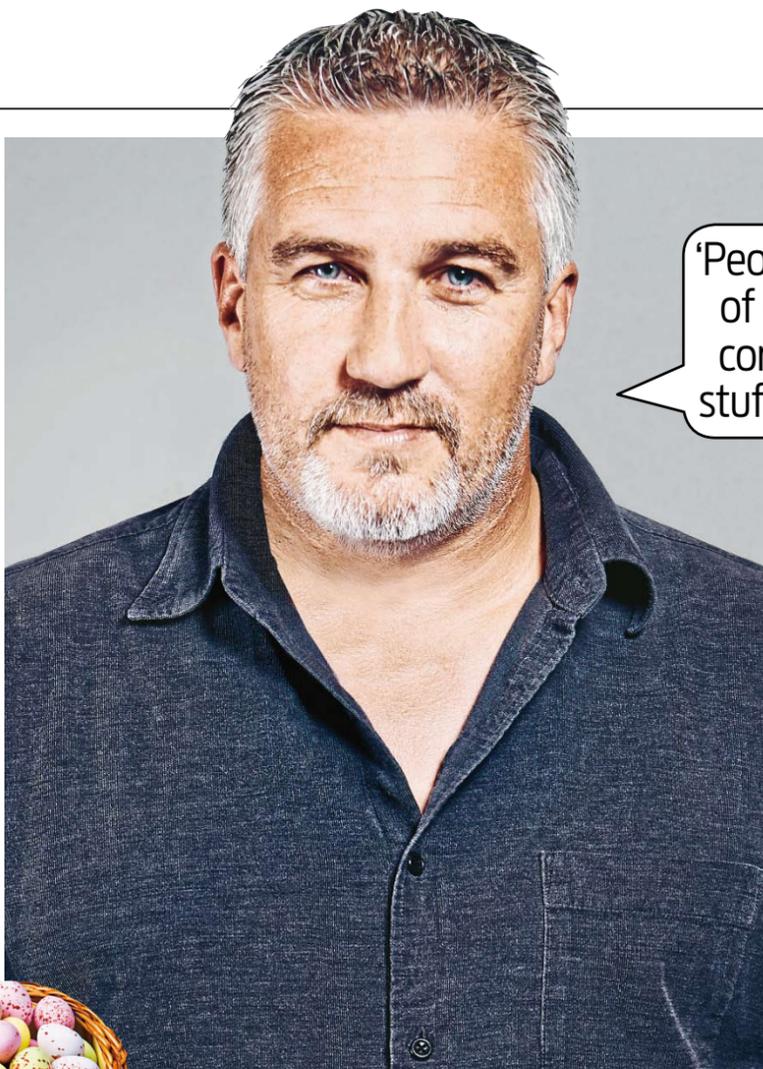


The DEFINITE ARTICLE

We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept **THE** definitive answer. This week it's *Bake Off's* Paul Hollywood



'People think I get a kick out of criticising the Bake Off contestants. I do say nice stuff but it gets edited out!'

The prized possession you value above all others... My Kawasaki Ninja H2 supercharged motorbike, which I bought last year. I've ridden bikes all my life and love the sense of freedom and that thrill of hanging off the back.

The biggest regret you wish you could amend... Not asking my grandad Norman Harman about WWII. I only found out about his time as an anti-aircraft gunner when I did Who Do You Think You Are? last year. He died in 2003 aged 89.

The book that holds an everlasting resonance... First Light, Geoffrey Wellum's memoir of being a Spitfire pilot in the Battle of Britain. It brings home the harrowing experiences. I'm going up in a Spitfire over the white cliffs of Dover for a TV show next month. I can't wait.

The priority activity if you were the invisible man for a day... I'd just sit in a bar eavesdropping. It gives you a proper insight into a city, but I can't do it any more now I'm well known.

The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint... The racing driver Ayrton Senna. I'd like to know when he sensed he'd reached the limit.

Right: Daniel Craig. Above right: Cadbury Mini Eggs. Far right: Turner's The Fighting Temeraire



The temptation you wish you could resist... Cadbury Mini Eggs remind me of being a kid – I can eat a whole packet.

The pet hate that makes your hackles rise... Drivers who hog the outside lane on motorways drive me nuts.

The person who has influenced you most... My father John, who's 72. He was a baker and I worked for him from the age of 18. He taught me so much, particularly never to be late. I'm still early for everything!

The film you can watch time and time again... Casino Royale with Daniel Craig. He's my favourite Bond – he saved it after Pierce Brosnan.

The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity... Kung fu. I started at 13 because my uncle ran a martial arts club. I was fascinated by Bruce Lee. I got pretty useful on the nunchucks [two sticks linked by a chain].

The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child... Take criticism constructively, it helps you to improve.



The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again... A Shado 2 Dinky Toy truck from Gerry Anderson's 1970s series

UFO. My mum kept it for me, but then it disappeared a few years ago.

The unending quest that drives you on... Gaining baking knowledge from around the world. I'll never stop learning.

The poem that touches your soul... I was baking last year with soldiers suffering combat stress. They'd written poems about it that brought tears to my eyes.

The song that means most to you... Led Zeppelin's Stairway To Heaven. I used to play it each morning when I started baking for my dad.

The event that altered the course of your life and character... The birth of my son Josh in 2001. I will protect him until my dying breath.

The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it... I'd steal Turner's The Fighting Temeraire from the National Gallery. I love how the sea bleeds into the fiery sky. I'd put it above the telly at home in Kent and admire it.

The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase... That I'm some conceited bloke who gets a kick out of criticising Bake Off contestants. I always follow up with encouragement but all that nice stuff gets edited out. You can only have one fairy godmother – and that's Mary Berry!

The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions... I'd begin the day by preparing some 24-hour, no-knead bread and leave it to rise to bake the next morning. I'd have a croissant and a cappuccino on a beach in the Maldives with my wife Alex and Josh. I'm a Divemaster, so after breakfast I'd go scuba diving, then head to Cyprus for lunch at a restaurant called Viklari in Paphos. I'd have a Keo beer and souvlaki – grilled meat in pitta with salad. I lived on the island for six years and loved it, so I'd spend the afternoon riding a trail bike in the Troodos Mountains with mates. The family and I would then relax at a chateau at Chinon in the Loire Valley. I'd have steak for dinner at Au Chapeau

Rouge restaurant with some 2002 Chinon red. Alex and I would end the day with a nightcap on the terrace at Cliveden, Berkshire, before crashing out in the Prince of Wales suite there.

The happiest moment you will cherish forever... My wedding to Alex in Cyprus in 1998. I'll never forget driving through Paphos afterwards in an old white Mercedes tooting the horn, which is the tradition. Terrific fun.

The saddest time that shook your world... My grandad's death. He was the first person in my family I'd lost, so it really hit me. I still miss him.

The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you... To drive in the Le Mans 24-hour race in 2018. It's the most phenomenal challenge.

The philosophy that underpins your life... Know your worth and don't let anyone put you down.

The order of service at your funeral... I'd want a church service with a funky and irreverent edge, with people wearing colours and treating it as a celebration of life. I'd be carried out to Stairway To Heaven and have The Prodigy's Firestarter play when I hit the flames!

The way you want to be remembered... As that fat Northern bloke from Great British Bake Off!

The Plug... Paul's book The Weekend Baker is published by Penguin/Michael Joseph, £20, and his series City Bakes is on Food Network. ■

As told to Rob McGibbon



PHOTOGRAPHS: SALLY ROSE/JON PRODUCTIONS; ALAMY; ALLSTAR

PS...

Russell Crowe and Ryan Gosling play unlikely detectives in *The Nice Guys*, in cinemas Friday. Paul Simon's new album *Stranger To Stranger* is out the same day. And Elizabeth McGovern stars in *Sunset At The Villa Thalia* at the National Theatre from Wednesday



NEXT WEEK

- Don't miss part two of Matthew Jukes' essential Summer Wine Collection – white wines and fizz
- Monty Don's tips for top summer scents
- Britain's best TV listings