

Cowell's band

Simon Cowell is the king of talent spotting, and he's still at it when picking his friends. Here are eight contenders he thinks have the X Factor



THE BIG CHEESE

Who Gordon Brown, 57, Prime Minister.
Why While Blair liked Britpop, Brown prefers 'inspirational' reality TV. The overtly sentimental pair connected at The Pride of Britain Awards leading to repeat invitations to Downing Street, after which the starstruck PM gushed to their mutual friend Piers Morgan that Simon was 'smart, direct and honest'.
The X Factor With his eye on a title, Simon recently scored Brownie points raising more than £1 million for British charities (Gordon sent a thank-you letter). Arise Sir Simon.



THE PM-IN-WAITING

Who David Cameron, 42, Tory party leader with the X Factor.
Why Andy Coulson introduced the pair and they bonded over their love for Cheryl Cole. Now they share spaghetti bolognese at Cipriani. Cameron wants to bring a populist touch to the party for the next election; Cowell wants to stage X Factor-style election debates and praises the politico for being 'very show business'.
The X Factor Simon thinks David will be sympathetic to his plan for X Factoring-up party conferences.



THE A-LISTER

Who Victoria Beckham, 34, Essex clotheshorse with a hottie husband.
Why After an introduction by Spice Girls svengali Simon Fuller, Cowell sweetened the Beckhams' move to LA with cups of sugar and a crash course in California living. He even had the pluck to tell Posh to 'quit pop'.
The X Factor Mr Nasty is courting VB to be the latest judge in his jury.



THE MOGULETTE

Who Amanda Staveley, 35, runs PCP Capital Partners.
Why When not being matchmade at Scott's by Philip Green over fish and chips, they're sizing up each other's Jags, or trying to out-rich each other (currently tied on £100m).
The X Factor She's in with the Abu Dhabi and Qatar ruling families after orchestrating the Manchester City takeover and Barclays bank bail-out: a perfect general to orchestrate Simon's march on the Middle East.



THE FIXER

Who Andy Coulson, 40, former *News of the World* editor turned Tory spin doctor.
Why They bonded years ago over Sinatra and reality TV. Andy offered Simon a *NOTW* column but Cowell's PR Max Clifford was anti it. In revenge, Coulson tapped Cowell's phone.
The X Factor Cowell wants to be in with the next election winners, so Coulson set him up with Cameron. In return, Simon sent munchkins from *Britain's Got Talent* for Cameron's visit to the Evelina Children's Hospital.



THE MINI-ME

Who Piers Morgan, 43, editor turned TV pundit.
Why With a shared love of Caribbean sun and Stringfellows, the pair have been friends for 15 years and share a manager. Cowell called on the former *Daily Mirror* editor to be a bitchy Brit judge for *America's Got Talent*.
The X Factor Morgan owes Cowell for making him a star in the States, not to mention the free holidays to his Barbados bolthole. Having secured a loyal replacement, Cowell can now plot his retirement.



THE TOTTY

Who Zeta Graff, 38-ish, ambitious Greek-born actress, who struck gold with her divorce from diamond dealer François Graff.
Why They hit it off in 2004 at an Elton John fundraiser in Hollywood. Graff chased him around the Marquee Club, causing his girlfriend Terri Seymour to blow her top.
The X Factor Cowell likes leggy brunettes. Now Terri's out of the picture, Zeta could be the X to his Y.



THE TYCOON

Who Philip Green, 56, retail tycoon and Kate Moss-loving billionaire.
Why The self-made gym bunnies struck up a friendship while comparing the size of their Learjets, poolside at Sandy Lane in Barbados.
The X Factor Cowell matchmade Leona Lewis and Sir Philip and they're on the verge of launching a range of animal-friendly clothes for Topshop together.

