

The DEFINITE ARTICLE

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

The prized possession you value above all others... My 1911 Steinway piano, which I bought in London in 1983. I first sat at a piano aged five – for me, it's the best way to express emotions.

The biggest regret you wish you could amend... That I never met my grandfather Guido. He was an Italian tailor who emigrated to America before WWI. I'd love to have talked to him about that era, but he died a few years before I was born in 1949.

The book that holds an everlasting resonance... My *Many Years*, the autobiography of the late pianist Arthur Rubinstein, reflects a real zest for life and music.

The pet hate that makes your hackles rise... When people entrusted with power misuse it by persecuting the powerless to serve their own ends.

The film you can watch time and time again... I've watched *Citizen Kane* about 20 times. I always see something new in it.

Right: Frank Sinatra. Above right: DC Comics. Far right: sunrise over the South Bank in London



The temptation you wish you could resist... Cake. I've cut it out of my diet, but I'm still a sucker for olive oil cake.

The person who has influenced you most... My mother Dorothy. She did so much for me and passed on her ability to get a job done. She died in 2011 aged 91.

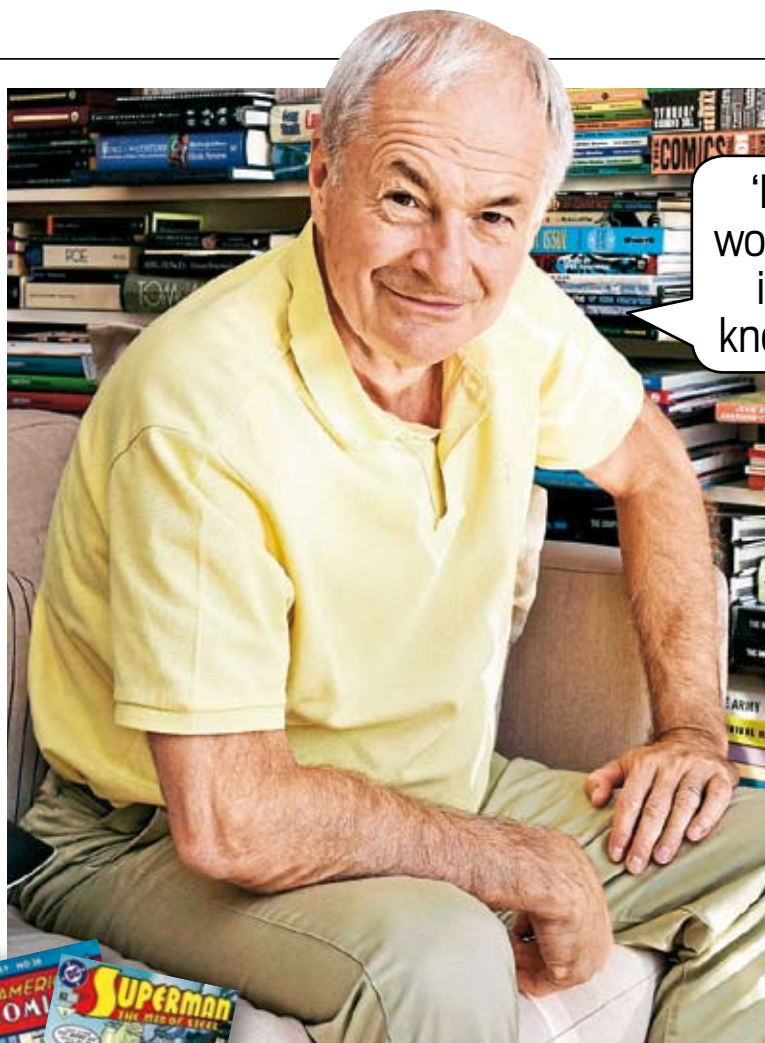
The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child... Be kind and the kindness will come back to you.

The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint... Jesus Christ – I'd ask what he thinks of all the things that have been done in his name.

The unending quest that drives you on... To live a long and healthy life, so I can share it with my husband, Christopher.

The song that means most to you... All The Way by Frank Sinatra. Chris and I repeated the lyrics as our wedding vows in 2012. They sum up the hopes of anyone who is getting married.

The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity... Lately it's been 20th-century American newspaper comic strips. I love comics and even won *Celebrity Mastermind* in 2010 thanks to my knowledge of DC Comics.



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The event that altered the course of your life and character... Going to Oxford aged 21 to study philosophy, politics and economics. I've lived in England ever since.

The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase... That I'm Canadian – I get asked that a lot. I was born in the Bronx.

The priority activity if you were the Invisible Man for a day... I'd watch Jack Nicklaus play golf to see my favourite sport from a champion's perspective.

The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again... My All-American Comics Vol 1 No 16 from 1940, which I sold in New York in 1963 for \$15. It had the first Green Lantern story and would now be worth \$155,000!

The philosophy that underpins your life... Live every day like it's your last, because one day you'll be right!

The poem that touches your soul... Robert Frost's *Stopping By Woods On A Snowy Evening*. It captures the isolation and beauty of the countryside.

The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions...

I'd wake up early to watch the sunrise over London from the terrace of our apartment on the South Bank. For breakfast I'd have orange juice and a cheese croissant from Maison Bertaux in Soho. I'd spend all day with Chris, beginning with a walk through Jardin des Tuileries in Paris to Le Palais Royal. We'd stop off at the café Angelina for hot chocolate. Lunch would be back in London at The Delaunay, where I'd have chicken schnitzel with a cucumber salad, then apple or rhubarb crumble depending on the season. After that we'd go to New York to watch my baseball team The Mets beat The Dodgers, then have ice cream at Grom Gelato near Central Park. For the evening, I'd have an Italian dinner at the nearby A Voce restaurant with my friends and family. I'd ask the chef to bring back a starter they used to do, focaccia with ricotta cheese, then have tuna. I'd sleep at my apartment near the Lincoln Centre, which I bought last year.

The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you... To play Major League baseball. I did get into the British Softball Hall of Fame for pitching for Regent's Park for 17 years!

The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it... I'd point out unpleasant truths about politicians and public figures without being sued.

The happiest moment you will cherish forever... Getting married to Chris. We had a civil partnership in London, then a wedding in New York. Being married has taken my life to a new level of fulfilment.

The saddest time that shook your world... When our spaniel Danny was run over when I was young. He was hiding under our car because he didn't want us to leave him behind on a family day out. My dad decided to move the car to scare him, but he didn't get out of the way. It was heartbreaking.

The order of service at your funeral... I want speeches by my dearest friends and music, including All The Way, The End by Earl Grant and Grieg's Piano Concerto.

The way you want to be remembered... I'm with Woody Allen; I don't want to achieve immortality through my work, I want to achieve it through not dying!

The Plug... Paul takes over *Pick Of The Pops* on BBC Radio 2 from 9 July. His book *Love, Paul Gambaccini* is published by Biteback Publishing, bitebackpublishing.com. ■

As told to Rob McGibbon



PS...

*Pixie Lott plays Holly Golightly when *Breakfast At Tiffany's* opens at London's Theatre Royal Haymarket on Thursday.*

Absolutely Fabulous: The Movie is in cinemas from Friday. And

Earth, Wind & Fire perform at The O2 Arena the same day



NEXT WEEK

● Head judge David Suchet launches our annual Great British Wildlife Photography Challenge ● A feast of fish dishes from Tom Kerridge ● PLUS Britain's most detailed TV listings