



**U**pon meeting Jermaine inside the Royal Mirage Hotel, it's not just his dapper suit that catches our eye, he also has a wristful of evil-eye bracelets. "They bring me good luck," reveals Jermaine in his soft-spoken voice. It turns out the 54-year-old Grammy nominated singer and bass guitarist lives between Bahrain and LA, and so knows the region well. "I've been to Dubai several times," says Jermaine. "I love the Middle East – I feel really peaceful here." Here in an intimate chat, the former Jackson Five member opens up about his 32-year-old fourth wife, his seven children and Michael's comeback...

**Welcome back to the UAE. What are you doing here?**

I'm working on a humanitarian project with my sister Janet. It's called Coming Together As One (CTEO) and it's an award ceremony where celebrities like Nelson Mandela and Angelina Jolie will be honoured for their charity work. The actual ceremony (which will be televised around the world) will take place in the UAE in April 2010. We will have some major artists performing.

**It sounds fantastic. Your sister Janet was in Dubai earlier this year with her boyfriend Jermaine Dupri at the Atlantis Opening Party...**

Yes, she was. She told me the fireworks were really incredible.

**There were rumours that she broke up with Jermaine a couple of weeks ago...**

They may have! I don't really know. I don't like to pry into her personal life too much. I got on well with Jermaine though, we share the same name! I think Janet is at a point in her life where she wants to go to the next level and do things outside the music industry. She's in the studio doing another album right now, but like me, she wants to focus on doing charity.

**She's 42 now. Do you think having kids is on her agenda?**

She was never too keen because she has so many nieces and nephews, and she's around them a lot. It's probably not going to happen.



**'WE ARE ALL PAINSTAKINGLY SHY'**

**JERMAINE JACKSON**

**THE OLDER BROTHER OF POP STARS MICHAEL AND JANET JACKSON TALKS EXCLUSIVELY TO OK! MIDDLE EAST ABOUT HIS EXTRAORDINARY LIFE**

**You have seven children with three of your ex wives. Are you still friends with them?**

Yes, because we all share children together so we have to get along. Like anyone else, we have good days and bad days but we try our best for our kids.

**How did you meet your fourth wife Halima?**

In Starbucks in Hayvenhurst Avenue, right down the street from our family compound. I don't drink coffee but I went into Starbucks because they have these incredible harvest salads. Anyway, Halima walked over to me and said hi, and I asked her if she was a Muslim and she said yes. She was very supportive of my family and she had met my mother once in a department store somewhere. We just had a connection.

**Your wife's originally from Afghanistan. Have you ever been there?**

No, but I would love to go sometime, I just want to make sure the climate is right. Halima's lived in Saudi Arabia, India and Pakistan before the States.

**What is your eldest son, Jay (X) and your daughter Autumn (X) up to?**

They are both involved in finance. My other sons Jeremy and Jourdynn are in the music business. My youngest sons, Jaffar, 12, and Jermajesty, who is eight, are hooked on golf. I took Jaffar to the course when he was only three. I think he's a Tiger Woods in the making. He's met him before and he's a big inspiration. I wouldn't be surprised if both my sons go pro. They're very good.

**Do they live with you and also their mother?**

Sure, they spend time with both of us. They love Dubai though, and have an image of the Burj Al Arab as their screensaver on their computer. Whenever I'm here, they say, 'Dad, it's not fair!' They haven't been yet.

**Will you and your wife Halima try for children?**

Yeah we'll try. I want as many as God will bless me with! Growing up with a big family, we're used to it. It's fun, the joy and the noise of it.

**We heard you have quite a few servants in your home in LA...**

We have eight servants but I'm a neat freak and I still make my own bed and tidy up after myself. I love things to be in place!

**From your experience of different relationships, what makes a good one?**

I think it's when two people can truly enjoy each other's company and spend quality time together. When a couple enjoy doing the same things and have the same values and beliefs.

**What do you and Halima like doing together?**

We both have a passion for charity work and we love travelling around the world building schools and hospitals. Other than that, we love cycling, horse riding and playing tennis. And we love to jog...when we're at home we go every morning.

**You're also super healthy...**

Yes, I believe you are what you eat! I'm a vegan and I've never taken any drugs in my life - I don't even take aspirin.

**And you converted to Islam in 1989...**

Yes I met Cat Stevens (who's now known as Yusuf) a long time ago in Saudi Arabia and he inspired me, and so did Malcolm X, Muhammed Ali and Louis Farrakan. Muhammed Ali talked to me about Islam ages ago before I converted. The most important thing for me is the feeling of purity and peacefulness of the Muslim faith. I just want to be the best human being you can possibly be and to do God's work. That's my mission in life.

**Who are you closest to out of all your brothers and sisters?**

I'm close to all of them, but I feel closest to Janet.

**Who is the most shy in the Jackson Five?**

We are all painstakingly shy. On stage we're more comfortable. We have that stage persona. We love performing. The focus isn't on you, but your music.

**Who is the funniest?**

Marlon is very funny and so I am!

**And who would you say is the leader in your family?**

I heard that I was. I just do what's in my heart and try to keep the family together. We have family days where we all get together. We'll probably all go to a restaurant with our parents sometime in June. Reminiscing about the wonderful days of Gary in Indiana where we grew up. They've done such a wonderful job.

**Are you going to see Michael perform in the O2 arena?**

Yes, of course! Knowing Michael, it won't be his last show ever. Performing is in his blood. He can't sit still for that long, he's always moving about, ever since he was a little boy.

**Is it true he has some flesh-eating disease?**

No, that's rumours and rubbish! That's crazy. He's pretty healthy, he's always been skinny. We have the same frame, I just have more meat on my bones. He doesn't have a butt, it just goes straight down! We tease him sometimes, I'm like, 'Michael, you're like a wall back there!'

**What kind of father is Michael?**

He's a good father, he's quite strict. His kids are smart and whenever they see me, they run up to me and scream 'Uncle Jermaine!' They're so sweet! I don't know who is on his mind in terms of a love interest right now. He aint telling me!

**Who is your closest celebrity friend?**

Chris Tucker. We have travelled quite a lot together. He's so naturally funny. But when we're together, I make him laugh!

**Do you sleep with the lights on?**

Yes, you heard about that? I don't like the dark. I'm scared of the dark! I keep lights on outside my room and a few inside. I've seen things before.

**What else scares you?**

The way the world is going. The wars, the misuse of products that's killing the ozone layer.

**What are your future dreams?**

To continue surrounding myself with good people who exude positive energy. I would like to do some business in this region, perhaps open a resort.

**When will you be back in Dubai?**

Soon. I'm off to the Bahrain Grand Prix this weekend and then I'll be in Malaysia, but yes I will be back at some point! **OK!**

INTERVIEW BY SARAH BLADEN  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY GETT IMAGES/GALLO IMAGES



**Left inset: Jermaine attends a red carpet bash with his wife Halima. Above: With his youngest son Jermajesty.**