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Portrait by **Sam Christmas**

Last month, two new forces burst on to the London scene. They were Jamie Reuben, 24-year-old son of David Reuben, the aluminium and property magnate, and his 32-year-old cousin Lisa, daughter of David's brother Simon. Together, their fiercely private fathers own the second greatest British fortune, after the Duke of Westminster.

The fathers may be low-key, but their children are far from retiring. A Haiti fundraiser, which they co-hosted with Virgin Unite where we are now standing, in Altitude 360, an all-white entertaining space on Millbank Tower's 29th floor (which their fathers own), attracted the scions of London's most distinguished dynasties - 'All our friends,' says Lisa simply. There were Ecclestons, Bransons and Goldsmiths; Nick Candy, Robin Birley, the Duchess of Cornwall's sister Annabel Elliot and Princess Beatrice, who managed to forget her mother's financial worries as she partied enthusiastically with her boyfriend Dave Clark.

Even the elusive Reuben brothers appeared (like Charles Saatchi, they have been known to give their own bashes a miss) and, according to Jamie, 'had a ball'. The auction, which raised £400,000, was run by Simon de Pury. Bids included £40,000 for an hour on the pitch with Pele, while Lisa's mother Joyce handed over £6,000 for tea and Scrabble with Joan Collins (who happens to be her best friend). She could afford it: David Reuben, 67, and his brother Simon, 64, have, according to rich lists, a fortune of £5.53 billion.

David and Simon Reuben were born in India to Jewish-Iraqi parents who brought them to London in the 1950s. 'They had absolutely nothing,' says Jamie. 'I've heard the stories from my mother - she was the one paying for the dinners when she met my dad.' The Reuben boys were sent to a state school in Islington. David went on to Sir John Cass Sixth Form College in Stepney, but Simon never completed formal education. At 17, David joined a scrap metals business and began to trade, working nights while he finished college, while Simon started out in carpets, bought out England's oldest

Lisa and Jamie Reuben in Altitude 360. Below: Jamie (right) with Theo Osborne (second right) in Cannes this month

High living of Osborne the younger

THE REUBEN SHOW

David and Simon Reuben, Britain's richest brothers, are fiercely private. Not so their party-throwing, philanthropic, fast-living children. **Lydia Slater** meets cousins Jamie and Lisa Reuben to talk yachts, politics and family values

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Reubens' masterpieces, from left: Bath Racecourse; the 242ft superyacht Siren; Millbank Tower

carpet company from the receiver and made enough money from it to start investing in property. Cannily, he bought several shops on Walton Street and the old Pheasantry site on the King's Road in Chelsea. When the brothers joined forces, their company Trans-World traded in non-ferrous metals, specialising in aluminium and tin out of London and copper and tin out of New York. By 1984, the company was worth in excess of \$20 million. They then made the move into Russia just after the break-up of the Soviet Union, bought up half of Russia's aluminium production and, eventually, emerged victorious from the 'Wild East' aluminium war of the 1990s. They had done business with Oleg Deripaska, the oligarch friend of Nat Rothschild and Peter Mandelson, but that relationship collapsed in a court case in 1995 in which the Reubens claimed damages of \$300 million for lost profits.

The brothers have since focused on reshaping the landscape of London. Their company redeveloped Paddington Basin and they also own Connaught House on Berkeley Square, the John Lewis headquarters in Victoria and some Sloane Street shops among a vast property portfolio.

Fortunes like this are not made by pussycats, and undoubtedly running a high-octane partnership must have produced tensions between the brothers. Not according to their children. 'My father has a huge temper, he's famous for it,' confesses Lisa. 'He yells and screams in the office, but two minutes later, he'll be talking about where you should go on holiday. He doesn't bear grudges. I'm sure my uncle and he do have arguments but never in public. They might disagree over something but an hour later it's all forgotten. They have a unique relationship. They're almost like Siamese twins. There's no "his" or "mine".'

'They finish each other's sentences,' agrees Jamie. 'My dad is a mad technical

geek, though he never seems to get anything working, and my uncle can't even use a computer. And they're both pretty sociable, but it's my dad who tells the jokes.'

Their children's relationship is just as close. Cousins Lisa and Jamie have a strong family resemblance. Bright-eyed, tawny-skinned and lush-locked, both arrive wearing strict monochrome. 'People are always saying, "I saw your brother the other day," and I never correct them because that's how I feel,' says Lisa, who works in the contemporary art department of Sotheby's. 'It amazes me when people don't even speak to their siblings. We were never allowed to be like that.'

'Lisa isn't like my sister, she is my sister,' says Jamie, who has an older brother David, 30, and sister Jordana, 31. Jamie has a seat on the board of two of his father's companies, Northern Racing and London Oxford Airport, as well as his own property interests - he has partnered up with Robin Birley to open a private club in Shepherd Market. With his father's discretion, he

declines to be drawn on the current spat between Birley and Richard Caring. Solidarity is their watchword, and the key to their financial success.

But Jamie is interested in more than making money; he wants a career in politics. 'Yes, quite possibly,' he says, as we gaze down at Westminster. 'I've campaigned for a few MPs. I helped out on Boris Johnson's campaign - we had an event up here for him. And in this election, I campaigned for Chloe Smith [a Conservative Whip and MP for Norwich North], who's an amazing lady, and I was in Richmond knocking on doors for Zac Goldsmith, too.' And not just knocking on doors: Electoral Commission records show that he donated £22,000 in the form of an auction prize to Richmond Park Conservatives during the campaign.

Whether his recent trip, earlier this month, on the Reuben family's giant luxury yacht, *Siren*, in the company of Theo Osborne, youngest brother of the Chancellor, will help or hinder this ambition has yet to be seen.

Certainly, Jamie and Lisa are neither short of glamorous and powerful friends, nor of ambition. The fundraiser for Haiti was organised by the cousins in their capacity as trustees of the Reuben Foundation, the family's education and healthcare charity. The foundation has paid for Great Ormond Street Hospital's state-of-the-art Children's Cancer Centre and runs a primary school in Hendon, among other projects. 'I always felt my parents were proud of me but I wanted to feel like I wasn't just Simon and Joyce Reuben's daughter,' says Lisa, who is married to American Ron Valk, who has his own private equity firm trading in coal and steel. Their wedding in 2007 took place at the Monte Carlo Sporting

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Jamie Reuben



From left: Joyce and Simon Reuben; Debra and David Reuben

Club which was decorated with 5,000 white roses for the occasion. They have a nine-month-old daughter Eden.

Not to be outdone, Jamie goes out with Marissa Montgomery, the leggy 23-year-old society blonde who founded Pussy Glamore lingerie and counts Cindy Crawford and Courtney Love as clients, as well as having Dellals and Jagers in her ad campaigns. She sells to Topshop and models her brand on Elle Macpherson's lingerie empire.

Initially, the brothers' determination to bring up their families to be as close as possible received a setback when Simon, a keen film buff, went on holiday to LA with his wife Joyce and Lisa, then a baby of nine months, and decided to stay. 'He went out on his own and announced to my mother two hours later that he'd bought a house,' says Lisa. 'I don't know how delighted she was to begin with...'

The Reubens socialised with old-school stars such as Loretta Young and Joan Collins (at one stage, Simon ran an art gallery with Collins' brother Bill); Lisa recalls being at a party at Young's house at the age of five, watching a film on TV, and realising she was sitting next to the film's star, Lloyd Bridges. 'It really was the most amazing upbringing. LA is the best place to grow up because you're outdoors all the time and there's lots of sport.' Then, in the late 1980s, Simon developed cancer. 'I was eight, so I didn't really understand what was wrong. But he was in hospital all the time, and my mum was away a lot, so I was sent to spend the summer with my aunt in France.'

Finally, Simon decided to move back to the UK to be closer to his family during his illness. 'It was definitely a shock moving from LA to a school which had bars on the windows and where the tennis court was also the playground,' Lisa reminisces. Fortunately, her father recovered, and the family settled down in Knightsbridge, five minutes away from David Reuben's home in Holland Park.

Lisa was sent to Francis Holland School with her cousin Jordana (now a mother of three, living in London). 'That was when they consolidated the businesses. Before that, my dad was in real estate and my uncle in metals, but my father got more involved in metals because it took off just then,' Lisa explains.

By 1995, Trans-World had a turnover of nearly \$7 billion and accounted for five per

cent of the world's aluminium production. Despite their extraordinary wealth, or perhaps because of it, the Reuben parents seem to have done their utmost to bring up their children to understand the value of money. 'As kids, we were never given extravagant gifts,' says Lisa. They were expected to share everything with their cousins. 'My parents would tell me not to talk about money, and they were always cost-conscious. They have beautiful homes, and luxurious things, but they don't drive fancy cars, for instance. My father doesn't want one, and my mother has a Golf. And she buys clothes from Gucci but her other favourite store is Banana Republic. My father is the same, he'll be like, "I got five for the price of one!"'

'It was made abundantly clear that there were so many unfortunate people in the world,' agrees Jamie. 'We knew we couldn't help everybody but you were expected to help somebody. And food left on the plate was a big no-no... which is a bit of a shame,' he goes on, patting his stomach ruefully. 'We did what all our friends did: we played football, we watched TV. For holidays, the whole family would stay in our flat in Florida. We used to go to this place there called the Swap Shop, which was basically a huge flea market, where you could have candyfloss and there was a circus. We certainly didn't lead a super-rich lifestyle, oh no.' Although they do now have *Siren*, with its cinema and lift.

Still, there's no doubt that the Reuben brothers, and their wives, have done an impressive job bringing up their children to be level-headed, fully functioning members of society rather than drug-addled, overindulged brats. What has clearly been something of a struggle is for the children to emerge from the shadow of their overachieving fathers.

Jamie, for instance, suffered from dyslexia

and ADD, and was given a home tutor when he was a pupil at the North London independent school North Bridge House. 'Even now, I can sort of drift away if I'm sitting with friends,' he confesses. 'They'll say, "Jamie, have we lost you?" I have a short attention span.' He has no ambitions to equal his father's fortune. 'Even if I could, they came from nothing and I haven't,' he points out rather wistfully. Hence his interest in politics as a possible future career. 'It's something that would be uniquely mine.'

(Not to mention potentially extremely useful to the family.)

As for Lisa, one of the very few on-the-record quotes given by Simon Reuben was the admission that 'my mood is very dependent on my daughter. If she's happy, I'm happy. If she's sad, I'm sad.' But Lisa says she, too,

struggled to live up to paternal expectations. 'When I was a kid, and I wasn't winning races, Dad would tell me I should be more sporty. Now I run marathons and I'm sure it's because of that,' she says. 'We clashed a lot when I was younger. He's achieved a lot and he was very critical. I understand that, because he wanted me to achieve things. He was just encouraging me to maximise my potential and I'm so grateful for that.' She ended up as head girl at Francis Holland, which she dismisses as 'not so hard - it's a small school', then went to Georgetown University in Washington DC at 17. 'I was suddenly in this mixed dorm, with people drinking beer when I didn't drink - I wasn't ready for it. I stuck it out for one year because I thought I shouldn't give up, but then I transferred to King's College in London.' She studied French and business management, then worked in the fashion department of *Condé Nast Traveller* for two years, before a brief spell working for her father.

'I learned a lot, but I felt it was always going to be there, and I needed to develop myself in another way.' It was only when she started studying art at the Sotheby's Institute of Art, at her mother's suggestion, that she found her métier. 'Now I feel more confident in my own achievements. I've done enough to feel I'm my own person and it makes my relationship with my father even better,' says Lisa. 'Sometimes my husband will come to my family with advice. Everyone's on the same side, which is perfect.' Sounds like the Reuben family motto.



From left, Lisa with her husband Ron Valk; Jamie with his girlfriend Marissa Montgomery