

Embracing change

The global financial crisis has had some positive spin-offs. Alice Haine meets two women who have embraced their new circumstances and enriched their lives.

The global economic downturn has forced many people around the world to face a new reality.

With an uncertain future residents have tightened their belts to help themselves ride out the financial storm. But while the situation may have caused concerns for some, it

has been a blessing in disguise for others and has been the catalyst for them to make a positive change to their lives. As the saying goes, 'When one door closes, another opens'. *Aquarius* meets two women who say the global credit crunch has changed their lives for the better.

"THE CREDIT CRUNCH... HELPED ME ACHIEVE MY DREAMS"

Emma Vorwerk, 29, from Adelaide, Australia, is the owner of Berry Behaved (www.berrybehaved.com), an online pet accessory boutique for dogs and cats. Emma moved to Dubai in February 2007 with her husband Nathan, 32, who works in health and safety.

"My background is interior design, so when I first moved to the UAE I worked for an Italian company that made glass mosaics. I then moved to an Australian furniture company that fitted out executive apartments right down to putting the milk in the fridge.

"As the project manager I was in charge of decorating serviced apartments in a building on The Palm and was incredibly busy. But I finished that project when the global credit crunch hit and suddenly I was a project manager with no projects to manage, so the writing was on the wall. After being paid late for the second month in a row, I knew it was time to get out. I handed in my notice in January because I had

another plan up my sleeve.

"Five years ago I'd had this idea to launch a lifestyle brand called White Berry, with lots of different products under its umbrella. I decided it was time to put

"Because of the credit crunch I was literally pushed out there and it's done wonders for my confidence."

that plan into action with Berry Behaved – an online pet boutique store – because I'd noticed so many people walking around the Marina with little dogs.

"Before quitting my job I had set up a market stall at the Marina in the evening

and on the weekends. It did very well and then, my job not going to plan was just the push I needed to take the plunge and focus on the business full-time. I started by building the website with

a web designer and securing my trade licence. I spent Dh80,000 of my savings on startup costs – it was a do or die moment – and a lot of time sourcing products from around the world. I also had my own designs made into pet products such as stylish

dog cushions or food bowls in chocolate leather that look nice on the kitchen floor. Because of my background, it's very important that there's a design element to all my products.

"I also sell my products wholesale to vet's clinics and plan to have them in pet stores soon too. I'm seven months into the business now and it's still early days. Everything takes a lot longer than I expected and my website is yet to take off, but people are still getting used to the idea of buying online. I'd like to distribute my products in Australia and expand the website around the GCC region, and plan to launch my next White Berry brand once Berry Behaved is going well.

"Because of the [global]

