

'You still want challenges as you get older'

Nicki Chapman has ticked off a lot of boxes in her career, but she's not finished yet



With the *Pop Idol* crew, Neil Fox, Simon Cowell and Pete Waterman



Working her Magic on the radio

Nicki Chapman boasts decades of experience in the media industry. Not only did she work as a respected PR for stars including the Spice Girls, Take That, Amy Winehouse and Kylie Minogue, but she became a household name in the early noughties with TV judging roles on *Popstars* and *Pop Idol*, before going on to present shows such as *Escape To The Country* and *Wanted Down Under*.

And now, the media expert, 58 – who is married to music producer Dave Shackleton – has

added another string to her bow by landing a sparkling new role on Magic Radio. In addition to her excitement about being on the airwaves, Nicki also chats to us about her days as a PR...

'I'm a home bird'

Tell us about your Magic Radio show

I've worked in radio for many years. I've been on BBC Radio 2 and sat in for Zoe Ball and Claudia Winkleman, but this is the first time I actually have my own show [the iconic Mellow Magic show has been running since 2016 bringing listeners relaxing timeless classics]. We're

getting you set up for the evening with some beautiful tunes.

What do you love about radio?

The intimacy. When you're on the radio, it's only you and that other person who's listening. It's just the two of you, and I love that. When you're on television, it's visual as well as spoken. But with radio, it's much more personal.

What's your perfect mellow evening?

In spring, summer and autumn, I love coming home and sitting in the garden, listening to some music and perhaps having a drink and a few nibbles. My husband and I have quite busy lives, and that's our choice because of the careers we've chosen. I don't need to go out every night, because I'm

out during the day – I'm with people and I'm stimulated. I don't need to go out all weekend either! I'm a home bird.

Tell us about some of the big nights out you had in the past – who is fun to party with?

I saw extraordinary things travelling the world with the Spice Girls and Take That. I've written a book called *So Tell Me What You Want* because my life looking after those bands was extraordinary. I went to Hong Kong, South Africa and Japan – places I never thought I would get to see. I think the best times for going out would be an after-party with Take That back in the '90s.

Was it wild?

Messy, yes. But if we were working, I couldn't really go for it because I knew I had to be on my A-game the next day. The best nights out were when I knew I wasn't going to be with the band the next day, so I didn't have to be quite so professional and could have a drink. I remember going to the MTV Awards and not remembering getting home!

What's your take on the recent boyband documentaries on TV?

I think the media industry has changed. Everybody's learned a lesson, and we continue to learn as well. Also, the bands themselves – they've got to be accountable for their own actions. If you've got a really heavy schedule and you're out getting wasted the night before, then no one can help you with that. You've got to look after your own health and surround yourself with people who will give

you advice you're prepared to listen to, even if you don't agree with it. When you have artists who have the strength to say, 'I'm taking a break,' everyone respects them for it.

'I let myself go'

How do you recharge and look after yourself?

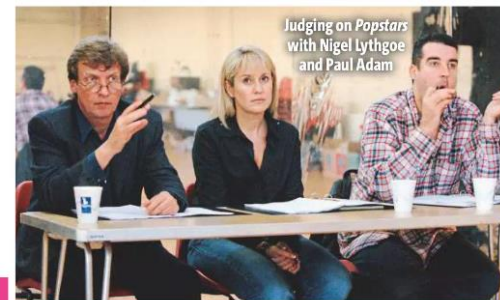
I let myself go last summer because I was working, but that's no excuse. You can always find time, and I haven't, so I've had to give myself a bit of a talking to. My back is quite sore at the moment, and

that's because I haven't been going to the gym. So I've started Pilates. This year, I'll be in much more of a routine with my radio show, and I like a routine. It means I can go to the gym and get to Pilates, I can go walking, and I can do work in my local charity shop, which I adore.

Is there anything else you want to achieve in 2025?

I'm going back to *Escape To The Country*, so I'll be filming a brand-new series of that. I'm really looking forward to getting back into my garden too – I brought in a new colour scheme. Then a little bit later on in the year, I'll take a lovely holiday somewhere. For me, this is going to be such an exciting start to the year because I'm doing something new. The older you get, you still want these challenges. I've got lots that I want to achieve.

● Nicki is the new host of the iconic Mellow Magic show: Tune into Magic Radio every Monday to Thursday from 8pm.



Judging on *Popstars* with Nigel Lythgoe and Paul Adam

By Charlotte Roberts and Millie Payne. Pictures: Brett Cove/SPA Images / Shutterstock / Instagram / nicki_chapman / PA Images / Alamy Stock Photo