



THIS IS WHAT 51 LOOKS LIKE

Karen Betts lives in Yorkshire with her partner Dave. She runs a beauty business specialising in permanent make-up.

DAILY FALSE LASHES

I WASN'T in the front of the queue when it comes to lashes. They're blonde and short. So, I wear Nouveau Strip Lashes daily (£4.96, shop.nouveaulashes.com). I never go out without them. They only take two minutes to put on. I remove them using baby oil, so I don't pull out of any of my natural lashes. They add much more volume than a mascara. I would rather do this than get extensions, as it takes an hour to put them in.

DIY BLOWDRY TIPS

EVERY week, I get a blow dry at my local salon (£17.50). To keep it in place overnight, I tie my hair up on top of my head with a loose band. Then, I wash it once, in between. I also use Kerastase Resistance Masque Extensioniste, as it's essential to do a good conditioning treatment regularly (£32, kerastase.co.uk). It makes my hair feel like silk, and helps to protect my hair when I curl it at home.

SPRING CLEAN FACIAL

IT'S important to treat yourself, even if you work hard — the key is to plan it in. A friend recommended I try the Dermatude Meta Therapy facial (from £55, nouveauSkintherapy.co.uk). It takes 45 minutes. I get it done monthly. It's a deep exfoliation, and my skin feels tighter and fresher after. It's hydrating, too, so helps to reduce the appearance of fine lines. I want a facial to feel like it does something and isn't just relaxing.

METABOLIC DIET

FOUR years ago, I visited a nutritionist: she put me on a 'metabolic diet', to try to speed up my metabolism, so that I burn fat quicker instead of storing it. It involves eating three meals a day, low in calories (about 1,500), but high in protein. In three months, I lost a stone and went down from a size 12 to a ten — all without increasing my exercise.

TWEAKMENT DUO

I'VE been having Botox every six months for five years (£350, aesthetichealth.co.uk). It helps smooth my frown lines and crow's feet, so I look less tired. I don't need anything to boost my confidence. I had filler once in my chin and cheeks, too, five years ago. But I think less is more, so I haven't had it since.

■ karenbetts.com

By FLORENCE SCORDOULIS

■ Do you look good for your age? Reveal your secrets to inspire@dailymail.co.uk

Why my husband and I moved into an 'old folks home' — with my parents!

by Jane Slade

WHEN Ali Sharpe announced that she was going to move into a retirement complex on the Bournemouth seafrost five years ago her friends were aghast.

She was only 58, a married mother of two grown-up children and working as a professional voice coach. Her husband Bob, a former librarian, was only 63.

Why would a fit, energetic woman who was still working full-time choose to move to what her friends call 'an old folks' home' where the average age is 75? 'I thought it was an old people's home at first,' Ali admits. 'I came to visit my parents who had moved into the penthouse apartment.'

'I looked at the décor in the lobby area and communal lounge and thought, I could never live in a place like this.'

There was no whiff of boiled cabbage, but there was the classic lounge full of board games and jigsaw puzzles.

But when she saw her parents' penthouse apartment of two bedrooms, two bathrooms and panoramic views to the Isle of Wight she couldn't believe it. 'It was stunning. Nothing like I imagined a retirement flat to be.'

At the time, Ali and Bob, who have been married for 35 years, were living in a three-bedroom family house on the other side of Bournemouth.

Their son and daughter had left home. The big family kitchen was dated and 'hell to clean', while the bathroom needed a face lift. They knew that the sensible option was to downsize, but it was only on the way to visit her mum and dad in their Churchill retirement development, Dean Lodge, in 2013 that they had the idea to move in, too.

THEY walked up through the car park and saw a for-sale sign for a small one-bedroom flat on the ground floor. 'It had a lovely compact kitchen and a sitting room big enough to take our baby grand piano,' Ali recalls.

'I could see Bob thinking, no more DIY. It didn't bother us living next to my parents. In fact, it made life easier. We wouldn't have to go far to visit them.'

Home today is a ground-floor, one-bedroom apartment in a modern building with balconies and mature gardens.

It is on a quiet residential street near the seafrost in Southbourne with its own car park, secure entrance, laundry facilities, a guest suite for visitors, a lodge manager and a communal lounge. Even though Ali's mum died last year and her father is frail, she and Bob have no intention of moving.

They are not alone. Age-

dedicated retirement villages are rapidly becoming a lifestyle option for downsizers.

And why not? They are spacious, modern and secure and often have care facilities on site. Michael Voges, chairman of the Association of Retirement Community Operators, says: 'With increased life expectancy, it is no surprise that we are seeing a wide range of arrangements — people moving in with their children, parents, siblings, old school friends,' he observes. 'This creates vibrant and diverse communities.'

Some retirement developments, such as Battersea Place in London and Audley Redwood in Bristol, are luxurious, more resembling boutique hotels than pokey retirement homes.

They have bistros, libraries, swimming pools and gardens, and offer exotic activities such as cocktail-making and Zumba

classes, which are proving attractive to midlifers.

Then there are luxurious schemes for the seriously rich, such as Auriens in Chelsea, London, where one-bedroom apartments start at £3 million.

PegasusLife is building schemes in fashionable Sandbanks in Dorset, where properties cost more than £1 million.

And, as people are living longer, it is becoming more common to find two generations of the same family living in the same retirement development.

'Far from traditional perceptions, moving into a retirement village isn't simply the preserve of people in their 70s, 80s or 90s,' says Nick Sanderson, CEO of The Audley Group, one of the country's more luxurious retirement village operators.

'Increasingly we are seeing people buying at our villages in order to enjoy a great lifestyle



Close bond: Ali Sharpe (left), and above, her parents

with access to a range of health clubs, swimming pools and restaurants. We have owners as young as 55 and, in some villages, two generations in the same family living together.'

No wonder, then, that for people with elderly parents, the prospect of living under the same roof (or in the same development) is attractive.

EVEN so, not all of Bob and Ali's friends understand why the couple, who are about ten years younger than most of the other residents, wanted to move to the development.

'Most people thought it was weird us moving here with Ali's parents,' Bob admits.

'But one of the reasons for the breakdown in society is that families don't live together any more. It used to be far more common to have granny living with you when I was young.'

Ali agrees. 'I just knew moving here was the right decision. The children had gone and I had seen how Mum and Dad struggled in their later years. They were both in their 80s when they moved here — it was an awful upheaval. I always had this dream of being by the sea. We don't need lots of space. We live a compact life and I like the idea of paring down our lives. We love being part of this community.'

'People think it's a nursing home and it isn't,' Ali adds. 'We all have our own apartments and live independently.'

'We even have parties around our grand piano. I do get anxious about getting old,' she admits. 'I don't want to be a burden to my son and daughter. I don't want them to feel they have to look after me, which they won't if we stay here.'

'I don't want to spend my retirement cleaning my kitchen and living in a house that is too big to manage either.'

'I want to enjoy lovely walks, swimming in the sea in the summer... and not have to think about moving again!'

1.8 million households in Britain contain two or more adult generations