

**BOSS  
ANNA HUNTER**

FEW BOSSES CAN SAY that they have known their PA for 29 years. In our case, my daughter Laura started working at Belgravia Gallery in 2001 after completing her degree. As a child, she had the tidiest bedroom, the neatest homework and as a pupil at North London Collegiate School was inevitably clever. However, neither of us were certain as to how we would work together. I am untidy, a poor typist and needed her organisational skills as the business was expanding rapidly.

On her first morning, following an article about Prince Charles's signed lithographs, which are exclusive to us, in a Scottish newspaper, the phone did not stop ringing – almost 90 were sold in the morning. Laura then had to organise their despatch, which she did efficiently.

A year later we went on our first business trip together – to South Africa to meet with Nelson Mandela at his home in

Johannesburg at a signing session for his lithographs of Robben Island. Efficient as ever, Laura recorded the morning on her camcorder. A few months later we invited our clients to a dinner with Nelson Mandela on Robben Island – a truly unforgettable experience. Mr Mandela spoke about his art to the international media and to have Laura encouraging me, when I was nervous about giving a speech next, was wonderful.

Laura's beauty, grace, efficiency, kindness and memory have been great assets when dealing with our clients who are from many nationalities and social backgrounds.

A brilliant administrator, Laura is now a great art dealer, regularly buying and selling high-value artworks. She has also presented us with a unique concept – the gallery baby, three years old. Jacob is the newest face in this family business.

## The art of being a PA

**ANNA HUNTER IS MANAGING DIRECTOR OF THE BELGRAVIA GALLERY IN ALBEMARLE STREET. HER DAUGHTER LAURA IS HER PA**

**PA  
LAURA WALFORD**

NEVER IN A MILLION YEARS would I ever have imagined I would end up working with my mother in her business. Belgravia Gallery (I say "with" as it sounds better than "for"). As a 16-year-old teenager, if asked whether I'd follow my mum into the art business, there was no hesitation in my answer: No.

However, eight years on from my first day at the gallery, I find myself very contentedly sitting here and I really do love my job. Following a family tragedy in 2001, just after finishing my degree in Media and Cultural Studies (I intended to work in documentary production), I began work at the gallery. My role was not clearly defined but I soon realised that my skills were very complementary to those of my mother: she finds it difficult to be tidy and organised; it comes naturally to me. She is a wonderful business person, instantly able to pick works of art that are both commercially sound and well painted. I have learnt so much from her in the past years and continue to do so every day.

My role at the gallery includes anything from clearing rubbish and organising mail-outs to meeting with Nelson Mandela and launching his artwork. The diversity is fascinating and means that no day is the same. We also deal with clients who range from those who have never spent any money on art to international celebrities such as Katie Holmes and Bernie Ecclestone.

With just three of us at the gallery (all female) it is vital that we all work well together and do not have personality clashes – and we could not get along better. My mum is an inspiration; she lets us all get on with the work we do best. We are very lucky to work together.

