

► wrong with it, but there are lots of things wrong with America and I love America. What I get from America when I get off the plane from England is the lack of class distinction, but it's always been an issue here.

"I was interviewed by an English journalist recently and he said that I was wonderful as the butler in *Batman Returns*, and I said, 'Thank you very much,'" says Caine. "But then he said, 'But of course, servants are easier to play, aren't they?' And then I thought, 'Oh my God, all these fucking years I have been ranting on about class in this country and it hasn't changed. Not one bit! And then I had other people say it was easy because I had a cockney accent. I said, 'Do you think that all cockneys are the same, that Alfred Hitchcock, David Bowie and me are the same person?'"

He doesn't try to disguise what he is, or who he is, either. How could he? After all, he's Michael Caine. "I was at a dinner with the Queen once and she asked me if I knew any jokes," he says with a smile. "And I said, 'Not that I can tell you.' So I told her Tommy Cooper jokes. I told her about four or five. 'He says my wife is very big and she was standing on the corner of the street and the neighbours came down and said, 'Come on fellas break it up.' He said, 'I have given up sex for food, I've got a mirror over the dining room table.' Oh I know another one, 'If it weren't for the pickpockets, I wouldn't have any sex life at all.'

"She laughed at them all."



**W**ith a career that has so far lasted 43 years, since his first hit, *Zulu*, in 1964 – in which he played firmly against type, embodying an upper-class army officer – and one that shows no sign of ebbing away, Michael Caine hardly needs a new vocation. But because of a dinner party with Sir Elton John in the south of France last summer, he's now got one. In his time he has been restaurateur, author and fleetingly the seventh member of Madness, although perhaps even Caine didn't envisage himself becoming a pop Svengali at the age of 74. This month Universal releases *Cained*, a selection of chill-out classics compiled by Caine, a man with the largest collection of chill-out tunes this side of Manumission. Like, er, who knew?

While Caine was having dinner at Elton's house in Nice, during the meal he became aware of the chill-out music in the background. Every time a track came on,

Caine would mention what it was called, who it was by and offer some little Michael Caine "Not a lot of people know that" tidbit. Elton asked him how cool it was and then Caine added a bit of buff, and knew no other form of jazz. He also admitted to a compilation tape.

"Elton said I should do a compilation CD, and I said, 'Grainge, who runs the record store, get you a record of the best stuff. And I started compiling the best stuff. And I The weird thing about this type of music is that no one really knows anything about it – who writes it, who records it. It's actually very neglected.'

*Cained* is a chill-out primer, containing everything from Chicane's "No Ordinary Morning", John Martyn's "Sunshine's Better" and Roy Budd's "Hurry To

Me" to St Germain's "Rose Rouge", Nina Simone and Felix Da Housecat's "Sinnerman" and Bent's "Swollen". There are half a dozen classics familiar to anyone with a passing interest in the genre, and genuine oddities, such as the Roy Budd tune. Budd wrote the music for Caine's 1971 movie *Get Carter*, but "Hurry To Me" from *The Big Tease* is far more lounge-core. Altogether *Cained* is a rather wonderful thing, almost like "The Best Of Chill-Out", or "Chill-Out's Greatest Hits".

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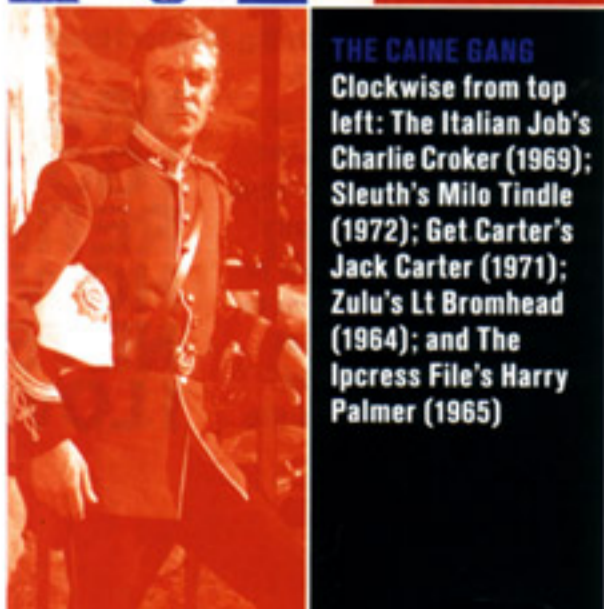
## 'BY THE END OF THE SIXTIES EVERYONE I KNEW WAS FAMOUS'

Caine, enthused by the topic. "I've been buying them for about 15 years, and really know my way around. I have records from all over the place. I buy them in shops, on the internet, people give them to me. Anywhere I can find them, basically. About ten years ago I started making my own compilations – I had all the equipment and just went from there. I started on little cassettes, you know, years ago, but now I do it with CD discs. I've always been interested in music,

and over the years have made literally thousands of tapes. When I was young there was no pop music, and you had to seek things out on Radio Luxembourg and American Forces Network on scratchy old radios. The BBC didn't fall into it for years; they had a guy playing the violin in an evening suit."

Paris has been instrumental in giving Caine a musical education, both in the Fifties, when he first travelled there as an unemployed actor chancing upon Jimmy's, in Montparnasse – and more recently, when he sought out the Buddha Bar after hearing some of its compilation CDs. Nights out at the Ad-Lib Club and the Pickwick Club and the Bag O' Nails back in the Sixties might have helped hone his skills – "Can I dance? Fuck yeah... I used to dance like a loon till three o'clock in the morning" – as did La Discothèque in Wardour Street – "I walked past with Terry Stamp in the mid-Sixties, and as this pretty girl was enticing us in, we went for it. First thing I said was, 'This is just like Paris'" – but it was flying solo in the Parisian back streets that got him acclimatised.

Jazz, yes; R&B certainly. But chill-out? Hearing that Michael Caine likes chill-out is a bit like discovering that Hugh Grant is a fan of Throbbing Gristle and Psychic TV, like finding out that Philip Roth is a Captain ►



**THE CAINE GANG**  
Clockwise from top left: *The Italian Job's* Charlie Croker (1969); *Sleuth's* Milo Tindle (1972); *Get Carter's* Jack Carter (1971); *Zulu's* Lt Bromhead (1964); and *The Ipcress File's* Harry Palmer (1965)