

IN FINE FEATHER

*As she returns to our screens in a dramatic new series of 'Poldark',
Gabriella Wilde models the season's most ethereal couture
in a magical secret garden*

PHOTOGRAPHS BY RICHARD PHIBBS

STYLED BY MIRANDA ALMOND

INTERVIEW BY CATRIONA GRAY

All prices on request,
except where stated.
Gabriella Wilde wears
embroidered tulle
dress; feather
headdress, both Dior
Haute Couture. Ring,
Claude Lalanne



It seems to be Gabriella Wilde's fate to be surrounded by highly-strung animals. At the *Town & Country* photo-shoot, she played second fiddle to a truculent peacock who had his own ideas about what constituted a good pose. And, as fans of the period blockbuster *Poldark* will know, she spends a large portion of her working life in the company of a little black-faced pug. Playing the deliciously manipulative heiress Caroline Penvenen, Wilde has brought a touch of glamour to the 18th-century copper mines, capturing the heart of the local doctor and defying her guardian, all the while with a lapdog clasped to her chest.

'I don't think anyone anticipated how difficult it would be to film with a pug,' she says. 'They're so noisy – Horace snuffled over every track so each bit of the recording had to be edited. But the dog was perfect for Caroline – she's like a child at the beginning, very young and naive, and her pet almost fulfilled the role of a teddy bear.'

There was another reason that Horace featured so prominently in *Poldark*; he was a convenient prop to shield Wilde's figure, as shooting of season two coincided with her second pregnancy. 'I got the role and three days later I discovered that I was pregnant,' she says. 'As it was a seven-month shoot, I assumed that I probably couldn't take it. But the writer and producer Debbie Horsfield said, "Hang on a second, why can't we do this? Why can't she work, and be a mother and pregnant, if she feels that she can?" So we made it happen, which has been really wonderful and quite refreshing. They even let me bring Shiloh on set for the latest series when he was just a couple of months old. In my industry, it's often assumed that if you have babies, then you're not going to have your career.'

It's hard to tell that the willowy blonde has two small sons

– she's 28 but looks even younger, with flawless porcelain skin and an ethereal beauty. Her husband Alan Pownall is the lead singer of the electro-pop band Pale and the couple now live near the fashionable Somerset town of Bruton, in three old farm cottages that have been knocked together. Previously a city dweller, Wilde found herself unexpectedly longing to return to the countryside after her eldest son was born and she realised that she didn't want to bring him up in the capital. 'People started asking me which school I had put Sasha down for when he was only two weeks old!' she recalls. 'We had no connections to Somerset – I grew up in Hampshire, my husband is from Richmond and most of our friends are in London. We just took a risk, sold our flat in Ladbroke Grove and moved down here.'

Wilde started out as a model at just 14, after being introduced to the stylist Isabella Blow by a friend of her mother's – for she is very well connected indeed. Born Gabriella Zanna Vanessa Anstruther-Gough-Calthorpe, she is a descendant of Charles II and part of a dynasty of society beauties that includes Cressida Bonas, Prince Harry's former girlfriend and a childhood friend of hers. Having already done a few fashion shoots, she met Naomi Campbell by chance at a party, who introduced her to her own agent and things took off from there. But Wilde swiftly realised that she was not cut out for her new profession.

'When I went into it full time, I think I lasted three months. I just hated it,' she confesses. 'I stopped modelling altogether for a while and went to art school. I even taught art for a little bit – it was only a couple of years later that I decided acting was something that I really wanted to do.' Once she had chosen her new path, she threw herself into it wholeheartedly – starring in the romantic drama *Endless Love*, taking a major part in the remake of *Carrie* and roles

in *The Three Musketeers* and *St Trinian's*. She is also a brand ambassador for Estée Lauder, as well as being a permanent fixture on the BBC's wildly popular adaptation of *Poldark*.

'It's all been rather serendipitous, because I was offered *Poldark* after I moved to the West Country. Most of the series is shot in and around Bristol, which is a 50-minute drive for me. It's quite unusual to be able to have a job like this and live at home in the countryside.' As our interview concludes, and Wilde

strolls off to buy a loaf of stone-baked bread in Bruton's postcard-pretty high street, you can't help but admire her determination to balance her work and family life. She's taken the road less travelled, but on this sunny Somerset day on the cusp of summer, with hedgerows filled with blossoms and birdsong, it certainly looks like the better route. □

Season three of 'Poldark' airs on BBC One on Sundays at 9pm this June.

SHE HAS BROUGHT A TOUCH OF GLAMOUR TO THE POLDARK COPPER MINES, ALL THE WHILE WITH A LAPDOG CLASPED TO HER CHEST

Embroidered tulle dress;
ostrich headdress, both Dior
Haute Couture. White gold,
diamond, green beryl, pearl,
purple and pink sapphire,
and tsavorite garnet
necklace, Dior Joaillerie



This page:
embroidered ecru and
raffia dress; silk
headdress, both Dior
Haute Couture.
Opposite: embroidered
tulle dress; tulle
headdress, both Dior
Haute Couture. Ring
(left hand), Dior
Joallerie. Ring,
Claude Lalanne






This page: organza and
lace dress; feather
bonnet, both Dior Haute
Couture. Opposite: dress;
bonnet, both as before.
Tulle and velvet mules,
Dior Haute Couture.
White gold and
aquamarine ring,
£12,000, Dior Joaillerie

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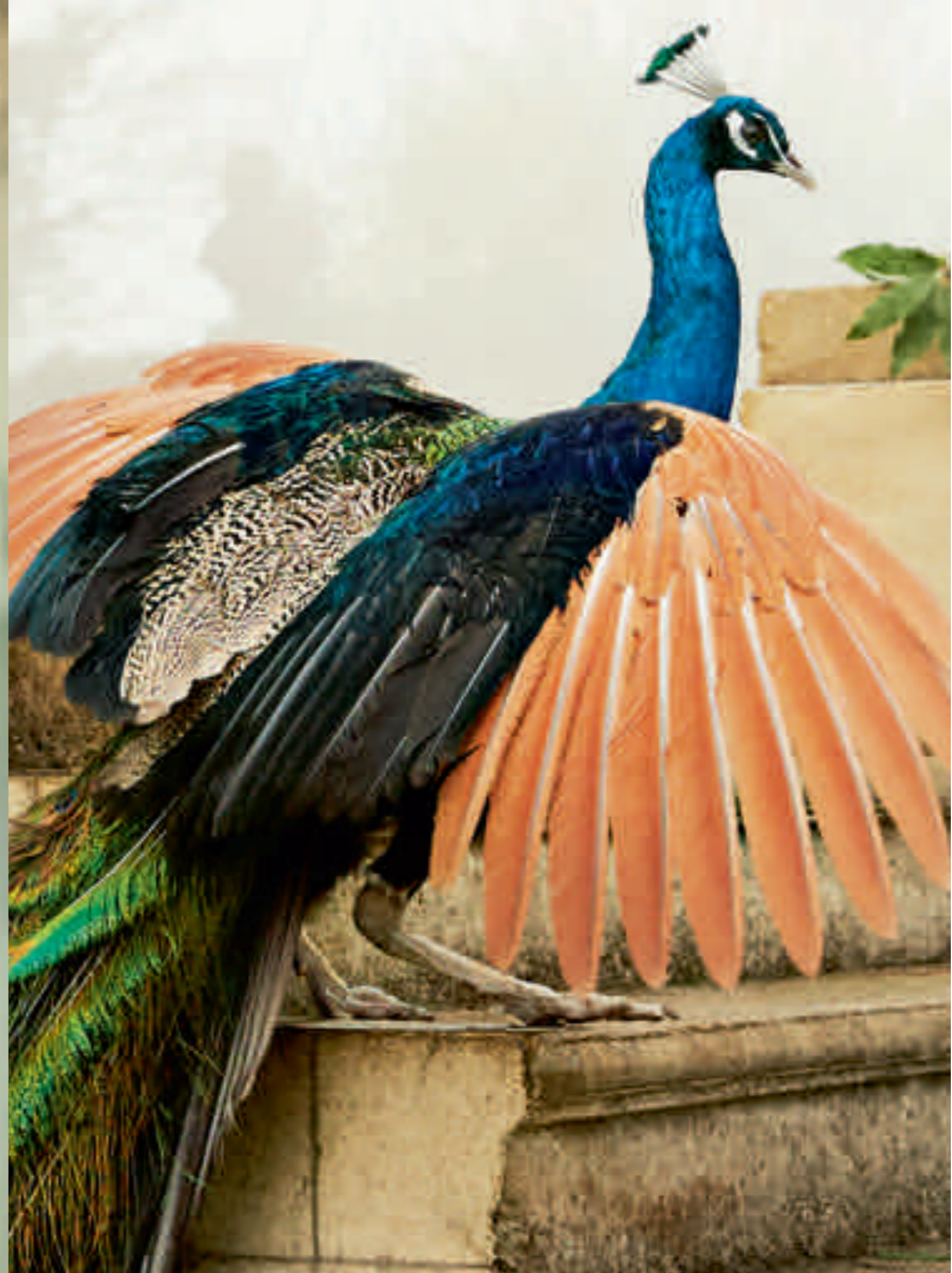


Embroidered tulle, silk and taffeta dress; feather headdress; tulle and velvet mules, all Dior Haute Couture. White gold, diamond, green beryl, pearl, purple and pink sapphire, and tsavorite garnet earrings; gold and chrysoprase ring, £13,300, both Dior Joaillerie



Wool and crepe dress;
feather headdress,
both Dior Haute
Couture. Gold and
diamond ring,
Dior Joaillerie

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This page: embroidered tulle dress; feather headdress; tulle and velvet mules, all Dior Haute Couture. White gold and diamond earrings; white gold and diamond ring, both Dior Joaillerie. Opposite: embroidered tulle dress; silk headdress, both Dior Haute Couture. Gold, diamond and peridot earrings, £12,000; white gold and yellow diamond ring, both Dior Joaillerie



This page: embroidered tulle dress; feather headdress, both Dior Haute Couture. Opposite: embroidered tulle dress, Dior Haute Couture. White gold earrings; white gold ring, both Dior Joaillerie. See Stockists for details. Hair by Earl Simms at Caren Agency. Make-up by Clare Read at Caren Agency. Manicure by Sabrina Gayle at the Wall Group. Flower design by Grace & Thorn (www.graceandthorn.com). Peacocks supplied by Animals Work. Stylist's assistant: Tilly Wheating



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