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< page 30 And Toni chips in: "To be honest, we don't mind what they do with their lives as long as they have good values, they appreciate all they've got and they turn out to be good people and to respect others. That's all that's important."

Both children go to a local nursery a few mornings a week, giving Toni time to pursue her other passion: horse riding, and in particular, dressage.

"I've always enjoyed riding, but now I'm taking it quite seriously," she says. "I'm getting some expert teaching from Vicky Thompson, a former Olympic champion who is based at the Oldencraig Equestrian Centre in Lingfield. It only takes half-an-hour to get there and I love every moment of it."

What's the horse's name? "He's a stallion called Del Boy! If I ever get really good it might sound a bit funny when the announcer calls out his name, but never mind."

Toni is also a qualified karate black belt 1st Dan. "I've learned not to get into an argument with her," says John.

Their idea of perfect days out include a trip to the Woburn Safari Park, a local farm or the Gambado indoor play venue in Chelsea, while their social life is with their own parents, brothers and sisters or with family-orientated Chelsea players who live locally.

Beyond that, home is where their hearts grow fondest. "John is away so much we make the most of our time together," says Toni.

Even Christmas Day is dominated by Chelsea. "We'll have a very early lunch with all the family here and then I need to get off to training," says John. "Then I meet up with the other players at the team hotel taking it easy before the Boxing Day match against West Brom, which is a lunchtime kick-off.

"It's worked out quite well for us this year because the next game a couple of days later is at home to Fulham. At least there are no big trips this Christmas, but it's still hard to leave Toni and the children."

With that, it's time for John to get back to light training up the road at Chelsea's training facility in Cobham. He got home at 2.30 in the morning after an away game and the children woke him at 7am.

"I don't mind," he says. "There's plenty of time for sleep, but I'm determined never to waste a moment with Georgie and Summer."

HOBBIES

John - I'm a keen golfer and a member at Wisley. I play off eight.

The best "family" fun is when we all get in the golf buggy and go in search of sheep. The kids love them and we feed them!

I also enjoy collecting unusual or rare watches, especially a Rolex.

Toni - Riding Del Boy and competing in events in dressage. I get over to the Oldencraig Equestrian Centre in Lingfield as often as possible where Del Boy is stabled. My dad's a keen rider too, so he's often with me.

It's an amazing place, run by Vicki Thompson, who is an page 34 >

