



From top: Orford Castle, magicians' props, Shakespeare, a chocolate Labrador and Maggi Hambling's Scallop sculpture



Above: Liza Minnelli in Cabaret and an original Spider-Man comic

The prized possession you value above all others... Our 100-year-old weekend retreat in Orford, Suffolk. My wife Jill [TV producer Jill Green] and I bought it in an auction in 2002 for £200,000. It's basically an old wooden boat shed with only one bedroom, but it's right by the sea, with amazing views.

The biggest regret you wish you could amend... Meeting Hollywood film producer Harvey Weinstein in 2005. He went on to make Stormbreaker – the film of my first book about teenage spy Alex Rider – and it wasn't a happy experience. I found him repellent.

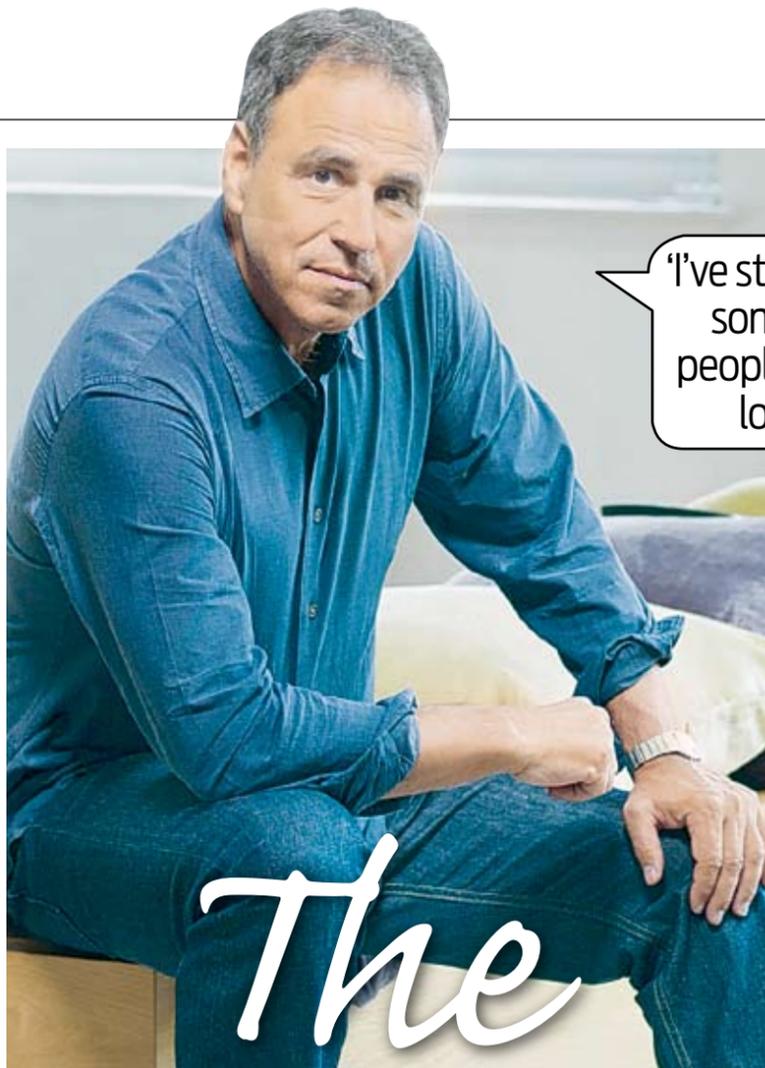
The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions... I'd begin with scrambled eggs at Orford with Jill and our sons Nicholas, 24, and Cassian, 22. I'd write until midday then walk along the coast, ending at Orford Castle. I'd have a dog with me to replace Lucky, our chocolate Labrador, who died two years ago. Jill and I would have grilled lobster for lunch at The Inn hotel, Antigua, then I'd swim and scuba dive. Later we'd shop in New York, then stroll through the Museum of Modern Art. We'd go riding and watch the sunset at Wadi Rum valley, Jordan. After a gin and tonic by Sydney Harbour, we'd watch Mozart's Don Giovanni at the Opera House. We'd end the day at Chez Georges bar in Agios Nikolaos, Crete, drinking Metaxa brandy, which only seems to taste nice in Greece!

The temptation you wish you could resist... Cadbury's Chocolate Fingers. **The book that holds an everlasting resonance...** The Go-Between by LP Hartley. It's about thwarted childhood and is everlastingly sad. I was 15 when I read it and it started me on my journey towards reading great literature.

The priority activity if you were the Invisible Man for a day... I'd walk into Sir John Chilcot's home and read his report into the Iraq war, then publish it for the world to see. It's a monumental scandal that it hasn't been published. I think the Establishment has stopped it because it finally nails Tony Blair.

The pet hate that makes your hackles rise... Chuggers – people who collect for charity in the street. I loathe their insincerity and lack of knowledge.

The film you can watch time and time again... Cabaret. Liza Minnelli as Sally Bowles is amazing, the script is wonderful and the choreography and music are absolutely astonishing.



'I've studied magic, but there's something creepy about people who perform it – just look at Paul Daniels!'

The DEFINITE ARTICLE

We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept THE definitive answer. This week: Foyle's War creator Anthony Horowitz

The person who has influenced you most... My wife. We've been married 25 years and she's steered me through all the trials of being a writer. She's my mental guru and best friend.

The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint... Shakespeare. I'd like to know how he managed to write so much.

The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child... Most adults are idiots and you're much smarter than them.

The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity... I've studied the history of magic – it's fascinating to know how it works. I own lots of props, but never perform it. There's something creepy about people who do – look at Paul Daniels!

The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again... My collection of nearly 500 Marvel comics. I had all the X-Men, Fantastic Four and Spider-Man editions from No. 1 onwards. Removal men stole them when we moved when I was 17.

The unending quest that drives you on... For my next book to be better than the previous one.

The poem that touches your soul... This Is The First Thing by Philip Larkin. It has only four lines but it holds a great truth about life and death.

The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase... Many people have pigeonholed me as either the writer of Foyle's War or Alex Rider – I've written many other things.

The event that altered the course of your life and character... The birth of my first son, Nicholas, when I was 33. It shifted me up a generation and changed the way I saw the future.

The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it... I'd blow up Maggi Hambling's Scallop sculpture on Aldeburgh beach. It's so trite and twee.

The song that means most to you... The Beatles' Eleanor Rigby. Their music was the background to my childhood.

The happiest moment you will cherish forever... The moment we won the auction to buy our Suffolk house.

The saddest time that shook your world... When my mother Joyce told me she had pancreatic cancer at 65. I was inconsolable. She lived another 18 months but died in 1990. She believed in my ideas and inspired me to write.

The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you... To have a play performed at the National Theatre.

The philosophy that underpins your life... To try to be good and helpful.

The order of service at your funeral... If I have my way there won't be a funeral, but I won't be too unhappy if I'm buried in the cemetery at St Bartholomew's Church in Orford. That's a decent spot!

The way you want to be remembered... As the author of the Alex Rider series, which I believe helped get a generation of children reading.

The Plug... My new Alex Rider novel, Russian Roulette, is out now published by Walker Books in hardback, digital and audio formats. Visit www.anthonyhorowitz.com. ■

As told to Rob McGibbon

PS...

Emma Thompson and Tom Hanks team up in Saving Mr Banks, the real story behind Mary Poppins, in cinemas from Friday. Jude Law plays Henry V at London's Noël Coward Theatre. And Gary Barlow's new album Since I Saw You Last is out on Monday



NEXT WEEK

- Free! Mary Berry's festive cakes and bakes 32-page magazine
- Jamie Oliver's Christmas cocktails
- Monty Don on the BBC's Great British Garden Revival
- PLUS Britain's most detailed TV listings