

Melissa Gilbert, 58, said she 'lost her mind' following her 2011 divorce from her second husband Bruce Boxleitner Gilbert admitted in a Page Six interview that she got botox and fillers, bought a mustang and even got herself a younger French boyfriend But she has since given up the Hollywood frills of botox and high expectations for perfectionism after having a life-changing realization that she wasn't 'happy' Gilbert and her current husband Timothy Busfield, 64, moved to the Catskill mountains after purchasing a 14-acre property for \$98,000 in 2018 The actress, who famously played Laura Ingalls in the classic TV series, is back to enjoying the 'simple life,' much like she portrayed on the hit show

Little House on the Prairie star Melissa Gilbert said she 'lost her mind, got botox and bought a Mustang' in the wake of her 2011 split from her second husband - long before ditching Hollywood for the simple life in the Catskills.

Gilbert, 58 — whose new book 'Back to the Prairie' details her life with current husband Timothy Busfield and moving to the Catskills — had recently told Fox News that she ditched plastic surgery and Hollywood expectations for the freedom of being in her own skin.

The actress says she 'lost her mind' after the 2011 divorce from her second husband Bruce Boxleitner, according to a recent interview with Page Six, and admitted that she got botox and fillers, bought a Mustang and even got herself a younger French boyfriend, who wore a T-shirt that read 'Snatch' to a brunch at her mother's house.

'It was like, I lost my mind,' she told Page Six. 'One of my friends says, 'You know, every once in a while we all have to go to the zoo. And you went and now you're back.'"

Gilbert, who played Laura Ingalls in the classic TV series which aired between 1974 and 1982, revealed in her 2010 memoir how she struggled with drugs and alcoholism, underwent multiple plastic surgery procedures throughout her career and had a series of relationships with some of Hollywood's leading men - including Tom Cruise.

Now, years, later, she admits that she 'sometimes wants to smack myself in the head' over the image she was portraying for her two sons. But she added that she hopes they will see the growth and be inspired.

Gilbert shares one son with first husband Bo Brinkman and the other with second husband Boxleitner.

A year after her 2011 divorce, Gilbert met her now husband Busfield.

'Tim says it to me all the time, I wouldn't be the woman I am today if one thing had gone differently,' she told Page Six, adding that she doesn't regret her past. 'It's kind of hard to look back and want to have changed anything.'

Gilbert is now enjoying a simpler life after escaping to a \$98,000 14-acre property in the Catskill mountains - only 20 minutes away from the famed Woodstock location.

While Gilbert says she misses family and friends in Los Angeles, she doesn't miss the city or the pollution and is now enjoying the simplicity of the Catskills.

'I've really embraced this lovely stillness in my existence ... And I am not chasing after some elusive thing, whether it's a success or a job or money or things. I'm really just enjoying the sweet simplicity of my life.'

They've lovingly dubbed their new home 'The Cabbage,' and it is where she was inspired to write her new book 'Back to the Prairie: A Home Remade. A Life Rediscovered' during the height of the pandemic.

'This is me now - no hair color, no filler, no implants, no Botox. I just take care of myself. I try to eat as well as

I can. I drink a lot of water. And I'm really enjoying the aging process because of that.

'[Aging] is an uphill battle. Eventually, everyone loses. It just does not fit in with who I am and what my life is now. It's exhausting and it's unnecessary. I had to find a place within myself where I could stop trying to, or feeling like I needed to be what everybody else wanted me to be and be exactly who I am.'

The actress, who once admitted to drinking two bottles of wine a night by herself, said she used to be attracted to 'men who smelled like alcohol' after starring alongside the show's creator, producer and star Michael Landon, who 'sipped vodka from his coffee mug.'

Gilbert realized she had a drinking problem when one night, while a friend was over for dinner, she passed out and woke up in a dog bed. The incident prompted her to go to therapy and attend AA meetings, Today reported in 2009.

The 58-year-old also had three nose jobs by the age of 20 after realizing that makeup artists would contour her nose to make it smaller.

Gilbert also became involved with Tom Cruise, among other high-profile men; and even had an unplanned pregnancy with then-boyfriend Rob Lowe, whom she started dating at 17.

She is now leaving that all behind to enjoy the harsh New York winters, raising chickens, and growing her food, alongside her third husband director Timothy Busfield, 64, whom she married in 2013 and shares a dog Chicago.

It was also the third marriage for Busfield, who starred in television series thirtysomething and The West Wing.

'Like everyone else, as we were going through that, eating all the comfort food and making all the sourdough bread, I was posting pictures of the meals we were eating, which were very comforting and wildly unhealthy, but lots of fun!' she told Fox News.

The actress said she was doing a segment on CBS Mornings about the move when she realized maybe she did have something to say about her new, simpler life.

'Our lives are simple now, and there's a sweetness to that simplicity. And with that simplicity comes a real love for stillness and living my life in a peaceful place,' she told Fox News.

Despite growing up in sunny Los Angeles, Gilbert said she always knew at her 'core' that she 'loved being in the outdoors' and 'around animals' and enjoyed the 'sweet, simple things in life.'

'Once we got up here, once we got our land and started to look at all the things we could do with it, and then when lockdown happened, it unleashed all of this stuff inside me. There was a person who was dying to have this [new life],' she told Fox News.

'I still can't believe this is what my life is like now. It's heaven. I'm just so blessed.'

Gilbert and Busfield - who she described as her 'blanket' and 'comfort place' - got their first taste of the country life in his native Michigan, where the couple lived for five years after getting married.

They eventually relocated to Manhattan's Upper West Side, while Gilbert was casted in play called The Dead, 1904, and her husband took on work for the NYC famous show Law & Order: SVU, but they found themselves craving the escape of the country lifestyle and fresh air and found themselves in the Catskills.

However, their dream house certainly didn't start out as 'heaven' when the couple bought the property back in 2018. The fixer-upper wasn't livable at first and required a lot of tender, love, and care from the couple to make it 'home.'

'This is one of those places that most people would say, 'Are you nuts?' if you expressed interest in buying it,' she told The New York Times. 'But Tim and I are the best kind of nuts. We're hopeful visionaries.'

The small house had peeling stucco on the outside and was covered with mold and mildew and was home to a few mice, but they saw its 'potential.'

'[The house] had no heat, and the plumbing was kind of wonky. We had to empty all the stuff that was in the house because it was fully furnished, I mean, to the point where there was cereal in the cabinets and soap in the shower. It was like the people had just wrapped up out of the house and it sat there for decades like that,' she told Fox News.

'Once we cleaned all of that stuff out, we put the wood-burning stove to warm it before we put in an actual heating system. There was so much cleaning. I remember my husband with a bucket just cleaning the ceilings with hydrogen peroxide and Clorox. We scrubbed that place within an inch of its life.'

Despite having a combined net worth estimated at being around \$500thousand, the couple spent their first night living back on the prairie on a 'mattress on the floor in the living room.'

'We were waiting for the delivery of the fridge, the washing machine, the dishwasher and stove. I just remember thinking at that moment: 'This is home. This is going to be our home.'

'I think it was that night, that first night that we slept there, is when I realized: 'Oh gosh, this is really it. And we're going to be doing this ourselves. And it's going to be incredible," she told Fox News.

She spent time refurnishing an old couch, which the couple bought is an ugly shade of gray and transformed into a burgundy dream. She quickly moved on to do the same for a loveseat. They built floating shelves out of recycled bowling alley wood and sprayed a piece tin roofing with vinegar to give a unique look before they mounted the piece in the kitchen and hung their collection of cast iron pans, they told The New York Times.

They decorated their home with family photos hung randomly on the wall and even a 1960s puzzle the couple did together, which they framed, and the poster of the band The Who joins the décor.

'The room was designed with Pete Townshend in mind,' Busfield told The New York Times. 'We keep hoping he'll come by one day and hang out.'

Now the actress spends her days cleaning out the chicken coop, building window boxes with her husband until dinnertime, and tending to her garden, where she grows strawberries.

She's relearning her love for the outdoors, which she briefly got to experience on the Little House set as a child and said there is 'something about the outdoors that still calls me.'

'It always felt like a big adventure, to be in the outdoors and play while working. I just loved the feeling it gave me,' she told Fox News. 'There were other kids to play with and lots of games we could do. They always had a lot of activities for us on set. And there were animals everywhere.'

'[Now], planting my garden, watching over my chickens and just feeling the dirt and nurturing our food that grows each day from the ground - it's satisfying. It awakened my soul in a way that I've never felt before.'

The star said she certainly does not 'miss Hollywood,' but does miss her friends and family that still reside in LA.

Gilbert, 58, was born in Los Angeles, California, on May 8, 1964. She was adopted by late actor and comedian Paul Gilbert, and his wife, actress Barbara Crane, one day after her birth - whom later divorced.

As a child, she appeared in tons of TV commercials, before landing the role was Laura in The Little House on the Prairie.

After that came to an end, she continued to act - starring in the drama film Choices of the Heart, the western Sylvester, 1986 flick Choices, thriller Ice House, Stand By Your Man (alongside Rosie O'Donnell), crime show Sweet Justice, 1991 drama Switched at Birth, Then Came Jones (opposite Sean Patrick Flanery), Secrets and Lies (which also starred Ryan Phillippe and Juliette Lewis), and When We Last Spoke in 2019.

She also voiced Batgirl in *Batman: The Animated Series* throughout the 1990s.

Throughout 2008 and 2009, she played Caroline 'Ma' Ingalls in the musical adaptation of *Little House on the Prairie*.

After suffering from back pain, a doctor told her she had been working on the musical with a broken back for months, and she then underwent surgery to replace a disk in her lower spine.

She released an autobiography in 2009, in which she opened up about her past issues with alcoholism and drug abuse.

Gilbert said she realized she had a drinking problem when one night, while a friend was over for dinner, she passed out and woke up in a dog bed. The incident prompted her to go to therapy and attend AA meetings, *Today* reported in 2009.

She participated in season 14 of *Dancing With the Stars*, during which she fell and hit her head. She was rushed to the hospital and suffered from a concussion, but continued on with the competition - ultimately coming in fifth place.

In 2016, she ran for Michigan's 8th congressional district, but later dropped out of the race citing health issues. At the time, she came under fire after it came out that she owed \$360,000 in back federal taxes and \$112,000 in California state taxes. She has since reportedly negotiated a repayment plan with the IRS.

As for her love life, she had a rumored fling with Tom Cruise in the '80s. She was also briefly engaged to actor Rob Lowe, and after that ended, she started dating Bo Brinkman - cousin of acclaimed actor Dennis Quaid.

She and Brinkman married in February 1988, and they welcomed a son, named Dakota, one year later. They divorced in 1992.

She then entered into a relationship with Bruce Boxleitner. After three engagements, they tied the knot in January 1995.

She gave birth to their son, Michael Garrett Boxleitner, in 1995. It's been said that he was named after her *Little House on the Prairie* costar Landon.

She and Boxleitner split in 2011, and two years later, she married Busfield, whom she is still with today.

From tax evasion to struggles with addiction, the *Little House on the Prairie* cast has certainly had their fair share of controversies.

The show, which went on for nine seasons before it concluded in 1983, followed a family who lived on a farm in Minnesota in the 1870s, '80s, and '90s.

Created by Michael Landon, it was based off Laura Ingall Wilder's best-selling novel of the same name. It starred Landon, Gilbert, Karen Grassle, and Melissa Sue Anderson - among others.

Though the series dealt with some very serious subjects including alcoholism, poverty, racism, cancer, and even rape, it was considered wholesome family viewing, and it quickly became a fan favorite. It was ranked the third top show in 1974 and was watched by millions of households across the globe.