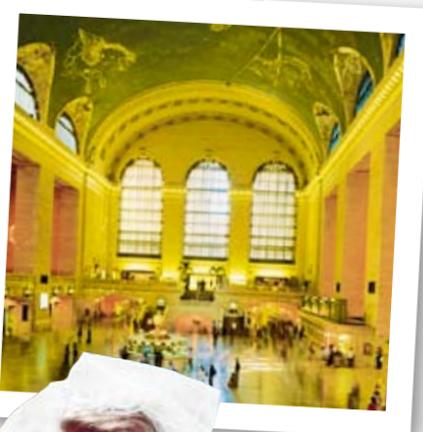




W. SOMERSET MAUGHAM  
The Razor's Edge  
A NEW NO



From top: the Palais Jamaï hotel in Fez, The Razor's Edge, Shah Jahan's cup, Jean Shrimpton, Richard Harris as King Arthur in Camelot, New York's Grand Central Station, Brigitte Bardot in And God Created Woman

**The prized possession you value above all others...**

A beautiful hand-woven rug made for me by the Italian actress Silvana Mangano. She was brilliant at needlepoint and it took her two years.

**The unqualified regret you wish you could amend...**

Turning down the part of Arthur in Josh Logan's 1967 musical film Camelot because I was frightened of singing. Richard Harris got the part.

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

I'd wake up to the sound of the call to prayer at the Palais Jamaï hotel in Fez, Morocco. I'd then go to the New York Athletic Club for a swim and a steam, followed by brunch in San Francisco. I'd be back in Manhattan for shad roe [fish eggs] at Grand Central Station's Oyster Bar for lunch, then hang out with my brother Chris at his home in East Hampton. I miss Concorde, so I'd fly on it to London for a West End play, then back for dinner with friends at Elio's on the Upper East Side. I always order a plate of fried courgette to start. I don't drink alcohol, but I'd be happy with a cold bottle of Badoit mineral water.

**The temptation you wish you could resist...**

Toasted organic spelt bread with olive oil. It's fattening but I think of it as a treat because I grew up in London's East End during the war and after German bombing raids my mum always said, 'Not to worry, let's have a nice cup of tea and some toast.'

**The book that holds an everlasting resonance...**

The Razor's Edge by Somerset Maugham. It's such a powerful book about an American pilot's search for meaning in life after being traumatised in the First World War.

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

I'd go inside the multinational agricultural and biotech company Monsanto's headquarters to see just how much genetically modified food they are making.

**The pet hate that always gets your back up...**

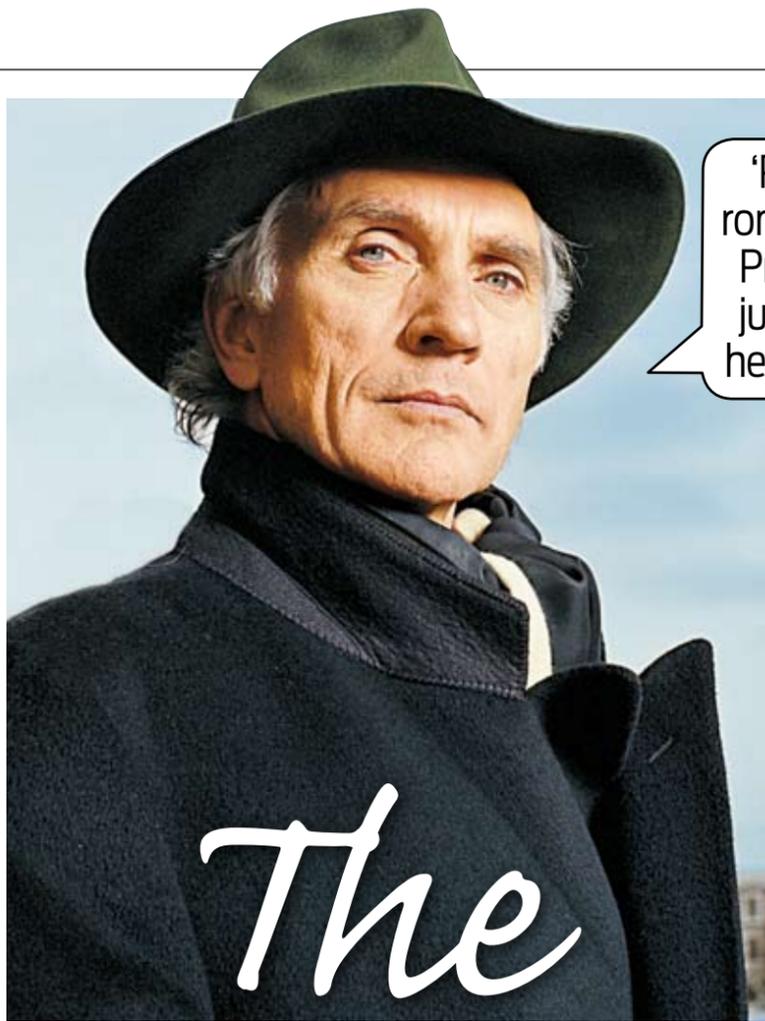
People speaking loudly on mobile phones about personal matters.

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

And God Created Woman from 1956. I was 17 and it was the first time I laid eyes on Brigitte Bardot. I became besotted with her.

**The person who has influenced you most...**

Baron Frederik van Pallandt. He was a Dutch singer in the 60s and became my mentor. He taught me that less is more.



'People still ask if I was romantically involved with Princess Diana. We were just really good chums – her company was heaven'

# The DEFINITE ARTICLE

*We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept THE definitive answer. This week it's actor Terence Stamp*

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

Alexander the Great. I'm fascinated by powerful figures who just get on with it.

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

Be aware, be yourself and follow your heart.

**The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity...**

I'm 74 and I've suddenly realised the benefits of high-intensity training. I do one 15-minute workout each week and it keeps me fit.

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

A lead bust of the Greek philosopher Socrates. I had to sell it in the mid-70s to pay the rent because I was totally broke.

**The unending quest that drives you on...**

To reach 80 with a fully flexible spine. I do yoga regularly.

**The poem that touches your soul...**

The Masnavi, which is a collection of spiritual poems by Rumi [the 13th-century Persian poet and mystic].

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

Meeting the Indian spiritual teacher and philosopher Jiddu Krishnamurti when I was 27. His teachings opened my eyes to so much.

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

That I was romantically involved with Princess Diana. We were just really good chums, yet I still get asked questions alluding to something more. She was a lot of fun – we used to have lunch at San Lorenzo and her company was heaven.

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

I would steal Shah Jahan's jade drinking cup [made in 1657] from the V&A. It's the most exquisite object I've ever seen.

**The song that means most to you...**

Night And Day by Cole Porter. It's just a beautiful song and I love it.

**The happiest moment you will cherish forever...**

The first time I kissed Jean Shrimpton! It was in Hollywood in 1964. Just to lay eyes on her was a joy. We were together for three years. She was the love of my life. Definitely.

**The saddest time that shook your world...**

My mother's death in 1985. She was in hospital following a stroke and I thought she was going to pull through. I was overwhelmed by grief.

**The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you...**

To be at peace in the moment, where you quieten the mind from pushing you into the future.

**The philosophy that underpins your life...**

Do unto others as you would have them do to you.

**The order of service at your funeral...**

It would be for my friends to decide, but I expect to be cremated. I don't own a home so I live on the move, but in my heart I'm a Londoner. So I guess my ashes should be scattered there, maybe in Green Park.

**The way you want to be remembered...**

As someone who spent his whole career earning his living as a stroller player.

**The Plug...**

My memoir Rare Stamps is published as an eBook by Escargot Books. [www.escargot-books.com](http://www.escargot-books.com)

As told to Rob McGibbon

## PS...

Prepare for the new 007 film *Skyfall with Everything Or Nothing*, a big-screen Bond documentary in cinemas now. Bonnie Langford stars in Dolly Parton musical *9 To 5*, touring the UK from Friday. And Barbra Streisand's new album *Release Me* is out on Monday



## NEXT WEEK

● Kirstie Allsopp's crafty tips on how to turn your house into a beautiful home ● James Nesbitt takes us behind the scenes on medical drama *Monroe* ● Homemade soups that'll bowl you over ● PLUS Britain's biggest and best TV listings guide