

BAYWATCH TO BAKING ANGELICA BRIDGES

THE AMERICAN TELEVISION SENSATION EXPLAINS WHY SHE'S SWAPPING SWIMSUITS FOR GORGEOUS GOODIES

She is instantly recognisable as the strawberry blonde bombshell that launched a billion posters after donning that famous red swimsuit on *Baywatch*. Yet minutes after meeting Los Angeles native Angelica Bridges, you realise this multi-faceted performer has several feathers to her cap.

The 46-year-old, who played Taylor Walsh on the global hit series laughs, explaining: "I am an actress, TV host, pastry chef, and philanthropist... a performer. An entertainer. I do so many things," when **HELLO!** met her at Five Palm Jumeirah during a recent trip to Dubai to film a segment for her new show, *Bake My Day*.

The mum-of-two, who spends her time jetting around the world, but is keen to start the next chapter of her life ensconced in London's salubrious Chelsea, took time out of shooting to share how her career has swerved from superhero films and survival shows to sweet treats.

What are you doing in Dubai?

Why not be in Dubai? [Laughs] I was here three years ago for a film, *Batgirl Rises*, in which I played Poison Ivy. It was previewing at Comic Con. I was so impressed and blown away by the city. I am shocked I haven't been back sooner. It has the best of so many places. I said before that it was like both New York and LA – my two favourite cities – joined together.

You got thrust in the international spotlight after landing a starring spot on *Baywatch*...

That was my launchpad. It was such a milestone in my life. It was already huge when I joined. Walking into the audition, with David Hasselhoff there, and then after the third call back being asked to go and try on the suit...

The iconic red swimsuit?

Yes, the costume lady took me downstairs and gauged my size with a quick look. She picked one off the rack and said, 'I think this looks good.' It had Pam written on it in black marker. It was Pamela Anderson's suit! It was a perfect fit. I thought it was a sign.

The audition process was really different for the show wasn't it?

They had you do a swim test. They have a huge tank – that's what it's called, The Tank – and it's for shooting the underwater swimming scenes. They wanted to see what we looked like opening our eyes underwater. They can't shoot someone who looks crazy with their eyes open underwater. Not only do you have to be a good swimmer, you have to have the right physique, look good underwater and be a good actress.

So it was a lengthy process?

That was a Friday and by Monday I

'They gave me Pamela Anderson's suit. It was a perfect fit. I thought it was a sign'



FIVE
PALM JUMEIRAH DUBAI

The former *Baywatch* babe was so taken by Dubai that she is now considering spending more time here despite having plans to move to London



Angelica's perfect figure (above, with the Baywatch cast) belies the fact that she's a talented chef (below, with Quatro Passi's pastry chef) with a new comic show *Bake My Day* (right inset)



'If I am going to put my name on something, I want to put my heart and soul into it'



had the contract. They said they didn't have a part for me, but were making one as they were so impressed. Pamela had just announced she was leaving the show so they were going to bring on three new girls to replace one Pam. Carmen Electra, Kelly Packard and I were the three new recruits.

Did your life change overnight?

Very much so. People recognised you everywhere. I remember going to Croatia and we had to have police escorts!

But recently you have been concentrating much more on your cooking skills?

Yes, I have been hosting a show in the States called *Cooking Styles with the Rich and Famous*. We highlight a celebrity and go into their homes – recently we had Slash from Guns'n'Roses who loves Italian food and we just shot Monaco-based Austrian Prince Mario-Max Schaumburg-Lippe.

How did this culinary career kick off?

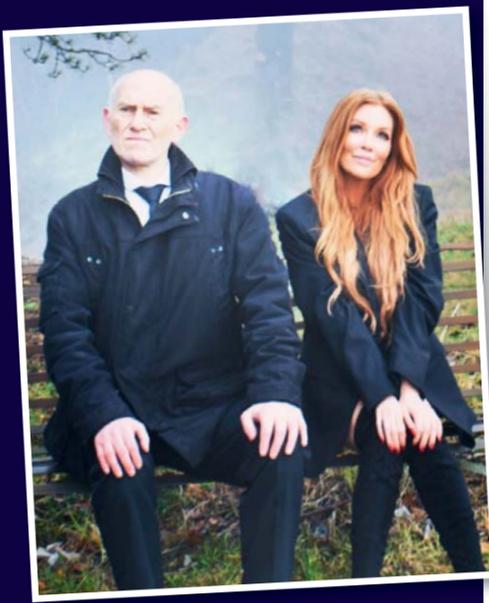
I have been baking since I was seven. I started off doing cupcakes for various places in Los Angeles; the SLS Hotel, the London Hotel... I have been an impromptu chef for Lionel Richie, Mira Sorvino, and different A-listers for the past few years. I used to infuse the cupcakes with special flavours – that was my unique signature – injecting them with syringes. If I am going to put my name on something, then I want to put my heart and soul into it and make sure it is truly my vision. So I was literally doing a thousand cupcakes a day, in Beverly Hills, in my home. I had commercial kitchenware brought into my penthouse. It was a lot for me to take in. And at the same time I ended up headlining a show in Vegas and Reno...

But now you've decided to concentrate on the cupcake scene?

Yes, I just rented Jamie Oliver's former home in London for a week. He had the most incredible kitchen – and I took it over and cooked up all these things as I am going to launch my dessert line, Gorgeous Goodies, in the UK in a few months.

You don't look like you have a sweet tooth... Oh I do. I have to go on the treadmill

'I adore Martha Stewart. I can do everything she does, but be more exciting and entertaining'



because I love cake. I woke up at four this morning as I am still on LA time and had cake for breakfast – the hotel made it for me with my picture on it. I literally ate it in my bed. This morning we did a section of the cooking show, making a chocolate éclair, at Quatro Passi restaurant with the resident pastry chef. That was my lunch.

Is there someone you particularly look up to in the baking world?

Nigella Lawson, love her. I also adore Martha Stewart as she's put on so many hats. I can do everything she does, but be more exciting and entertaining! It's time for the culinary world to have a sparky, dynamic addition.

Why are you moving to the UK, though?

I am drawn to it, it's a magnetic pull that I cannot even describe. I used to host a show in the UK on VH1 called *Spice*, plus I did a catalogue clothing line there. I have had a real niche there. It is the gateway to the rest of Europe for me. I am probably going to reside in Chelsea as I feel the best energy there. I love it.

This morning you were shooting yet another show called *Bake My Day* – that's another series you are launching?

Yes, we just shot the pilot while I was in London in January, too. It's about an American girl who goes from sunny, glamorous Beverly Hills to freezing London. She has a cockney chauffeur and a proper butler. It is a comedic cooking show that's partly scripted but partly unscripted.

Who would be at your dream dinner party?

Michael Jackson, Prince, Oprah, Marilyn Monroe, Brad Pitt – I have already met him, we are from the same part of Missouri, and he is amazing... I like to cook and host so I would do all that.

INTERVIEW: NATASHA FARUQUE

SHOT ON LOCATION AT FIVE PALM JUMEIRAH



Angelica poses after officially christening the FIVE Palm Jumeirah boat