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Think Caprice is a blonde bimbo who can't keep her clothes on? Well think again, cos she reckons she's a canny businesswoman with great comic timing and about to take Hollywood by storm. But then, she also thinks she's getting fat...

The vision of Caprice Bourrel shoehorned into teensy silver hot pants and slathered in baby oil would be a dream come true for any red-blooded man. For a girl, though, it's the stuff of nightmares, especially when you've turned up to interview said vision wearing horizontal stripes – fashion's equivalent of widescreen. If ever there's a time to dress in top-to-toe black, it's the day you're meeting Caprice. But Caprice is having a fat day too. 'I'm really struggling with my weight,' she sighs in her *Clueless* drawl, and prods her stomach. 'I have to watch it all the time, but especially when I'm happy. Goddamnit, I'm so bloody happy right now I've gained 10 pounds. Can't I have something dysfunctional in my life to get rid of them?' Caprice is joking, of course. She's delighted with the direction her life has taken since she silenced the critics with her recent turn in *Rent*. 'I took the part of a diva and

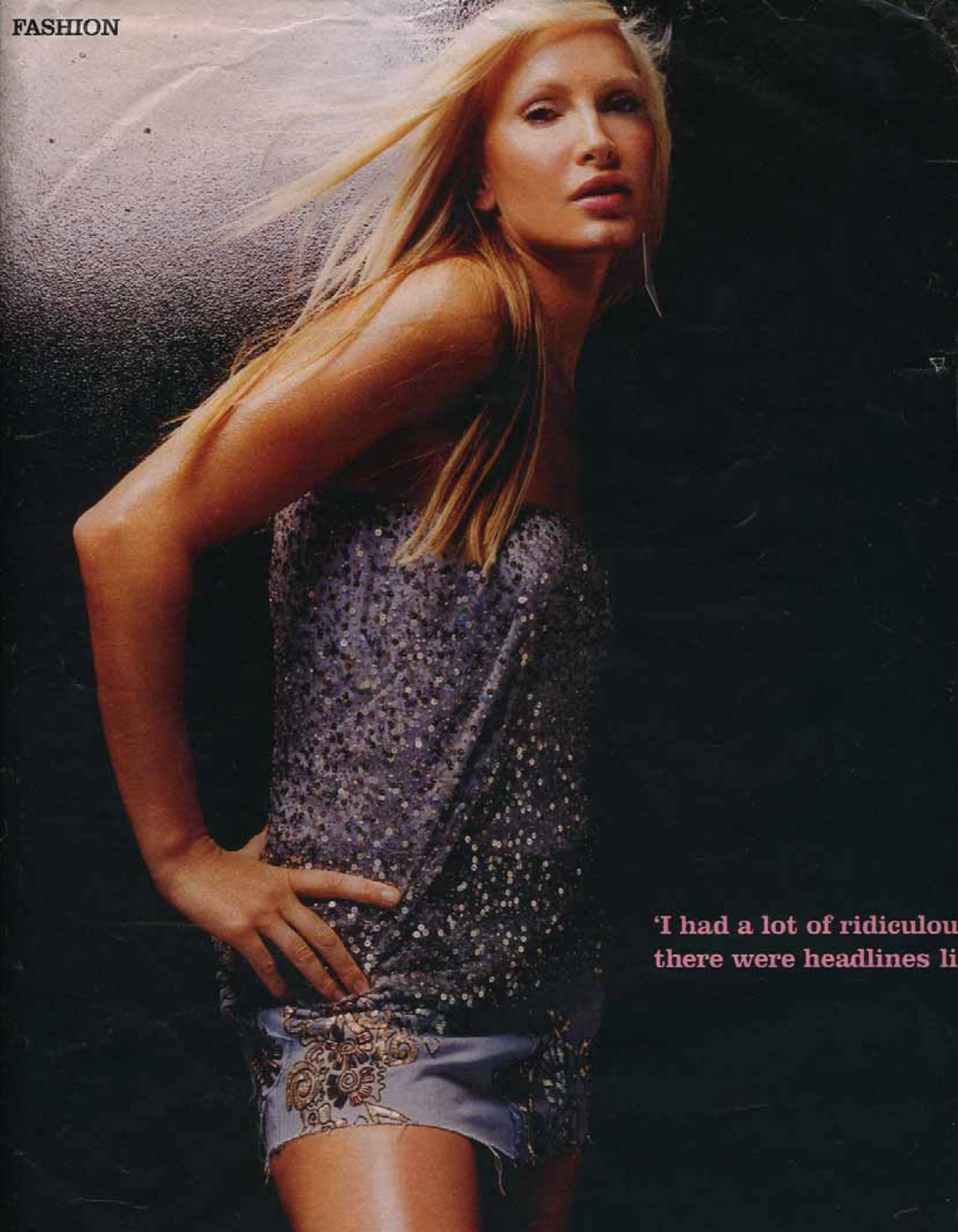
turned her into a really funny character,' she says. 'I think I'm a good comic. You've either got timing or you haven't.'

Rent's producers learnt all about Caprice's 'timing' when she started calling hourly to beg for a part. 'I was on the phone to them constantly,' she admits. 'They weren't 100% sold on me. They only took me at the last moment and I had to learn the whole musical in a week. I had to audition like everyone else and even then they weren't 100% sold, so I just kept calling.'

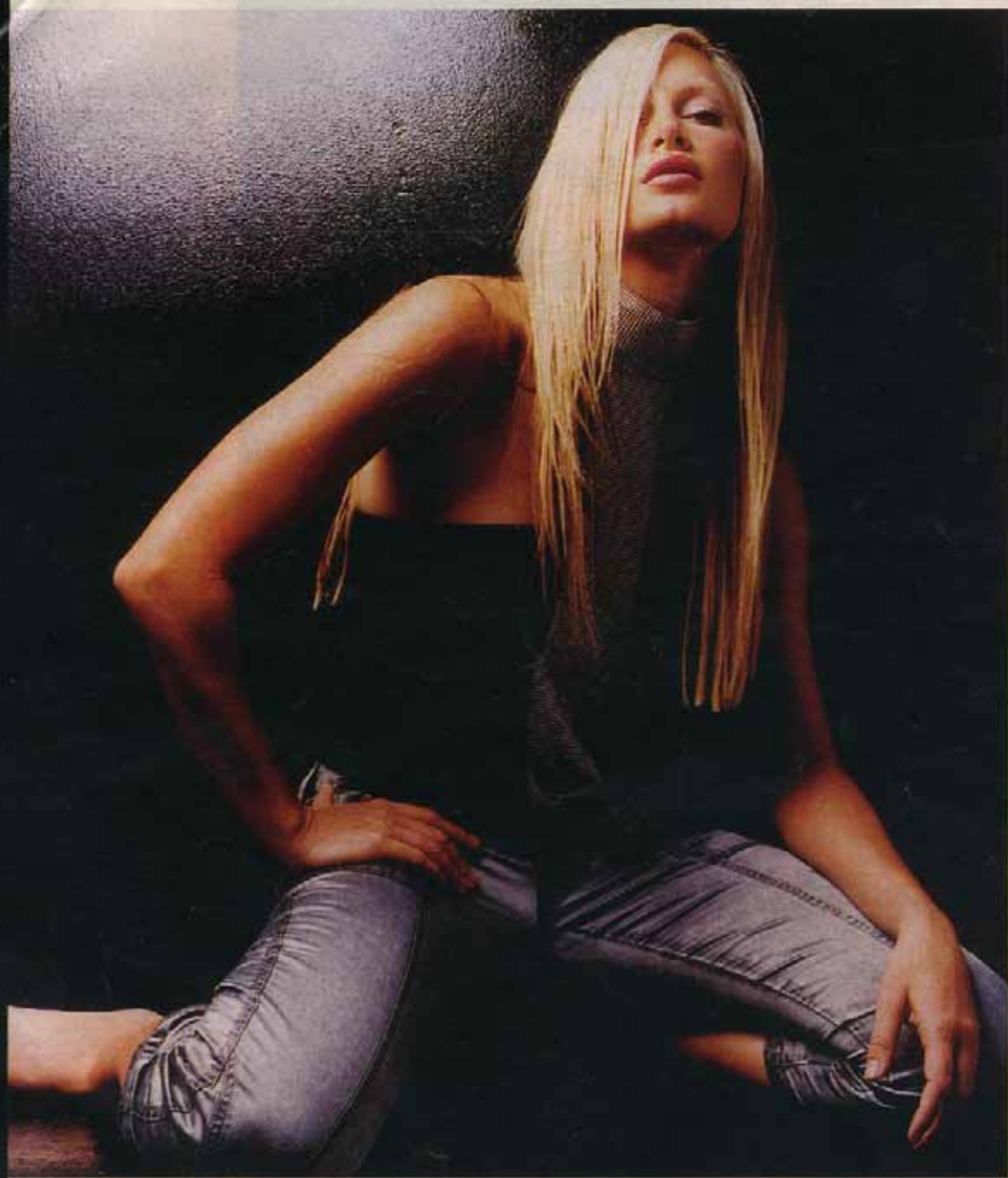
With *Rent*, Caprice finally got the opportunity to prove she was more than just the sum of her body parts. 'Everyone was expecting me to have my boobs pushed up to my chin, being the hot momma and the "hurgh"...' Caprice leaps onto her stilettos and enthusiastically humps the air. 'I said no way, I'm going to be slated if I do what they expect. So instead I took the mickey out of myself. If you don't take the piss, everybody else will – so you might as well do it first.'

In which case Caprice will forgive us for saying she's always had her knockers. You may recall the pasting she received when she swapped modelling for a pop career – which boiled down to a tour of provincial pubs, two singles which both peaked at number 24 in the charts and a P45 from the record company. 'It's so easy to criticise me,' she admits. 'People anticipate I'm going to do a bad job. Stereotyping is very prevalent in Britain – it's like, if you do one thing you can't do another.' So does she still fancy being a pop star? Will she try again? 'Yes – 100%. I'll never stop writing songs, regardless of whether I get a deal again. I'm still going to the studio and I still do little gigs at my friends' houses.' And what about weddings and bar mitzvahs? Can she give me an estimate? Caprice shoots me a

Caprice wears, left: Top, £35, Warehouse; lurex hot pants, £7.99, H&M; bangle, £50, Sam Ubhi; shoes, £55, Office



'I had a lot of ridiculous
there were headlines li



This page: Top, £29.99, River Island; trousers, £35, Miss Selfridge
Opposite page: Skirt (worn as top), £60, Spirit at Debenhams; denim mini skirt, £29.99, River Island; earring, £5, Diva at Miss Selfridge

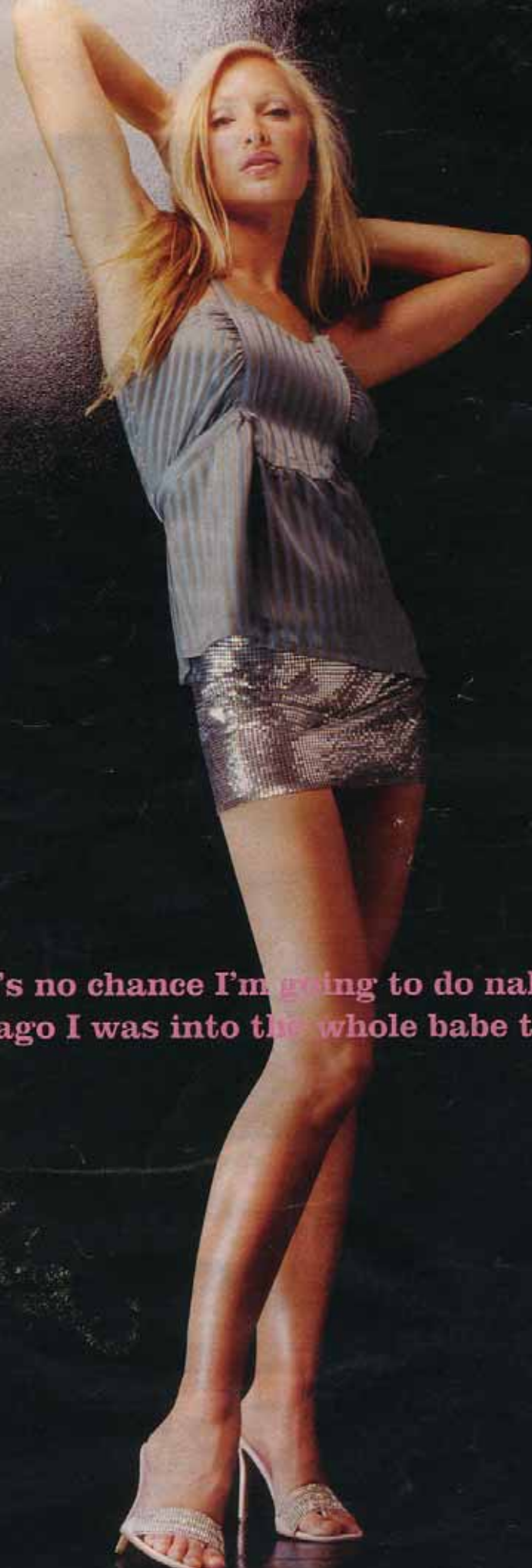
stuff written about me... I was linked to people I hadn't even met – “Did Caprice play with his Bing-a-ling?” about me and Steve Bing’

look then giggles. You've got to hand it to the girl – she takes the media's digs in good humour. But there's some press attention Caprice doesn't find so amusing.

'Before *Rent*, I had a lot of ridiculous stuff written about me,' she says. 'My old management seemed to think all publicity was good publicity and it doesn't work like that. I was linked to people I hadn't even met and there were horrible headlines like "Did Caprice Play With His

Bing-a-ling?" about me and Steve Bing. My management didn't even bother to warn me, and I only found out because friends called up and said, "Oh god, what are you doing?" If I choose to go out with one guy after another, fine, I'll take responsibility for that. But these stories simply weren't true and it was hurting my career and my family. Even my grandma was being bombarded by journalists.' Enough was enough. Caprice

sacked her manager and vowed to get herself taken seriously. 'My image was a joke, but it was my fault,' she admits. 'I should have read my press and seen how I was perceived. But now my life has changed completely and all the pieces have fallen into place.' Piece number one: Caprice the brand. Her lingerie collection for Debenhams has proved a huge success, despite fierce 'bra wars' with Kylie, Elle Macpherson and co.



'There's no chance I'm going to do naked love scenes. Seven years ago I was into the whole babe thing, but now I've evolved'

Silk top, £45, French Connection; mini skirt, £35, Dorothy Perkins; sandals, £65, Dune. For stockists, see p66

'It's good, sexy stuff but it's very functional too,' she says. 'I personally test everything to make sure the knickers don't scratch or go up your butt.'

This month Caprice PLC moves into the hair business by launching her own £50 ceramic straighteners, almost half the price of the main competition. 'It's a service to womankind,' she laughs. 'My hair is wavy and I used to spend hours drying it straight until I got these.' Piece number two: the two-movie Hollywood deal. 'My first film is a road movie, *Hollywood Flies*, with Vinnie Jones and Brad Renfro – he's a real hottie,' says Caprice. But don't expect to see her slipping into the backseat with him. 'There's no chance I'm going to do naked love scenes. I don't want to and I don't need to. Seven years ago I was into the whole babe thing, but now I've evolved. I won't be doing anything gratuitous. Although maybe I could be enticed if it was with Matt Damon – I love him,' she adds, eyes twinkling. 'Or Heath Ledger. Whooh!' And speaking of men, we come to the final part of the jigsaw. Caprice is currently romancing 24-year-old oil heir Alexander Davis, who she describes as 'just a normal bloke'. She adds, 'I'm really happy with him. I went through a

time when I was insecure and uncertain, but now I'm at a really good, solid place.'

So do we hear wedding bells? 'Oh, we all want to get married one day,' laughs Caprice. 'When I'm ready to have children I'll go the next step and settle down. But right now, I'm happy with my life and things are going the way I've wanted them to for a long time.' Looks like these extra 10 pounds are there to stay, then. *Caprice hair straighteners, £49.50 plus P&P, call 0845 330 4686, or see www.capricehair.com*

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