

Countess Caroline Vivian Gabriele von Krockow-Lahame

An international personality, a lawyer turned novelista, a Paris-enthusiast with a personal connection to Lebanon, Countess Caroline talks about her new chapter of authoring books and living her passion.

AM: Please give us an insight into your personal and professional background?

I am international, a UK solicitor and a literature and art lover. For 13 years I have been living in Paris with my husband Fady Lahame and our three children Charles-Edouard, Alice and Diane. I moved to Germany from New York in 1983 at six years old, where I completed my school education in Neuss, Frank-

furt and Holzminden. Afterwards I spent a year in Madrid where I studied Spanish history, art history and literature. My next degree was a bachelor's in history at King's College London where I graduated in 2000. I then worked as a journalist for artnet.com in New York until 2001 followed by a Master at the London School of Economics where I graduated in 2002. After working in publishing and as an Account Manager for a design agency I trained to be a UK solicitor graduating from the College of Law (London) in 2006 followed by my work at an international law firm in London. In Paris I continued my law studies at Assas (LLM in European law) and worked for an international law firm.

It was in Paris where I found the inspiration to start writing my first novel about the Belle Epoque; an extraordinary adventure which allowed me to delve into the rich Parisian history and art. During this time, I also completed the Cedar Crest College low-residency MFA in order to ameliorate my writing skills and complete my first novel, *The White Rose*.

The White Rose was bought by Editions Prisma and was published in March 2020. It exists in

English by Belle Epoque Publishing. My second book, *The Blue Brooch*, came out in November 2021 in French and exists in English as well.

AM: From law to authoring books, was it a difficult step to take? And how did your law degree help you?

It was natural step for me to go from law to authoring books. My law degree and work in the international law firms gave me the tools and discipline necessary to complete these ambitious adventures. In law you have to be structured, meticulous and very hard working. These qualities are a pre-requisite for a successful writer. As an IP lawyer it was also easy to create my own company and protect my international property.

AM: How has your German heritage and international upbringing affected your writing?

I was very close to my grandmother who owned a beautiful castle named Schlenderhan close to Cologne. She bred racehorses and organized all the big occasions in my life. This was one source of inspiration for my books. My parents are both German but very different. My father a German count, banker and hunter. My mother a German baroness, art lover whose lifework was to transform her grandfather's castle

into a beautiful 5-star Hotel in Slovakia with the help of the famous international architect Axel Vervoordt. They both have always encouraged me to travel the world which I did. In my books I mix tradition, different cities, cultures, art and glamour.

AM: So what are some of your rituals before you start writing a book?

When I prepare for a new book my discipline and willpower are key. I wake up at 5 am and start with 20 minutes of yoga followed by 20 minutes of journaling and planning and then I learn something new (podcast, newspaper, books or improving my Arabic). Then I prepare breakfast and take care of my family. Once the kids are in school and my husband at work I go to my studio and write from 9am to 3pm. Afterwards I take care of my kids and supervise their homework.

AM: Paris seems to be at the center of your novels, what do you like the most about the city of lights?

Paris is not only the city of lights but the city of love! I moved from London to Paris because of my love to my now husband. Living in Paris made me fall in love with the city as well. For me it is a female city; center of fashion, Belle Epoque architecture, art and jewelry. In contrast to London which is more of a male finance city. When I arrived in Paris, I realized that everything I liked aesthetically was rooted in the Belle Époque: the Eiffel Tower, the Grand and Petit Palais, the Alexandre III bridge. It was at this point that I began to do in-depth research on this period. I analyzed many archives of the National Library and I quickly realized that Paris in the Belle Époque was much more international than it is today. The City of Light attracted Europeans, Americans and people from all over the world. It was at this point that I, the Paris lover, through my research, became even more in love with the Belle Époque. I love the Belle Époque



Blazer, Budoor Atelier.
Brooch, Boucheron.
Earrings, Private family collection.

Dress, Xuan Paris.
Brooch, Boucheron.
Earrings, Private family collection.
Bracelets, Boucheron, Bulgari and Dior.



because it is a period marked by social, economic, technological, scientific and aesthetic progress. In retrospect, it was a period of economic expansion, marked by carefreeness and a faith in progress. It was also a festive period marked by gaiety. Paris therefore became the center of my novels.

AM: *You seem to be passionate about Maison Boucheron, not only does the house appear in your book, we've also featured a vintage piece in our shoot. What is it that you like about this iconic house?*

I love Boucheron for several reasons. For me it incorporates extreme luxury. Starting in 1858 it attracted the most interesting customers until today. Frédéric Boucheron was a visionary selling sparkly diamonds, milky pearls, mysteries emeralds and rubys the colour of blood to a wealthy international clientele like La Païva, Virginia Oldoini Countess of Castiglione who was Napoleon's third mistress and many more. I especially adore the wedding baskets Boucheron produced and the Italian queens's tiara which holds a mystery on it as well as the versatility of the jewellery. What I love most are the trembling brooches like the Blue Brooch at the heart of my novel. I've been to Boucheron recently for an event and discovered a beautiful bedroom and bathroom with a view on the Place Vendome. Voilà another reason I love Boucheron.

Photographer: Madhu Sundar
Stylist: Victor Concepto
Location: Hotel Park Hyatt Paris Vendôme

AM: *Who would you say are your books targeted to?*

I got a lot of feedback from men and women of all ages. My books are targeted to anybody regardless of their gender, social position or nationality.

AM: *After becoming a professional author, what would you say is the secret recipe to a successful book?*

Self-criticism, a lot of re-editing, perfectionism and a very good publisher.

AM: *Your husband is Lebanese, tell us more about your thoughts about Lebanon and the Lebanese culture*

I love Lebanon and have done wonderful trips with my husband to his country. We went to Baalbek, Beiteddine Palace, Byblos (where the alphabet was invented) and of course Beirut. My husband's aunt is an archeologist and gave us unique insights. We also went to the Beirut art fair which was well organized with exceptional contemporary art. The Lebanese are so hospitable, and we had party's thrown for us in the most beautiful houses. The Lebanese food is divine and even in Paris we eat Lebanese at least twice a week.

AM: *Finally, what are some of your upcoming projects?*

My books tell immersive, entertaining and impactful stories written with a visual style that could make lovely movies or Netflix series. I just created my own production company BE Productions and I'm looking to co-produce my first two books to become movies. Simultaneously I'm working on my third book which is still top secret.

Dress, Gemy Maalouf.
Brooch, Boucheron.
Cuff bracelet, Chanel.
Ring, Personal creation.
Bracelets, Boucheron, Bulgari and Dior.

