

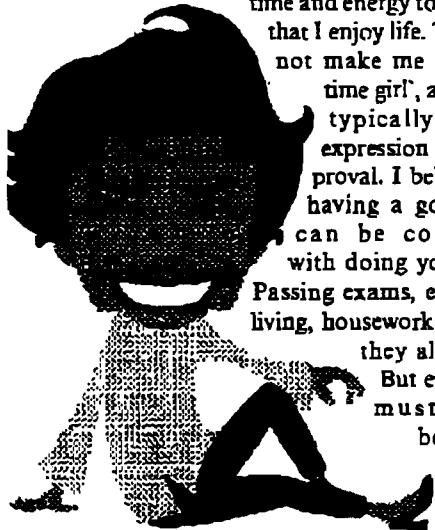
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# Innocent Bystander

Three views of hedonism from three lives with views

## Carla Powell

■ If you really want a good time, you need to believe that life is to be enjoyed, not just endured. I devote a considerable part of my time and energy to ensuring that I enjoy life. This does not make me a 'good-time girl', a horrible, typically British expression of disapproval. I believe that having a good time can be combined with doing your duty. Passing exams, earning a living, housework chores – they all matter. But enjoyment must never be pushed into second place.



have not lived life unless you have thrown yourself wholeheartedly into a campaign. I have had good times on many occasions in the political thick of things, especially when my husband was helping Baroness Thatcher at No. 10. Personally, I think there's nothing better than a good international crisis. The Countess of Avon, when her husband was PM, complained that the Suez Canal flowed through her drawing room. It can flow through mine any time it pleases.

A journalist once suggested that I should start a political movement known as the Dinner Party. Our slogan would be 'Everyone is entitled to their just desserts'. We would have an entrée to the best parliamentary circles and all our members would be appetising – thus marking us off from the other parties. I'm called a political hostess, but the truth is my best and most enjoyable entertaining has been around the kitchen table, where more than one prime minister has sat and had fun. What I like is bringing together unlikely combinations. I got Ken Livingstone and

against the odds, courting danger – they all add spice. I like being scared. Climbing near the Matterhorn once, roped to a guide, I was told to leap a gaping crevasse. I sat down and howled, saying that no power on earth could make me jump. Without a trace of emotion, the guide said he would simply count until three and then jerk the rope, which would leave me dangling in space at 12,000ft. I closed my eyes and jumped. It was one of the great moments in my life. I'm convinced that in order to live life to the full, you have to be full of life. □

*Lady Powell is the wife of Sir Charles Powell, former private secretary to prime ministers Baroness Thatcher and John Major.*

## Taki Theodoracopulos

■ As Confucius may or may not have said, those who do not enjoy having a good time end up fools. I may act foolish lots of the

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That is my motto. The trouble with some of my English acquaintances is that having a good time makes them feel guilty. When I go out, I like to radiate pleasure, to laugh and to show the world I'm having fun. That doesn't stop me working hard or taking life with deadly seriousness when necessary. We Latins have our sorrows, sure. But we are not so foolish as to think that they can be banished by travel agents and party-planners. Happiness comes from within. It's in our genes, which are essentially sociable. For me, happiness in solitude is a contradiction. One of my greatest pleasures is getting together with old Italian friends. We talk inconsequential and unaffected chatter. The average London dinner-party guest, counting scalps and trying too hard to impress, would regard us as vapid. But our enjoyment is in just being together.

■ Another of my greatest enjoyments is politics, which shows that pleasure does not have to be frivolous. A recent high point was taking part in the incomparable Sir James Goldsmith's swashbuckling battle to force the main political parties into committing to a referendum before Britain joined a single European currency. He succeeded despite attempts of the small-minded to pretend otherwise. You

John Aspinall together. They were united by a love of animals and a hatred of authority. Red Ken marched up to Aspers and announced: 'This is a great occasion: Nazi meets Trot.'

■ Having a good time for me is also about taking risks. I will never forget when my husband, Charles, in his speech at our party for Colin Powell – then US chief of staff – greeted Colin as a member of the Powell family saying: 'Our family tradition is that the eldest son went into the Diplomatic Service, the second into business, the third into the church and the fourth – the black sheep of the family – was sent off into the colonies. So welcome home, Colin.' My husband would have been lynched in the US for such a lack of political correctness. Everyone held their breath – me included. But Colin laughed uproariously. That is precisely the kind of high-risk fun I like.

Plenty of risks, campaigning

time, but no one, not even those who hate my guts, think I will end up a fool. The reason for this is self-evident. I have enjoyed my life more than most, so if suddenly I have to cross that river, it's been great while it lasted. I have absolutely no regrets, despite a swollen liver, a bad ticker and lungs that resemble those of a miner. I have pursued the good life throughout, and now, in my autumn years, I can look back with the satisfaction of not having missed much.

Take yachting, for example. When my first wife decided that life would be more fun without me, I reacted as all Greeks do: I threatened to kill her and any man who came near her. Like all Greeks, however, I did nothing of the sort. What I did was far more constructive. I moped for weeks, boring everyone with stories about the perfidious nature of the weaker sex and threatening suicide. That is when my father came to the rescue. Easily bored, nothing bored him more than his son moping. He telephoned me in Paris and told me to go out and buy a boat ▷

