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DAVINA'S
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FAST, FABULOUS
FAMILY RECIPES

‘MY
FAMOUS
SURNAME
HELD ME
BACK’

LILY COLLINS on winning
over Hollywood and
making dad Phil proud

‘My famous surname made me work harder’

Actress LILY COLLINS was top of screen legend Warren Beatty’s list when he was casting his latest film. Already nominated for a Golden Globe for the part, Lily is thrilled to have made her way to Hollywood’s top table under her own steam – and her rock-star dad Phil couldn’t be prouder

INTERVIEW *Elaine Lipworth* PHOTOGRAPHS *David Roemer*

Lily Collins isn’t easily starstruck. The captivating actress, who dazzled as Snow White in the 2012 film *Mirror Mirror* alongside Julia Roberts and gave a winning performance in the 2014 romcom *Love, Rosie*, is the daughter of rock legend Phil Collins and his second wife Jill Tavelman. As such, Lily has been surrounded by some of the biggest names in showbusiness for as long as she can remember; but even Lily was taken aback when she found out that Warren Beatty wanted her to phone him at home. ‘My agent said, “Here’s his number.” I was in awe, I thought it was a joke. But I called Warren and his first words were, “I told you never to call me at home!” I freaked out and he said, “Just kidding. How are you, Lily?” He broke down all the walls right away.’

It emerged that the 27-year-old was at the top of the iconic film-maker’s list for the leading role in his first film for 15 years, *Rules Don’t Apply*, inspired by real-life billionaire movie mogul Howard Hughes. Rising star Alden Ehrenreich ►



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◀ (who is due to play Han Solo in an upcoming *Star Wars* film) also stars. Warren had Lily in mind to play Marla Mabrey, a chaste beauty queen from small-town Virginia who is enticed to Los Angeles with the lure of a big-screen career by Howard, played by Warren (he also wrote, produced and directed the film). There was no audition; instead that phone call was followed by a series of meetings ‘at my mum’s house – where we talked about life, anything but the movie – and at Warren and Annette’s [Warren’s wife, the actress Annette Bening] house’.

Lily never officially heard from the 79-year-old star of classics such as *Shampoo*, *Bonnie and Clyde* and *Reds* that she had landed the part. ‘Warren failed to mention it,’ laughs Lily, relating the saga over lunch. (Appropriately, she’s picked the London West Hollywood hotel for our interview; Lily lives in Los Angeles but still regards England as home. ‘I love PG Tips, and Marmite on toast,’ she says – although today she chooses ceviche and plantain chips with peppermint tea.) Months went by before Lily found out when she was expected to turn up for work. ‘I was super excited,’ she says, explaining that the casting experience ‘kept me on my toes’. A case of life imitating art, ‘it mirrors the experience Marla has because she is strung along by Howard. Warren likes to create that reality to bring the movie to life.’

It’s hard to keep your eyes off Lily, who first attracted attention as Sandra Bullock’s daughter in *The Blind Side* eight years ago and starred opposite Julianne Moore in *The English Teacher* (2013). Frequently compared to Audrey Hepburn, she is exquisitely pretty. Her style – at least today – is also vintage Audrey: black poloneck, narrow jeans and fabulous Chanel ankle boots, ‘oldies but goodies’.

‘I grew up watching Audrey’s films,’ says Lily. ‘I loved *Funny Face*, *Sabrina* and *Roman Holiday*. I admired her grace and charm, but it was her smile...’ she sighs. The same is true for Lily, who shines as Marla, ‘a fictional amalgamation of a lot of young girls “Mr Hughes” brought to California, supposedly to become Hollywood stars. We’ll never know their names because they never made it.’ The film, which boasts an impressive cast including Alec Baldwin, Matthew Broderick and Steve Coogan, follows 19-year-old Marla as she is ensconced in a luxurious house, chaperoned by her devout mother, played by Annette (‘she is fantastic, so

electric and funny’). Marla is driven around town by Frank, a handsome chauffeur employed by Howard, played by Alden Ehrenreich, whom Lily describes as ‘handsome, funny and really smart’. Inevitably, Marla and Frank fall for each other, but have to keep their romance secret. ‘Howard was very controlling and had strict rules: people who worked for him weren’t allowed to date.’

One scene that has attracted particular attention has Marla singing the original title song ‘The Rules Don’t Apply’. Marla ‘is not a singer; so if my voice cracked or I was nervous, that was good,’ says Lily. ‘Warren said, “I almost want it to be spoken, rather than ‘sung sung.’” I think it’s hilarious that the song is getting so much attention [on YouTube]. It’s not like I was looking for a hit single.’

Did Lily’s father Phil teach her to sing? ‘I never had lessons but he would sing lullabies to me and I used to love writing songs. I would go to the studio with him and sing a melody and he would produce and record it,’ she recalls. ‘I didn’t tell him that I was singing in the film. I wanted it to be a surprise. He’s proud, as any dad would be.’

There were other challenging scenes in the film. After getting drunk for the first time, Marla has sex with the decades-older Howard. ‘It was a strange scene to shoot,’ says Lily. It isn’t explicit, ‘it’s more comedic; it’s fumbling and very awkward.’ Still, filming a sex scene with Warren must have been intimidating. ‘I was nervous. It’s always a strange situation to be in when there are

100 crew members around you,’ says Lily. Do powerful men in Hollywood still wield that kind of manipulative power over impressionable actresses? ‘I’ve heard stories about young women who are put in uncomfortable situations with directors, but I think people are more outspoken about it now. I’ve never been in a situation like that,’ she says. ‘I consider myself lucky.’

But there remains, she says, considerable sexism in the industry. ‘There are limited roles for young women; there isn’t enough good material. Nowadays we can produce and direct ourselves and



Lily with her parents Phil Collins and Jill Tavelman

that wasn’t a possibility for women in the 1950s. Hopefully there will be a day when people won’t say, “Oh my God, a *female* director!” We are still fighting to be taken as seriously as men.’

A vivid depiction of the studio heyday in Hollywood, *Rules Don’t Apply* deals with dashed hopes and rejection – something that Lily could relate to. Despite – or possibly because of – her illustrious DNA, it was difficult to get started as an actress. ‘I remember sitting down with one agent who

said, “So what, you’ve got a famous last name. Who cares? What makes you so special?” Now Lily is more recognisable than her father to many millennials – Phil is often referred to as ‘Lily’s dad. It makes him laugh. He’s proud of me!’

I have met Lily several times, the first when she was still a teenager; and it has always been obvious that she is intelligent and determined to forge her own career. She worked as a journalist while still in school, writing for *Elle Girl* and *Teen Vogue*, and won a place at the prestigious University of Southern California (she left after two years to focus on acting). ‘There is a huge sense of entitlement among young people,’ she says. ‘I will never understand it. I’ve always wanted to feel I deserved to get somewhere because I’ve worked hard.’ Neither parent spoiled her; she insists: ‘The best thing for me was being told “no” so many times. You learn from those experiences and it makes getting a “yes” more exciting because it wasn’t easy.’

Lily describes her childhood as happy. After her parents separated in 1994, she and her American mother Jill moved from England to Los Angeles (she would see her father during school holidays). Her mother provided stability but, Lily admits, ‘There were a lot of pressures. You’re reading magazines, looking at actresses and models you admire, and you develop insecurities because you feel you’re not fitting into a certain mould.’ Those concerns were exacerbated when Lily started modelling at 16. ‘I got to travel and I met some amazing people, but I realised it wasn’t a lifestyle I wanted so I stopped. It is a very impressionable age. I liked to be in control, but there were things that felt out of control – as they do for a lot of young women. Some turn to drugs, alcohol or food as a way of feeling they’re in control.’

Lily was helped by her involvement in a ▶



From left: Lily in *Rules Don't Apply*; with the cast of the film (centre, to the right of director and co-star Warren Beatty); in *Love, Rosie*, and in *Mirror Mirror*

◀ high-school programme through which she mentored younger students. 'I trained as a teen therapist; I've always been passionate about standing up for people who don't have a voice or don't know how to use it. I am an advocate for helping young women feel confident and passionate about who they are.' Would Lily describe herself as a feminist? 'I prefer to talk about empowerment,' she says. 'But if [feminism] means standing up for what you believe and being taken as seriously as men, then that is what I am fighting for.'

That spirit led Lily to pen a book (due to be published in March) called *Unfiltered: No Shame, No Regrets, Just Me*, a series of moving, highly personal essays about self-confidence, relationships and family, intended to support and encourage young women. 'I'm not saying I know everything at 27,' she says, 'but if I can start a conversation and take the taboo out of things that girls don't want to talk about or feel they are suffering alone in, that's great. It was therapeutic for me to write.'

Lily recently won the prestigious New Hollywood award for her role in *Rules Don't Apply* and has been nominated for a Golden Globe. She is also starring in a slew of upcoming projects, including *Okja*, a drama with Jake Gyllenhaal and Tilda Swinton, and a TV adaptation of F Scott Fitzgerald's classic novel *The Last Tycoon*. And in *To the Bone* she plays a young woman battling anorexia, her most emotional role to date. Lily worked with a nutritionist to lose 20lb for the part. 'I did it in the healthiest way possible. They had me on a regimen of proteins [fish and chicken], steamed vegetables and juices, with supplements; no caffeine – there were a lot of "nos,"' she laughs. 'Regaining the weight later was also an emotional journey. I didn't gorge on ice cream and burgers because

I didn't want to put negativity into my body.'

Off set, Lily enjoys cooking. 'I grew up in the English countryside, eating organic before organic was the "it" thing,' she says. She is also passionate about baking – 'it's therapeutic, it makes the house smell good' – and is an ardent *Great British Bake Off* fan. 'I'm obsessed. I love Mary Berry and Paul Hollywood.' Her own speciality? 'I recently baked a two-tier chocolate blackout cake for my friend's birthday. It was gluten-free, vegan...and it was really good. I bake gluten-free because so many people [though not Lily] have allergies nowadays.'

Lily is close to her mother, whom she describes as her 'best friend', and who owns several antique shops in Los Angeles, but she sees less of her father: Recently reunited with his third wife Orianne Cevey, Phil lives in Miami with their sons, Nicholas, 15, and Matthew, 11. 'I love my younger brothers. We text a lot and they're adorable. Nicholas is touring with his band and Matthew is amazing at football. My dad is getting to do things with them that he didn't get to do with me and my other siblings [Lily has a half-sister Joely, 44, and half-brother Simon, 40, from Phil's first marriage to Andrea Bertorelli], which is great. I'm very happy for them that they

get to experience that.'

Lily's previous relationships have reportedly included Zac Efron and British actor Jamie Campbell Bower; her co-star in the 2013 fantasy flick *The Mortal Instruments*, but she is currently happily single. What has she learnt about romance over the years? 'When I was dealing with one difficult relationship, someone close to me said, "When someone shows you who they are, believe them." I think that's really important because you sometimes enter a relationship thinking you can change the other person, but when they act in a certain way, that's who they are. Women tend to think, "I can change him or

save him.'" It's great to be nurturing, but if someone starts to deplete your energy, it's time to move on. You have to trust your gut and if you feel a certain way about a situation, act on it. I've learnt so much about myself through the relationships I've been in, some good, some bad.'

Her own dating advice? Watch out for 'red flags: someone who is more focused on their phone than being with you, or who drinks a lot on a date; someone who doesn't get back to you, or has spurts of interest and then disappears.' Lily says that over the past few years, she has re-evaluated her priorities. 'I've realised what I don't want to put up with and what I deserve in a relationship. Everyone has an aura, a light, and when you dim your light to make someone else's shine brighter, something is not right and you need to re-evaluate. That can be painful, but through that pain comes immense growth.'

Relishing time on her own, Lily is in no rush to meet someone. 'Some girls are raised with the idea that the ultimate goal is to get married and have a family, and that's definitely an aim of mine, but it's never been something I've felt I need to be complete. I've learnt that until you feel confident and love yourself, you don't know what it is you need from someone else. We're not encouraged to take time for ourselves but it's important. I love hanging out with people, but I enjoy living on my own, too, and having quiet time to meditate. I'm very much in a relationship with myself right now. I think all girls should date themselves.'

'I'd love to have a family one day and a partner in crime, someone who can make me laugh and feel that being me is enough,' she adds. 'I've worked with amazing women who have shown me that you can have a career and a family, and I would love to have both. When you are young, you date and experience things. As long as you are open to learning, it leads you to that next chapter. Maybe that next person you meet will be the right one,' she says. The next instalment of the Lily Collins story has already begun...and it's certain to be a compelling page-turner. ▀

■ *Rules Don't Apply will be in cinemas on 10 March*

TRUNK ARCHIVE; GETTY IMAGES; FRANÇOIS DUHAMEL; INVISION/AP IMAGES; EVERETT/REX; SHUTTERSTOCK; CITIZEN SNOW FILM PRODUCTION

LILY LOVES

BREAKFAST I make porridge every morning with quinoa, ghee [clarified butter], fruit, stevia [natural sweetener] and vanilla – it keeps me full all morning.

FAVOURITE AUTHOR Jane Austen. And I was a fan of *Harry Potter* when I was growing up.

CELEBRITY CRUSH Colin Firth. He's so gentlemanly and charming – how can you not love him?

BEAUTY ESSENTIALS Lancôme Hypnôse mascara and Kiehl's lip balm.

FITNESS REGIME I love swimming and running, and going to dance, cardio and ballet barre classes with my friends. I also do yoga classes where they blast really loud music and you sweat a lot.

DREAM DINNER-PARTY GUESTS Anna Wintour, Mary Berry, Meryl Streep, Jane Austen, Audrey Hepburn, David and Victoria Beckham, Karl Lagerfeld, Michael Jackson, Banksy and Tim Burton.

GUILTY PLEASURE Reality TV. *The Real Housewives of...anywhere!*

MOST TREASURED POSSESSION My grandmother's ballet shoes.

SOMETHING SURPRISING ABOUT YOURSELF I can be super clumsy; I trip and fall running up the stairs.

PERFECT SUNDAY MORNING Wake up early, go to a yoga class, then have brunch with a friend.

DREAM FOR 2017 A holiday, as I haven't had any time off for ages. I'd love to go to Thailand and stay in a tree-house.

DESCRIBE YOURSELF IN THREE WORDS Driven, passionate, dorky.

