

# TOP TABLE



**Eoghan McDermott of RTE 2's new teenage gameshow Frenemies picks Gotham Cafe, South Anne St, Dublin.**

WHILE everybody enjoys the ceremony of going to a very swanky restaurant every now and again, ultimately I'm not that sophisticated when it comes to food and Gotham does really tasty casual dining.

It's great value and you always get a smile when you walk in. **The power of a smile should not be underestimated.** Plus there is nowhere in Dublin that I've eaten in yet that can top their pizzas.

The ambiance lends itself to marathon chats and catch ups with great friends.

**There is nothing like great unfussy food and a few glasses of wine to get the banter rocketing.** I always notice it's full of all sorts, groups, families, couples ... I've had one or two first (and last) dates there too.

**The atmosphere is that lovely balance of energy and chill.**

Some places might boast a slicker menu but couldn't match the atmosphere and that's why Gotham wins every time. And the staff are superb.

Like I said, you are always greeted with a smile.

I recently moved to London so I haven't been to Gotham in



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a while, but there is an eastern European gent who usually greets at the door and he should give master classes in great first impressions.

As I have mentioned, their pizzas are amazing, **my favorite being the Bowery or Broadway pizzas** or if I'm feeling like being healthy I'll go for the Spicy Tiger Prawn Salad. Duh, WINNING!

I'm not a fussy drinker so I'll usually have the house white or a coke with my meal.

It's not the most sophisticated place on earth, but **it's the best of its kind in Dublin** and I bet most of the people there every night are repeat customers.

*Check out the new series Frenemies, RTE2 5pm Wednesday.* ●



IT'S THE often-heard line that stick-thin celebs spew out, making us sick with envy: "I eat like a pig and I hate the gym.. I just have a really fast metabolism."

But Glee's Lea Michele has a refreshingly honest approach - her perfectly-toned physique is down to good old-fashioned slogging it out in the gym.

The all-singing, all-dancing 24-year-old watches what she eats - she tries to stick to a vegan diet - but doesn't obsess about food, and still tucks into big Italian Sunday dinners when she visits family.

Not only is Lea honest about her diet and exercise regime, she's also practical about it.

Gwyneth Paltrow and Shakira may follow the Tracy Anderson diet plan, which involves two hours working out six days a week and depriving your body of practically all food stuffs, but what normal person has the time or the will power for that?

Just like her level-headed Glee character, Rachel, Lea exercises in a practical way; taking hikes, going for bike rides and practising yoga. Or when she's tight on time, she works out with the new Nike Training Club app on her iPhone, which is basically like a personal trainer in your pocket, allowing you to fit in your workout anytime, anywhere.

The 80/20 rule (being good 80 per cent of the time, but allowing herself the odd treat) is her secret.

"I'm a part-time vegan because it's not always possible to eat vegan when you travel with work," says Lea.

"But the great thing about Los Angeles is that you can get loads of delicious vegan food. My favourites are vegan burrito and chocolate and coconut ice-cream.

"I'm a girl who eats, and I have my family to thank for that. My

**Glee's Lea is over being told she is too ugly for L.A. - and celebrates a good appetite**



**Niamh BYRNE**



**PREP IDOL: Lea's role as prim Rachel in Glee has catapulted her to fame**

mother's side is

Italian, my father's is Jewish. We're the kind of family who, every Sunday night, have dinner with all 19 of my cousins.

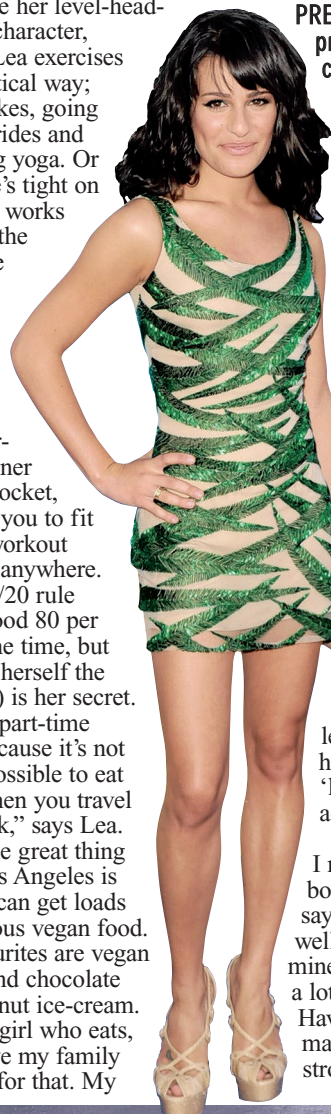
"So I'll have a big Italian dinner and I don't give a crap because it makes me happy.

"Visiting my family in New York really re-charges my batteries."

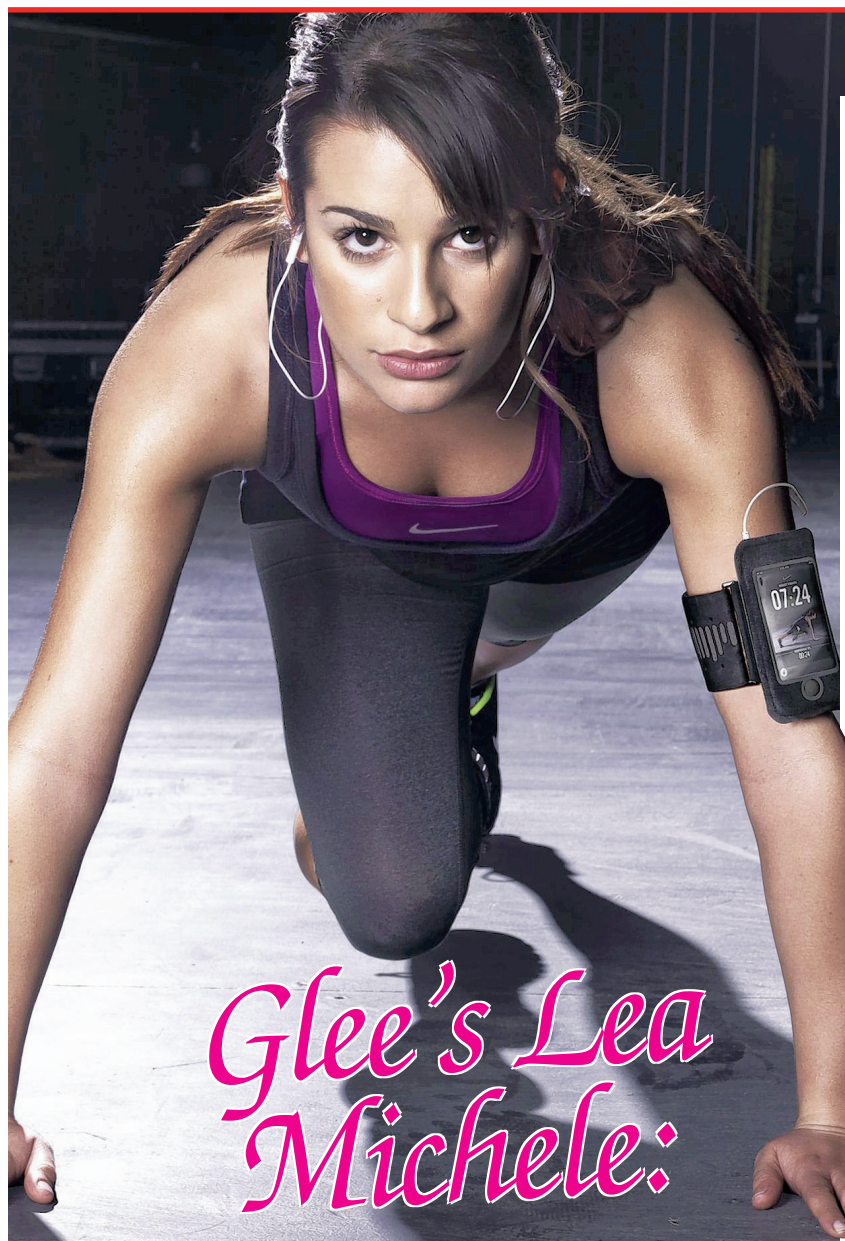
To counteract these big Italian feasts, Michele has a healthy, active lifestyle and job - her athletic figure is down to hard work and not

'lucky genes' like most actresses claim.

"It sounds cheesy, but I really believe that your body is a temple," she says. "I exercise and eat well and take good care of mine, which has given me a lot of self-confidence. Having a strong body has made me feel like a stronger person."



Glee whiz



## Glee's Lea Michele:

I'LL TUCK INTO  
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CRAP

FIT: Lea credits Nike's Training Club app for her killer figure



"I get outdoors a lot, I love to hike, ride my bike and rock-climb. They're not just brilliant workouts, they're like therapy as they clear my head. I also do Bikram Yoga - I could be in that hot room all day."

Her high-octane role in Glee also gives the star a money-can't-buy-you cardio workout.

"The dance routines are pretty punishing, especially when you have to do 50 takes," she says. "But when I realise how much fun I'm having with my best friends it just makes me want to do it again."

Like the strong, determined character, Lea's always been driven, and never succumbed to the pressures of Hollywood to conform to a certain image.

Self-assured but never cocky, she knew from a young age that she had what it took to make it in the acting world, although there were always people ready to knock her down because of her unique looks.

"I didn't know I could sing until I auditioned for Les Miserables when I was eight years old," she reveals. "My friend was auditioning so I wanted to try out as well."

"My mother was like: 'You can't sing' I'd never even tried. After the audition, I said: 'Mom, I think they like me.' She said: 'if we ever hear from

them again, it'll be a miracle.'

"I was a ballsy little kid, I felt no fear at all."

Lea did get the part, and then spent her childhood acting on Broadway. After school, she went to L.A. to break into TV and film.

"When I was growing up, so many people told me there was no place for me on TV, that I wasn't pretty enough."

She adds: "L.A. is a tough city. When I first moved here from New York I wasn't sure I'd fit in as there's a definite idea of what's beautiful."

With Italian-Jewish heritage, Michele didn't fit into the blonde-haired, blue-eyed ideal of what a young actress should look like

"I was the only girl in high school class not to get a nose job," she laughs. "The great thing about Glee is that it gave me a chance - and proves that you don't have to look like how everyone else looks to be beautiful and successful. Differences should be celebrated."

"I want to show young girls that you don't have to do what all the cool kids do to turn out OK in the real world."

"I never was a party girl, even in high school, that wasn't my scene. If you want to come over to my house and stay up all night, I think that is more fun." ●