

The DEFINITE ARTICLE

We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept THE definitive answer. This week it's musician Paul Young's turn

The biggest regret you wish you could amend...

Not writing more songs when I was young. I was happy to do cover versions because there were too many distractions, like going out, so I didn't learn the craft seriously. It would have made a big difference to me financially.

The temptation you wish you could resist...

A big night out getting drunk – especially when I end up on tequila! I used to party all the time when I was younger and I'd recover quickly. I'm 58 now and I only overdo it once a month.

The unending quest that drives you on...

To keep discovering new music.

The film you can watch time and time again...

One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest. I love Jack Nicholson in that, he's superb. It's such a sad and moving story, yet it has great comedic moments.

Left: Jack Nicholson in One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest. Above, right: A Harley-Davidson Electra Glide like Paul's. Far right: A sailing boat

The prized possession you value above all others...

My Harley-Davidson Electra Glide motorbike. I bought it as a wreck in the 90s and restored it. I love the sense of freedom on the bike.

The priority activity if you were the Invisible Man for a day...

I'd sit among gorillas and lions without fear of being attacked. That would be fascinating.

The book that holds an everlasting resonance...

Steppenwolf by Hermann Hesse. It's about a journey to self-knowledge. I read it in the 80s when I was experiencing fame for the first time and it taught me to appreciate it.

The pet hate that makes your hackles rise...

Violence against old people. These kind and helpless people have survived so much and they end up being attacked by some nasty piece of work.

The person who has influenced you most...

My dad Tony. He's 86 now and he taught the importance of good manners. I have a lot of respect for him.

The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint...

Winston Churchill. I'd love to hear how he prepared himself to boost the morale of the troops in the darkest hours.



'I wish I could resist a big night out getting drunk. Especially when I end up on the tequila! I'm 58 now...'



The event that altered the course of your life and character...

Leaving my band The Q-Tips and signing my solo record deal. It was a new beginning.

The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase...

That my record company styled me when I went solo in 1982. It all started because I wore a suit on the cover of my first solo album, but it's ridiculous because I was wearing suits before that in The Q-Tips.

The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it...

I'd pull off a bank heist, and steal enough cash to keep me and the family going.

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

I'd go to a little place in West Hollywood, LA, for a breakfast of corned beef hash with pancakes and coffee. Then I'd chill out on a beach in the Bahamas with my wife Stacey and our kids – Levi, 27, Layla, 20, Grady, 18, and Jude, eight [Stacey's son from another relationship]. We'd go snorkelling, then

The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child...

Always be polite.

The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity...

I'm desperate to learn how to sail a boat. I'm fascinated by the challenge of navigating the oceans.

The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again...

My right ear! It got damaged in a car accident in Spain in 2012. I had surgery to repair it and I can still hear perfectly, but it sticks out. I'd like it to be normal again!

The poem that touches your soul...

I'm moved by song lyrics, particularly Tom Waits' Take It With Me. It's about a man on his deathbed, wanting to take the heart of the woman he loves with him when he goes.

The song that means most to you...

Wherever I Lay My Hat [his Marvin Gaye cover that reached No 1 in 1983]. It was a huge hit in the UK and launched me internationally.

have lunch in Sardinia, again by the sea. I'd have sea bream baked in salt with chilled local white wine. After that, I'd captain a sailing boat to Puerto Vallarta in Mexico. We'd settle in at a beach bar and listen to a band and Stacey and I would sink a few margaritas as the sun went down while eating local food. We'd end the day in Las Vegas. I'm not a gambler, but the mad atmosphere is such a laugh. We'd check into a high roller suite at the Bellagio hotel.

The happiest moment you will cherish forever... Marrying Stacey in 1987. She taught me to enjoy myself.

The saddest time that shook your world... When my bulldogs Ronnie and Nancy died. I was in bits.

The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you... To own a fabulous sailing boat. It will happen one day.

The philosophy that underpins your life... Keep moving forward.

The order of service at your funeral... I want a church service with New Orleans funeral jazz music. I'd like people to say a few words about me and I may have my ashes scattered in the sea.

The way you want to be remembered... He sang some sad and mournful hits, but he partied until the end.

The Plug... My band Los Pacaminos have an album, A Fistful Of Statins, out now and there'll be a Paul Young solo album this year. Visit www.paul-young.com. Twitter @PaulYoungParlez. ■

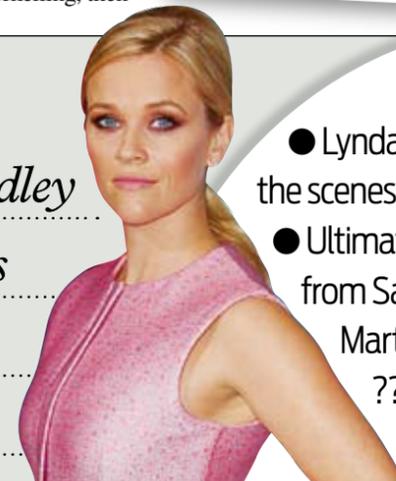
As told to Rob McGibbon



PHOTOGRAPHS: MIKE LAMN, ALAMY, ALLSTAR

PS...

Reese Witherspoon takes a 1,100-mile hike in Wild, while Bradley Cooper is a tortured Navy SEAL in Sniper – both in cinemas from Friday. And Jacobean tragedy The Changeling, starring Hattie Morahan, is at Shakespeare's Globe theatre from Thursday



NEXT WEEK

- Lynda Baron takes us behind the scenes on Still Open All Hours
- Ultimate comfort food recipes from Saturday Kitchen's James Martin ● ????? ???? ???? ???? //??/????? ● PLUS Britain's best TV listings