

'My man doesn't put pressure on me to look good!'

Michelle Collins talks to **new!** about beauty, her boyfriend and if we'll ever see Cindy Beale back in Albert Square...

Sitting opposite a soap legend in a swanky private members' club might sound a little intimidating, but chatting to Michelle Collins feels like gossiping with one of your mates over a cuppa.

And although the actress, 56, waved goodbye to Albert Square and the *Corrie* cobbles years ago, she's busier than ever launching her own skincare range and campaigning for gender equality.

We manage to pin Michelle – and her impeccable green power suit – down for a natter about the range, the annual rumours that she's doing *Strictly*, and life with her boyfriend, Mike Davison, who's 22 years her junior...

Hi Michelle, there was a rumour you're doing *Strictly* this year...

Every year, people ask if I'm doing it and I'll say no. Then they'll say, "Go on, do it! Do it! Why don't you do it?" I'm getting to the point where I'm like, "You know what? If they ask me, I might actually do it!" People drive me mad asking, so who knows? I haven't been asked yet, but it's early days... we'll see!

What would put you off doing it?

I can't really dance. My biggest fear would be getting eliminated in the first week – it'd kill my ego! **Would you return to *EastEnders*?** I did go back for *Children In Need* in 2014 and it felt so weird. It felt like I'd died and had come back as a ghost. Some of the people



Her toy boy is "more sensible" than she is

were still there that were there when I left – *that* was weird! I think you have to be very careful going back because it's never the same.

Cindy could do a *Dirty Den* and come back from the dead...

It'd spoil the myth if Cindy went back! Everyone would be excited for about a week, then after a while, that's it – everyone's like, "Oh, she's here." And I'd be like, "Oh, OK, is this it? I wish I hadn't come back now!"

What about a *Corrie* comeback?

People always ask if I'd go back. You never say never, because you just don't know. At the moment, there are so many other things I want to do.

Like focus on your skincare range?

Yes! I just felt that it was a challenge, and it's empowering – it's not a fad.

It's taken quite a long time and I want to expand it from skincare. I quite like yoga, so maybe I'll make some yoga clothes, too.

Do you spend a lot of time on your beauty regime?

I'm quite low-maintenance, but I have CACI [treatments] quite a

lot. They've got a non-surgical facelift, full of electrodes that tighten your skin. It's non-surgical, so if I'm doing something on the telly, or I want my skin to look a bit firmer, I might do a course of that.

What's your fitness routine like?

I'm not a slave to the gym, but when I go it's usually for about 40 minutes, as I'd rather go little and often than go for hours. I also do hot yoga.

Are you a fan of classes, then?

I don't like classes! Everybody doing Zumba... I can't bear it. [Laughs] I love women but I don't want to do a Zumba class, thanks. I just quite like being on my own, so I just put my headphones on and go. It's that time you can have on your own.

Your partner is a bit younger – Cheryl and Liam always get stick for the age gap...

That's why I don't discuss my relationship, because then



She wouldn't rule out a *Corrie* comeback

you're putting yourself out there to be judged! I don't think of [the age difference] at all any more. I used to in the very beginning, but now I don't. He's so supportive of everything I do, and you know what? He's actually far more sensible than I am! He doesn't put any pressure on me to look good. We have a really good relationship. We're very equal and we're very supportive of each other.

JADIE TROY-PRYDE

Michelle's skincare range, *Pellum Vero*, is available to buy now at Mcskintruth.com



With *EastEnders'* Adam Woodyatt in 1993