



'I love lizards, they're so prehistoric. I'd like to get a pet iguana, but my husband won't let me'

The DEFINITE ARTICLE

We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept THE definitive answer. This week it's TV property guru Sarah Beeny

The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child... Positive things happen to positive people.
The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity... Lizards. There's something so prehistoric about them. I want a pet iguana, but Graham won't let me.
The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again... A silver bracelet decorated with daisies and red stones, which was given to me when I was five. It got broken at a party when I was 18.

The unending quest that drives you on... To finally be on top of *everything!* My inbox would be empty, all the cupboards tidied, the house sorted, the financial books organised. I'll be dead before it happens, then it won't matter!
The poem that touches your soul... The Highwayman by Anonymous. My mother, Ann, read it to me when I was seven and it always reminds me of her. She died from breast cancer when she was 39 and I was only ten in 1982.

As told to Rob McGibbon

The prized possession you value above all others... My photographs, especially from my childhood.

The biggest regret you wish you could amend... Giving up learning the piano when I was 14. These days I look on in awe and envy when I see someone playing. But I've just bought a ukulele.

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

I'd start with breakfast in bed with my husband, Graham, and the boys – Billy, nine, Charlie, seven, Rafferty, five, and Laurie, three – at our home in south London. I'd have Marmite on toast, cut in squares with the crusts trimmed off! Then we'd go skiing in Austria. Graham and I would have lunch – no kids! – at Bucci's restaurant in Balham. I'd have oysters and mussels with Chablis. Then we'd all go for a walk in the mountains in the South of France, paddling and fishing with nets. I wouldn't mind a glass of prosecco somewhere romantic in Italy before driving to the Welsh countryside in our new Fiat Ducato motorhome. We'd go for another walk, then back to the van for a round of the card game Uno and to cook sausages and marshmallows on an open fire. I'd finish at Rise Hall [her Yorkshire stately home], which has the best sunsets ever.

The temptation you wish you could resist... Saying inappropriate things at the wrong time. People look at me and think, 'Did she really say that?'

The book that holds an everlasting resonance... Oh, The Places You'll Go! by Dr Seuss. It's about taking opportunities and having a free spirit.

The priority activity if you were the Invisible Woman for a day... I've got a major crush on Antonio Banderas, so I'd follow him to see what he's like.

The pet-hate that makes your hackles rise... Petty bureaucracy. I can't stand being told what to do.

The film you can watch time and time again... How To Train Your Dragon. It's pure escapism and even has a happy ending, which I always prefer!

The person who has influenced you most... My husband Graham. I'm 41 and we've been together since I was 19. He's fearless – he's calm about a business failing. He says, 'As long as we have enough to make beans on toast, we'll be fine.'

The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pint... Elizabeth I. I'd like to know how she coped with the loneliness her power brought.



From top: Mountains in the South of France, Elizabeth I, Oh, The Places You'll Go, an iguana



Above: Rise Hall. Left: How To Train Your Dragon. Below: Antonio Banderas



PS...

Oscar winner Jennifer Lawrence returns in the second Hunger Games film, *Catching Fire*, from Thursday. The National Theatre's new family show *Emil And The Detectives* starts today. And Shangri La, the second album from teenager Jake Bugg, is out Monday



NEXT WEEK

- Behind the scenes on BBC2's gripping new Cold War spy thriller *Legacy*
- Jamie Oliver's classic British pies
- Got a gardening dilemma? Monty Don answers all your queries
- PLUS Britain's best TV listings