

Elton doodles for dinner



A SOLO musician since he left the group Bluesology more than five decades ago, is Sir Elton John planning to start his own band again?

For I can reveal that he has taken to calling his family 'the Johnettes', in the manner of a Sixties pop combo.

Sir Elton took his husband, the film-maker David Furnish, and their two sons, Zachary, eight, and Elijah, six, to Da Ivo restaurant in Venice for lunch on Sunday.

And to say thank you to the owner, Giovanni Fracassi, he drew this charming doodle of his family. Next to it, he wrote, 'Elton John and the Johnettes'. After Zac's



birth, Sir Elton declared: 'I want music to be a huge part of his life.'

How long before the boys start tickling the ivories?



SHAK

Downton creator accuses England of living in the past

HE WON an Oscar for the period drama Gosford Park and made a fortune when he created Downton Abbey, but Julian Fellowes is not afraid to bite the hand that feeds him.

The writer and Tory peer criticised the British for dwelling on the past. Speaking in America, Lord Fellowes compared this country unfavourably with the U.S., which is far more focused on the future, he claims.

'America is a very forward-looking society,' declares Fellowes, who lives in a manor house in Dorset. 'It's what's coming [and] what's next that inspires everyone.'

And he adds, witheringly: 'England, really if anything, its fault is the other direction, that it's too much in its own past and everyone is dwelling on the past all the time.' Dwelling on the

■ REPLACED as Prince Philip by an older actor in the next series of *The Crown*, Matt Smith is already missing playing the Queen's Consort. 'I love him, and sort of always have,' he admits. Teasingly, Smith adds of feedback from the Palace: 'I think a few of them have seen it. There may have been a note. There may have been a text, but I'm not in a position to divulge such information.' Spoilsport!

waiting to Princess Michael of Kent, Emma Kitchener — knew how country house life operated.

The film's success inspired Fellowes to create another country house series, Downton Abbey, whose money-spinning success helped transform the fortunes of ITV.

Fellowes's other period dramas include *The Young Victoria*, *Titanic* and *Vanity Fair*. This week, filming started at Twickenham Studios on his latest period offering, *Belgravia*.

Fellowes, who was elevated to the peerage by David Cameron in 2011, made the comments while promoting his new film, *The Chaperone*, a Twenties drama about the rise of actress Louise Brooks, which has just been released in the U.S.

Hollywood, the peer observes, 'has this forward-looking dynamic. So, you know, if the price you pay is that you make less period drama, I don't think it's so high'.

past has, of course, transformed Fellowes' life.

He was best known for playing Kilwillie in the BBC's Scottish drama *Monarch Of The Glen* when the celebrated Hollywood director Robert Altman asked him to write the screenplay for *Gosford Park*.

Altman chose him because Fellowes — who is married to a former lady-in-

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