



# My *Life* through a lens

*Celebrities share the stories behind their favourite photographs. This week it's legendary photographer David Bailey, 83*



**1965** When I married French film star Catherine Deneuve, the wedding [pictured] was a big happening, with crowds in the street. Inside though, it was just me and my friends having a drink. Mick Jagger was my best man – I knew Mick before he was in the Rolling Stones. He was just a bloke I met because he was going out with my then girlfriend's sister Chrissie Shrimpton. He used to stay at my house when he had nowhere to live. All my ex-girlfriends or wives are friends of mine. I've never understood how you can live with somebody for five or six years and then not like them.



**1983** I've been friends with American model Jerry Hall since she arrived in London in the 70s. She's one of the funniest people I've ever met – she has perfect comic timing – and we've always had a good time when we're together. This is us at the Cannes Film Festival – it's an important place to meet people professionally, but it's always great for a party too. A little while after this, I was photographing famine victims in Sudan for the Band Aid appeal. I had started to branch out with my photography; taking portraits of tribespeople in Papua New Guinea, for instance. Something more than just frocks.



**1938** This is me as a baby with my mum, Glad. She was a machinist and my dad Bert was a tailor's cutter – I also have a younger sister called Thelma. We were bombed out of our flat in Leytonstone, east London, during the Blitz and moved to East Ham. One of my earliest memories is walking on glass after the house next door had been hit. I was about three and a half at the time.



**1963** I was dyslexic and used to skip school to look at the birds (of the feathered kind) on Wanstead Flats. I ended up leaving school at 15 with no qualifications but got into photography during my National Service. This is on a shoot with Jean Shrimpton. We were an item for about four years but our professional relationship stayed strong. We helped make each other's names.



**1986** I've been married four times; my wives have never fallen out with each other. My third wife, Marie Helvin, and my current wife, Catherine Dyer, get on fine, even though I was married to Marie when I met her. I've been married to Catherine [pictured with David and their daughter Paloma] for 34 years now. I think the secret to our marriage's success is honesty and humour. If you laugh at something, it makes it ridiculous. Plus like all women, Catherine's a mystery to me so there's always something new to find out.



**2002** One or two photographers I have considered as rivals, such as Helmut Newton, but people like Patrick Lichfield, John Swannell and Terry O'Neill [left to right, at an event with David] were always just friends. Patrick and I got on well, despite coming from different backgrounds – he was a cousin of the Queen. I used to stay at his estate, Shugborough Hall. I didn't mind that he was able to use his connections to get work, such as the marriage of Charles and Diana. I used to think, 'Good luck to him.'



**2010** The Queen is a charming woman. We're at a reception at Buckingham Palace here, but when I photographed her for her 88th birthday in 2014 she gave me half a day of her time and we discussed all sorts of things, such as Alzheimer's. I told her that if I said anything wrong, then it would be because I have truth Tourette's. We laughed all morning. She has very kind eyes with a mischievous glint. I've always liked strong women, and the Queen is a very strong woman.



**2019** Getting this huge anthology of my work, called a SUMO, was like getting an Oscar. Only three photographers have SUMO books: Helmut Newton, Annie Leibowitz and Sebastião Salgado. I took my wife and children [l-r son Sascha, daughter Paloma, wife Catherine and son Fenton] to the launch at Claridge's. Sascha's into digital currency and will probably become a billionaire. Fenton, an excellent photographer, works with me. Paloma is a very good painter. I've not asked what they think of my career. But I think I've done all right for a boy from East Ham.

As told to Simon Hemelryk. David Bailey's new autobiography, *Look Again*, is out now.