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Sting, but not stung

Sun salutations or sunblock? As the Police reform, our correspondent considers the age-defying looks of Sting

Sarah Vine

As you get older, some comebacks bother you more than others. I was too young for Pink Floyd, too old for Take That. But the Police — now that strikes a chord. I was 13 in 1980, the year *Don't Stand So Close To Me* was a hit. Sting was already in his early thirties by then, a good 15 years older than me, but that didn't stop me — or the rest of the female population at school — from having a massive pash. The blue eyes, the spikey blond hair, the cheekbones. Oh, Gordon Sumner (us true fans weren't put off by his real name), we fantasised as one, you can stand so close to me *any day* of the week.

So when the news reached me of a comeback, announced on Monday 20 years after the Police last went on tour together, two thoughts entered my head. The first was: Oh hell, am I really so old that my teenage pin-up is making a comeback? And second was: good grief, can that man really be 55? Surely that's not *all* down to tantric sex and yoga?

So: does he or doesn't he? I don't mean the sex, although rumours of his and his wife Trudie's exotic sex life abound, most, I suspect, of them fuelled more by the couple's sense of mischief than by any concrete proof. I mean plastic surgery. If not the actual knife itself, then perhaps some fillers? The odd drop of 'Tox? A chemical peel? A little help with the hair? Or is it all down to lucky genes and an awful lot of yoga.

In my quest for the truth, I ring a top plastic surgeon, Barry J. Cohen, in Washington. Cohen has just opened a drop-in cosmetic clinic in Harvey Nichols in London; he also has his own successful line of cosmeceuticals, PH-Advantage, which are actually quite effective. It's 7am in Washington, and Cohen is on his way to the operating theatre. "I'm on my Blue-tooth in the Jaguar," he bellows. "So, you wanna know if Sting's been stung?"

Indeed I do, I say. "My opinion is that he is simply very well preserved," says Cohen. "I can see no Botox and no evidence of brow lift or eye lift surgery. His nasal labial folds [I stifle schoolgirl giggles. These are nothing rude, of course: he means the lines going from his nose to the corners of his mouth] are deep. I'm not sure about chemical peels or resurfacing. His jawline is very firm — it is faintly possible that he's had a neck lift." So basically just winning the gene jackpot and a good lifestyle, then? Cohen agrees. "You can see his eyebrows are well below the browbone rim. He needs a brow lift, Botox and eye lift surgery, plus fillers in his nasal labial," he says, adding chirpily, "I'd be happy to fix that for him." So there you go, Gordon, a

very generous offer. Although one, I'm tempted to say, that Sting can well afford to refuse.

The question of "resurfacing" remains. Sting's skin is surprisingly clear and even for a man of 55, especially one who has in the past sported some shocking suntans. Resurfacing — either medical microdermabrasion (this goes deeper than the kind you can get in many beauty salons these days) or laser peels will strip the top layers off the skin, reducing uneven pigmentation and effectively traumatising the skin so it is encouraged to repair itself.

When the whole process is over (sometimes days, sometimes weeks, depending on patient and treatment intensity), you are left with a dewy, fresher looking complexion. It doesn't necessarily last, though — the minute you expose your skin to the sun, for example, pigmentation will start to reappear. But if you were preparing for a very special occasion, it could well give you a boost.

But honestly, at the risk of sounding like a muesli-muncher, I put most of it down to Sting's dedication to yoga. Done seriously, yoga really does make a difference. I know 60-year-olds who look 45 thanks to yoga. It eliminates toxins, improves muscle tone, maintains posture. Poor skin tone, a sagging stomach, hunched shoulders — these things are just as ageing as wrinkles or age spots. Plastic surgery may give you a 20-year-old's complexion; but what good is that if it's attached to a rickety old body?