

Tough love

Meet the women who can't resist a bad boy



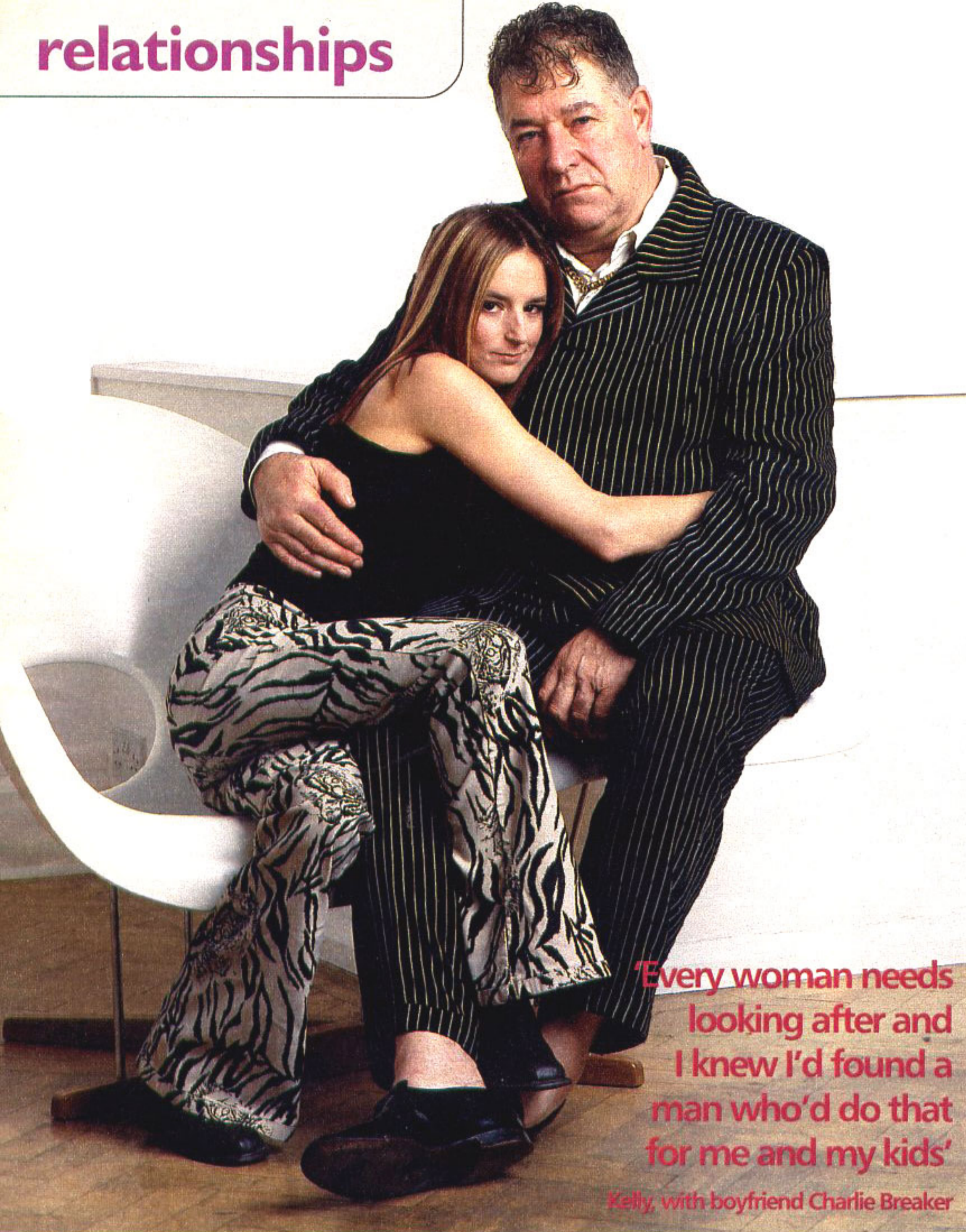
Who wants a Mr Nice Guy when you can have a bit of rough? Not these ladies, that's for sure. So what is the allure of hard men? We met the wives and girlfriends of some of Britain's scariest geezers to find out...

Jenni Courtney, 33, a rap artist, is married to ex-gangster and former Kray henchman Dave Courtney, 43. They've been together 13 years. Jenni has two children from her previous marriage and one child, Courtney, five, with Dave. Dave has been tried for murder (he was acquitted) and has admitted to smuggling and racketeering. He spent 18 months on remand in a secure unit at Belmarsh prison and arranged the Kray funeral. Dave is now an actor, writer and recording artist.

Jenni says: 'I met Dave while I was DJing at a club he owned. One night, this bald geezer with bright blue eyes, dressed in a waistcoat and wearing a Stetson, came over and announced: "I'm gonna have you. Marriage, kids, everything." I just thought: "Cor! Who the hell is this?" I really fancied him and a few nights later, he sat me in his car and told me who he was, describing himself as "a bit naughty". I found out through friends about him being a Kray heavy, that he'd been tried and acquitted of murder and was, basically, a gangster. I was scared but he also told me he'd take care of me, protect me and give me whatever I wanted. 'I had two kids at the time but was in a bad relationship with their father. Dave said: "Do you want him to stop hassling you?" I was worried he might kill him or something. "Don't hurt him," I said. I don't know what Dave did, but he didn't bother me again. Dave was like a knight in shining armour. I believed in him and he didn't let me down. I said: "Mould me into whatever you want me to be." 'I didn't want to know what he got up to and he kept



ft: Jenni with her
sband, former
ay henchman Dave
Courtney: 'He's turned
my life around.'
ght: Caren is
ing out with debt
flector Michael
ylor: 'I don't ask
out his work and he
eps it to himself. I
n't want to know'



'Every woman needs looking after and I knew I'd found a man who'd do that for me and my kids'

Kelly, with boyfriend Charlie Breaker

his work separate from me and the family. I got on with looking after the kids, making records and doing housewifely chores. But his friends and associates were the most charming people I'd ever met – even if their work could be violent. I'd worry about him like any wife, sometimes he'd come home bloody with cuts, bruises and grazed fists and I'd tend to them. They're just an occupational hazard. I never worried for my own or the kids' safety. Dave used to say: "Don't be afraid unless I say so. Until then, don't worry." "There are downsides. We've had so many police raids, we've actually given them a key so they don't break down the door. They've never found a thing. We've had bugs in our phones and cars and have been under 24-hour surveillance. It's a nuisance more than anything as Dave's 100% straight now. 'Dave is a great dad but some of the kids' friends won't come to our house. People think he's dangerous, but he's given me everything

I ever wanted. Apart from the diamonds and furs, he's turned my life around. He takes care of me. He always says, so long as I'm happy, he's happy. I feel lucky to be with him every single day. I just love the geezer.'

Caren Saunders, 21, has been going out with Michael Taylor, 44, for a year. She has a five-year-old son from a previous relationship. Michael, a former professional champion boxer and one-time stripogram, is now a debt collector. In the past, he has been charged with two attempted murders and subsequently acquitted.

Caren says: 'A couple of friends have stopped speaking to me since I've been with Michael. I don't know if they think he's a psychopath or if they're just jealous. They knew me when I was a struggling single mum working as a receptionist at a travel lodge. Now I don't have to work any more and what other 21-year-old girl gets bought an Audi A6?

'We met at a pub. I knew he was known as a "hard man". He was muscular, well-dressed, though not flash, and had striking blue eyes. He chatted to me and was a real gentleman. He opened doors for me and made me feel like a lady. Michael is a fitness fanatic and we talked about going to the gym. He asked if he could take me out and arrived in a BMW 7 Series. He told me about his boxing days and I told him about my son. It was his honesty and kindness I liked. 'I don't ask about his work and he keeps it to himself. I don't want to know – it's when we're together that's important. I know he collects debts and sometimes his reputation is enough to make people pay up without even a visit. One night he told me he'd been acquitted of two attempted murders. He was innocent so I didn't let it worry me.

'While he was on remand in prison, he also found God. I'm not sure I share his beliefs but it has helped him deal with some of the bad things he has done in his life.

'With Michael, every day is different. Sometimes he goes away on jobs or "errands" and I don't see him. I don't worry about him – I've never seen him hurt. I wouldn't be with him if I thought I was in danger because my son is always my priority. Other times he'll be at home Hoovering or cooking for us. I taught him to cook and I don't think he'd picked up a vacuum before he met me. I'm not just the little woman indoors – I persuaded him to buy Tommy jeans, a Fila hat and a parka coat with a fur-lined hood for himself. He loves it. The age difference doesn't worry me. He's a lovely person with a great body. He goes to the gym every night. He was a "boxer stripogram" once – and yes, he has performed for me.

'He has done bad things in the past and I am attracted to "bad boys" with an air of danger about them. But with me he's just Micky – honest, caring and loving. I don't have to work, although I hate people saying I'm living off him. He just likes to look after me.'

Kelly Moore, 28, has been with Charlie Breaker, 54, for two years. Kelly has three children from her previous relationship. Charlie, an ex-gangster, has served eight years in prison for crimes including GBH, ABH and malicious wounding. A former associate of the Krays, he has also acted as boxing promoter Don King's bodyguard. He is now retired.

Kelly says: 'People imagine all kinds of things when you tell them you're living with an ex-villain. When we got together two years ago, my friends wondered if I was getting together with a maniac. At times, I did wonder myself. I'd meet his friends and they'd swap stories about him – how he was called Breaker because he breaks bones and faces,

how he'd had his face ripped apart in knuckleduster fights, beaten up prison guards and even pulled someone's teeth out with pliers. But with me, he was the perfect gent. 'When we met, my mum had just died, I was living in a horrible house, working as a barmaid, had hardly any money and a boyfriend who could be violent. Despite the stories I'd heard, I put my trust in Charlie and he's never let me down. We've never had a cross word. Every woman needs looking after and I knew I'd found a man who'd do that for me and my kids. He was Mr Right. He won't let anyone raise their voice to me. The children call him Breaker. To us he's a gentle giant. 'I now live in a country house with an acre of land at the front, six acres of woodland behind, stables, snooker room, bar, jacuzzi and a library. I don't see my old friends any

more because this is my new life. I've never asked where the money came from – I don't want to know about Charlie's past. I've only seen him fight once. 'Someone shouted at him while we were in the car one day: "You think you're hard, eh?" Charlie dragged the man out the car, punched him to the ground, picked him up, punched him down again and then threw him over the bonnet. I shouted for him to stop. I did wonder how far he was going to go. But when I told him to stop, he did. 'He hasn't had an easy life. He was brought up in children's homes and did time in prison, but he has earned respect and has put the life of crime behind him. 'I've never asked for anything from him. I only want to be part of his life. He buys me presents though and I have a ring which fits on two fingers, like a knuckleduster, with

KEL spelt out in 28 diamonds. I tell him if he ever leaves me or upsets me, I'll imprint my name on his face with it.'

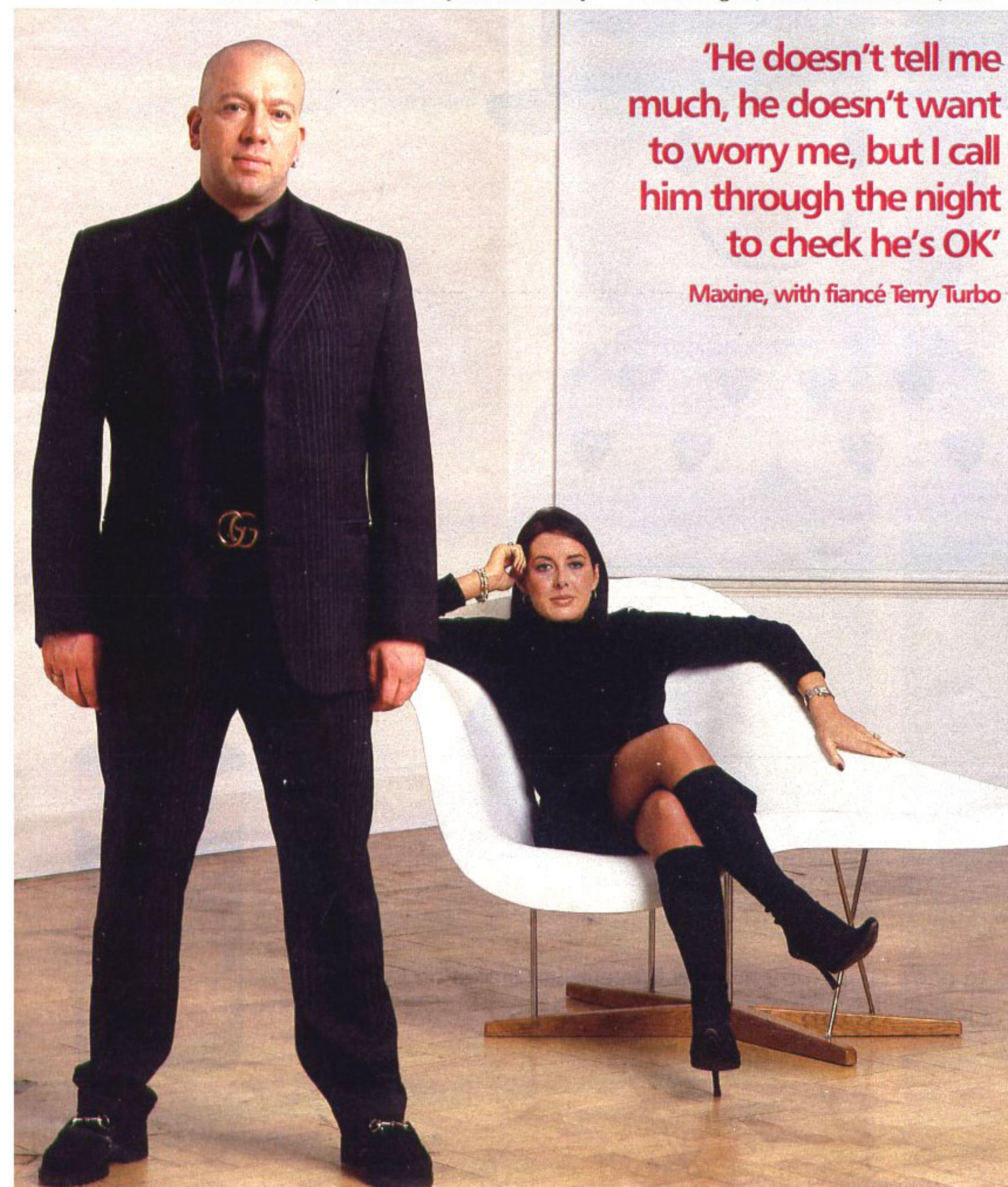
Maxine Page, 24, has been engaged to Terry Turbo, 32, for 18 months. Terry is an actor and also runs a club promotion company and a door security company. He is trained in martial arts and is a former boxer and doorman.

Maxine says: 'I wasn't sure what to make of Terry at first. I'd had a privileged upbringing and went to the same Surrey school as the Duchess of York. Until then, I'd only been out with real Hooray Henry types and an Arab Prince. Now I was dating a 6ft South London skinhead. 'I was on a girls' night out at a dodgy "Sharon and Tracey" club when we met. Terry "moonwalked" up and down in front of me. It made me laugh. We swapped numbers and I thought it might be fun to see him. 'Although I'm from a wealthy background, my dad is a self-made man from the East End so I wasn't put off by him being a bit of a geezer. I love the East End way of life and the fact they put family first. The people I'd gone to school with barely saw their parents. 'When Terry invited me to his house and I arrived at his Georgian mansion, I thought: "This can't be his!" I expected a three-bed semi. I was worried at first because there was a bullet-proof vest in the hall and pictures of Terry at the Kray funeral, but I liked him. He explained he was a club promoter and had friends in the underworld he'd met through club nights, boxing events and his work in security. They were just friends though and when I met them, they were the most well-mannered guys I'd ever come across. Old-fashioned gents.

'Terry explained how violence was creeping into the club scene and he wore the bullet-proof vest to work. His events – One Nation and Garage Nation – have a good name, but he has been in fights, breaking up trouble, and had guns pulled on him. He doesn't tell me much, he doesn't want to worry me, but I call him through the night to check he's OK. 'He has got a short fuse though. He can lose the plot even if someone cuts us up in the car. But he's not about to kill someone. And it's nice to feel protected.

'People assume I'm just the little woman indoors. But I have my own life and my own money. Terry is like a big teddy bear. He calls me Princess and likes to protect me, buy me clothes and dinners and take me abroad, but what makes him special isn't that he spoils me or the glamour or danger. What's important to Terry is his family and that's what has always been important to me.'

Chris Morris



'He doesn't tell me much, he doesn't want to worry me, but I call him through the night to check he's OK'

Maxine, with fiancé Terry Turbo