family – son Navarone, whose father is producer/director Marco Caribaldi – and Lisa-Marie and her four children. “I love spending time with them all,” the glamorous gran says of her grandchildren



daughter and grandchildren are all like that. We're very happy with the simple things in life, and appreciative of the things that we have. Riley wanted a small wedding, and it was perfect. Her dress was designed for her, and she looked absolutely stunning.”

Do you think she'll make you a great-grandmother in the near future?

“That would be amazing. Riley's still young, though, and she's very smart – she doesn't want to have a baby right away. Her career is important to her and she knows that a child is a huge responsibility.”

You had Lisa-Marie when you were 22. Was it challenging being a young mother in such a high-profile marriage?

“It was difficult. I lived in a house with all guys, so raising my daughter wasn't easy. You have to remember, I was very young. Elvis and I would go to the movies all night – we'd stay out until 6am at times. I'd be exhausted and I'd think, 'How am I going to get through this?' I had a nanny, but she left after two weeks because she couldn't handle the chaos and the erratic hours. It was very hard bringing up a child in a rock'n'roll environment.”

Was Elvis a hands-on father?

“He was away a lot, but when he was



Happy families: Photos around the comfortable home show Priscilla with Elvis – “we had an amazing bond” – and a young Lisa-Marie (below); and her beautiful twin granddaughters Finley and Harper (right), now seven years old. “They’re Nonna’s angels,” Priscilla says

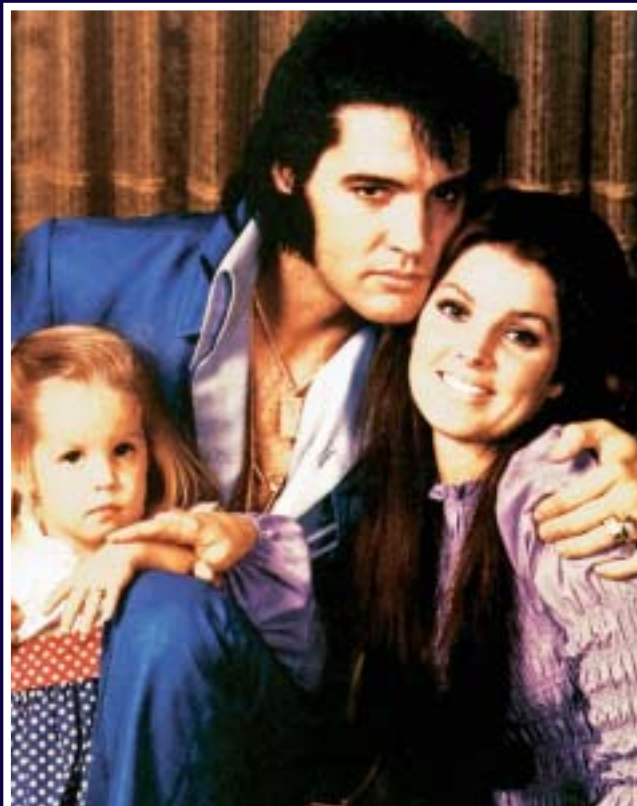
home he was hands on: he adored Lisa-Marie. It was different back then, though: he never changed a nappy.”

Does Lisa-Marie take after her father?

“Yes – she’s very determined and her love of music is very authentic. She was listening to 45s when she was three years old. She’s very hands on with her children and she gets that from me. I think she appreciates me more than ever since having her children and I have to say, she’s such a great mum – I’m so proud of her and the way she raises her children.”

To this day, Elvis has a very loyal fanbase. Is it hard having to share his memory with them?

“Yes, it is. Whatever I give, it never seems to be enough. He has great, loyal fans, and there’s a part of me that wants people to know about Elvis and why he’s so special – there will never be another Elvis Presley, ever – but there are times when people do cross the line. I have very respectful fans on my Facebook and Twitter, but some can be vicious and that I don’t understand. Elvis hated gossip, he hated meanness, ▶





Priscilla's classic taste is in evidence throughout (above and left). "It's such a crazy world out there and my home is my sanctuary," she says. "I love all the beautiful pieces from back in the day. I've been collecting since 1969 and it was a real labour of love to put all of this together"

he didn't have people around him who were like that."

You remained very close, even after your divorce...

"Yes, we were very, very close. I loved him with all my heart, he was the love of my life."

Do you still consider him to be your one true love?

"Oh my God, yes – he was absolutely the love of my life. He was the father of my child and I learned so much from that man."

"I'm not saying that everything was wonderful – marriages have problems, and especially in that rock 'n' roll environment... but we had an amazing bond."

Are you in a relationship now?

"I'm definitely single. I have dinner with a few men but they are really good friends of mine. I've learned a lot about the way men think, but on a platonic level, which is liberating."

We often hear that LA is a difficult town to date in...

"Absolutely. There are so many beautiful women, an abundance of nice-looking men. People never seem satisfied. They may have it all right in front of them but they don't want to commit in case someone better comes along."

Would you ever marry again?

"I don't think so. I can't say no for certain, but the right person has just never really come along. I've met some good men, but I'm satisfied with my life and I'm not sure I really want to jump into a relationship because I feel that I would have to give up too much."

Do you think your suitors have all been in Elvis's shadow?

"Probably, yes. He was a one-off."

Was he as charismatic off stage as he was on it?

"Yes, he was electrifying. Dixie Locke, Elvis's very first girlfriend, and I have become good friends. I asked her, 'Dixie, did Elvis always have that charisma, even at 18?' She said, 'Yes, he knew that something big was going to happen. He'd walk into a room and you'd get chills just from feeling his energy.'"

How does it feel when you go back to Graceland?

"It's honestly like I never left. When I walk in that door, it still feels like home. I have so many, many memories. I was there from the age of 17 to 28 and I had my daughter there. We did everything in that house; it was a playground for us. We didn't leave Graceland much when Elvis wasn't on tour. Elvis's spirit is definitely there – I can feel his presence walking down the stairs, which is both eerie and gratifying."

It was the 38th anniversary of Elvis's death in August. Is that an emotional time for you?

"It's always a difficult day. First of all it's hard to believe – where did the time go? So many people still come to Graceland every year to remember him: it's incredible. He would never believe it."


If you could go back, what would you tell him now?

"This past August, when I looked out at the thousands of fans outside Graceland taking part in a ▶

'So many people still go to Graceland to remember Elvis. He would never believe it'

The guardian of Elvis's musical legacy reveals that a new orchestral album of The King's greatest hits is due out soon. She also has plans for a hotel at Graceland, plus her own work in panto, movie production 13 and a Broadway musical: "I want it to be entertaining and take the audience on a journey," she says

'I don't feel my age at all. When you put that big old number on there it's like, "What? I am so not!"'



Stunning at 70: "I do an hour and a half of yoga three days a week and I walk a lot," Priscilla reveals. "I eat very cleanly – I stay away from carbs and I'm vegetarian." Of her milestone birthday, she says: "Lisa-Marie said, 'We have to do something,' and I said, 'I am not celebrating!' I want to celebrate life, not age"

candlelight vigil, I would have said, 'We told you your fans would still be there for you and look at them still coming in droves. They still love you.'

You're opening a hotel next to Graceland...

"Finally! I'm going to be decorating 18 suites. There will be a taste of Elvis in the decor, but not in an overwhelming fashion."

You're back in the UK starring in a production of *Aladdin* this Christmas... You've said pantomime is one of the most fulfilling things you've ever done...

"Yes, confronting an audience like that, I get very nervous, and think, 'Wow, I'm putting myself through this?' But I do like challenging myself. It's very rewarding. And I love being in the UK at Christmas. The people are so gracious."

What advice would you give your younger self?

"That's a tough question. I was very naive when I was younger, and I had a lot of insecurities, how could I not? There's always someone prettier, cuter or smarter than you. In life, there are no guarantees, so keep striving to be a better person on every level."

The reports of Elvis's infidelities must have fuelled those insecurities...

"Absolutely. Elvis being in rock'n'roll and being one of the most famous icons in history... I had fears that I'd lose him. Being young, I never wanted to leave town or even visit my parents as I didn't want to give him that chance, thinking that someone would come and take my place."

What advice would you give to your twin granddaughters if either decided to marry young?

"I would tell them that they have to live life a bit more and do the things they want to do first. Make sure that they feel complete within themselves. You have to have some experience, and you have to really know the person that you're with – rushing into something doesn't lead to anything good."

Do you have any other projects in the pipeline?

"I'm producing two movies and I'm still working on my Broadway musical. I want to tell a great story about a 14-year-old being thrown into the life of rock'n'roll."

You've been credited with keeping Elvis's legacy alive – that's quite a responsibility...

"He deserves it. He gave us so much, and to be able to keep his legacy going and work on projects that show the world even more about him, it's a privilege."

INTERVIEW: CAROLINE HEDLEY
PHOTOS: CHRISTOPHER AMERUOSO

STYLING: RAFAEL LINARES AT ONE REPRESENTS
HAIR & MAKE-UP: MOUNA FORDE