

'Our secret? Friendship – and getting on with life'

Camilla reveals how her relationship with Charles works as the pair get back to work



They celebrated their 20th wedding anniversary in Italy

A recent unexpected health scare left many worried that it's time for the King to slow down. But Charles and Camilla are firing on all cylinders to prove they won't be stepping back from their busy schedules any time soon.

At the end of March, news broke that King Charles, 76, had undergone a brief hospital stay after suffering from side effects of his cancer treatment. It was confirmed that the stay was unscheduled, with the monarch forced to cancel planned engagements in Birmingham. The Palace later confirmed the hospital stay was nothing more than a 'minor bump in the road', with Charles – who

'He needs to pace himself'

Of course, this didn't stop fans from worrying over the King's health – further fuelling speculation that Charles and Camilla, 77, must begin slowing down.

was diagnosed with an undisclosed form of cancer in February 2024 – doing well with his treatment.

One royal insider said, 'King Charles is renowned for burning the midnight oil and even falling asleep as his desk working so many hours. But those days must be a thing of the past, and it's vital he looks after his health and cuts down his workload. He needs to pace himself.'

However, it seems slowing down is the last thing on the King's

mind. Despite worries for his health, the King and Queen proved they have no plans to take it easy – jetting off in April for a whirlwind tour of Italy.

The trip proved a momentous affair for the couple, who received warm welcomes from the crowds – some of whom waited hours in the Italian sunshine to glimpse the royal duo. Just four days long,

their schedule was packed. The state visit included a trip to the Vatican for a private meeting with Pope Francis, who gave his best wishes to Charles and Camilla for their 20th wedding anniversary – which they marked in Italy on 9 April.

Opening up to British reporters about spending their anniversary in Rome, Camilla shared, '20

years! Who could believe it was 20 years. What is the secret? I don't know. I suppose it's just sort of friendship, really. Laughing at the same things, getting on with life. Doing things like this takes up most of the time.' Camilla – who marked the day by wearing the reworked outfit that she wore to the Windsor Guildhall on their wedding day in 2005 – also

revealed there hadn't been too much downtime to celebrate the milestone beyond 'a bit of a catch-up'.

And when it came to anniversary gifts, Camilla sweetly shared that she had bought Charles some china to mark the occasion – used to signify 20 years of marriage.

The Queen also opened up about the secret to their two decades of happiness, revealing, 'It's not easy sometimes, but we do always try to have a point in the day when we meet. Sometimes it's like ships passing in the night, but we always sit down together and have a cup of tea and discuss the day.'

It's something former comms chief Kristina Kyriacou recalled, previously, sharing, 'They don't do every single engagement together, but no matter what, they will try to share breakfast or dinner.'

Anniversary celebrations took a sideline, however, for the many royal duties that remained top priority on their official visit. The King received a standing ovation following a speech in Italy's parliament, during which he called for the UK and Italy to stand together to defend democratic values.

With his work far from done, the monarch then enjoyed a state banquet in Rome – telling 150 guests at the lavish dinner that

The couple celebrated their 20th anniversary in Italy



Charles and Camilla show no signs of slowing down just yet



The King and Queen on their Italian state visit



Soaking up the sights of Rome with a trip to the Colosseum



The Palace described the recent health scare as a 'minor bump in the road'



Charles was quick to greet the crowds

'we are living in a very precarious and fragile world'.

Alongside the intense ceremonial events, Charles and Camilla also took plenty of time to enjoy the culture of Italy. Seen greeting crowds, the royal couple were relaxed and happy – with onlookers saying Charles was quick to make his way to the barriers to chat to people.

Their final day was spent with a celebration of the country's food, with Charles and Camilla trying

their hand at making pasta during a festival in Ravenna, before sampling a pairing of parmesan cheese and whisky. Of course, no trip would be complete without a stop for bookworm Charles. The monarch took a brief visit to the tomb of writer and poet Dante Alighieri, famed for his works *The Divine Comedy* and *Inferno*.

'I think he loves his work'

It was a busy few days for the couple who show no signs of slowing down their royal duties – despite having both faced health setbacks in recent months. While the King recovered from his cancer, Camilla was forced to cancel a string of engagements herself late last year after suffering from a nasty bout of pneumonia. Following

their Italian tour, the couple immediately headed to their Balmoral estate – ready to rest and recuperate in peace following their Italian venture.

Although of course tiring, many have said that Charles won't step back from his duties – as much for himself as for the public. The King was described as thriving on his work commitments while undergoing cancer treatment. It's a fact that Queen Camilla hinted at herself while in Italy, insisting

that Charles was keeping himself busier than ever. When asked by press whether the King may slow down as his anniversary gift to her, the Queen joked, 'Dream on!'

She added, 'I think he loves his work and it keeps him going. And I think it's wonderful. If you've been ill and you are recovering, you're getting better now, and he wants to do more and more and more. That's the problem. That's what he's driven by, helping others.'

It was a sentiment echoed by a senior palace official, who exclaimed 'we've all tried' when asked whether the King – who will turn 77 in November – will take it easy.

'As people will have seen, the King enjoys his work,' they added. 'He enjoys engaging with as many people as possible. In this role, as when Prince of Wales, he knows he is fortunate to do just that. As we are seeing, since this reign began two-and-a-half years ago,

he's achieving that in many different ways.'

However, according to one royal expert, the King may well find himself forced to reevaluate his jam-packed workload over the next few years – with plenty of other royals willing to help out when the time comes.

Describing it as a 'golden opportunity' for other members of the family to step up, they shared, 'Prince William has been very prominent recently, and

Kate Middleton is obviously nursing herself back to health following her own cancer treatment.'

Another source added, 'The royal family cannot ignore the stark reality that circumstances may change unexpectedly. The King's hospitalisation in March served as a sobering reminder of his ongoing health struggles. King Charles is aware of this, and has been preparing William to take over at a moment's notice.'

By Lottie Roberts, Pictures: PA Images, Alamy Stock, Associated Press