



MY HAVEN

SIR RICHARD BRANSON

The Virgin tycoon, 65, at The Temple, a Balinese-style pagoda on his Caribbean island Necker

1 LOVE ISLAND

My wife Joan and I moved to Necker permanently in 2006 so we could focus on our health. The island has been central to our love story because I wooed Joan here when we first visited in 1978, and we got married here 11 years later. It's not easy living so far away from our children, Holly, 34, and Sam, 30, who are in Britain, but they visit often with their partners and our three grandchildren. This lovely family shot is from Holly's wedding on Necker in 2011.

2 TEA POTTY

I'm not sure how I'd survive without English Breakfast tea. Even in the Caribbean I must drink 20 cups a day. After tennis and breakfast, my working day begins early by looking at emails with my assistant Helen. I can get a lot done before most of the world logs on and from then on I make calls to our various Virgin businesses. I read the news on my iPad, write blog posts and check my social media. I often keep going long into the night – and a cup of tea will never be far away.

3 SMASHING!

This is my trusty Babolat tennis racquet, although I'm trying out some lighter ones because of an elbow injury. I travel for about six months of the year and my racquet always comes with me. I have a solid forehand, but improving my backhand is top of my to-do list. My most memorable match was in 2013 in our pro-am Necker Cup against professional player Mike Bryan and singer Jimmy Buffett. I played my best ever and we won... but then my partner was Rafa Nadal!

4 TAKE NOTE

The Temple, where I'm sitting, is a short walk from our house and it's a wonderful place to think and relax. It's calming and inspiring and some of Virgin's most powerful initiatives were incubated here. This notebook was a gift and has my initials monogrammed on the cover. I'm often given notebooks and I fill them up quickly. Who knows where I'd be if I hadn't had one to hand over the years to write down my ideas – or more importantly, other people's!

5 BEST GAME

My late father Ted taught me to play chess when I was a child and I still love it. I'm always up for a game on this set and I must have played thousands in my lifetime. Every player has their own strategies, which always makes for a unique contest. My style is attacking. Just like in life and in business, chess is more fun when you're making your own moves and taking calculated risks. It combines tactics, planning, bravery and risk-taking – I think it's the best game in the world.

6 A WILD PLACE

Necker is a haven for animals and we have more than 140 species on our 74 acres. My favourites are the flamingos and lemurs. These fluffy versions were gifts and my grandchildren – Holly's twins Etta and Artie and Sam's daughter Eva-Deia, who were all born last year – love to play with them. Flamingos had died out here but we reintroduced them and now have more than anywhere else in the region, and our rare lemur populations are flourishing too.

As told to Rob McGibbon. Read Sir Richard's regular articles and musings on his blog at virgin.com/richard-branson.

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LAST WILL On this day in 1616 William Shakespeare passed away at his family home in Stratford on his 52nd birthday