

# Fabulous

AUGUST 11, 2024

**REAL LIFE**  
'HOW I  
LEARNED  
TO LOVE MY  
JJ BOOBS'

**#WINNERS**  
WHO'S BEEN  
CROWNED  
THE BEST  
IN BEAUTY?

## SUNSHINE STATE OF MIND

Divorce, dating and living  
life to the max – A Place In  
The Sun presenter **LAURA  
HAMILTON** has it licked

PHOTOGRAPHED  
FOR FABULOUS BY  
MARK HAYMAN

# GRILLED TO see you

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**TASTE  
MATCH**  
taste tested

FROM  
**£2<sup>89</sup>**

SERIOUS  
ABOUT  
SUMMER

**ASDA**

THAT'S MORE LIKE IT

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Splitting up with your husband when you have two young children is never an easy decision to make. But *A Place In The Sun* presenter Laura Hamilton insists it was the right one for her family. She separated from her husband of 10 years in 2022 and has never really spoken about it – until now. Turn to p8, where she says that it is better to be apart than to be unhappy together, and reveals why celeb dating app Raya is not for her, as well as how she became a postmistress but quit 12 months before the Horizon Post Office nightmare. It's a fascinating read.

And if you have ever wondered about the motives behind social-media sleuths who descend on crime scenes to try to solve them themselves, on p16 we speak to one who got involved in the recent disappearance of Jay Slater and last year's Nicola Bulley case.

Meanwhile, if you are desperate to know what hair product will *really* tame your tresses and which skincare product is the best, we have the answers with our Beauty Awards – judged by the experts. Even better, you could win the lot! Turn to p20 to find out how.

And it's not long until the summer bank holiday. So if you want to give your garden a glow-up but are a bit strapped for cash, turn to p38, where we'll show you how to do it without breaking the bank. Enjoy!

Sinead



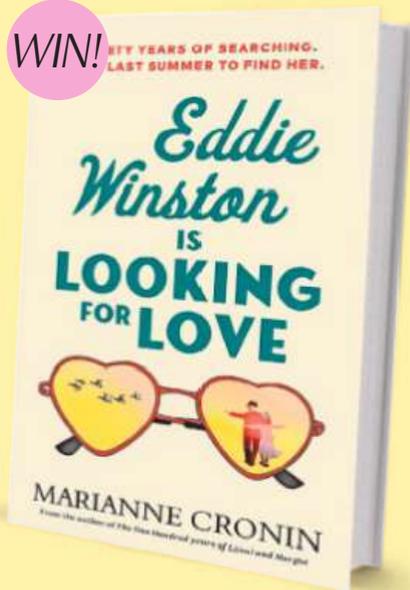
EDITOR IN CHIEF  
SINEAD McINTYRE  
@MCINTYRE2

**Eddie Winston Is Looking For Love** by Marianne Cronin

Ninety-year-old Eddie volunteers in a charity shop, sorting through donations. When he meets 24-year-old Bella, who is grieving the love of her life, it sparks a friendship, then an adventure when Bella discovers Eddie is yet to have his first kiss. Warm, funny and life-affirming. To win, visit [Fabulousmag.co.uk](http://Fabulousmag.co.uk). \* Out Thursday (£16.99, Doubleday)

WIN!

FIFTY YEARS OF SEARCHING. LAST SUMMER TO FIND HER.



**Emily In Paris Season 4: Part one**

Bonjour! We're back in the City of Love with our fave fashionista to pick up the pieces from Gabriel and Camille's cancelled wedding. As Lily Collins' Emily attempts to embrace singledom, she finds herself still pining for two different men: incoming baby daddy Gabriel and ex Alfie (Lucien Laviscount). But as Emily starts feeling at home among French culture, picking just one man may not be strictly necessary... From Thursday, Netflix

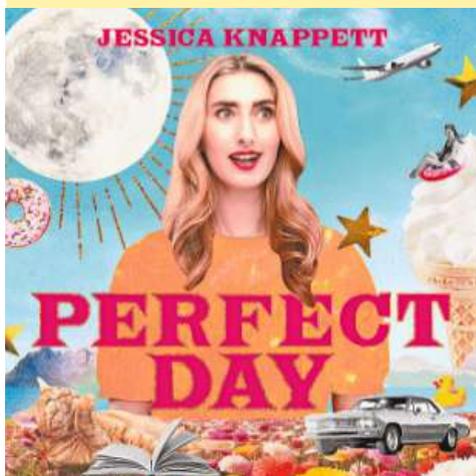
**Alien: Romulus**

It took us weeks to recover from 2016 horror flick *Don't Breathe*, so we have high hopes for director Fede Álvarez's latest project - a spin-off of the legendary *Alien* franchise, produced by the one and only Ridley Scott. Slotting in somewhere between the original 1979 movie and its follow-up, we meet a bunch of space-curious youngsters led by Rain Carradine (*Priscilla's* Caille Spaeny), on a mission to a distant world. But then the group start getting picked off, one by one. The tension is out of this world! In cinemas Friday



**Fabulist**

Return to Paris with Lily Collins, read Susie Dent's debut novel and watch as Alien rears its head again



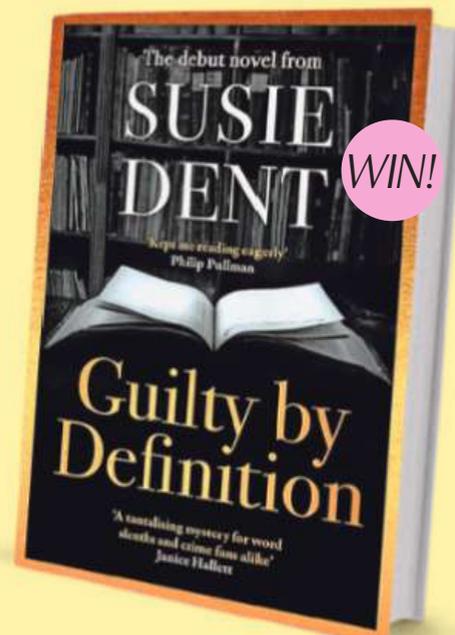
**Perfect Day With Jessica Knappett**

What does your ideal day look like? Maybe it involves swimming with dolphins or perhaps it's a chilled-out spa break. We're all different - including celebs, as this brilliant new listen from podcaster newbie Jessica Knappett proves. She chats to stars from comedian Romesh Ranganathan to writer Dolly Alderton about what would make their perfect 24 hours - and how they spend it in reality. Available now on all podcast providers



**Janet Jackson: Together Again Tour**

It's been five years since JJ last graced our shores on tour, and now, the songstress is heading back to Blighty to mark her 50th anniversary in the world of entertainment. See the five-time Grammy winner in London, Birmingham, Glasgow and Manchester with special guest Wyclef Jean. September 27-October 1, 2024, [Janetjackson.com](http://Janetjackson.com)



**Guilty By Definition** by Susie Dent

The *Countdown* star's debut novel is an absolute delight! When Martha returns to Oxford to head up the team of lexicographers at the Clarendon English Dictionary, cryptic anonymous letters start to arrive. And Martha quickly realises the letters contain clues about the disappearance of her sister 15 years ago. To win, visit [Fabulousmag.co.uk](http://Fabulousmag.co.uk). \* Out Thursday (£16.99, Zaffre)

SHOPPING



Slides, £41,  
JD Williams



Marc Jacobs Daisy Wild, £60 for 30ml EDP



Photo frame, £29.50, Oliver Bonas



Peeler, £13.99, Peleg at Amazon.co.uk

# Lustlist

Make some shroom for fungi-infused face lotion, a brilliant beach dress and the purr-fect peeler. . .



Hourglass Unreal Liquid Blushes, £38 each



Earrings, £16.50, M&S Collection at Marks & Spencer



Bottle stopper, £8, Lisa Angel



Dress, £37.99, H&M



K18 Damage Shield Conditioner, £39



Bag, £79.99, Siedrés X Mango



Glow Hub Skin Trip Treatment Lotion, £12

Compiled by Catherine Bennice-Pedley, Emily Regan & Mia Livendon. Photography: Sophia Alexander. Stockists: Glow Hub (Sofridges.com), H&M (hm.com), Hourglass (Hourglasscosmetics.co.uk), JD Williams (jdwilliams.co.uk), K18 (Cultbeauty.co.uk), Lisa Angel (Lisangel.co.uk), Mango (Mango.com), Marc Jacobs (Theperfectshop.com), Marks & Spencer (Marksandspencer.com), Oliver Bonas (Oliverbonas.com)

# 5 mins with...



Wellness guru and author  
**LIZ EARLE, 61**

**Do you have any bad habits?**

Late-night Instagram scrolling - you just pick up your phone and go down that rabbit hole, don't you? It's very addictive. To avoid it, I leave my phone outside the bedroom, otherwise it's too tempting. I follow lots of biohackers, like Davinia Taylor - she's ballsy!

**Who would play you in a movie of your life?**

I actually mentioned this to my boyfriend [45, who works in tech] and he said Margot Robbie, so I thought: "Yes! I really do love you." I'll take that!

**When are you at your happiest?**

When all five of my children [three daughters and two sons, aged 14-33] are around the dining table. There's a 20-year age span between them and they're all very different. I love cooking for them. I'll do something like cottage pie or spag Bol.

**Who would be your dream dinner-party guests?**

The kids' nickname for me is Queen Elizabeth III, so I'd love to have Queen Elizabeth I and Queen Elizabeth II. I'd want Heston Blumenthal in the kitchen - I read about his snail porridge, which sounds disgusting, but knowing him, is sublime. Dolly Parton would be on the guitar. I saw her when she was last at London's O2 Arena, as well as at Wembley Stadium in my pink stetson, too.

**Who is your celebrity crush?**

My most recent one is Bradley Cooper. I had my boys around the other night and we binge-watched *The Hangover* movies. He looks fanciable in those!

**Does anything scare you?**

I have terrible vertigo and I'm really scared of heights. Being up high in a tall, glass building is probably my worst nightmare. I don't like rollercoasters, either.

● A Better Second Half: Dial Back Your Age To Live A Longer, Healthier, Happier Life by Liz Earle (£22, *Yellow Kite*) is out now.

Words: Ama Clarke Photography: Getty Images

**FABULOUS**

**OLD-SCHOOL DISHES**

Sometimes, you really can't beat a classic, as TikTok's latest culinary obsession proves - retro-tastic '70s recipes of everything from prawn cocktail to pineapple upside-down cake. Give them a go and make your nana proud!



**JODIE TURNER-SMITH**

We fell hard for her as an oh-so-stylish outlaw in fugitive flick *Queen & Slim*, and now fresh from her split from Joshua Jackson, the Brit is set to bewitch us as the Dragon Queen in AppleTV+'s new murder-in-paradise series *Bad Monkey*, out Wednesday.



**LEGO LOVE**

If you're at the end of your tether trying to keep the kids occupied this summer, hotfoot it down to a Lego store on August 18 and September 15 for their free interactive creativity workshops for children aged 6-12. Beats them accompanying you on the Big Shop.



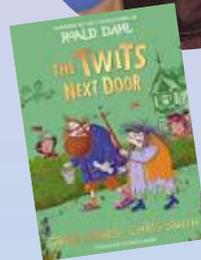
**QUIRKY HOBBIES**

Move over padel - hobby horsing, kintsugi and, er, lute playing have entered the chat, with YouTube seeing a 312% increase in searches for these ultra-niche pastimes in the last year. Eccentrics of the world, your time is now.



**GREG JAMES**

He might have a voice for the airwaves, but the BBC Radio 1 presenter is quite the wordsmith, too. Greg and his *Kid Normal* co-creator Chris Smith's Roald Dahl spin-off *The Twits Next Door* hits shelves on Thursday. That's the kids' summer reading sorted.



# Fabometer

What's fabulous and what's *fabulless* this week



**SUNBURN**

Skip the beetroot stage, thanks to Aldi, which is giving away free Lacura Moisturising SPF30 Lotion to 1,000 outdoor workers, including lollipop people and posties. We're glowing just thinking about it.

**SILLY SLEEP HACKS**

If you're struggling with shut-eye, you might have tried the viral "drunken monkey", which involves moving your weight from side to side to boost circulation before you get into bed. Whatever happened to a relaxing bath and a good book?



**FABULESS**

# Kate Wills

Our columnist on why we need to stop pitying women who aren't mothers

**L**try not to let envy creep into my life, but there's one group of people I can't help but feel jealous of. No, not billionaires on their superyachts or party-hopping supermodels. It's the women I know who are child-free by choice whose social media feeds I find myself gazing at longingly.

All of my female friends who never wanted kids seem to be living their best lives. They're renovating dream houses, digital-nomading around the world or just doing whatever it is you do when your weekends don't revolve around packing lunches and enduring tantrums at Legoland.

Yet, there are many people who are convinced that if you haven't popped out a spog, you're missing out. Recently, a video resurfaced of Donald Trump's running mate JD Vance saying that the US is run by "a bunch of childless cat ladies who are miserable at their own lives and the choices that they've made." Apparently, Kamala Harris - who is a stepmum - doesn't "really have a direct stake" in the country, because she hasn't given birth. Purr-lease (as their cats might say).

It's amusing to picture an army of angry cat mums running the Free World (Mice are banned! Kitty treats for all!). But Vance's comments have not gone down well, notably among fans of Jennifer Aniston, who has spoken in the past about her failed attempts at IVF, but has now made peace with her child-free life (which seems entirely lovely and features beach yoga and perfect hair).

**L**onging for a baby and not being able to have one can indeed make you miserable. I should know, I've been trying to have a second child for two years now. But the idea that choosing to have cats and not children makes you sad and/or unfit to lead a country is laughable. Around one in five women now reach 45 without having children, so it's not exactly a niche quirk. Yet women who choose not to procreate still have to explain or justify their choices, for fear of being judged shallow, selfish or self-absorbed.

I remember being happily child-free in my early 30s, and I felt almost guilty for having so much freedom and fun while many of my friends seemed to be consumed by babies and leaky boobs.

**'Child-free women are the happiest people I know'**



However, when I met my partner Guy at 34, the desire to have a child with him sent me doolally. It was a type of lust that evaporated all rational thought on the matter, so I jumped into motherhood without a second glance.

I surprised my formerly non-maternal self by how much I love having a daughter. But somewhere out there is the path I left behind, where I remained child-free and would be just as happy as I am now. Although Guy and I are starting IVF to try to have a second baby, I occasionally think wistfully of this parallel road not taken. Sometimes, I wonder if the fear and demonisation of women who remain sans kids is because parents secretly feel jealous or threatened by those who opt out of having children.

We're told that ticking the boxes of marriage and babies will bring us joy, but they are definitely not for everyone. Especially when you take into account that studies have found that the healthiest and happiest demographic are women who have never married and never had children. Being a "childless cat lady" isn't a diss, it's actually a title a lot of women would love to have. **F**

● Follow Kate on Instagram @katewillswrites.

## THIS WEEK I'M...

### Reading... *Liars*

I've been recommending Sarah Manguso's dark novel to all my female friends, but it might put you off marriage for life!



### Popping... *Wild Nutrition*

These refillable vitamins are ethically sourced and organic, and come with a personalised consultation.



### Watching... *The Gruffalo*

This summer, catch Tall Stories' adaptation of the Julia Donaldson book in London's West End.



PHOTOGRAPHED  
FOR FABULOUS  
BY MARK HAYMAN



# 'I'm dating, I'm having fun!'

A Place In The Sun presenter **LAURA HAMILTON** opens up on her amicable divorce, single life and how she narrowly escaped the Horizon Post Office scandal

**M**ore than a decade has passed since TV presenter Laura Hamilton last appeared on the cover of *Fabulous*. At the time, she was a children's TV presenter and had just come runner-up on *Dancing On Ice*. It's fair to say, a lot has changed since then.

"That feels like a lifetime ago," she says today. "I wasn't even married then. I wasn't on *A Place In The Sun* - I always laugh that the show has seen me through so much - an engagement, a marriage, the birth of my son, the birth of my daughter and then a divorce. I've come out the other side now and I'm so grateful to be part of *A Place In The Sun* family. They have been so incredible and supportive throughout my whole journey," she says. "For example, there aren't many employers that allow you to have your kids and then bring them abroad with you while you're filming. Honestly, you never know where life's going to take you. You've just got to bloody enjoy the ride."

*'It is absolutely possible to separate in an amicable way'*

It hasn't been the easiest ride for Laura, who split from her husband of 10 years - insurance broker Alex Goward, 43 - in 2022. They share two children together - 10-year-old son Rocco and eight-year-old daughter Tahlia.

"I have been on a journey," Laura says. "But who hasn't? At 42 years old, I'm at a point in my life where I probably feel more comfortable in all aspects of my life. There's been ups and there's been downs. I'm always a glass-half-full rather than half-empty person.

"I think if there's a couple that's separating and they've got kids, I'd tell them: 'It doesn't have to be a bad thing.'



## THE KELLY ALLEN INTERVIEW

"People change throughout their lives. I think about how, as a generation, many parents in my children's school aren't actually married. My mum and dad have been married for 43 years, but that is incredible and an absolute rarity.

"I really feel like it is absolutely possible to separate and do it in an amicable way, and focus on the fact that your children are the priority. Sometimes, parents stay together and they aren't as happy as they should be. That can be so negative to the children involved," she says. "You can be apart and co-parent, and it could be really positive for the kids.

I don't think I have failed [at marriage], because I've got two amazing children. They're what's important. My children are really adaptable. They're happy. We've got

really good family on both sides. I've got amazing friends. *They've* got amazing friends. And everyone's happy. That's the most important thing."

Laura does admit, though, that some people did question the couple's decision to separate - worrying that, at 39, it was a "scary" time to be on her own.

She disagreed. "I've always been quite a strong and independent person. I don't feel like I was 'starting again'.

"I never really speak about *why* I separated, which I think is why there's this fascination about it. It feels such a long time ago to me now, and I've embraced where I am."

*'I think I might be a bit intimidating to men'*

**P**roperty expert Laura has recently been linked to business CEO James Pettigrew, 44, who is in the process of divorce from his wife - but she won't confirm if the rumours are true.

"I don't know where this story came from," she says, rolling her eyes.

"I'm dating. I'm having fun. No, I don't have the apps. I've tried those in the past three years. I went on Raya and thought: 'This is not for me.' I like to meet people organically.

"People do look at me and say: 'I know you from somewhere...'" and that starts a conversation. I did go out on a date with somebody and the only thing he wanted to talk about was buying a property in the sun. I'm not here to be your property consultant!

"But it's quite difficult for me to date when you look at my life and how busy I am. I've got two children and I'm abroad every other week. Really, I should have a man in every country. That would be a more interesting story [laughs]. 'Oh, she's →



With then-husband Alex and their children

## COVER STAR

got one in Ibiza, she's got one in Mallorca.' No, that's not who I am.

"I've got a busy life and a great group of friends. It's probably a bad thing to say, but I think I might be a little bit intimidating to men. My life is full, so it's not like I need to be with somebody to validate me. If I could tell my 26-year-old self anything, I'd say: 'Believe in yourself. You will be fine on your own.'"

Whether Laura does end up with James or in another serious relationship with someone else, one thing she has decided is that she won't be so public about her next romance.

"I've massively learned," she says. "I had a public relationship. I had a wedding in a magazine and all that followed. Going forward, that aspect of my life will be private. It won't be a secret - people I'm close to will know what's going on - but it will be confidential," she says. "Just because you're in the public eye, it doesn't mean that you have to have everything out there for everyone to see."

### *'It takes five days to film one show - I wear the same outfit all week!'*

**A**way from finding love, Laura's passion is finding people homes abroad - and she's even snapped up her own place in Mallorca.

"I love everything about *A Place In The Sun*. I've always been passionate about travel. I love property, I've been buying and selling houses since I was 19.

"What people don't realise is that it takes five days to film the one-hour show. We shoot for a week and we have to wear the same outfit for four days - everyone gets asked to bring two of every outfit. I don't have that or my wardrobe would be ridiculous, so I wash my clothes by hand every night.



Laura with her mum

"You spend a lot of time with the couples, and they open up to us. We end up saying to the director: 'Do you realise she's recovered from breast cancer?' It's nice to make a difference in people's lives."

But it's not to say it's all plain sailing filming a show aboard, and Laura has had some mishaps over the years.

"Every week is different. There have been episodes where couples have had a fallout midweek, and you're like: 'What's going to happen?' It's stressful.

"I remember when I'd just had Tahlia and had gone back to work pretty quickly, so I was still breastfeeding. I was filming with this couple and I said to the director: 'My left boob is about to start leaking.' And he was like: 'What?'"

"I had this pale-green dress on and there was this massive patch. So, if you ever see that episode, that's why I'm walking around with my arm covering it, because we had to keep filming. I was saying: 'I need to just get this milk out of my boob.'"

*A Place In The Sun*, which first aired on Channel 4 in 2000, is a fan favourite. It's among the 10 most-watched programmes on the channel on any given week - and has only got more popular since Covid.

"The pandemic happened and people can work remotely, and that changed everything really," Laura explains. "People want that escapism. A lot of people buy abroad - even me!"

"I've bought a place in Pollensa in Mallorca. It was a bit mad, as my parents were visiting me and I said: 'Let's go view a couple of houses.' The next thing I knew, I'd bought one! It's a renovation project and then a holiday home."

Property development is Laura's main money earner, with 60% of her salary coming from buying and selling.

"I do better from business and property than I do in my career in TV," she admits. "But I love my TV job. My mum and dad



Laura (right) on *A Place In The Sun*

always used to say to me: 'If you want to work in television, always make sure you've got a back-up'.

"I love to be entrepreneurial. I'm not afraid of hard work. I've tried things that haven't worked out and things that have, but that doesn't mean I see it as a failure - I see it as a learning curve."

### *'I used to run a Post Office - I'm glad I got out when I did'*

**P**erhaps one of Laura's more surprising roles was when she became a postmistress in order to save her local Post Office in Purley, Surrey, from closing. She was very fortunate to avoid being caught up in the Horizon scandal, in which more than 900 sub-postmasters were wrongfully prosecuted for stealing and are still fighting for justice now.

"It was really crazy. Seven years ago, the local village shop was in disrepair and was closing down. It was previously a Post Office. And I thought: 'I'm going to bring back the Post Office to the community and integrate it into a coffee shop and deli.'"

She did all the Post Office exams and hired staff to run it, but found it too much of a challenge.

"After a year, the coffee shop and deli really took off. But the Post Office was very difficult to run and balance the books. It was like a bank. We had a massive safe and we were dealing with a lot of money. Security would come every week and deliver the cash.

"People used to say: 'It's like running a pub and you're the landlady.' Your name's above the door and if anything goes wrong, on your shoulders be it.

"I just thought: 'I can't run this side of it any more'. So we decided to wrap it up. That must have been about 12 months before the whole Horizon scandal, so I'm kind of glad I got out of that when I did."

It's clear that Laura doesn't sit still for long. She's recently started learning to be a pilot, and with her daredevil attitude could following her *A Place In The Sun* pal Scarlett Douglas on to *I'm A Celebrity!* be on the cards?

"I love a challenge," she admits. "I live in a country house with lots of spiders. I'm learning to fly. My dad flies, so I grew up with that and always sort of thought: 'I want to learn'. Never say never," she says on the subject of the jungle.

"If an opportunity comes my way, I think: 'Yeah, let's just see what happens.' I'm a 'yes' person. Even if I don't know how to do something, I'll figure it out." **F**

● Follow Laura on social media @Laurahamiltonv.

**'I make my money from property, but I love my TV job'**

## IN THE MAKE-UP CHAIR WITH LAURA

### Do you have any skincare heroes?

A hydrafacial is my way of switching off – it helps look after my skin, as it's in the sun all the time. I take Gold Collagen every day. I use a lot of Murad products, too.



### What are your make-up bag essentials?

I do my own make-up on *A Place In The Sun* and I only take hand luggage, so I'm very minimal. I mix Mac face tint with Clinique tinted moisturiser. Then I brush Chanel powder over to make sure it stays on. Then it's Maybelline mascara and Kylie Jenner Lip Kit.



### What do you splurge on?

Candles – I'd love one of those massive Diptique ones, but they are about £400!

### Do you have any beauty hacks?

I use a Benefit brow pencil as a lipliner.

### Who's your celeb beauty icon?

Reese Witherspoon – she's beautiful and never seems to age.

# Too big, too small, no boobs at all... How we learned to love what we've got

Three women share their emotional journeys to self-acceptance of their bodies

BY EIMEAR O'HAGAN

## 'MY FLAT, SCARRED CHEST REMINDS ME THAT I'M A SURVIVOR'

**Nellie Abbott, 42, is a marketing manager and lives in Stroud, Gloucestershire, with her partner Grant, 54, and their daughter Nancy, eight.**

"Looking at my reflection, the overwhelming emotion I felt towards my breasts was hatred. I was preparing to have a double mastectomy, after being diagnosed with stage 3 cancer. I felt like they'd failed me and I just wanted them gone.

It was May 2020 when I found a lump in my right breast in the shower. Tests then revealed I had invasive cancer in both breasts, and I was a carrier of the BRCA2 gene mutation. It was a devastating time, especially as I was alone for most of my appointments, because of Covid. The NHS was under such pressure that I wasn't able to have reconstructive surgery immediately, but I was in survival mode - what my body looked like after the operation wasn't my biggest concern.

A 30FF at the time with a size 8-10 figure, I'd enjoyed being curvy, although at times I'd felt my breasts didn't fit my body. I knew it would be strange suddenly seeing myself flat, but assumed at some point I'd have reconstructive surgery.

My daughter Nancy was just turning four, and, to prepare her for seeing me without breasts, I explained that I was poorly and that the way to make me better was to take them away.

Coming round from surgery in August 2020, I felt relief, but became emotional when I saw the bandages and drains. Two weeks later, the dressings were removed. I was scarred and bruised - and completely flat. It was such a shock, but there was no time to really process how I felt, as within weeks I began seven gruelling months of chemotherapy. I lost my hair, gained weight and - after having my ovaries removed as a preventative measure



- was plunged into early menopause. By the time I reached the one-year anniversary of my mastectomy, I looked like a different woman. As well as being flat-chested, I was bald and heavier, too.

It's now been four years since my breasts were removed and I'm yet to have reconstructive surgery. I'm not sure I ever will. I can't face the thought of more operations or the risk of complications. And I've come to accept how my body looks.

At first, I'd catch a glimpse in the mirror after a shower and my chest was a visceral reminder of the traumatic experience I'd been through. Now, I don't feel upset or shy away from looking at myself.

In 2022, I did a trek with the charity CoppaFeel!, along with other breast cancer survivors, which played a big role in changing how I felt. What mattered was that we'd made it through treatment and were living life to the full. That's not to say I don't get frustrated at times - clothes often don't look 'right'.

Grant has been an incredible support, always reassuring me he loves me for me, while Nancy doesn't remember me with boobs. In the future, if she gets tested for

BRCA2, she may have to make her own decision to have a double mastectomy. With that in mind, I know it's important for me to be a confident role model for her.

After the hatred I felt for my cancerous breasts, I look at my scars and I'm reminded of my strength and resilience. My body survived a terrible disease, and I owe it to myself to applaud it."



Nellie with Grant and Nancy before cancer; her CoppaFeel! trek brought self-acceptance



## 'I HAD A BOOB JOB AT 18 - NOW I'M NATURAL AGAIN'

**Star Freudenberg, 32, is a gut health, detox and wellness expert and lives in London.**

"Growing up, I always felt ashamed of my breasts, as society made me feel that way. Not only were my boobs small, they didn't match in size, with one a B cup and the other AA. I also had a curvy bum and felt my body was out of proportion. I'd stuff my bras with socks and I remember the cruel jibes of boys at school who'd say I had 'bee stings'. Once, for 'a laugh', one reached up my top and pulled out a handful of socks. I felt so violated.

My self-confidence took a knock, and while teenage friends wore clingy tops and flirted with boys, I was convinced nobody would be interested in me. I began saving for a boob job, squirrelling away money from part-time work. My parents were supportive, wanting me to be happy. My mum had been a G cup but, despite having a reduction, still had a curvy figure compared to mine.

I went under the knife aged 18 in December 2009. I wanted to be a D cup, but the surgeon advised against it - and they were right to, because even with C cups, I ended up with stretch marks. Still, I was delighted with my new boobs and went through my 20s with my confidence transformed. I dated men and had no qualms about letting them see my body, and I wore a bikini with pride on the beach.

In 2021, I met my partner Kial, 24, and was honest about my implants - he didn't care. In the last few years, however, my feelings towards my boobs began to change. Working as a wellness expert, having these artificial implants inside my body didn't feel right any more. I wasn't living the message of self-acceptance and being natural that I was promoting.

I knew my implants would need to be replaced in the next few years, and again down the line, as they're not meant to last a lifetime. I dreaded the thought of the rest of my life being punctuated by being cut open. I also knew a friend whose implant had ruptured, and had read about women who experienced health problems as a result, which made me anxious. Being in a loving relationship was also a factor. I was no longer that teenager trying to attract boys and live up to some ideal.

In April this year, I had my implants removed. I felt ➔

## REPORT

apprehensive, as I was wheeled into theatre - what if I missed my curves?

A week after surgery, I saw my natural chest for the first time in 14 years. It was strange, like I'd gone back in time, but I also felt relieved to be me again. Now, my body's still healing, but I feel happy with my decision. My posture has improved and I sleep more comfortably.

I used to worry what other people thought of my figure, but apart from close friends who know I've had surgery, nobody has even noticed I'm flatter-chested, and Kial says I'm as attractive to him as ever.

I feel proud I had the courage to return to my natural shape. It may not be 'perfect', but this is who I'm meant to be."



Star with her C-cup breast implants; her mum always had bigger boobs, despite having a reduction

### 'I HAD TO WORK HARDER THAN EVERYONE ELSE BECAUSE OF MY BIG BOOBS'

**Jennie Turner-Maskell, 58, is a craft tutor and event organiser and lives in Lechlade, Gloucestershire, with her husband Jaime, 60.**

"Walking down the street, I heard a man's voice shout in my direction: 'Great tits! Can



I have a feel?' It wasn't the first - or last - time my breasts had made me the subject of unwanted and inappropriate male attention, and I felt disgusted. However, this was the late-'80s and not only was that sort of behaviour more common, women were expected to put up with it.

When my now-JJ-cup breasts first developed in my teens, and grew (and grew) bigger than other girls my age, I was thrilled. Slim with big boobs was the body shape that was in vogue, boys were interested in me and I felt attractive and confident.

By 22, when I married for the first time, I was a GG cup and size 12. It was once I started working, first in recruitment and then in theatre management, that I began to realise being a curvy woman can be a disadvantage. Men would talk to my breasts, and I felt like my chest made people think I was less intelligent and capable. I was also worried I'd be accused of being flirtatious when I was just being friendly, because there's so much sexual innuendo tied up with bigger boobs. A combination of misogyny and my boobs meant I felt I had to work harder than everyone else to prove myself, just because of my bra size.

Dressing professionally was also a struggle back then - I was constantly searching for a shirt that didn't gape, or a looser top that didn't make me look pregnant. I remember a colleague once asking when I was 'due' - we were both mortified! I avoided clingy tops, as I was worried that both men and women would think I was showing my chest off.

A few times over the years, I've wondered if I should have a breast reduction, but the answer has always been 'no'. I've never wanted to take the risks of surgery, plus I don't believe that I should have to change because of other people's behaviour.

I have a condition called costochondritis, commonly described as 'microtrauma' to

the chest wall, which is caused by the weight of my boobs and can cause me discomfort. So good-quality, properly fitting bras are a must for me.

Ageing and the menopause have seen my breasts sag more and the skin lose elasticity, but I accept that's just part of growing older. Of course, I'd love my boobs to be perkier, but I can honestly say now that I wouldn't change them for the world.

In 2019, I married my second husband Jaime, and he loves my figure - he's definitely a boob man! I'll happily slip off my bra in the evening while we're watching TV, even though my breasts are practically in my lap, but I'm not remotely self-conscious around him. Once, for a laugh, we weighed each breast on the kitchen scales - they were over a kilo each.

Now, I always encourage friends and women I meet through work to be proud of their bodies, including their boobs.

Breasts my size may not be considered the 'ideal', but I don't care. What's more important to me is being healthy and living a full life, not what my cup size is." **F**



Jennie's figure always attracted attention; her wedding day to husband Jaime

Photography: Mark Hayman. Photographer's assistant: Matthew Foxley. Hair & make-up: Sara Bowden. Styling: Emily Regan. Nellie wears: shirt, jeans, both New Look. Star wears: bra, Primark; jeans, New Look. Jennie wears: bra, Bravissimo; jeans, New Look. Visit [Starfreudwellnessclinic.com](http://Starfreudwellnessclinic.com)

STYLE **not a**

# Wheel of fortune

Whatever your budget, these beauts are the perfect pick-me-ups

Compiled by: Catherine Bennion-Pedley, Emily Regan & Mia Lyndon. Stockists: Beauty Pie (BeautyPie.com), Bershka (Bershka.com), Ikea (Ikea.com), John Lewis & Partners (Johnlewis.com), Mario Badescu (Cultbeauty.co.uk), Marks & Spencer (Marksandspencer.com), New Look (Newlook.com), Primark (Primark.com), ProCook (Procook.co.uk), Salt & Stone (Sphora.co.uk), Stradivarius (Stradivarius.com), Victoria Beckham Beauty (Victoriabeckhambeauty.com), Zara (Zara.com)

**UNDER**

Dinner plates, £36 for four, ProCook

Bottle, £38, Clickstyle.co.uk

Victoria Beckham Beauty Satin Kajal Liner in Sour Apple, £30

Bag, £39.50, M&S Collection at Marks & Spencer

£40

clothes stand, £9, Ikea

Cap, £9.99, New Look

Mario Badescu Facial Spray With Aloe, Cucumber And Green Tea, £5

Cushion covers, £2 for two, Onlinehomeshop.com

£10

Beauty Pie Superluminous Redness Corrector, £12 for members

Salt & Stone Bergamot & Hinoki Hand Cream, £20

£30

£20

Shirt, £12, Primark

Waistcoat, £29.99, Zara

Shoes, £25.99, Bershka

Lantern, £12.99, Festive-lights.com

Clock, £22.99, Jones at John Lewis & Partners

Scarf, £12.99, Stradivarius



# 'I'd never do anything to jeopardise an investigation'

As the popularity of social-media sleuths rises, Callum Fahim – who tried to solve the Jay Slater and Nicola Bulley cases – reveals why he does it

BY CLARE O'REILLY



It was just a few weeks after Catherine O'Sullivan's 22-year-old son Jack went missing that she received her first message via social media from an amateur sleuth. "I know where he is. I know where he's buried. I know who killed him," it read.

"Jack wasn't actually missing on the date this person mentioned, so I knew straight away it was false," says Catherine, 52. "But it could have been really traumatic, if it wasn't so obvious they knew nothing."

Missing since March, after a night out in Bristol with friends, Jack's case has attracted the attention of online sleuths clamouring to share theories and "solve" the mystery of his unexplained disappearance.

And Catherine's experience is far from unique. In fact, increasingly, high-profile missing person cases are proving magnets for complete strangers. When mum-of-two Nicola Bulley, 45, went missing in January 2023 - the only trace of her was a mobile phone found abandoned on a riverside bench and her pet spaniel running loose - social-media sleuths descended on St Michael's on Wyre, the sleepy village in Lancashire where she was from. Police were forced to disperse influencers who were taking photos and videos at the scene. TikTok buzzed with videos posted by armchair detectives spouting theories about what had happened, while others searched woodland and abandoned buildings, their smartphones recording their hunt.

More recently, when Jay Slater, 19, went missing on holiday in Tenerife in June, not only was social media awash with users talking about the case, but numerous sleuths also boarded flights to the island to get involved in the hunt for him, before the Spanish Civil Guard discovered his body in a ravine last month. Even after this, sleuths persevered, attempting to access details from the autopsy that had not been released by authorities.

With more than 32,000 followers, TikTok user Callum Fahim, from London, is one of those who travelled to Tenerife to help search. "I didn't know Jay, but I reached out to the family and made connections with people on the island who lived there, and we all came together and searched," he says. "We made the police aware, but they didn't want us to get involved."

Keen hiker Callum searched the remote area where Jay was last known to be, hiking in searing heat for any clue as to the apprentice bricklayer's whereabouts. The search was in vain, and Jay's body was discovered days after Callum returned to the UK.

### *'I'm interested in cases that are hard to solve'*

It is not the first missing person that Callum has tried to find. "I'm interested in cases that are hard to solve. I'm no criminologist or specialist, just a normal person. I've done online research into Madeleine McCann and I went to where Nicola Bulley went missing too, to search," he says.

There are many who believe people like Callum should stay away and leave it to the professionals, but he insists he can add something worthwhile. "I've only ever offered help in areas I know I can give 100% to, such as planning, map reading and hiking - I've never once claimed to be able to do anything else. If me trying to find a missing person was going to hinder any kind of criminal investigation, of course I'd stay away. I would never, ever, ever do anything to jeopardise bringing somebody back to safety."

Psychologist Emma Kenny says the majority of people who turn up to help have, like Callum, good intentions. "For the most part, people do it because it comes from a place of social responsibility. I think people genuinely believe that if they're there, there's a greater opportunity to find the missing individual. Some people also do it because they have a distrust of authorities - they believe they don't care in the diligent way that *they* will." Emma warns that not all



Missing graduate Jack with brother Ben (left) and parents Catherine and Alan

sleuths have the best of intentions, though. "Some people do it to promote themselves, for clickbait and to gain followers," she says.

Callum says in recent weeks he has been contacted by other families of missing persons. "A lot of people have reached out to me. It's heart-wrenching, but I'll keep doing what I do, trying to help with cases where I feel I can offer something. In the past, I've both self-funded and been given money by families who want me to help. I'm not trying to be like some other TikTok users, where they're trying to get famous. If I can help one person, I'm happy."

### *'Families desperate for answers are vulnerable, so will try to use whatever help they can get'*

But former murder detective David Swindle says social-media sleuths can be incredibly damaging to police investigations. "Being involved in high-profile major crime and missing person investigations, I've always been concerned about unqualified so-called experts approaching families and making public statements about ongoing investigations.

"Families desperate for answers are vulnerable and so will try to use whatever help they can get. Unfortunately, that 'expert' help may not always be credible. People who generate social-media content to push their own theories in cases like Nicola Bulley and Jay Slater can be obstructive for ongoing investigations. I'm an advocate of using social media and podcasts - however, that needs to be carefully managed to ensure nothing obstructs police work."

For some families caught up in the nightmare of a missing loved one, any assistance is welcome. At the time of going to press, Catherine's son Jack, a history and law graduate, now 23, hadn't been seen since March 2 after leaving a house party. Police have said his phone remained active on the Find My Friends app until 6.44am, but there has been no trace of him, to the distress of his family, who lodged a formal complaint against Avon And Somerset police in June over its handling of the case.

Since his disappearance, a Facebook community called "Find Jack" has been set up by Catherine's family and now has nearly 40,000 members. While she has received some upsetting messages, overall she's been grateful to the online community.

"I get people contacting me daily saying they're doing their own searches, walking the route, going out at different times at night, really putting themselves out there to help us."

As the search for Jack continues, Emma cautions that some sleuths will approach cases without good intentions. "There are self-serving social-media users out there, including those who are narcissistic and even psychopathic. It's all about them and they don't think about the consequences of their actions.

"They want to be at the centre, and the most important person, in a story. Those are the dangerous ones." **F**

“  
**Knowing the  
symptoms  
saved  
my life.”**

Diane



- ▶ **Bloating**
- ▶ **Tummy pain**
- ▶ **Needing to wee more**
- ▶ **No appetite/feeling full quickly**

If they are persistent, ask your  
GP about **ovarian cancer**.

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(England and Wales) and SC042920 (Scotland).



# 'Tripping on a blind saved my life'

**MELANIE GREEN, 54, LIVES IN FELIXSTOWE WITH HUSBAND GRAHAM, 59, AND THEY ARE BOTH RETIRED.**

"For a split second, I flew through the air, before landing on the floor with a thump. Looking up at my daughter's worried face, I smiled, joking that I thought I'd popped a boob. I had no idea that trip was about to save my life.

It was April 2018 when I went to help my daughter Lauren, now 32, move into her new flat. There was an ugly metal blind the sellers had left in the bay window. I'm not a clumsy person, but as I tried to pull it down, my feet got tangled in the long, looping cord. One second I was upright, the next heading for the floor.

It took a few seconds for me to realise what had just happened. Lauren and I were both pretty shaken that I'd just missed hitting my head on a concrete storage heater, but thankfully I was OK, apart from one of my F-cup boobs, which had been seriously squashed when I'd landed on it.

Two days later, I was lying in bed when I thought about my fall again. My breasts weren't sore, but I thought I'd better have a quick feel to make sure there wasn't any damage. That's when I found a golf-ball-sized lump at the bottom of my right breast.

I didn't tell anyone I was going to the GP - it seemed silly to worry them over a bruised boob. I was still calm when I told my husband Graham that the doctor had referred me for scans at the hospital. It was only during a biopsy 13 days later that the panic crept in. Surely I wouldn't need this if it was just a bruise? Then the consultant told me that there was a 50/50 chance that I had cancer, but they'd know more when the results came back in 10 days.

The shock was so great, I immediately went into denial. I was too young for cancer. I had two children, Lauren and her younger brother Kieron, 30, who needed me. I didn't tell them anything, even as we celebrated my 48th birthday a few days later.

Returning to hear the doctor say: 'I'm afraid it's cancer,' I immediately replied: 'You've got the wrong script.' It seemed impossible. It was only when they gave Graham and me a minute alone that the tears came.

The children were devastated. I explained that doctors were going for a cure and it would involve chemotherapy, surgery and radiotherapy. It was a huge relief when further scans found the cancer hadn't spread, however it was an extremely aggressive type.

Before, I'd hardly ever thought to check my boobs, so if I hadn't fallen over that blind, I'd never have spotted



Melanie lives life to its fullest now; with husband Graham; sounding the bell at the end of her cancer treatment; with her children Kieron and Lauren



## BTW

One in seven women in the UK will be diagnosed with breast cancer in their lifetime.\*

Around three in four of those diagnosed will survive the disease for 10 years or more.\*

the lump - then where would I have been? The fear hit in strange moments, like watching a travel show with Graham about Croatia and suddenly realising I might never go on holiday again, or that I might not live to see Christmas.

Physically, the treatment was rough. I had chemo between June and November 2018, then surgery to remove the lump in December, and radiotherapy began in January 2019. But I was so thankful for my amazing family. We joked and laughed constantly, which was how we always got through tricky times.

I began blogging after my diagnosis. It was the perfect way to express my emotions, and to keep people updated without having to constantly talk about it. In October 2022, I turned my blog into a book, and it was amazing to hear from other women on their cancer journeys.

Thankfully, my treatment was successful. I'm still on medication, but I had my last yearly mammogram in July 2023, and in December I was discharged from the breast clinic. Cancer has changed me. I've done mad

things, like paragliding off a mountain in Turkey and abseiling from the top of a hospital to raise money for Colchester & Ipswich Hospitals Charity. I try to say yes to things now, even if they scare me.

I still think about how lucky I was to land flat on my face in Lauren's flat. If it wasn't for that ugly metal blind, I might not be alive now. I just want to make the most of the second chance that fall has given me. **F**

● But Seriously, Who Knew? My Cancer (And Other Bits) Story by Melanie Green is available at [Amazon.co.uk](https://www.amazon.co.uk).

# 2024 FABULOUS BEAUTY AWARDS

Our expert panel of judges has spent weeks testing thousands of products to determine which beauty buys are the best on the market. From groundbreaking tech to cult classics, today we reveal the winners...



## THE JUDGES



**Ruby Hammer**  
Beauty entrepreneur



**Sinead McIntyre**  
Editor-in-Chief



**Tara Ledden**  
Beauty Editor



**Mira Parmar**  
Make-up artist



**Mia Lyndon**  
Beauty Writer



**Sarah-Jane Crawford**  
Hair expert



## MAKE-UP

### BEST BASE PRODUCT

**Winner** Nars Cosmetics Light Reflecting Eye Brightener, £26

**Runner-up** Huda Beauty Easy Bake And Snatch Pressed Powder, £32

**Highly commended** Ilia Skin Rewind Complexion Stick ✓, £48

### BEST BLUSH

**Winner** ELF Cosmetics Camo Liquid Blush, £7

**Runner-up** Ruby Hammer Cheek Colour, £24

**Highly commended** Ateh Jewel Beauty Watson Watermelon, £25

### BEST BRONZER

**Winner** Kosas Sun Show Glowly Baked Bronzer, £30

**Runner-up** Reeson Beauty Bronzing Balm, £38

**Highly commended** Natural Collection Bronzer, £3

### BEST BROW PRODUCT

**Winner** Anastasia Beverly Hills Brow Freeze Gel, £24

**Runner-up** Olaplex Browbond Building Serum, £64

**Highly commended** Benefit Precisely, My Brow Detailer Eyebrow Pencil, £22.50

### BEST EYELINER

**Winner** Sculpted By Aimee Easyglide Eyeliner, £19

**Runner-up** Revlon Colorstay Micro Liquid Liner Blackout, £8.99

**Highly commended** Victoria Beckham Beauty Satin Kajal Liner, £30

### BEST EYESHADOW

**Winner** Bobbi Brown Dual-Ended Long-Wear Cream Shadow Stick, £35

**Runner-up** Too Faced Born This Way Mini Eye Shadow Palette, £30

**Highly commended** Rimmel London Wonder'Last Shadow Stick, £8.99

### BEST LIP COLOUR

**Winner** Maybelline Lifter Plump, £9.99

**Runner-up** Mac Maxximal Silky Matte Lipstick, £25

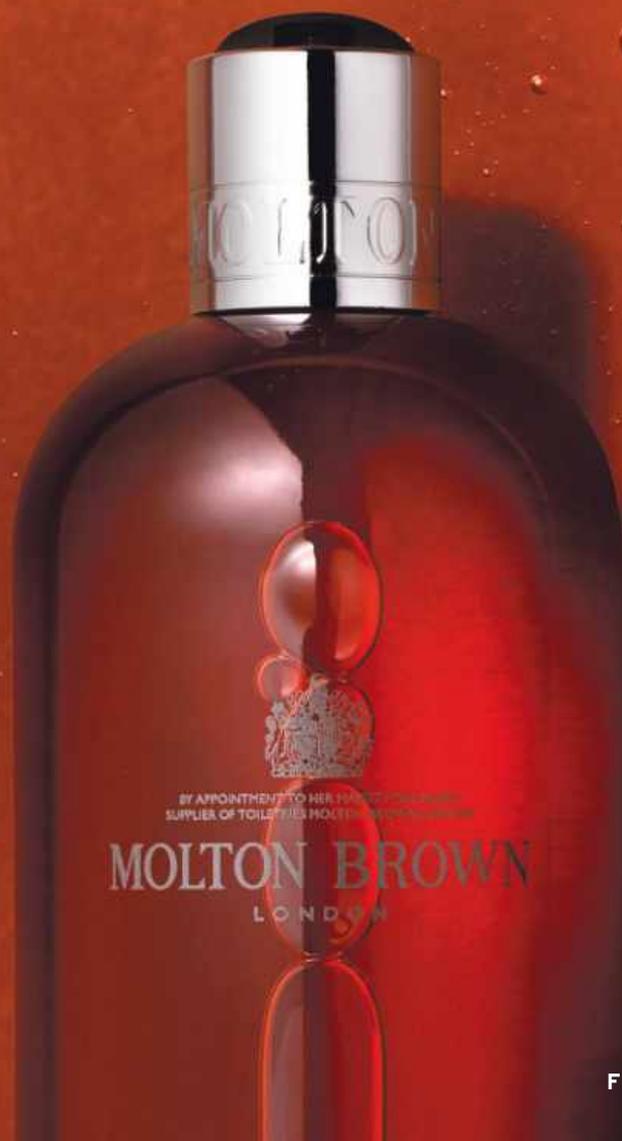
**Highly commended** Merit Beauty Signature Lip Matte, £28

### BEST MASCARA

**Winner** Clinique High Impact Hifi Volume Mascara, £27

**Runner-up** Vieve Modern Mascara, £23

**Highly commended** Soap & Glory Thick & Fast Tubing Mascara, £11.99 →



## BODY

### BEST BATH PRODUCT

**Winner** Molton Brown Sunlit Clementine & Vetiver Bath & Shower Gel, £25

**Runner-up** Sanctuary Spa Lily & Rose Natural Oils Ultra Rich Shower Oil, £9.50

**Highly commended** Vieve Bath & Body Soak, £25

### BEST BODY CARE PRODUCT

**Winner** Ren Clean Skincare Evercalm Barrier Support Body Balm ✓, £35

**Runner-up** Elizabeth Arden Eight Hour Daily Hydrating Body Lotion, £27

**Highly commended** Nécessaire The Body Retinol, £56

### BEST FAKE TAN

**Winner** Bondi Sands

Technocolor 1 Hour Express Self Tanning Foam, £19.99

**Runner-up** Bare By Vogue Clear Tan Water, £22.50

### Highly commended

Iconic London Prep, Set, Tan Tanning Mousse, £24

### BEST NAIL CARE

**Winner** Ruby Hammer Neon Nail Kit, £22

**Runner-up** Mii Refine+Pamper Intensive Cuticle Cream, £15

### Highly commended

Margaret Dabbs London Nail Strengthening Treatment, £16

### BEST NAIL COLOUR

**Winner** Dior Vernis, £29

**Runner-up** Barry M Cosmetics Sheer Strength Hardening Nail Paint, £4.49

**Highly commended** Nails Inc Mani Marker Nail Art Pen, £5

## BEAUTY AWARDS

### SKIN

#### BEST BODY SUNSCREEN

**Winner** Garnier Ambre Solaire Ideal Bronze Milk-In-Spray SPF50 ✓, £7

**Runner-up** Sol De Janeiro Rio Radiance Body Spray SPF50, £36

**Highly commended** E45 Sun Body Spray SPF50, 14.99

#### BEST FACE SUNSCREEN

**Winner** Trinny London See The Light, £45

**Runner-up** Boots SPF+ Anti Pollution Daily Suncare Face Fluid SPF50+, £8

**Highly commended** Supergoop! Every. Single. Face. Watery Lotion SPF50, £29

#### BEST LIP CARE

**Winner** The Inkey List Tripeptide Plumping Lip Balm ✓, £11

**Runner-up** Tatcha The Kissu Lip Tint SPF25, £35

**Highly commended** The Ordinary Squalane & Amino Acids Lip Balm, £8.50

#### BEST SKINCARE BRAND

**Winner** Medik8

**Runner-up** Cerave

**Highly commended** Murad →

### TECH

#### BEST BEAUTY GADGET

**Winner** Foreo UFO 3 LED, £289

**Runner-up** Hello Klean Purifying Shower Head, £65

**Highly commended** Omnilux Eye Brightener, £96.80

#### BEST HAIR TOOL

**Winner** Nicky Clarke Airstyle Pro Infrared & Ionic Hair Dryer & Styler, £249.99

**Runner-up** GHD Chronos, £289

**Highly commended** Mdlondon Wave, £125



HAIR

**BEST HAIRCARE PRODUCT**

**Winner** Tresemmé Lamellar Shine Finishing Oil, £9.99  
**Runner-up** Living Proof Clarifying Detox Shampoo ✓, £31  
**Highly commended** Garnier Ultimate Blends Hair Honey ✓, £9.99

**BEST HAIRSTYLING PRODUCT**

**Winner** Color Wow Dream Coat Extra Strength, £32  
**Runner-up** Bumble And Bumble. Thickening Dryspun Texture Spray Light, £31  
**Highly commended** Hershiesons Almost Everything Cream, £69

**BEST SCALP PRODUCT**

**Winner** Living Proof Scalp Care Density Serum ✓, £54  
**Runner-up** Charlotte Mensah Manketti Oil Salt Scrub, £60  
**Highly commended** Straand The Crown Fix Prebiotic Scalp Serum, £20



BEST OF THE REST

**BEST CULT PRODUCT**

**Winner** No7 Future Renew Damage Reversal Serum, £42.95  
**Runner-up** Clarins Lip Comfort Oil, £25  
**Highly commended** Estée Lauder Advanced Night Repair Serum, £65

**BEST MENOPAUSE BEAUTY PRODUCT**

**Winner** Olay Collagen Peptide Menopause Max Serum, £44  
**Runner-up** Dove Pro Age Lotion, £5.69  
**Highly commended** Charles Worthington Menoplex Healthy Scalp Serum, £12.99

**BEST BEAUTY INNOVATION**

**Winner** Dyson Airstreat Straightener, £449.99  
**Runner-up** Trinny London Elevator, £68  
**Highly commended** Marc Jacobs Daisy Drops, £28

**BEST BUDGET PRODUCT**

**Winner** L'Oréal Paris Panorama Mascara, £13  
**Runner-up** Sali Hughes X Revolution Skin Ringlight Illuminating Eye Balm, £10  
**Highly commended** Isle Of Paradise Gradual Tan, £9.99

**BEST SUPPLEMENT**

**Winner** Vida Glow Collagen Liquid Advance, £40  
**Runner-up** Dose By VH Liposomal Vitamin C, £35  
**Highly commended** Advanced Nutrition Programme Skin Moisture IQ, £81

**BEST VIRAL BEAUTY PRODUCT**

**Winner** Hourglass Veil Hydrating Skin Tint, £49  
**Runner-up** Nyx Professional Makeup Fat Oil Lip Drip, £7.99  
**Highly commended** Hair Proud Glass Hair Heat Activated Smoothing Shine Spray, £8.95

**BEST MEN'S GROOMING PRODUCT**

**Winner** Super Facialist Age Defence Serum For Men, £16  
**Runner-up** L'Oréal Men Expert Hydra Energetic Vitamin C Shot Serum, £16.99

**Highly commended** Thayers pH Balancing Daily Cleanser, £11.99

**EDITOR'S PICK**

**Winner** Elizabeth Arden Retinol + HPR Ceramide Capsules Rapid Skin Renewing Serum, £51  
**Runner-up** Charlotte Tilbury Unreal Skin Sheer Glow Tint Hydrating Foundation Stick, £35  
**Highly commended** Eylure Underlash Salon Lash Extension Kit, £20

**BEST CELEBRITY BRAND**

**Winner** Rare Beauty  
**Runner-up** Cosmoss  
**Highly commended** Fenty Beauty

**BEST INDEPENDENT BRAND**

**Winner** Arkive ✓  
**Runner-up** Floral Street ✓  
**Highly commended** Mantle ✓

**BEST NEW BRAND**

**Winner** Relevant  
**Runner-up** Clean Curls  
**Highly commended** Joonbyrd

**BEST PREMIUM BRAND**

**Winner** Lancôme  
**Runner-up** Charlotte Tilbury  
**Highly commended** Elemis

**BEST SUSTAINABLE BRAND**

**Winner** Origins ✓  
**Runner-up** L'Occitane ✓  
**Highly commended** Davines ✓

**BEST TEEN-FRIENDLY BRAND**

**Winner** Indu  
**Runner-up** ELF Cosmetics  
**Highly commended** Bubble Skincare

**BEST RETAILER**

**Winner** Boots  
**Runner-up** Space NK  
**Highly commended** Superdrug

**BEST ONLINE RETAILER**

**Winner** Look Fantastic  
**Runner-up** Sephora  
**Highly commended** Marks & Spencer

WIN ALL THE WINNERS!

FIVE LUCKY READERS WILL EACH BAG A SET OF 2024 BEAUTY AWARD WINNER, RUNNER-UP AND HIGHLY COMMENDED PRODUCTS. To enter and for T&Cs, visit [Fabulousmag.co.uk](http://Fabulousmag.co.uk) or scan the QR code by 11.59pm on August 24, 2024.

WORTH MORE THAN £4,000



## FRAGRANCE

### BEST FEMALE FRAGRANCE

**Winner** Narciso Rodriguez For Her, £92 for 50ml EDP

**Runner-up** Prada Paradoxe Intense, £97 for 50ml EDP

**Highly commended** Coach Love, £56 for 50ml EDP

### BEST MALE FRAGRANCE

**Winner** Givenchy Beauty Gentleman Society Extreme, £85 for 60ml EDP

**Runner-up** Rabanne Phantom Parfum, £76 for 50ml EDP

**Highly commended** Montblanc Explorer Platinum, £38 for 30ml EDP **F**



# Have you had enough of beauty?



For beauty writer **JO HOARE**, falling out of love with cosmetics was a personal and professional issue. Here's how she got her mojo back



A few months ago, I looked in the mirror and realised I couldn't remember the last time I'd worn any make-up beyond a slick of tinted SPF. Maybe the week before last, when I was in an office? Lunch with a friend a few weekends back? For someone who wore a full face of make-up every day of lockdown and previously wouldn't even pop to the shop without lipstick, this was a big deal. Nothing had happened or changed in my life, I was still showering, washing my hair, keeping on top of essential skincare (and with my sensible head on, if you're noticing a dip in managing these or your lack of beauty mojo coincides with a lack of desire to do things you used to enjoy, then a GP appointment is a good idea). But when it came to anything more, I just CBA.

Overwhelmed by trends that start at breakfast and fizzle out by dinner, the plethora of science and pseudo-science chucked at us, combined with an industry increasingly aimed at younger and younger people, at 44 I'd simply tuned out.

When I shared my feelings with some mates, I found I wasn't alone. "I've just kind of stopped bothering with new make-up now," said one. "At first it was because I was trying to save money, but nothing new feels like it's aimed at me in my 40s - it's all so Gen Z and I feel stressed out when I go into a shop, because there's too much there."

Another said: "I've stopped buying, because I've got really cynical about what beauty companies promise me, and I'm fed up with influencers pretending they love something just because they've been paid to say so."

### ALL CHANGE

Now, my boredom with beauty would be fine were it not for two things. 1: I love(d) beauty for its fun, transformative and confidence-boosting abilities; 2: It's my *actual* job to write about beauty. Oh, and a bonus number 3: I'm not Pamela Anderson, I don't look like I'm making a cool statement when I go make-up free - people just think I'm hungover. So I knew something had to change.

I started with a big sort out. Similarly to how you don't want to cook in a dirty kitchen, my beauty drawers and dressing table were chaotic, and I couldn't find what I wanted easily - so I didn't bother. An afternoon spent chucking, donating and swatching made clearer what I had and what I still loved. I picked out some key items I wanted to use that week and put them in a bag, sweeping the rest into drawers to worry about later. That was my first win. I made sure I used each product at some point that week and, come Sunday, repeated the ritual with a new batch.

Then I phoned a friend. Or a few friends to be honest, calling upon my fave beauty experts to find out what they'd recommend.

Make-up artist Lauren McCormack told me: "Whenever I've lost my beauty oomph, I treat myself to a facial, either at home or in a salon. Once I've got my skin looking good, I feel much more inspired to play with make-up again."

Next, make-up artist Jesse Walker suggested: "Inspiration is what you need, and social media can be the best place to find it. If you don't want to take over your existing feeds, set up a second Pinterest or Instagram and use it just to follow

people whose beauty style you admire."

Finally, hairstylist Lachlan Wignall had these words of wisdom for me: "Beauty is not one-size-fits-all, and if you've fallen out of love with it, it might be that you don't want to conform to unrealistic standards or that you're time-poor. Instead, embrace what you have and work with your natural hair texture - put down the straightening products and don't feel you have to heat-style every day. Learn and play; there are no rules."

### FACING THE FUTURE

A couple of months on and my mojo is slowly coming back. I took Lauren's advice about spending more time on my skin, using products I enjoyed the texture, scent and application of, rather than feeling I had to be using the latest "It" ingredient or hyped-up products I'd seen on TikTok. I've also upped the number of influencers I follow on Instagram who represent me and my life stage better, plus I've bought myself 20 minutes in the morning by working more with my natural hair rather than blow-drying my waves straight. Some days I still use this time to snooze, but mostly I encourage myself to pick something from my selection and experiment. And if that means A-list levels of contour for nothing more than a Tuesday Teams meeting, then so be it! **F**

#### MY MOJO-BOOSTING MUST-HAVES

**Prada Monochrome Soft Matte Lipstick, £39**

Sometimes, what you need is a real treat - a super-luxe lipstick is the easiest win, as you don't require any skills or special tools to wear it.

**Tan-Luxe The Face Illuminating Tan Drops, £36**

I don't need hundreds of new products to add more clutter. This works well for whatever depth of tan I fancy and makes my skin look more radiant overnight.

**Sol De Janeiro Perfume Mist Discovery Set, £40**

Some TikTok trends are worth trying. These fragrances are so fun they blew the boredom cobwebs away and brought all the confidence-boosting compliments.



Illustration: Lauren Johnstone. Stockists: Prada (Boots.com), Sol De Janeiro (CultBeauty.co.uk), Tan-Luxe (Spacenk.com)

**BABY  
BLUES**

Dress, £120,  
Forever New;  
bag, £45.99,  
Zara; shoes,  
£49.99, Mango

# SEASON SWITCH-UP

These hot trends will see you  
all the way through to autumn

STYLING BY ABBY McHALE



Blouse, £67, Arket

Dress, £110, Next

Skirt, £32.99, H&M

**PERFECT  
PLISSÉ**

Waistcoat, £45.99, Mango; trousers, £105, Guess; bag, £79, Charles & Keith; shoes, £50, River Island



Dress, £45, River Island



Dress, £23.99, New Look



Top ✓, £19.90, Uniqlo

**HOT SPOTS**

Cardigan ✓, £99,  
Karenmillen.com;  
trousers ✓, £135,  
Aligne; earrings,  
£8, ASOS Design  
at Asos.com



Blouse ✓, £65, Monsoon



Bag, £90,  
Dune  
London

Dress, £29.99, Reserved



## BANGING BERMUDAS

Blazer, £89.99, Reserved;  
bandeau, £26, Mango;  
shorts with belt, £29.99, Zara;  
earrings, £22.99, Mango



£26.99, New Look



✓ £27.99, H&M



✓ £28, Next

**SUPER SKIRTS**

Top, £19.99, Mango;  
skirt ✓, £32, Next;  
earrings, £14, M&S  
Collection at Marks  
& Spencer; bangle,  
£19.99 for two, Zara



£59, Monsoon



£85, Cos



✓ £65, Albaray



## BAGS OF STYLE

Blazer, £59.99, Zara;  
trousers, £18, George at  
Asda; ring, £17.99, Zara;  
bag, £45.99, Reserved

Photography **Catherine Hack**  
Hair **Dino Pereira** using  
Malin+Goetz  
Make-up **Bethan Owens** using  
Weleda & Clarins  
Model **Lotten** at Mrs Robinson  
Stylist's assistant **Emily Regan**



**Stockists**  
**Albaray** Albaray.co.uk  
**Aligne** Aligne.co  
**Arket** Arket.com  
**Charles & Keith**  
Charleskeith.co.uk  
**Cos** Cos.com  
**Dune London**  
Dunelondon.com  
**Forever New**  
Forevernew.co.uk  
**George at Asda** George.com  
**Guess** Guess.eu  
**H&M** Hm.com  
**Mango** Mango.com  
**Marks & Spencer**  
Marksandspencer.com  
**Monsoon** Monsoon.co.uk  
**New Look** Newlook.com  
**Next** Next.co.uk  
**Reserved** Reserved.com  
**River Island** Riverisland.com  
**Uniqlo** Uniqlo.com  
**Zara** Zara.com

£59.99, Zara



£75,  
Charles & Keith



£44.99,  
H&M



£50, Monsoon



# It's time to ditch the mum guilt

How to stop beating yourself up – and become a better parent in the process **BY JENNY FRANCIS-TOWNSON**



It's noon on a Monday and I'm sitting on a Zoom call to mum-fluencer Zoe Blaskey, host of the podcast and now book of the same name, *Motherkind*. It couldn't be better timing – I have a 20 month old, I work full-time and, as I interview Zoe, I feel like a bad mum for not being with my daughter. "You're the classic mum I hear from all the time," Zoe says. "It's textbook mum guilt, but I bet you haven't said it out loud to others. Am I right?"

Of course, she's right. Perhaps I'd kept schtum because 92% of mums feel society does not understand or support motherhood, according to a survey by parenting platform Motherly. "The truth is, motherhood is really, really hard," says Zoe. Except, no one tells you how hard it will be, even less so how to navigate it (other than with wine). "Everything I'd heard told me I should wish for my children to be happy, I shouldn't care about my own happiness because, as the mother, I didn't matter," adds Zoe. "But every time I ignored my needs and chose the comfort of others, I felt broken."

Clearly, this resonates with many mums – Zoe's podcast, launched in 2017, has more than 5 million downloads and was recently named in Apple's Top 10 parenting podcasts. "My book won't tell you how to wean your toddler, or why your six year old won't sleep. My focus is on you, the mother," she says. Here's how to look after yourself, as well as care for your kids.

## REJECT BOUNCE BACK

Zoe's first message to mums is to reject the "bounce back" narrative. "The idea that we're expected to go through the greatest transition imaginable and then just return to our previous self, as if it never happened – to fit back into our lives, our jeans and our old identities – is, I believe, why so many of us feel we are getting it wrong," Zoe says. "The dictionary definition of bounce back is to 'recover quickly from a setback'. But our children are not a 'setback'." Zoe encourages mums to be curious about their new identity, but says it's normal to grieve your pre-baby self. It's OK to admit that being a mum is very hard, even if you chose it.

## YOUR TOOLKIT

**In moments of overwhelm, use this 30-second self-compassion aid, which has been adapted from the teachings of Dr Kristin Neff.**

- 1 Awareness** Label the moment, eg: "This is hard/tough."
- 2 Validation** Remind yourself there is nothing wrong with a hard moment. It's a part of life. Say: "Every mother has had moments like this. I'm not alone."
- 3 Compassion** Show yourself the same level of compassion that you would show a close friend in the same situation, by telling yourself: "I can handle this and I'm doing a good job."

**GET MORE!**  
Discover hormone danger signs to look out for at [Fabulousmag.co.uk](http://Fabulousmag.co.uk).

## STOP TRYING TO BE PERFECT

Attempting to be faultless isn't going to help our children – it's going to give them mums who are stressed-out, exhausted and self-critical. "You very rarely hear the words: 'I'm just such a great mum,' despite the fact more mums are doing everything they possibly can to be the greatest they can be," says Zoe. Perfectionism makes the already hard – and inherently imperfect – job of mothering almost impossible. It is largely a fear of disapproval and of not being good enough, which is what underpinned Zoe's own distressing experience of breastfeeding with her firstborn. "I dreamed of long days with my heavenly smelling newborn nuzzling at my breast," she says. "The reality couldn't have been more different – the latch wasn't right, I got mastitis and I bled, but I wouldn't give up. I was always either feeding, pumping, or cleaning the pump and bottles. I couldn't see that perfectionism was driving me into the ground." When her second daughter was born, Zoe combined breastfeeding with formula and then used only formula from six weeks. "I can't tell you the difference it made to my mental health," she says.

## YOUR TOOLKIT

**Every evening, write down one thing you feel you haven't done today or have "failed" at. Next to it, note five things you have done today. "Focus on this list, giving yourself credit for being selfless in those moments, for achieving things you know make you a fantastic mother," says Zoe.**



## MAKE YOUR NEEDS EQUAL

When was the last time you put yourself first? Chances are, you can't remember. As mums, we are always looking out for our children (and our partner, too). "Our needs are like a beach ball that we try to push under water," says Zoe. "But they don't go away just because we ignore them. In fact, they explode to the surface when we least expect it. This explosion might be screaming at your partner, snapping at the kids, tutting at the slow person in the supermarket queue, or crying on the bathroom floor." In order to put your own needs first, it might mean disappointing others. For example, telling the kids you can't build a cushion fort with them, because: "Mummy needs to read in peace," or you can't put them to bed because: "Mum is going to a yoga class." But as Zoe says: "It's non-negotiable to look after ourselves in order to look after our children." It teaches them to advocate for their own needs.

## YOUR TOOLKIT

**Make a chart or list of your needs: sleep, exercise, intimacy, purpose, nature or fun are just some.**  
**"Regularly ask yourself: 'What do I need?'** It's a really simple question, but one that thousands of mothers I've spoken to rarely ask themselves," says Zoe.

## DO LESS, NOT MORE

On top of the dozens of things mums already have to do, Zoe avoids telling them to practise "self-care" to reduce stress. "As mums, our nervous systems can be in a state of constant activation and our bodies are often scanning for a threat, meaning we rarely feel at ease," she says. "The problem with the version of 'self-care' our generation is being sold is that it feels like another thing to do - yet more pressure to do it 'right'."

## YOUR TOOLKIT

**Instead of forcing self-care practices you think you should be doing, write a list of 10 things that give you energy and 10 things that drain it. Here are some prompts to get you started:**

**Givers** When do you feel at your best? What do you always look forward to?  
**Drains** What do you dread? Who makes you feel worse after seeing them?  
 Zoe says she's changed friendships and had hard conversations since questioning what truly gives her energy. F



Zoe Blaskey is the author of *Motherkind: A New Way To Thrive In A World Of Endless Expectations* (£16.99, HQ) out Thursday.



# Bossing it

Apprentice star and West Ham United vice-chair **KARREN BRADY** answers your careers questions, plus try our money-saving tips



**I've recently taken on a leadership role at work, but even though I'm confident in my job, I'm a softly spoken, calm and naturally quiet person and, in my previous job, I'm aware some of my colleagues thought they could take advantage of me because of this. I don't want to have to be somebody I'm not or behave in a way I don't feel comfortable with, but how can I approach my new management position with an authentic authority? Ciara, via email**

Congratulations on your new leadership role. It's great to hear that you want to uphold your authentic self while establishing your authority. There's a common misconception that creating authority in the workplace requires you to be loud or aggressive - but it is absolutely not the most important trait in a leader. Think about leaders you admire. I bet integrity, vision, empathy and trustworthiness are much higher on their skills list than being loud. Communication is important, as you must be able to share your vision and get your team on board, but there are many ways to communicate and be assertive without shouting. Set clear boundaries and expectations for your team from the outset, and maintain them. While your voice doesn't need to be the loudest, it needs to be respected. If you are spoken over, be firm and speak directly to the person interrupting you by using their name and saying: "Please allow me to finish what I am saying, then you may add your thoughts." See this as a development opportunity for you to step outside of your comfort zone when required. You could also consider finding a coach who can identify and strengthen your development areas.

● Got a careers question for Karren? Email [bossingit@fabulousmag.co.uk](mailto:bossingit@fabulousmag.co.uk).

## 5 ways to save on... Your first home



**Getting on the property ladder may seem impossible, but *The Sun's* Consumer Reporter Sam Walker has some top advice.**

### ■ SAVE WITH AN ISA

Saving for a deposit is the first major step in buying a home, and putting your money into the right account could see you reach your goal more quickly. Lifetime ISAs (LISAs) can be a great way for anyone aged 18-39 to boost their savings. You get a 25% bonus from the government on top of whatever you put in, too, worth up to £1,000 a year, and the interest is tax-free. And look at fixed-rate ISAs, as they tend to offer higher interest rates than easy-access ISAs, though there's a fee to withdraw cash before the end of the term.

### ■ BE A SCHEMER

There are several schemes designed to help first-time buyers get on the property ladder. First Homes launched in 2021 and lets prospective first-time buyers in England get their homes at 30-50% discounted rates on the market price if it is a new build, or a home the previous owner purchased through the scheme. So, you could bag a £300,000 house for just £150,000.

### ■ CUT MORTGAGE COSTS

Saving money on your first home isn't just about purchase price, but how much you pay on your mortgage in the years to come. Laying down a larger deposit, if you can, usually means you are offered a lower mortgage interest rate. Improving your credit score - by, for example, signing up to vote and keeping on top of your finances - will also usually see lenders offer you better mortgage

rates. Plus, analysts currently think the Bank of England will cut its base rate at some point this year, which will influence the interest rates lenders charge. A broker can help find a deal, but they may charge up to 1% of the mortgage amount.

### ■ TIME IT RIGHT

Buying at the right time of year could save you thousands. March, April and May see greater stock come to market, which can drive house prices down as vendors compete for buyers. November and December can also be a great time to get a bargain. Sellers may be keen to sell their property quickly in winter and could be willing to accept a lower price.

### ■ DO YOUR RESEARCH

Get an idea of what the average asking price is for properties in your area, so, when it comes to putting in an offer, you will know what is below and above market price.

# Glamping in... STAMFORD

You'll wake up to one dreamy view here, says Lifestyle Editor  
**CATHERINE BENNION-PEDLEY**



## THE PAD

Soak up vistas of the wild meadow and watch ducks gliding across the lake from your egg-shaped bath - the standout feature in each of the three safari tents at The Nest in Lincolnshire. Lap up the same views from the master bed, wrapped up in linen from The White Company. Meanwhile, board games can be found in the coffee-table trunk and locally roasted coffee in the kitchen, plus there's a wood-burning stove and BBQ.

There are walks aplenty, with 38 acres of farmland to explore (you'll likely spot the local deer). Nab the hammock in the woods for total relaxation, send the kids off with a nature-hunt kit, or get kayaking on the lake. You can even go for a wild swim if you're feeling brave. Hire the wood-fired hot tub to glamp it up even more.

## EXPLORE

You're only 15 minutes away from the gem of Stamford and its incredible Friday market - expect foodie treats, plants, jewellery and clothes. Gorgeous lifestyle shop You is stuffed with gifting goals and smells divine (Youstamford.co.uk). You'll find affordable boutique fashion in Iris & Violet (Irisandviolet.shop) and ace, personalisable homeware at Katie Cardew (Katiecardew.com). The gardens at Burghley House are a joy to explore, too. Picnic among stunning sculptures and lose yourself in the interactive Garden Of Surprises. The new adventure play area is the cherry on top for kids. Garden entry costs from £9 per adult and £7.50



Roll up the canvas then jump in *that* egg-shaped bath

for kids (Burghley.co.uk). Or climb aboard old trains, marvel at model railways and ride a steam train - including

Thomas The Tank Engine on selected dates - at Nene Valley Railway in Wansford. Tickets cost from £5 per person (Nvr.org.uk).



Creature comforts at The Nest

## BTW

Ferry Meadows Country Park has watersports and a fab farm shop (Nenepark.org.uk/ferry-meadows).

## REFUEL

Tuck into gastro-pub grub, such as BBQ beef short rib with charred chicory, £24, at The Millstone at Barnack (Themillstonebarnack.co.uk). Grab a seat on the alfresco terrace and be sure to try the Bread & Butter chardonnay, £7.30 a glass, too.

Hunt out plant-based cafe The Blonde Beet in Stamford for spiced oat and coconut softie biscuits, £2.25, brilliant blondies and excellent coffee in the super-cute courtyard - this is vegan food at its best (Blondebeet.co.uk). Come dinnertime, tuck into roasted duck pizza with spring onions, cucumber, mozzarella and hoisin sauce, £17, in the quirky, 13th-century setting of The Tobie Norris (Kneadpubs.co.uk/the-tobie-norris).

## BOOKIT

A four-night stay for up to six people costs from £187.50 a night. Hot-tub hire for the stay costs £200 (Thenestglamping.co.uk). **F**

## PACKIT



It's all about that bass with this 24-hour-charge speaker. Beats Pill, £149.99, Beatsbydre.com/uk



Upgrade your hot-tub tipples and pack light. Cocktails, from £29 for four, Niococktails.co.uk

Keep bugs at bay with this gorge lavender and patchouli scent.

Candle ✓, £19, Thefloralab.com



Pretty Stamford doesn't disappoint



Go vegan at The Blonde Beet



Coasters, £10 for four, Garden Trading



Wheel this out as an extra side table for drinks, before popping it back indoors as a home for your house plants. Trolley, £60, Ikea



Carafe, £15, Floandco interiors.co.uk

# COME RAIN OR SHINE...

Fab indoor/outdoor picks to see out summer BY CATHERINE BENNION-PEDLEY



Indoor/outdoor table runner, £15, Furn



Not only are these dishwasher-safe, but they are also swish enough to be used every day if you so wish. Picnic pasta bowls and dinner plates, both £18 for four, M&S Collection at Marks & Spencer



Promising up to 1,200 hours of candlelight and a nifty timer function, this is a beaut! Lantern with TruGlow candle, £29.99, Lights4fun.co.uk

# HOMES

Outdoor cushion, £8, B&M



Trolley, £42, Garden Trading



Make your own hanging herb garden or decorate with fairy lights and style up as a bar. Indoor/outdoor shelves, £25, Homebase



Chair, £149.99, Fifty Five South at Hm.com



Tumbler, £30 for six, Laredoute.co.uk

Rug, from £34.95, Kukoon rugs.com



Placemats, £9.99 for two, H&M

## CHILD'S PLAY

Keep little ones happy with these great garden games



Magnetic darts, £21.99, Janod

Penguin bowling set, £14.99, House of Marbles



Can toss game, £14.99, Hillington at Amazon.co.uk



# GLOW UP YOUR GARDEN

From faux foliage to pimped-up pots, try our easy ways to transform your space



**W**e're just two weeks away from the summer bank holiday, so if you're planning on hosting in your own backyard, here are a few ideas on how to give your alfresco space an easy makeover - and some might not even require you to buy anything new! But, of course, if you're in the market for some lighting or new greenery, we've got it covered.

## LIGHT UP!

Still not invested in a rechargeable lamp? Now is the time. This beauty (left), £140, from Rockett St George, is at the pricier end of the market, but that's because it's waterproof, has three mood settings and a whopping 140-hour charge. As your nan might say: "You get what you pay for," when it comes to lighting, and as Rockett St George co-founder Jane Rockett tells us: "You don't want your lights dying mid-party!" So, our biggest tip? Check out the charge time. A lot of the designs, however pretty - and sometimes pricey - don't stay lit for very long. If you are after a budget option, though, this cute mushroom-shaped design (right), £12, from Ikea would make a nice buy for a student house.



## PIMP YOUR POTS

The easiest way to create different zones in your outdoor space is by using potted plants to separate your cooking and socialising areas. Plus, if painting chairs and tables feels like too much effort, it's way easier to revamp your pots instead. Try drawing on your own unique designs with acrylic pens (see above) - they're waterproof and work on wood, terracotta and stone, so the kids could even have a go! Meanwhile, if you've got space for some more pots, think about bamboo. "Bamboo is a great-value way to get height, grace and movement and dress up an outdoor space," says David Mitchell, garden and seasonal buying manager at Homebase. "By keeping it in a pot, you don't need to worry about how invasive it can be," he adds. Otherwise, olive trees are a classic, and a string of fairy lights woven through the branches help them look even prettier come dusk. Try the 200 Starburst Solar USB String Lights, £23.99, from Lights4fun.co.uk, which glow as soon as dusk hits, but also come with a handy USB cable to charge if the sun hasn't shown its face, plus a remote to set one of eight atmospheric modes. David also suggests trying an acer (also known as a Japanese maple) or two. "Acers are really on trend and are great in pots with their delicate foliage and bright colours. A potted hydrangea will give an instant blast of colour, too," he adds.



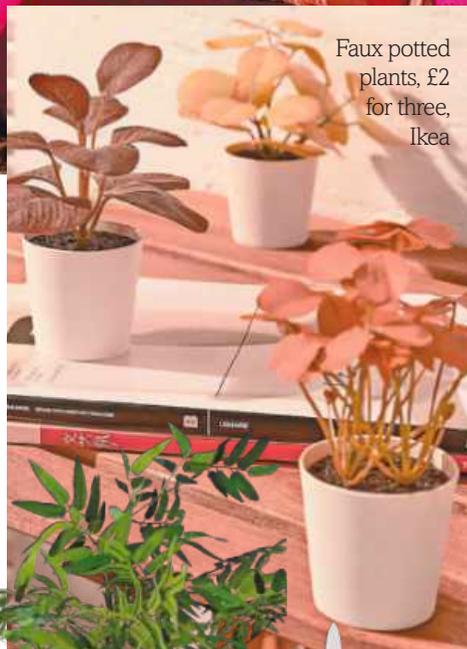
Pots decorated using Edding Permanent Acrylic Pens, from £4.10 each, Amazon.co.uk



**GO WITH THE FAUX**

If your outdoor space isn't looking as green as you'd like, you could recruit some faux plants to fill in the gaps - Ikea has an incredible new range. To really help fool your guests into thinking they are real, pop them into pretty pots and add some newspaper, then cover with soil or pebbles. While we're on the subject of faking it, although we adore real candles, this gorgeous LED one (right) is hitting the Cox & Cox shelves tomorrow, and definitely deserves a space at your dinner table. **F**

Artificial yucca plant, £96, Beardsanddaisies.co.uk



Faux potted plants, £2 for three, Ikea



Faux bamboo in basket, £42.99, Gisela Graham London

LED candle, £12, Cox & Cox

**HOW TO CREATE A WARM GLOW**  
3 buys to defeat colder eves



Try toasting s'mores in this, too! Chiminea, £59, George Home



Water-repellant and fade-resistant, unzip the cushion and you'll discover a duvet - clever! Unwind Outside 2-In-1 Waterproof Cocoon Set, £33, Slumberland.co.uk



A cute buy for that guest who always feels the cold. Hot water bottle, £10, Dunelm

Stockists: BM (Bmstores.co.uk), Cox & Cox (Coxandcox.co.uk), Dunelm (Dunelm.com), Furr (Furr.com), Garden Trading (Gardentrading.co.uk), George Home (Direct.asia.com), Gisela Graham London (Gisela.graham.co.uk), H&M (Hm.com), Homebase (Homebase.co.uk), House of Marbles (Houseofmarbles.com), Ikea (Ikea.co.uk), Jamod (Jamod.com), Marks & Spencer (Marksandspencer.com), Rockett St George (Rockettstgeorge.co.uk)

# Spaghettijunction



GIUSEPPE FEDERICI cooks up Italian classics with a plant-based twist



## WALNUT AND MUSHROOM RAGU

**SERVES 4**

**Prep time** 20 mins

**Cook time** 40 mins

**Cals** 817

**Sat fat** 5g

\*120g walnuts  
\*80g sunflower seeds  
\*2 stalks celery  
\*1 small carrot  
\*1 white onion  
or 2 shallots  
\*4tbsp extra virgin  
olive oil  
\*3 cloves garlic  
\*250g chestnut

mushrooms  
\*2tbsp tomato purée  
\*2 x 400g tins chopped  
tomatoes  
\*400g tomato passata  
\*1tsp white miso paste  
\*½tsp chilli flakes  
\*1tsp dried oregano  
\*¼tsp bicarbonate  
of soda  
\*1tsp sugar  
\*Bunch fresh basil  
\*300g pappardelle or  
other pasta of choice  
\*Vegan parmesan,  
grated

**1** Put the walnuts and sunflower seeds into a small bowl, cover with hot water and set aside for 20 minutes. Wash the celery and chop the ends off, peel the carrot and onion, and put them all into a food processor (roughly chop if they won't fit). Blitz until broken down into small chunks. Heat 2tbsp olive oil in a large pan over a medium heat, then add the blitzed veg and crushed garlic. Cook for 5 minutes.

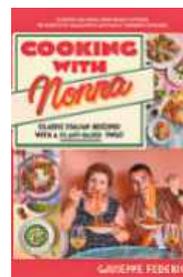
**2** Remove the stems from the mushrooms, then put into the food processor and pulse a few times until they break into mince-sized chunks (divide into two batches if needed).

**3** Add the mushroom chunks to the pan, season with salt and pepper, and cook for a further 5-10 minutes, until the mushrooms have softened, stirring occasionally.

**4** Meanwhile, drain the walnuts and sunflower seeds and put into the food processor. Blend for 20-30 seconds, until they become almost a paste, but with some small chunks left. Add the paste to the pan along with the tomato purée. Mix everything together.

**5** Add the tinned tomatoes, passata, miso paste, chilli flakes, oregano, bicarbonate of soda, sugar and the basil. Adjust the heat to a low simmer, stir, season to taste, then leave for 20 minutes (pop a lid on if you have one).

**6** Meanwhile, cook your pasta in salted boiling water until al dente, drain and place in a large serving bowl. Add a quarter of the ragu and stir to coat the pasta. Serve with extra ragu and top with olive oil and vegan parmesan.



Cooking With Nonna by Giuseppe Federici (£25, Michael Joseph) is out Thursday.



**DRINK ME!**

Barefoot California Zinfandel, £8 Sainsbury's

## PASTA WITH GARLIC, OIL AND CHILLI

**SERVES 4**

**Prep time** 5 mins

**Cook time** 10 mins

**Cals** 435

**Sat fat** 3g

\*300g spaghetti

\*2-4 cloves of garlic

\*Handful fresh parsley

\*100ml olive oil

\*1tsp chilli flakes

\*Vegan parmesan, to serve

**1** Bring a pan of water to the boil, then add 1tbsp fine table salt. Cook the spaghetti according to the packet instructions.

**2** Meanwhile, crush the garlic and chop the parsley.

**3** In a large pan on a very low heat, mix the olive oil, garlic, chilli flakes and parsley.

**4** Drain the cooked pasta, reserving 1-2 cups of the cooking water.

**5** Transfer the pasta to the oil pan and mix thoroughly, adding some of the pasta cooking water to coat to a silky consistency. Serve on to plates and top with plenty of vegan parmesan. **F**

## 3 OF THE BEST...

**TROPICAL PITCHERS**  
Serve your summer drinks in style.



**Toucan, £53, Thegreatbritishshop.com**

Toucan play that game with this jungle-themed jug that'll hold your margs mix or piña colada concoction.



**£18, Robert Dyas**

This plastic 2L Guatemalan-themed piece is pitcher perfect for picnics and barbecues – plus you can buy matching tumblers.



**£12, Tesco**

Add a little fun to your soirées. Ideal for pouring your pink spritzes from this summer, we think this statement pitcher is tropicool.

# PUZZLES

**PICTOGRAMS** Say what you see in the pictures to work out these ice-cream flavours (answers below right).

1



+



2



+



3



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## AWARDS

Best Writer - Beauty, Fashion & Lifestyle BSME 2023

Rising Star The Fragrance Foundation UK

Jasmine Awards 2023

Editor of the Year BSME 2022

Best Campaign BSME 2022

Lifestyle Site of the Year The Drum Awards 2022

Highly commended - Newspaper Magazine

Editor of the Year BSME 2019

Best Stylist BSME 2018

Editor of the Year BSME 2017

Best Picture Editor BSME 2016

Best Original Feature Idea (Digital) BSME 2013

Editor of the Year BSME 2012

Interviewer of the Year (Popular) BPA 2011

New Editor of the Year BSME 2011

Art Director of the Year BSME 2011

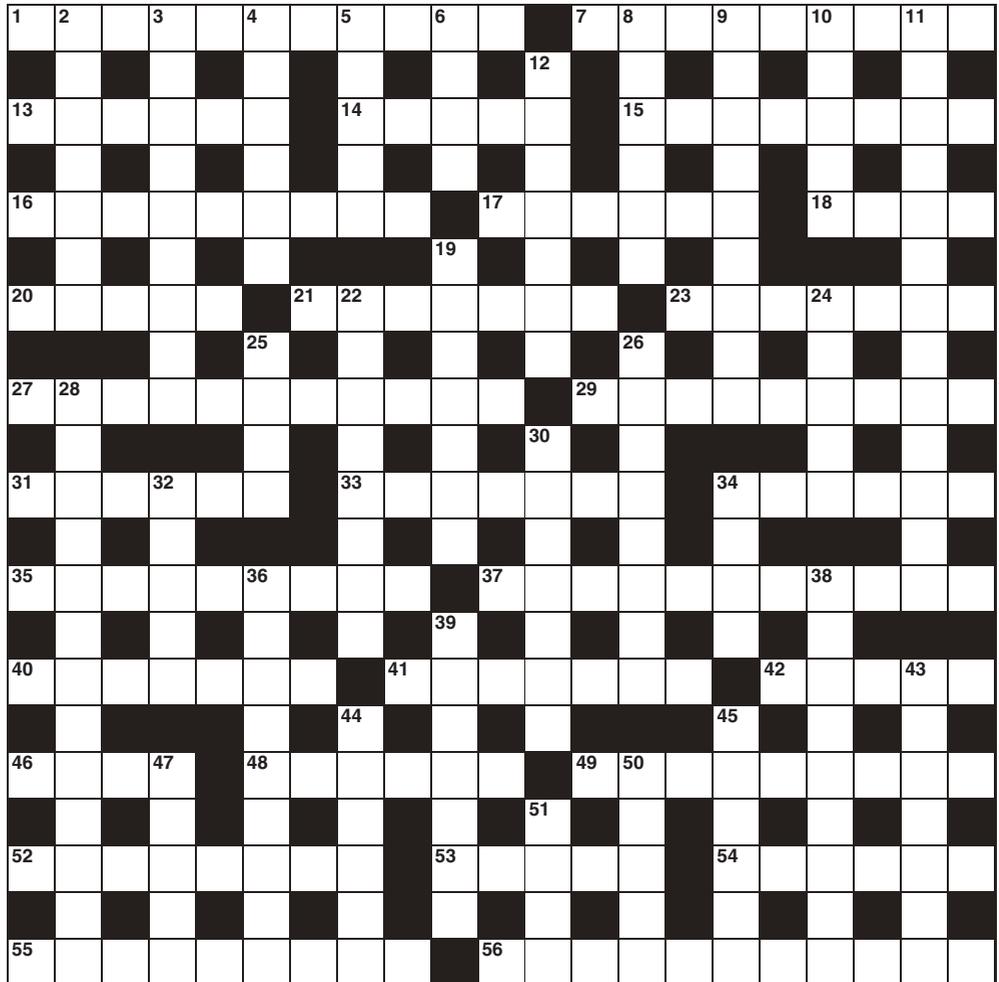
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1 London Bridge Street, London SE1 9GF (020 7782 5000).

Printed at Walstead York Limited, Yorkshire.

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## ACROSS

1 Paper strip used to protect surfaces from paint (7,4)

7 Fantasies (9)

13 Dreaded (6)

14 Lad (5)

15 Fails to look after (8)

16 Man-made fibre (9)

17 Evil or naughty elf (6)

18 Conservative (4)

20 Slightly drunk (5)

21 Plot reveal (7)

23 Structure of language (7)

27 Popular summer fruits (11)

29 Infant's nanny (9)

31 Scary experience (6)

33 Fruit of the palm tree (7)

34 Co-ordinates (6)

35 Squeezed instrument with a keyboard (9)

37 Folk jig performed with bells and sticks (6,5)

40 Impure, soiled (7)

41 Image consultant (7)

42 A, E, I, O or U (5)

46 British measure of distance (4)

48 Factory siren (6)

49 Kitchen strainers (9)

52 Lying on water (8)

53 Dirty mark (5)

54 Basket for strawberries (6)

55 Person who falters over some words (9)

56 Estimates, valuations (11)

## DOWN

2 Greatly impressive (7)

3 Hair fastener (5,4)

4 Naked lifestyle (6)

5 Herb often used with parsley in stuffing (5)

6 *GBBO* judge, \_\_\_Leith (4)

8 First name of Mr Schwarzenegger (6)

9 Ellen \_\_\_, voice of *Finding*

*Nemo's* Dory (9)

10 Upright and rigid (5)

11 Too interested in possessions (13)

12 Make \_\_\_, have great fun (7)

19 Complete absence of sound (7)

22 Outlet from a pig (4,4)

24 Impersonate comically (5)

25 Hollow made by a knock (4)

26 Birds that feed on carrion (8)

28 House plant with heart-shaped, velvety leaves (7,6)

30 Heathen, without religion (7)

32 Animal's angry noise (5)

34 Fail to win (4)

36 Resembling a corpse (9)

38 Prevention from happening (9)

39 One who does not believe in god (7)

43 Sincere and serious (7)

44 Duffel-coat fastener (6)

45 Grounds or buildings of a college or university (6)

47 Accurate in every detail (5)

50 Measure of weight (5)

51 Reply given if a quiz answer is not known (4)

## SOLUTIONS

August 4, 2024 crossword

**ACROSS** 1 Skateboards 7 Fell apart 13 De Niro 14 Tusled 15 Nobody 16 Vera 17 Tear gas 18 Evacuees 19 Wonders 21 Septic 23 Wizard 25 Tell the time 26 Perishing 29 Chastain 31 Necklace 34 Tunneller 35 Blood vessel 37 Uneven 39 Smarmy 41 Untwist 43 Galloped 46 Bravery 47 Cone 48 Alkali 49 Massive 50 Rooney 51 Escorting 52 English rose  
**DOWN** 2 Keeled over 3 Taika 4 Blowtorch 5 Astray 6 Disagreement 8 Eddie 9 Linda 10 Pub quiz 11 Red herring 12 Closet 20 Dolphin 22 Coercion 23 Whirl 24 Steamers 27 Hacksaw 28 Inflammation 30 Salon 32 Turntables 33 Messengers 36 Vineyards 38 Volcano 40 Ambush 42 Cereal 44 Print 45 Demon 47 Choir

## Pictograms

1. Bubblegum  
2. Honeycomb  
3. Brownie

# Mystic Meg

WITH MAGGIE INNES



Visit [Thesun.co.uk/mysticmeg](http://Thesun.co.uk/mysticmeg) for more



**ARIES**  
MAR 21 - APR 20

The mind planet revisits your sector of creative ideas and dreams, bringing a second chance at a first impression. Be prepared, but be yourself. If love feels more like labour, Venus can change this with a few words. So if you want to speak up, this can be your week. If you're fancy-free, someone who appears so serious has such a fun passion proposal.



**GEMINI**  
MAY 22 - JUNE 21

This week, the moon brings resilience. When one emotional approach doesn't hit the spot, you can try others, and keep on trying. But do set a personal limit, in your own mind and heart, before you start. Rewinding a work conversation and starting again can fill in some gaps you may not have noticed. Luck and love both link to abstract art.



**VIRGO**  
AUG 24 - SEPT 22

A dream you assumed was gone for good is back, bigger than ever, from the start of this week. Don't waste this chance to examine what you want and how you can get it. Your love zone is all about shared values - if partners are on different commitment pages, you can correct this. Single? You'll first see your perfect match wearing colours that really clash.



**CAPRICORN**  
DEC 22 - JAN 20

Who you allow to enter - and remain - in your closest circle is this week's theme. People may impress you, yet be hard to truly connect with. The shrewd eyes of Mercury will help you spot the difference. You may resist revealing your softer self, especially at work, but vulnerability can reinforce people's respect for you. Luck adds up a series of odd numbers.



As Mercury reverses into the personal heart of your chart, you find strength to try deep inner changes. Most important is the voice you use to talk to yourself - it should be kind, never critical. Be your own best friend and so much can fall into place. The moon highlights a business linked to making families or homes look and feel better.



**LIBRA**  
SEPT 23 - OCT 23

All kinds of reunions, in person and online, are starred by Mercury as worth your attention this week. Going back may not be your usual approach, but there's a lot to learn, and maybe a lot to love, too. A money moon grows all week, so you can find ways to make ideas work - make sure you do your research. Luck turns four names or numbers into five.



**AQUARIUS**  
JAN 21 - FEB 18

If love feels like unfinished business, it's your time to tackle this, and search for closure or a new set of commitment rules. Only you know exactly what you most need to take your heart forward. Keep this clear in your mind as you make your moves. Cash pulls you in two very different directions, but you have the brains to make the best of both.



**SCORPIO**  
OCT 24 - NOV 22

The best ambitions for this week can be those you've already written off - so step back into your wish list and see what leaps out. Your instincts are strong, as you start the week with a personal moon, plus Mars staying power and Venus charisma. If you truly want something to work, you're already halfway there. Love that seems platonic has a passion secret.



**PISCES**  
FEB 19 - MAR 20

Work that links to history - your own or other people's - can take a larger stake in your success. This starts with a casual set of questions, which should be taken seriously. If you're with a partner, a moon of adventure opens two hearts, then loosens two opposing sets of views. So anything can happen! Single? A unique ring can be a key clue.



**TAURUS**  
APR 21 - MAY 21

Your standing in a family may have felt shaky these last few weeks, but now you can firm things up. You know the role you want, and only you can spell this out. The Jupiter effect on your cash chart is noticeable by its generosity and luxury - the more you give away this week, the more you could receive. Try it and see. Luck waits in a room of "W" candidates.



**CANCER**  
JUNE 22 - JULY 22

You're not a sign that's ruled by money, but this week, getting to grips with spending challenges is one of your key tasks. It's sensible, not selfish, to make sure your side of a deal is fair. Venus connects partners in unexpected, warm ways. If you're single, your soulmate is the first to raise their hand and ask a key question.



**SAGITTARIUS**  
NOV 23 - DEC 21

The best journeys are an adventure in themselves, whether or not you arrive. This week, you have a star ticket to ride, in search of something special. The moment this comes into your mind, you will know the right direction. In love? Expecting more from passion may mean giving more - are you ready for this? A dream date may come late, but it's worth the wait.

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# Love ...and me

**SINITTA**, 55, on getting over Simon Cowell, dating Brad Pitt and finding her confidence in bed



I've always been a hopeless romantic. As a shy teenager, I read all the Mills & Boon romance novels and would do personality quizzes in magazines on how to meet your "best love". I thought that when we did eventually meet, we'd get married and have children, like Cinderella did. Then there comes a point when you grow up and realise you're believing in fairy tales. That arrived 12 or so years ago, when Simon [Cowell, 64] and Lauren [Silverman, 47] fell in love.

For years, Simon and I had been on a rollercoaster ride of dating. I thought tempestuous dramas were par for the course. We dated other people - I even married someone else - but in my heart, I always believed he was my person.

We met in the '80s, when I was the first artist Simon signed to his label, Fanfare Records. He had long Patrick-Swayze-style hair and big muscles. He was gorgeous and funny with a dry sense of humour. He'd say I reminded him of his first pet poodle - it was the hair and devotion. I was charmed and besotted.

I thought we'd end up married. Simon used to say: "Be patient. One day you'll have everything you want." But everyone loved him. He's like a magnet - a big character and lots of fun, so there were always girls, AKA "the vultures", circling.

We'd make up, break up, make up, break up. Usually, my tactic would be to date someone drop-dead gorgeous to make him jealous. So, when Brad Pitt asked to meet me, I invited him over to my place. I wouldn't be that brazen now.

When I released my single *Toy Boy* in 1987 - all about me and gorgeous boys - everyone thought Brad was my latest "beautiful man". There was an instant attraction. Even George Michael spent most of his album launch party trying to pull him! When Brad and I broke up in 1988, we stayed in touch, until he married Jennifer [Aniston, in 2000].

I'm on good terms with all my exes. Over the years, Simon and I became like siblings. We're still close now and are godparents to each other's children.

After becoming a born-again Christian in 1994, I decided not to have sex until my wedding night. As my mother said: "If you're giving them the milk, they don't need to buy the cow." When I met my former husband Andy [Willner, 64, a financier], he wasn't what I was looking for - he had two children and was going through a divorce - but after becoming friends we eloped to Las Vegas in 2002. We

## 'I always thought I'd end up married to Simon Cowell'

had a lovely life with two beautiful children [Magdalena and Zac, 18, who the couple adopted], but we broke up when he moved to Hong Kong in 2009 for work. We tried long-distance, but it was exhausting.

Dating in my 50s is different. I was on Hinge until my account got deleted - they thought I was an imposter! It was a shame, as I was just figuring out how to reply to messages. I've had DMs on Instagram, too, but after receiving some lewd pictures I was put off.

In lockdown, I became quite lonely. Before meeting someone recently, I was single for eight years - you can almost get addicted to it. Young men hit on me, saying: "If you ever just want to have sex, call me!" but I'd switched myself off sexually.

Now, I'm with my best friend. My advice to older women is to find a grown-ass man. If you're on HRT and hormones are raging, it's tempting to get a young guy, but older men know how to treat you.

It took a long time, but I'm more secure in my skin. When I was young and famous, I was sheltered and insecure. I didn't think I'd ever be "the pretty girl". I'd get called "Sexy Sinitta", but think: "They don't mean that." Now, I'm able to say: "I like to have sex like this."

Knowing what you want in a relationship can take a while. Today, I'm calm and happy. I feel like a fully-grown, empowered woman. It resonates across all of my life. I feel free. **F**

● Sinitta stars in *Now That's What I Call A Musical* from September 6 ([Thenowmusical.com](http://Thenowmusical.com)). For info on finding love, visit [Sinsangels.com](http://Sinsangels.com).

**NEXT WEEK IN FABULOUS... Exclusive Ekin-Su Cülcüloğlu interview \* 'ADHD spending habits landed me in £60k debt' \* Taylor-Swift-inspired beauty \* Comforting pasta recipes**

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