The
DEFINITE
ARTICLE

We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept THE definitive answer. This week it’s novelist Sandra Howard

The prized possession you value above all others... My mother Rosalie’s sapphire and diamond engagement ring. She left it to me when she died in January 2002 and I’ve worn it since the engagement ring Michael [former Home Secretary Michael Howard] gave me was stolen when I was mugged later that year.

The biggest regret you wish you could amend... Not going to university. I wanted to be a model, so I did a three-week charm course at 17. University would have given me a broader education, greater confidence and many friends for life.

The temptation you wish you could resist... Rich, creamy cheeses, especially Vacherin. I can eat spoonfuls of it.

The book that holds an everlasting resonance... The God Of Small Things by Arundhati Roy. It’s a beautiful novel set in India.

The priority activity if you were the Invisible Woman for a day... I’d watch a book club discuss one of my books. It’d be painful but amusing.

The song that means most to you... One For My Baby (And One More For The Road) by Frank Sinatra. I became friends with him in the 60s and he was my eldest son Sholto’s godfather. That song takes me back because it was one of the few of his own he ever played at his house in California. He had a huge heart.

The figure from history for whom you’d most like to buy a pie and a pint... Martin Luther King Jr. I’d ask him in the trenches of the First World War is frighteningly sad.

The film you can watch time and time again... Darling, starring Dirk Bogarde and Julie Christie. It epitomises the 60s and reminds me of fun times.

The philosophy that underpins your life... Look for the good in people.

The order of service at your funeral... Just a few conventional hymns and little fuss. Michael wants us to be buried side by side. I’ll let him sort that out!

The happiest moment you will cherish... When the PC-bribe appeared in Vogue and I put it in the column. I once went to Michael Palin’s school and met his father Michael [former Home Secretary Michael Howard] gave me was stoicism. It’s ridiculous. I can recall a US historian once demanding to be called a ‘herstorian’!

The event that altered the course of your life and character... Working with the photographer Norman Parkinson at 18 after the model he’d booked called in sick. The shoot appeared in Vogue and I worked with him many times after that.

The way you want to be remembered... As told to Rob McGibbon

NEXT WEEK

- The most delicious Easter feast from Tom Kerridge
- Michaela Strachan on her Springwatch special
- Monty Don’s passion for primroses
- PLUS Britain’s best TV guide

Ben Affleck and Henry Cavill star in Batman v Superman – in cinemas on Friday. James Norton’s onstage in Bug at London’s Found 111 theatre from Thursday. And former 1D member Zayn Malik’s debut album Mind Of Mine is out on Friday