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wouldn't you like to live in her shoes?

Amy Allen's life is filled with champagne, sports cars, stiletto heels and her new hit book, but under the fizz is a woman who rolls up her designer sleeves to get the job done

by **Sonia Kolesnikov-Jessop**

Amy Allen's life seems like a fairy tale. Fluent in Cantonese, Japanese, English and French, with a cute three-year-old daughter, she jets around the world, working on stylish events with luxury brands like Aston Martin sports cars and Champagne Jacquesson.

Plus, her first book – *This Little Piggy Went To Prada*, a collection of tongue-in-cheek nursery rhymes, is a worldwide hit. Inside, you'll find funny jottings on fashion, set to well-known nursery rhyme tunes, like the words: "Twinkle, twinkle, diamond ring, in a blue box tied with string," sung to the tune of Twinkle Twinkle Little Star.

Released six months ago in London and Singapore, the book is already in its second print, and is a must-have on every baby shower list. In fact, the publishers HarpersCollins will also release it in the US this October to time it with the upcoming festive season.

Amy admits all the pieces of her life's jigsaw puzzle may look like they fall into place with no effort, but behind the scenes, she's hard at work.

Take her glamorous look: "During my pregnancy with my daughter Mimi, I put on 25 kg. A shocker!" she laughs. "But I was determined not to end up the mother of an eight-year-old still saying, 'I haven't returned to my pre-pregnancy weight.' So for three months, all I ate was fish and vegetables, and I exercised with a private trainer. It was hard work."

She adds, "My advice is, don't buy any new clothes after you give birth. I wore my old ones, and they were much too tight. That helped with the diet."

Getting her book published was also no breeze. "It was rejected by several publishing houses until Spy Publishing in the UK first took it on. Even then, I still had to do some rework because some of the nursery rhymes didn't gel."



Amy's book spawned from giving new lyrics to old nursery rhymes.



A trained fashion and image consultant, Amy also designs couture clothing (above) as corporate gifts.

Born to Hong Kong parents and raised in the UK, Amy graduated from Oxford University with a master's degree in Japanese, spent four years in Tokyo working in luxury advertising, then ran advertising accounts in London for the luxury department store Harrods and the high-end timepiece brand Patek Philippe. Amy is also trained as a fashion and image consultant.

"I've seen many able women who weren't taken seriously because they didn't dress well or put on make-up. You can be chic on a budget. It's not about wearing designer labels as much as it is about knowing what suits you and

flatters your body shape," she explains. "It's good to talk to an image consulting professional, because often your friends won't tell you if something doesn't suit you, for fear of crossing the line."

Champagne and Sports Cars
 When Amy and her then future husband Howard settled in Singapore five years ago, she was bitten by the entrepreneurial bug. She helped to set up a champagne bar which has since closed. The bar may be gone, but it gave her the opportunity to meet the owner of Champagne Jacquesson, an exclusive

Inspirational Success

Amy can turn a problem into a sparkling success. Her book started because she couldn't remember the real words of nursery rhymes to sing to her daughter. "I started to make up my own words like 'This little piggy went to Prada'. It was for fun, but friends liked it and I thought there might be a market."

Now Amy is already tossing around ideas for

another "funny" book for adults that will also look beautiful. Part of the attraction of *This Little Piggy Went To Prada* are the illustrations of Eun-kyung Kang (aka Zebby). She was personally chosen by Amy. "When I saw her work, I knew that was it," says Amy.

On Zebby's part, when she first met Amy, Zebby says, "It was like meeting

the Asian version of Carrie Bradshaw from *Sex And The City*." She credits Amy as the inspiration for many of her drawings.



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French company which produces just 350,000 bottles of champagne a year. That has led to her latest project – organising events for prestigious global brands.

"Jacquesson has an alliance with Aston Martin sports cars and the London Symphony Orchestra," she reveals. "I help them all organise events in Asia."

Last month, she worked on a private party at the British Embassy in Tokyo with the London Symphony Orchestra, and this month, she's preparing an event in Hong Kong, celebrating the 20th anniversary of Christie's auction house.

Amy concurrently runs her own event management and creative concepts company, Bespoke, which also designs stylish products and couture clothing as corporate gifts. She has already designed a fashion collection for Aston Martin sports cars, under the name Muselet. "I'd love to launch my own fashion label. But it's difficult to do out of Singapore."

When it comes to her own wardrobe, Amy says, "I like Alberta Ferretti's flowy dresses, Etro's prints and the quirkiness of Kenzo, and a Diane von Furstenberg dress is always a good choice." But she disapproves of buying designer clothes for toddlers. "The child will just smear ice-cream on it. And they grow so quickly – in a month, the dress will be too small."

Three-year-old Mimi is too young to appreciate her mother's first book, but she's already developing an interest in fashion. She recently eyed her mother's diamond necklace and said earnestly, "Mummy, you must share!" **WW**

For every copy of Amy's book purchased in Singapore, a donation will be made to the Action for AIDS Pregnant Mothers' HIV Fund, which provides anti-retroviral drugs to HIV-positive mothers in Singapore, preventing the transmission of the virus to their unborn child (www.afa.org.sg).