

# Love Mimi

*As the new Fashion, Health & Beauty editor of City Life and County Living magazine, I was asked to try out makeover experts Mimi. I wasn't sure how to take it or what to expect! I met with owner Ursula Kelly to find out more about the photo-shoot process and then agreed to strip off for her camera. I was petrified, intrigued and a little excited...*

I've been unfortunate enough to take centre stage in some photographic nightmares in my time, and lately my confidence has nose-dived further still. There have been two significant blows to my self image: the first was when I had developed a skin care brand, and the company needed a picture of me for their website, I hated the images they took and there was nothing I could do, they were published for the world to see! The second was when I was asked by none other than Europe's king of Botox, Dr. Sebagh, if I knew that my face was uneven. When I replied 'yes, thank you', he proceeded to tell his assistant that I was beautiful, and he thought with a little work I could be perfect! Funny, I just keep remembering and hearing 'your face is uneven!' And despite my family and friends reassuring me that it wasn't true, a complex had set in.

But I told myself I didn't care, because I'm me, as clichéd as it sounds, I believe beauty is only skin deep, and I love me for being me. So I concentrated on the positive points and ran with them!

And figure-wise, I have no aspirations to be a size zero, I love my curves. So why was I so worried? And why had I suddenly become aware of every inch of myself?

The truth was, I would love to have even just one image of myself that I can be proud of, so on those dark gloomy days of self destructive scrutiny (every woman and many men will know what I'm talking about) I can remind myself that I can look great.

I'm not a model, but I was determined to make the most of myself and the MIMI experience, so the night before the shoot, I went into a preparation panic meltdown.

Mariah Carey would've been proud of my bathroom ritual, that evening! Had I finally fallen into the trap of ultra-vain diva-dom in sheer panic at what lay ahead? I had a sick feeling in the pit of my stomach. What had I done? I'd agreed to take my clothes off and 35,000 copies of my photo-shoot to go to print. I'm allowing not only family and friends, but clients and strangers, to scrutinise my looks. But it was a challenge, and I do love a good challenge!

### WHO IS SHE?!

(Quote: Nikki Grahame, Big Brother '07) East Midlands Photographer of the Year sounded a solid qualification, but Ursula Kelly would have to be a miracle worker to get a good shot out of me, I reasoned – if I was going to pose for her, undressed or not, I'd have to check her out first.

I attended the Mimi VIP launch night at Tonic bar in an attempt to gain a little more info. When I met Ursula, I was relieved at how laidback I felt in her presence. We had so many ideas for the shoot, apprehension soon gave way to excitement. But the proof was still going to be in the pictures!

### MY MIMI DAY

I arrived for the shoot on a rainy Thursday morning, dressed in UGG boots, my hair tucked into a woolly hat so as not to get it wet. I have to say that my first surprise was the beauty of the studio and the fabulous portraits that decorated it.

We had coffee, chatted, had a giggle, looked through some outfits and jewellery that I'd brought, and before I knew it I'd been there almost an hour. Thankfully the Mimi team includes a fabulous make-up artist who, after giving me a relaxing facial, did a beautiful job of my make-up which made me feel extra special. It was like



being in a girl's world. Is this what being Barbie feels like?!

Make-up done, it was down to Ursula and myself to get to work. I felt like I was locked in my own little world, where no-one could disturb us, it was great!

(I had to laugh that whilst I was relaxing over a delicious lunch in the studio, I realised I was actually sat in a fleece, knickers and a pair of knee high boots! I was so impressed at how comfortable I felt here. It was a reflection of the fun I had that day that I was so relaxed, and how much I loved my very special Mimi experience.)

Nevertheless, I thought I'd get one image I'd be happy to show the world, max, and I'd have to bribe our design studio to photoshop my head onto Elle McPherson's body. How wrong I was - I loved every single shot Ursula sent me. We now have a page full of images as I just couldn't choose which summed up the unbelievable talent Ursula has for making people look their very best. She has an incredible gift and I'm so proud and pleased to have benefited from it!

A photo-shoot is something I've always wanted to do, but never thought I could. When I leaf through the pages

of the glossy magazines, I can see how much artwork has gone into the images – trust me, I know the stars are almost all airbrushed, and I still never thought I could look as glamorous. Thanks to Mimi, I have my own set of ‘star quality’ pictures.

As a woman, if you’ve ever felt downright rubbish about yourself, then this is one of those things you must experience in life. I can’t tell you how amazing it feels to leaf through incredible images of yourself.

And as for men reading this, if you have someone special, this is one of the best gifts you could ever give...and you’re sure to benefit if your partner feels great!

It was a truly incredible day; I had so much fun and felt like a superstar.

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*Love*



**Mimi**

