

The DEFINITE ARTICLE

We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept **THE** definitive answer. This week it's singer and actress **Martine McCutcheon**

The prized possession you value above all others... My rose gold wedding ring. My husband Jack, who's a singer, and I got married in Italy in 2012 and our rings are engraved with our names and the word Evergreen, which stands for eternal and ever flourishing.

The biggest regret you wish you could amend... I wish I'd gone back to music sooner. I had a 15-year break because of acting work, but music's part of my soul. Recording my new album has made me feel I'm myself again.

The book that holds an everlasting resonance... Silk by Alessandro Baricco is so intense. It opened my eyes to different kinds of love.

The temptation you wish you could resist... Toblerone. If I have one triangle I can't stop until the bar's finished.

Right: Barbra Streisand in Hello, Dolly! Above right: the River Café's chocolate Brooklyn Bridge. Far right: two lions

The pet hate that makes your hackles rise... Traffic wardens waiting for the parking meter to go one minute over time drive me mad.

The film you can watch time and time again... When Harry Met Sally is so brilliantly written that I see different things every time I watch it.

The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint... Anne Boleyn intrigues me. I'd really like to know if she had six fingers on one hand.

The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child... You can create your own happiness and the life you want. It's all within you.

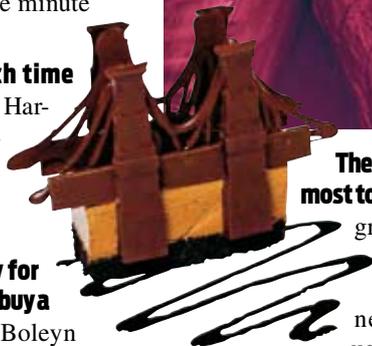
The person who has influenced you most... Barbra Streisand. I've loved her films and music since I was five, and I'd like to meet her one day.

The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase... The label of 'cockney sparrow' has stuck with me because I was born in Hackney and appeared in EastEnders. I'm more than my accent.

The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity... Darts – I love the skill, the showmanship and how authentic and honest it is, especially with the way the crowd behaves and how the women dress up so glamorously.



'I love darts – the skill, the showmanship and how honest it is, especially the way the crowd behaves'



The song that means most to you... The Hungry Years by Neil Sedaka captures my journey perfectly. I used to sing it to my mum Jenny when I was little and tell her that I'd be a star one day.

The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again... My photographic memory. I used to read a script a couple of times and know it. I'm 41 now and have to work harder at it.

The unending quest that drives you on... To keep entertaining people.

The poem that touches your soul... I love the quote, 'What you think, you become. What you feel, you attract. What you imagine, you create.' It sums up that life is all in your hands.

The event that altered the course of your life and character... The birth of my son Rafferty in February 2015. He gave me a whole new energy and zest.

The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it... I'd break into the Treasury and re-write the laws on stamp duty. It makes it harder for people to get on the property ladder.

The priority activity if you were the Invisible Woman for a day... I'd walk with elephants, then sleep among a pride of lions. To be with wildlife at its most natural would be unbelievable.

The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions... I'd have breakfast with Jack and Rafferty at The Wolseley in London. I'd have a pain au chocolat with a black decaf coffee. We'd then be whisked off to Lake Como where Jack and I got married. We'd sunbathe, swim and go out on a boat listening to old Rat Pack songs. Lunch would be beside the lake at the Villa d'Este hotel, where I'd have lobster spaghetti and sparkling water with lime cordial. We'd then have a fabulous nanny on hand to entertain Rafferty while Jack and I do some shopping in New York. We'd have cocktails in a suite at the St Regis hotel, where you have your own butler, then dinner at the River Café under the Brooklyn Bridge. I'd have sea bass then the signature chocolate dessert, which is shaped like the bridge.

After that we'd go to my dream concert at Madison Square Garden, where Tom Petty, Michael Bublé and Kings Of Leon would be on the bill. The night would end at our home near Hampton Court – nothing beats my own bed!

The happiest moment you will cherish forever... Holding Rafferty for the first time was the most magical feeling. It felt like an out-of-body experience.

The saddest time that shook your world... When my Uncle Chrissy died from an accidental overdose aged 17. I was only five, but we had an amazing bond. He used to sing It Must Be Love by Madness to me. I have those words tattooed on my arm in his memory.

The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you... To sell out the O2 Arena and perform my own songs – but I'm not sure it's going to happen!

The philosophy that underpins your life... Nothing is impossible, as long as you're prepared to work for it. Now I've said that, maybe the O2 can happen

The order of service at your funeral... I want it in a church near our home, with everyone dressed in black and white. I'd like Evergreen by Barbra Streisand and Somewhere Over The Rainbow.

The way you want to be remembered... As a great mother and wife.

The Plug... Martine McCutcheon's album Lost And Found is out now. For her new tour dates visit gigsandtours.com/tour/martine-mccutcheon. ■

As told to Rob McGibbon



PS...

Lily James stars in romantic war drama *The Exception* – in cinemas

Friday. Shania Twain's new album *Now* is out the same day.

And Lesley Joseph opens in monster musical comedy *Young*

Frankenstein at London's Garrick Theatre on Thursday



NEXT WEEK

- Five pages of fabulous recipes from former MasterChef winners
- Monty Don on how to bring colour and drama to the autumn garden
- PLUS Britain's most detailed TV listings