



AGE: 56

LATEST GIG: Checking back into *General Hospital* as Dr. Noah Drake, 22 years after he left the daytime soap.

■ **Since You Went Away:** A 1982 Grammy winner for "Jessie's Girl," Springfield left *GH* the following year to focus on his music and break out as a film star. But the Australian-born rocker hit a few potholes. His big-screen debut (1984's *Hard to Hold*) fizzled, album sales waned and a 1988 ATV crash almost cost him his life. "I was recuperating at home for nearly six months," he says, "and it got to the point where I just didn't want to go out." After battling depression, he started touring again in 1998 and headlined in Las Vegas in 2001-02. Now he and his band "go out four days at a time and then go home," he says.

■ **Paging Dr. Drake:** "There's more to play than just the smoothie Noah was in the '80s," says Springfield, explaining why he leaped at the offer to return to *GH*. "There's a lot more baggage. He comes back with a son with whom he has issues." And rekindles a romance with old flame Bobbie Spencer (Jackie Zeman). "It was like a blast back to the past," says Zeman. But will it last? "I'm going to do 12 episodes," says Springfield, "and then we'll see."

■ **Rick's Girl:** Springfield credits his comeback to his wife of 21 years, Barbara, 44, "a 4'11" dynamo," says her 6'1" mate. "Her strength is what's held us together through all we've been through. Our kids [Liam, 20, and Josh, 16] have seen that through it all you can stay together," he says. "You don't have to get divorced." The boys have also learned to put up with Dad's quirks. "I'm always hugging them and getting in their faces. They go, 'Dad! Get out of here!' But they're very loving. They'll [even] wear my clothes! Maybe it's because I [still] try to dress as a teenager." ●



On call as Dr. Drake (ca. 1982).

CATCHING UP WITH...

Rick Springfield