



From top: a fruit cocktail, Chiva-Som health resort, Joni Mitchell, one of Bruce's designs, dressmaking scissors, Bette Davis (second left) in *All About Eve*, J.S. Bach, an OBE and Maria Callas

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

My dogs Babe, a Rhodesian ridgeback and Baz, a border terrier. They mean everything to me.

**The unqualified regret you wish you could amend...** I don't have regrets because they are negative. Life's full of rubbish, so you just have to move on.

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

I'd watch the sun come up at Chiva-Som health resort in Thailand, then have one of its slimming breakfasts. I'd then have a piano lesson at home in Chelsea and play Bach's Prelude in C faultlessly. After that I'd cook an al fresco lunch for friends at the Argiano winery estate in Montalcino in Tuscany. I'd spend the rest of the day at [socialite] Sue Sangster's lovely house in Barbados. I'd sit on the beach with a fruit cocktail waiting to see the emerald flash [a rare meteorological phenomenon] as the sun goes down. I'm generally in bed by 10.20pm – otherwise I get grumpy – but Barbados is so relaxing I'm usually tucked up by 9.30pm!

### The temptation you wish you could resist...

I keep on working when other people are out having fun. But I love what I do and find it hard to stop.

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

Selected Poems by the 19th-century English Jesuit priest Gerard Manley Hopkins. I studied his beautiful work for A-level at school in Ripon and it has stayed with me.

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

I would spend the day watching the girls in our work rooms, seeing who produced the best work – and who didn't!

### The pet hate that makes your hackles rise...

Bad workmanship – in anything, not just clothes. Even if I see a door painted badly it bothers me.

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

*All About Eve*. Bette Davis gave impersonators a ticket to imitate her for years to come with that role.

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

My foster mother Violet Masters [Bruce was given up to care when he was six weeks old]. She brought me up from the age of two until 13 [with four other foster siblings]. She was a seamstress and inspired my career.

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

Maria Callas. I adore her music and would love to have heard her sing.



'People think I'm grand because I'm associated with celebrities, but when they meet me they say, "I didn't think you'd be so nice"'

# The DEFINITE ARTICLE

*We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept THE definitive answer. This week: fashion designer Bruce Oldfield*

**The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child...** Don't be limited by the expectations of others. You can always be better and do more.

**The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity...** Facebook! I know it's sad, but I love it and have about 2,000 'Likes'. The relationships you have on it are very hands-off. You can take it further if you want, or just leave it as a passing Hello. It's weird, but that suits me.

**The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again...** A small 1930s Cartier tie pin. It was a lovely piece but I have no idea where it went.

**The unending quest that drives you on...** I'm not as driven as I was in my 30s, but I constantly strive to maintain my standards.

**The poem that touches your soul...** *Pied Beauty* by Gerard Manley Hopkins is a complex and beautiful poem about God being in everything.

**The event that altered the course of your life and character...** Being taken from my foster home in 1963 and put into a Barnardo's home when I was 13. I was getting out of control, so they had no choice. It was desperately sad being dragged away from my family.

**The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase...** That I'm grand! Maybe it's because I'm associated with so many celebrities, but when people meet me they often say, 'Oooh, I didn't think you'd be so nice!'

**The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it...** I would lay bicycle tyre-shredding strips on the raised zebra crossing by the Serpentine Gallery in London's Kensington Gardens to force cyclists to dismount. They do *not* have priority over everyone else!

**The song that means most to you...** Joni Mitchell's *People's Parties*. I sat next to her at a party in 1982 and told her how much I loved that song. She couldn't remember the words and was quite surprised when I recited them to her.

**The happiest moment you will cherish forever...** Getting an OBE in 1990. I felt I was getting some recognition.

**The saddest time that shook your world...** Christmas Day at the Barnardo's home after I'd been taken back. I stayed in my bed all day crying.

**The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you...** To have hair again!

**The philosophy that underpins your life...** Never cut corners, or accept anything that's second-rate.

**The order of service at your funeral...** I'd like a simple service at St Paul's in Knightsbridge with lots of flowers and I'd have the Intrada movement from Gerald Finzi's *Dies Natalis*. I'd like my ashes to be thrown to the four winds somewhere on the Ridgeway in Oxfordshire.

**The way you want to be remembered...** As someone who tried hard and, hopefully, did a good job.

**The Plug...** Bruce's new couture bridal salon opens in Knightsbridge on 30 July. Visit [www.bruceoldfield.com](http://www.bruceoldfield.com). ■

*As told to Rob McGibbon*

## PS...

*Anne Hathaway stars as Catwoman in **The Dark Knight Rises** – in cinemas now. Illusionist Derren Brown works his magic in **Svengali** at London's Novello Theatre. And Joss Stone's new album, **The Soul Sessions II**, is out on Monday*



## NEXT WEEK

Celebrate the greatest show on earth with our bumper Olympics issue, featuring the most comprehensive TV listings covering EVERY single televised event so you won't miss a thing!

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