

From top: the Masters course at Augusta, vintage football programmes, The Wind In The Willows, James Hunt, St Margaret's Church in Ditchling in East Sussex, a rum punch, and Robert De Niro

The prized possession you value above all others... I collect football programmes – the rarest I have is the 1888 FA Cup Final between Preston North End and West Bromwich Albion. It would fetch around £15,000 at auction.

The unqualified regret you wish you could amend... I wish I hadn't lost touch with so many friends.

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

My wife, Sophie, and I love New York. We'd head to a deli for breakfast with grits, hash browns, eggs and pancakes. Then I'd go to Augusta, Georgia, to play the Masters course with my father, Geoff, and two mates. After that I'd join Sophie and our sons – Sidney [four] and Kit [two] – on the West Coast of Barbados. We'd play on the beach and I'd sink a few rum punches. In the evening, Sophie and I would go to the Lone Star restaurant for some barbecued flying fish. Delicious!

The temptation you wish you could resist... Worrying.

The book that holds an everlasting resonance... The Wind In The Willows by Kenneth Grahame. It started my love of reading. I read it to my kids recently and it felt wonderful reconnecting with its characters.

The priority activity if you were the Invisible Man for a day... I'm fascinated by Robert De Niro, so I'd hang out on a film set to see how he works.

The pet hate that makes your hackles rise... The bureaucracy of local councils. I have no end of problems with planning and parking permits.

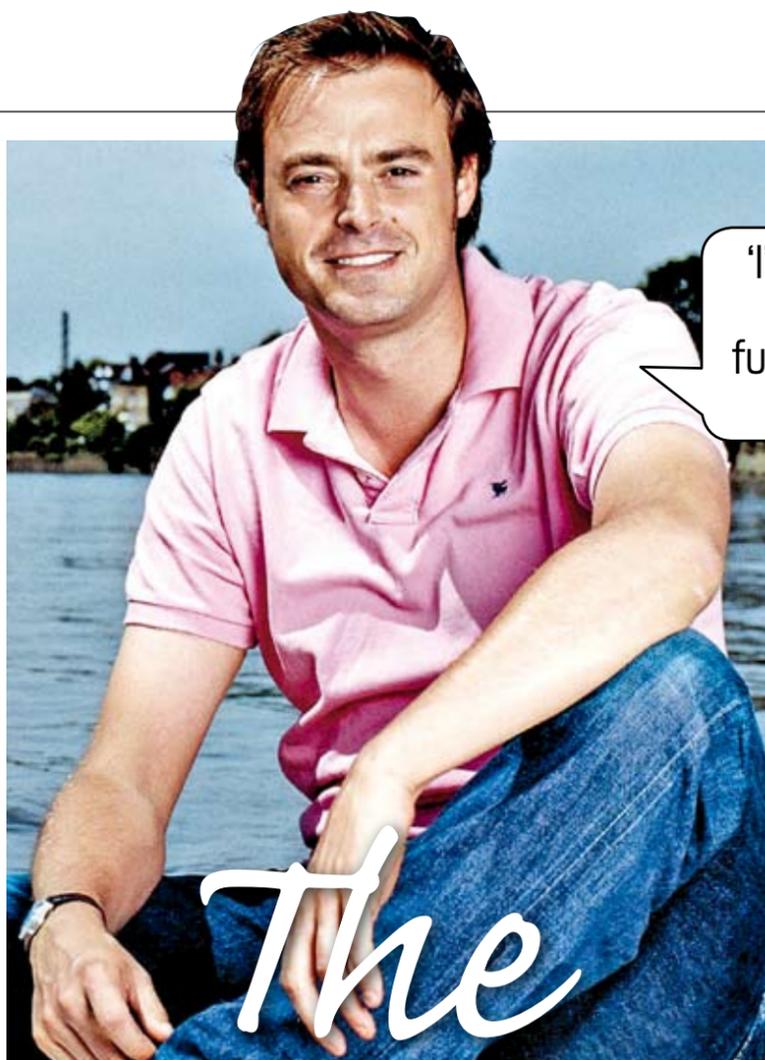
The film you can watch time and time again... The Champ from 1979 with Jon Voight and Ricky Schroder is one of the most moving films ever made.

The person who has influenced you most... My father. He's strong, stoical and taught me what's right and wrong.

The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint... I'd like James Hunt [the late British Formula 1 driver] to take me on a drive in a fast car, then out for a major night. I imagine he'd know how to have a good time.

The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child... Believe in your dreams.

The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity... 20th-century Italian furniture. My wife and I have taken two years to renovate our new house and I've spent a fortune in Italy. One chandelier alone cost £20,000!



'I've spent a fortune on 20th-century Italian furniture. One chandelier alone cost £20,000!'

The DEFINITE ARTICLE

We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept THE definitive answer. This week: broadcaster Jamie Theakston

The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again... I miss having that naive enthusiasm for life you have when you're younger. I'm 42 now and no matter how hard you try, age turns you into a realist.

The unending quest that drives you on... A thirst for knowledge. I'm the type of person who always wants to know exactly how things work, to take the back off something to see whatever's inside.

The poem that touches your soul... Not Waving But Drowning by Stevie Smith. It deals with someone trying to cope with mental problems. I read it as a teenager and it stayed with me.

The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase... That I'm always unflappable. Obviously, I give that impression during live television or on the radio, but you can't see the duck's feet paddling like crazy under the water.

The event that altered the course of your life and character... Becoming a father when I was 38 had a huge impact on me. Suddenly life was not about me.

The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it... I'd lock up Justin Bieber. The way he's been manufactured reflects everything I despise about the music industry.

The song that means most to you... Steve Harley's Make Me Smile. It was played as Sophie and I walked out of the church at our wedding in East Sussex in 2007. Everyone loved it and started singing along. It's become our song.

The happiest moment you will cherish forever... The moment I knew I was in love with Sophie and wanted to marry her. I was sitting in a hotel room in Paris in 2006 while she was in the bath. I caught sight of myself in the mirror and realised how happy I looked. Two days later I proposed.

The saddest time that shook your world... I was very sad when London was attacked on 7/7. On my radio show the next day there was this outpouring of emotion from callers.

The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you... To build the perfect house for our family. I'm determined to do a Grand Designs-style project.

The philosophy that underpins your life... Count your blessings and appreciate what you have, rather than focus on what you haven't got.

The order of service at your funeral... A traditional service at St Margaret's in Ditchling, where I got married. It would be great if Sophie could read WH Auden's Stop All The Clocks, or maybe they'd play Monty Python's Always Look On The Bright Side Of Life. I might surprise everyone by making one last broadcast. I'll announce beers will be served at a local pub and my final sign-off will be, 'And now, the travel!'

The way you want to be remembered... I'd like anyone who remembers me to have felt loved by me.

The Plug... Jamie is in Celebrity MasterChef, weekdays, 6.30pm, BBC2. ■
As told to Rob McGibbon

PS...

Robert Webb and Lucy Punch star in hilarious British rom-com

The Wedding Video. Anthony Andrews is on stage in Bully

Boy at Northampton's Royal & Derngate. And Hot Cakes,

the comeback album from The Darkness, is out Monday



NEXT WEEK

- Stephanie Beacham takes us behind the scenes on supermarket sitcom Trolled
- Easy ways to feed a crowd for the Bank Holiday
- How Holker Hall, one of Britain's finest gardens, was brought back to life
- PLUS Britain's best TV listings