

A TRUCE – FOR THE KIDS, FOR US



In this heartfelt interview Amor tells Gloria Edwards how she and Joost made their peace, how it breaks her heart to see him so ill and their plans for a special family Christmas

Pictures: DINO CODEVILLA

EVEN at first glance it's clear Amor Vittone is a different person. Her hair gleams in the sun, her brown eyes are full of life and every now and then she does a little jig and hums a tune.

There's no sign of the tiredness or pain that used to be etched on her face or the bitterness about the rugby-hero husband who disappointed her so deeply.

The singer has reason to smile again because she and Joost van der Westhuizen (40) have buried the hatchet – finally, after the sex video scandal he became caught up in, their drawn-out divorce and the motor neuron disease (MND) that's slowly claiming the life of the former Bok captain.

But it's taken a long and painful journey to get here, Amor (40) says in an exclusive interview at a restaurant in Muldersdrift near Johannesburg.

She's pouring her heart out because she wants people, especially her children, to know how happily this nasty situation has turned out.

No one knew how much pain she was struggling with while she sang on stage and gave motivational talks at women's gatherings after her marriage had crumbled.

The situation was ironic. "I was the one

who needed the motivation," she confesses.

Then comes the admission, as if she's only just realised this: "I died emotionally three years ago."

That was on Valentine's Day 2009 when the sex video came to light in which Joost was secretly filmed with a stripper.

Amor tried to process her jumble of emotions on her own and kept silent about what was really going on in their marriage. When they separated almost a year later she was criticised from all sides.

"People thought I was hard, unfeeling. But they don't see what goes on behind closed doors. Our every move was publicly analysed and judged. Those close to us kept interfering.

"And when you're angry you make impulsive decisions."

But the way Joost's condition had deteriorated over the past two years as a result of the MND persuaded her to pursue inner peace and set aside her differences.

Their children, Jordan (8) and Kylie (6), asked questions about their marriage and their father's illness she couldn't answer. "I was tired of the public fights. Really, really tired."

It hurts her to see the former strapping Bok so weak and ill.

"It breaks my heart into a thousand pic-

es. I wouldn't be human if I weren't sad about Joost."

She shakes her head. "But the peace isn't the result of pity," she emphasises. "It's sincere on both sides."

(Turn over)

Joost has tweeted several times about how happy he is to have access to his kids.

GALLO IMAGES/GETTY IMAGES FOR AGFARMEDIA



