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Tommy Hilfiger and his son Sebastian wear matching Pink House Mustique outfits of Pistachio Green Linen Shirts and Blue “Going to the beach” Trunks. Dee wears vintage Lotty B Kaftan





Tommy and Dee's Mustique home is a beautiful blend of formal and informal and a melting pot of influences, from the Asian touches in the furniture in a sitting room (above) to the sophisticated European-style stone and marble staircase



Tommy and Dee Hilfiger are international names, regarded with the kind of reverence that only the big guns in fashion can boast. The couple, who are celebrating ten years together, radiate happiness as they invite **HELLO!** into their home on the private Caribbean island of Mustique.

The sensational beach-front property is one of their multiple jaw-dropping homes around the world, with beautiful palm trees lining the house and old-school wooden ceiling fans keeping the warm air moving. A photoshoot in such surroundings is naturally a doddle, made even more joyous by ex-Ford model Dee, who effortlessly switches outfits, creates different hairstyles and only ever needs the tiniest bit more gloss.

Her sense of fun made the day fly by – even Tommy was on his best and most charming behaviour, though he couldn't help but offer a little creative suggestion every so often.

The designer bought the luxurious house with his first wife Susie, with whom he remains close friends, and Dee has not felt the need to redecorate the family's patch of paradise.

Revering in this green, natural environment are the couple's five-year-old son Sebastian and Tommy's three daughters Ally, 29, Elizabeth, 21, and Kathleen, 19. Their children have certainly inherited their charisma – within minutes you are caught up in laughter and sharing stories as if you were their long-lost friend.

Sebastian seems to have brought the whole clan together with his older siblings dotting on him. Rushing around with a tiny aeroplane in his grasp, he is a perfect mini-Tommy.

KINDRED SPIRITS

Dee, 48, is naturally blonde with sparkling green eyes and delicate bone structure, but she is far from the stereotypical arm candy one might expect. She is never happier than barefoot, make-up free and mooching about with her family.

Tommy, 63, is a born and bred New Yorker, who, as one of nine children, worked hard to make his mark in the fickle world of fashion. After starting in retail at the age of 18, he established the Tommy Hilfiger brand in 1985. His slightly nerdish charm coupled with his almost schoolboy adoration of all things rock'n'roll has helped keep him in a league of his own.

The couple met by chance in St Tropez in 2004 and married four years later. Together, they have seven children: Tommy has four children with Susie – his three daughters and son Richard, 24, who has been linked with singer Rita Ora after they met during the summer – and Dee has sons Alex, 20, and Julian, 17, with her former husband, retired Italian tennis player Gianni Occeppo. Sebastian came along in 2009.

To add to the modern-day dilemma of merging two families into one, two of their children – Alex and Kathleen – are on the autism spectrum. As ▶

(LEFT) DRESS: JASPER CONRAN; BRACELET: ELIANE FATAL FOR S.J. PHILLIPS; (ABOVE LEFT) DRESS: WILLIAM VINTAGE; (RIGHT) DRESS: VALENTINO; NEVELLE: ELIANE FATAL FOR S.J. PHILLIPS; (PREVIOUS PAGE) DRESS: VALENTINO; NEVELLE: ELIANE FATAL FOR S.J. PHILLIPS

'Each of our houses is totally different. It depends on where it is that really defines its style' Dee



Both the home and Dee are the last word in elegance. The house was built to original drawings by Oliver Messel, who helped to create the architectural scheme for 11 properties on the island, and incorporates coral stone, wooden shutters and Palladian windows



'Tommy and I definitely have similar tastes. We love a similar aesthetic and find ourselves gravitating towards the same things,' Dee

The turquoise-blue waters of the Caribbean Sea have surrounded the island of Montserrat since the mid-18th century. In the house's decor, from the sophisticated hurricane lamps that take center stage in the living room, to the polished-turkey and tortoise shells that adorn a wall (below)



Tommy puts it beautifully: "It's so unique to meet someone who has shared so many of the same struggles. From the beginning we felt this was just meant to be."

Although he sold his company in 2006, Tommy remains creative director and the face of the label. He flies all over the world while Dee plays the role of mummer. Even with their busy schedules, they rarely spend a night apart. Such is their bond that they answer the same question identically: It would all be a bit too good to be true if there wasn't a constant barrage of laughter in their home, having dinner with them is entertainment central.

BRAND PLANS
Despite being kept busy by motherhood, Dee fell upon the idea of a luxury handbag and lifestyle brand two years ago. Fully encouraged by her husband, she has already had success, landing a supplier in Harrods last season for her Dee O'Leary collection.

Tommy's advice to his wife was: "Keep it well edited, and stay focused." Words she clearly heeded, with her ten sides – or, as she calls them, "allosides" – very much a labour of love.

Tell us about the interior design...
"Well, when I bought the property I was

crisp and serious of their Montique home, not to mention the fact they are an above-average fashion power duo, that incredible track and a wardrobe to die for, they are every inch your all-American dream. Well, almost..."

Tommy and Dee, thank you for inviting us into your incredible home. When did you fall in love with Montique?
Tommy: "I had previously been a St. Bart's regular but barely one day I felt it had just got too busy. There were so many New Yorkers and I wanted to find more of a haven to bring my children up in. I came to Montique and stayed at a house called Pointe L'Anse – a magical piece of property with water on both sides. I immediately fell in love with the island and found this tiny beach shack of a house where Palm Beach now stands. I could envisage wonderful times on vacation and bringing my kids here to roam around. There is great privacy and zero traffic – there is no golf or golfing, which tends to bring the masses. I suppose I found the quarters coupled with it being only two and a half hours by plane from New York."

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Though the house is undeniably grand, it is first and foremost a comfortable family home, lived with tastefully arranged family photos (right) to allow Dee, Tommy and their combined lady and seven children to sit around and chat



'Functionality is our key. We use our homes, they are not museums or showcases' Tommy

intending on a small little project. [Laughs] I bought an adjacent property and having already fallen in love with the architecture of the island, mostly by [British stage designer] Oliver Messel, felt it should remain true to his style.

"I then met [Swedish architect] Arne Hasselqvist, one of the main builders of Mustique, and he pointed out that the house was made of wood – and the wrong wood at that. We took the whole property down. Arne showed me a set of architectural drawings by Oliver Messel of a house that had never been built made from coral stone with wooden shutters and Palladian windows, all key features of a Messel home. I was sold and that's how this home came to be.

"As this home was originally created with my ex-wife, Dee has only done some small alterations here and there. We did a minor makeover, but more to keep it fresh than anything major."

Dee: "We definitely have similar tastes. We love a similar aesthetic and often find ourselves gravitating towards the same things."

You have an apartment in New York that has some striking artwork. Is the style of your properties similar or does having several homes allow you to indulge different design ideas and parts of your personalities?

D: "Every house is totally different. It depends on where it is that really defines its style. Our New York apartment, for example, is certainly more old-world décor – it's in the old Plaza Hotel building, so that gives it a sense of history that we played to.

"Miami, our most recent home, is crazy kitschy. It's fun, colourful and daring. We collaborated with the wonderful designer Martyn Lawrence Bullard, who delivered to a T. The art pieces in Miami were originally bought at auction for New York, but we couldn't physically get them into the apartment. We have an eclectic taste, placing Basquiats and Warhols together. You can't keep great art in Mustique due to the weather; it would be ruined in days.

"Our Connecticut house is more country-mansor style, with much lower ceilings, so the feeling is more cosy and warm."

How do you balance your impeccable taste ▶

TOP: MOTHER OF PEARL; TROUSERS: OSSIE CLARK AT WILLIAM VINTAGE; EARRINGS: ELIANE FATAL; AT 54 PHILLIPS; BAG: DEE OCCEPPO; RINGS: DE GRIGGONO



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A palm-fringed white-sand beach is the perfect backdrop for lounging in the shade, as Dee proves (above). When the heat of the day becomes too much, she can seek refuge in one of the comfortable bedrooms, where large wooden fans (right) keep the warm air circulating. Not that Dee has much time for catnapping having launched her own luxury handbag (left) and lifestyle brand two years ago





With a blue water and stone surround, the arch frame, the swimming pool features the natural surroundings (above). Getting Papi from back from the shorefront was important to Tommy as the family could stroll on the sand and enjoy the views around them without being the building's main feature.

with keeping your properties functional for your family and children?
 T: "Nothing is ever too precious for our family. The artwork is well hidden - or protected, should I say it's not that reachable. Functionality is our key. We use our homes, they are not museums or showcases. Two of our homes are on the beach, so that very much dictates the style."
How do you spend your time here on Montserrat?
 What are your favourite activities?
 D: "One of the best things about Montserrat is that it's sports oriented. We are always hiking, paddle boarding, jogging, swimming, yoga, volleyball - you name it, we're doing it."
 "There's no distraction here, which is part of its magic. There are no shops and it's a very relaxed island lifestyle. The kids, of course, are left to

tom as it's very safe. Not too surprisingly, they love the life here. It's the polar opposite to New York, which is incredibly intense, and lives are dependent on a tight schedule and it's all hectic and hectic. Here, we have no routine other than lunch and dinner, with all of us being together. Tommy and I lead a fairly gypped lifestyle on the whole. We are never anywhere for more than two weeks maximum."
You seem to have so much fun together. How would you describe your relationship?
 T and D: "Friendship."
 T: "We started a slow friendship, which then blossomed into what we have now, ten years later. We actually celebrate ten years this year."
 D: "Maybe because this is our second marriage we've learnt what we need to do. We're pretty much always together - I'd even say 24/7."



Dee and Sebastian grab a bliss and a cuddle on a hammock (left). There's a 12-year age gap between Sebastian and Tommy and Dee's only child together - and the former baby of the family (right). It's not the five-year-old has been 'the magnet' that brought the clan together.



'In New York, we're on a schedule and it's all hustle and bustle. Here, we have no routine other than lunch and dinner' Dee



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cent of the time. Possibly we have four or five trips apart. I think this works for us now. When you feel blessed to have found a partner, you know you need to keep it nurtured."

Are the children all close?

D: "My two elder boys both live with their father in Italy. Julian is on the pro-tennis circuit, like his father. Alex is 20 and at the age where he wants very much to do his own thing. I see a lot of him, especially when I'm visiting Milan for work."

"The kids all get along. We very much made a decision at the beginning that our decision would be final. We stood our ground and eventually they all accepted it. As you can imagine, uniting two families is always a juggling act, but we have Sebastian, who is the magnet."

T: "He is the knot at the centre of the bow."

You're both advocates for autism awareness and

last year Dee was honoured by Autism Speaks. Is this something you'll continue to support?

D: "We'll always follow the work we have set out on. We just wish we could help find a cure. It's certainly an epidemic and the scariest part is why it is happening."

Do any of your children show signs of following in your fashion footsteps?

T: "My children are all very creative. My son Richard is very interested and involved in music and fashion, Ally is a designer and has already presented her own collection and my daughter Elizabeth is studying at design school now, so I suppose they are all definitely artistic. Dee's boys are sports mad. Both play tennis, very much in the footsteps of their own father Gianni, who is still very involved in the game now."

"I believe they should be encouraged to follow

their dreams. Parents cannot dictate because they then tend to do the opposite."

You're both hugely successful entrepreneurs. How proud and supportive are you of each other?

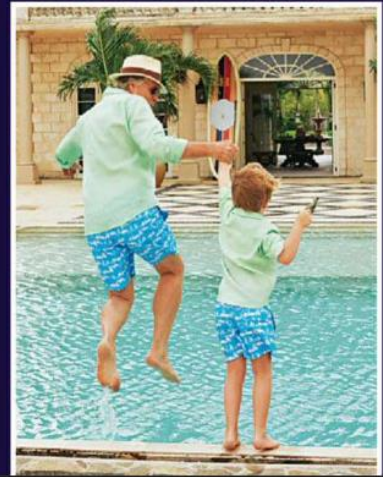
D: "Tommy has been incredible. He always has a little input that makes sense but without taking over. I admire and respect his judgment. Tommy has been extremely instrumental in the development and launch of my company and really encourages me every step of the way."

T: "I feel that Dee is 100 per cent my partner in life and she is as supportive as anyone possibly could be."

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MAKE-UP: KATRINA BORGSTROM

Tommy and Dee take Sebastian – a "mini-me" Tommy in his matching outfit – for a walk (above) before the two Hilfiger boys make a splash (below right). The couple (below, centre) are joined by daughter Ally (third from left) at a barbecue for Tamara (second from right) and the HELLO! team



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