



First: Demi Moore posing in 1991

Put your bump away, Sienna.

Pregnancy isn't a beauty parade

Unless – says ANTONIA HOYLE, who's due in a month – you're willing to join me showing off legs like sausages and cellulite resembling cottage cheese

HER skin is the colour of burnished gold; her generous curves a joy to behold. At eight months pregnant, Sienna Miller is serene yet statuesque, held up to us all as the perfect example of an expectant mother in her prime.

The 30-year-old actress was painted naked, on canvas, by artist Jonathan Yeo in July, just weeks before giving birth to her daughter, Marlowe, in a portrait unveiled this week in an exhibition of his work in Berlin.

It will no doubt be received with great acclaim. But when I saw it yesterday, I nearly choked on my Gaviscon.

I, too, am eight months pregnant, but my physique bears about as much similarity to Sienna's as a screaming newborn does to those perfect babies you see in nappy adverts.

I have never been a fan of female celebrities baring their ridiculously-perfect bodies, but these days it seems rare to see a pregnant celebrity photographed with her clothes on.

It all started with Demi Moore in 1991, when she posed naked on the cover of Vanity Fair magazine while seven months pregnant. The photographs were seen as empowering and thrillingly provocative, and we applauded Demi for smashing taboos about the pregnant body.

Since then, however, celebrities have been jumping on the bandwagon faster than I will be begging for an epidural when I give birth.

The list of pregnant stars who have stripped reads like a Who's Who of Hollywood. From Cindy Crawford to Jessica Simpson, Britney Spears to Mariah Carey, it seems you're not a bona fide mother-to-be unless you've bared your bulge to the world.

Inevitably, the trend has spread to Britain and infected some of our own, less high-profile celebrities – footballer's wife Danielle Lloyd and Celebrity Big Brother star Chantelle Houghton among them.

FRANKLY, when your career hits the skids, the fastest way to resurrect it appears to be to get pregnant then bare your body in the pages of the highest-bidding gossip magazine.

But, two decades after Demi, it's all a bit of a bore – as well as incredibly demoralising for mere mortals like me who are heavily pregnant but not in possession of the inconceivably glamorous, gravity-defying bodies of our celebrity counterparts.

Sienna, I know how wonderfully proud you were of your bump, but was this the right way to express that pride? What's wrong with a simple photograph in the family album, for Heaven's sake?

Pregnancy is not an aesthetically appealing state of being that enables a woman to celebrate her newfound curves – at least, not in my book.

We develop a host of ailments, from varicose veins to stretch marks, from water retention to mysterious moles which seem to appear with every passing day. The last thing most of us want to do is showcase all this to the wider world.

I am three stone heavier than my pre-pregnancy weight. I have cellulite from my shins to the tops of my arms.

My legs look like link sausages without the links, and my hands like inflated rubber gloves.

Unattractive as this sounds, it is not unusual. Without wanting to blow my own trumpet, I think I look perfectly normal for a woman about to give birth.

But you'll have to take my word for that because there's as much chance of me being pictured naked as there will be of my newborn giving me more than two hours of uninterrupted sleep next month.

I catch glimpses of myself in the mirror as I peel myself out of my voluminous pregnancy underwear and into my baggy pyjamas each evening. It's not a sight I want to linger over for too long, and I'm sure nobody else does either.

But it seems Sienna and her celebrity peers are not afflicted by any of the discomforts I've described. Which begs the question: how do they look

so good? Sympathetic lighting and clever artistry is the answer I don't see how else Sienna can be baring breasts that wouldn't look amiss on an 18-year-old. Or well-slept eyes, gym-honed biceps and upper thighs that don't look like a generous serving of cottage cheese.

In a painted image, anything is possible. And in photographs, we're so used to seeing celebrities airbrushed that the very idea we're getting the reality of pregnancy in these shots is pretty laughable.

Employing the world's best make-up artists and an internationally renowned photographer such as Annie Leibovitz, who shot Demi Moore's pregnancy pictures, is a long way from a candid snap in the bathroom mirror.

I also think there's a fair amount of misery-inducing sacrifice involved on the part of celebrities as well. Earlier this year, I interviewed a



Painting a rosy picture: Actress Sienna Miller's naked portrait

Hollywood trainer who specialises in helping new mothers get back into shape. She told me that post-partum preparation begins while the stars are still pregnant.

NO MOUNTAINS of macaroni cheese for them, and no 'eating for two' second helpings of sticky toffee pudding. Carbs are limited, and her clients carry on exercising long after most of us have let our gym memberships lapse.

This seems to be the way of things for supermodel Gisele Bündchen, 32, who is sailing through her second pregnancy with as much ease as I polished off my second round of toast and peanut butter this morning.

Earlier this week, she was pictured seven months' pregnant and flawless, in a bikini on a Miami beach. Gisele

— sanctimonious to the last — says there is no need to overindulge just because you're expecting.

I don't doubt she's right, but the fact is if you don't have a millionaire's budget, a celebrity trainer and the paparazzi trailing your every move, pregnancy is a solitary existence.

For the past eight months I have been sober, too exhausted to see my friends, too irritable to endear myself to my husband, and too unattractive to socialise. Given my limited opportunities for pleasure, I think my predilection for the biscuit tin is quite understandable.

And anyway, pregnancy isn't a beauty contest. There is enough pressure on women to look good as it is. Surely this is the one time in our lives when we can let our standards lapse and appreciate the fact that our bodies are doing something quite remarkable?

Even if I was possessed of Sienna's implausible beauty, I doubt I'd want to broadcast it by appearing in the buff. Without wanting to sound prudish, I think the changes in our bodies during pregnancy warrant a little more modesty.

I'm not sure which riles me more: that Sienna, notoriously opposed to the paparazzi taking her picture when she is in public, is prepared to violate her privacy by posing naked at such a private time; or that, by doing so, she is sending out such a distorted image of what pregnancy really entails.

So, for the sake of my self-esteem, and that of expectant mothers everywhere, I would urge the next pregnant celebrity thinking of stripping off to spare us.

We have seen it all before.