

# TV Times

27 Sept  
-30 Oct  
2014

**SOAP SPECIAL**  
**Emma Atkins'**  
**Emmerdale diary**



**WIN**  
**5 iPad**  
**Airs!**  
T&C's apply  
see page 27



# It's **Strictly!**

**Sunetra, Jake & Pixie** on hitting the dance floor



# Hot to foxtrot

Sunetra, Jake and Pixie are out to claim a glittering prize  
Photographed for TV Times by Dan Goldsmith

## TV Times Cover Shoot



It's the second live show in *Strictly* this Saturday, but with the celebs relaxed ahead of their big night, we were lucky enough to grab a chat and a photoshoot with Sunetra Sarker, Jake Wood and Pixie Lott, seen here with our picture editor, Elaine McCluskey. See pages 6-9.

# Jake Wood, Sunetra Sarker and Pixie Lott on how celebrity friends and their own families are preparing them for *Strictly* success...

## STRICTLY COME DANCING

Saturday BBC1

**T**hey've met their professional partners, slipped into sequins and twirled beneath the glitterballs – but Jake Wood, 42, Sunetra Sarker, 41, and Pixie Lott, 23, are now revelling in the ultimate moment of *Strictly* glamour: posing for an exclusive *TV Times* cover shoot!

The dazzling trio are all smiles, and as they share the ballroom gossip we learn that pop singer Pixie is impressed by the male celebs, *Casualty* star Sunetra is distracted by the height of her heels and Jake is delighted to wipe *EastEnders*' Max Branning's scowl off his face...

**Hello! We've had weeks of speculation and preparation – how does it feel to finally get started with the live shows?**

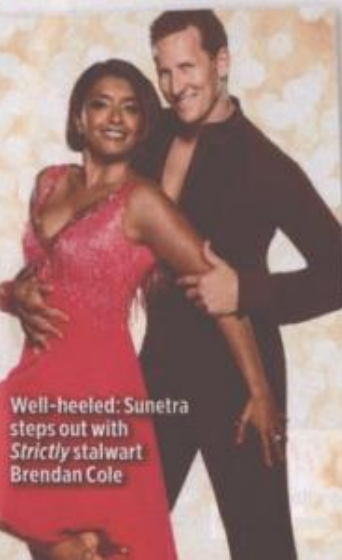
**Jake:** It's been lovely – Walford can be quite a miserable place at times, so yeah, it's been great to throw myself into something that's all about sequins and glitterballs.

**Sunetra:** I was very dubious about doing the show at first. I said, 'I can't do things like this, not at my age!'. But now I'm in it I feel like I've made the right decision – there's something infectious about it.

**How tough are you finding your training regime?**

**Jake:** It's very hard work, mentally as well as physically. I didn't realise just how much my brain would be swimming –

**'I like a boogie'** Sunetra



Well-heeled: Sunetra steps out with *Strictly* stalwart Brendan Cole



Snake hips: Jake with pro partner Janette Manrara

**'Scott Maslen encouraged me and we waltzed around his kitchen!'** Jake

there's a lot of information to take in.

**Pixie:** I haven't learnt a proper routine in years and it's hard work. We're doing the jive and I get so out of breath by the end – it's fast!

**Sunetra:** I just keep looking at the heels and really wondering how people dance in them. My character, Zoe Hanna, wears high shoes but I have a pair of wedges I stick on while we're rehearsing!

**You're all very busy people – how are you squeezing *Strictly* into your schedules?**

**Jake:** Max is still a suspect in the Lucy Beale murder investigation so I'm sure I'll be busy. I've just written off the next few months – I'll probably be sleeping standing up at some points, but it'll be fine. The studio is literally just across the road from *EastEnders* in Elstree, so there's not much travelling!

**Pixie:** I love being busy and it's really fun to do my music at the same time as *Strictly*. My professional partner, Trent, is coming on the road with me to some of my shows.

**Sunetra:** We film in Cardiff and we're just trying to mix and match the *Casualty* and *Strictly* schedules at the moment. I might ask for a sabbatical in *Holby City*

for a couple of weeks, as their studios are only across the road!

**Do you consider yourself a good dancer?**

**Jake:** Yeah, I love music and can definitely move my feet and shake my hips about. I'd say I've got a good sense of rhythm, so hopefully that will stand me in good stead.

**Sunetra:** I like a boogie – I can keep up with the Macarena and I've always liked a bit of comedy dancing at a wedding. I don't rate myself as terrible, but looking at the others I'm going to be in the dance-off a lot!

**Pixie, you and Trent are the bookies' favourites – is that intimidating?**

**Pixie:** I think it's just too early to say because people haven't even seen me do my first dance yet! I've been impressed with everyone in the competition, especially the male celebrities. They all picked up the steps in the group dance at the launch – I was comparing them to my brother and boyfriend, who wouldn't have been able to do it at all!

**What's the best tip you've had so far?**

**Pixie:** Last year's winner Abbey Clancy told me not to get too nervous, because you don't want to let the nerves ruin the experience for you. Obviously that's easier said than done!

**Sunetra:** I spent an hour on the phone with Patrick Robinson [her *Casualty* castmate who danced on last year's show] and he was telling me how to get my schedule sorted – he was really helpful.

**Jake:** Obviously there are quite a few people on *EastEnders* who've been through it already, so I talked to Jessie Wallace, Letitia Dean and Natalie Cassidy. Scott Maslen encouraged me and we waltzed around his kitchen!

**It wouldn't be *Strictly* without sparkles and spray tans – are you basking in the glamour?**

**Jake:** I'm getting very comfortable with the sequins and tight trousers, it's quite alarming really. Once you sign the contract and commit to the show then I think you've got to throw yourself in whole-heartedly.

**Pixie:** It's fun to dress up and it's cool that they customise the dresses for everyone. I can't wait to see what's in store.

**Are your family and friends excited to see you on the show?**

**Sunetra:** Well, I got bullied into doing *Strictly*! My son Noah said that he'd love to see me dancing on a Saturday night. Then I rang my mum and she said, 'You've got to do it!'

**'When I'm really busy it's hard to see all my family, so I'm pleased that my grandad can watch it'** Pixie



Short odds: Pixie and Aussie Trent Whiddon

**Pixie:** When I'm really busy it's hard to see all my family, so I'm pleased that my grandad can watch it, and all my aunts and uncles. I've already had ticket requests!

**Jake:** *Strictly* has got to be the best family show on TV and my kids are starting to enjoy it now, so that was definitely a big part of my decision to do it. Jo Joyner [who played Max's ex-wife Tanya in *EastEnders*] is excited, too, because she also worked with Sunetra on *No Angels* – she's going to have to vote twice every week!

EMMA BULLIMORE

*Strictly Come Dancing* is previewed on pages 42-43

For the latest news go to [www.whatsonTV.co.uk/strictly](http://www.whatsonTV.co.uk/strictly)

TURN OVER PAGE FOR MORE STRICTLY PICS