

The DEFINITE ARTICLE

We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept THE definitive answer. This week it's the turn of actor John Hannah

The prized possession you value above all others... It'll soon be a Colnago C60 road bike, which I'm about to buy. I love cycling and clock up about 200 miles a week. Cycling keeps me fit and is better than golf, which I used to play a lot, because I don't spend so much time in the clubhouse!

The biggest regret you wish you could amend... The time I lost through partying too much in my late 20s and 30s. I had fun, but spent too much time drinking and then recovering. I'm 54 now and more conscious of body and soul.

The temptation you wish you could resist... The second glass of wine, because that leads to the third, then the fourth – and then you may as well finish the bottle!

The priority activity if you were the invisible man for a day... I'd stand on stage with Richard Ashcroft and his band The Verve at Glastonbury as he sings Bitter Sweet Symphony. Such a great song.

The book that holds an everlasting resonance... The Catcher In The Rye. I read it quite late – I was 20 – but I connected with that feeling of angst and disconnection because I wasn't sure what I was going to do with my life.

Right: Napoleon.
Above right: a cocktail.
Far right: the Dolomites



The film you can watch time and time again... It's A Wonderful Life because I love its optimism.

The pet hate that makes your hackles rise... Politicians. I've lost faith in them. They're driven by greed and a lust for power.

The person who has influenced you most... My wife Joanna [actress Joanna Roth]. We've been married for 20 years and I couldn't imagine taking a big decision without her. We share the past, the present and the future.

The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity...

Birdsong. I like to get up early and sit in the garden with a coffee listening to the birds.

I'm surprised how many species I can recognise from their song.

The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint... Napoleon. I'd love to know what he'd make of the EU and the fallout from Brexit.

The event that altered the course of your life and character... I was an electrician when I was 19 and not very happy, but my boss Tommy Byrne, who'd picked up on my love of films, suggested I try acting. Within a year I'd joined drama school.



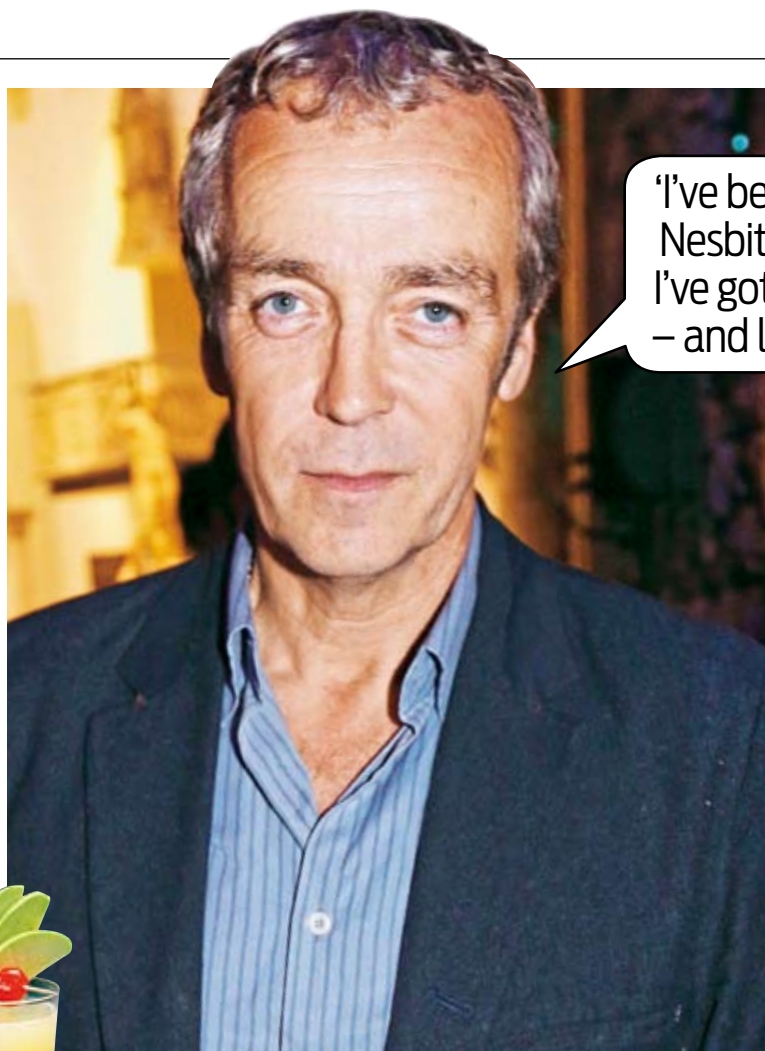
The song that means most to you... First Time Ever I Saw Your Face, sung by Johnny Cash. It came on our CD player on random play when I got home after seeing our twins Gabriel and Astrid born in 2004. It reminds me of the moment I saw their faces for the first time, and the extraordinary feeling of love that swept through me.

The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child... Pay attention to the world. These days people are too busy with phones and computers to notice what's going on around them.

The unending quest that drives you on... To do new things that inspire me. I made a decision a few years ago to be more open – and not just jump in and do the next cop show!

The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again... My dad John, who died in 2014 aged 84. I long for all the time and chats we lost because I was out in the world building my life.

The poem that touches your soul... To A Mouse by Robert Burns. I love the way it reveals man's place in the universe through a farmer talking to a mouse whose home he's destroyed.



'I've been mistaken for James Nesbitt and Hugh Laurie, but I've got more hair than Jimmy – and less money than Hugh!'

gondola ride on the Grand Canal, then have a delicious Italian dinner in a backstreet trattoria before crashing out in the best suite at the Gritti Palace hotel.

The happiest moment you will cherish forever... After the birth of the twins, it was cycling the 15-mile climb to the top of Stelvio Pass in the Italian Alps two years ago. I felt I finally understood what riding up mountains is all about.

The saddest time that shook your world... The death of Andy Whitfield [the actor he starred with in the Spartacus TV series] in 2011 from cancer when he was only 39. He was a great guy on the cusp of doing so well.

The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you... To score the winner for Scotland against England in a World Cup football match. But these days I'd be happy for Scotland to qualify for anything other than curling!

The philosophy that underpins your life... Stop thinking and live life.

The order of service at your funeral... I'd like a big ceilidh and lots of drinking and laughter. I don't want anyone reading Stop All The Clocks! [the WH Auden poem he read in the film Four Weddings And A Funeral.] That's been read at enough funerals already!

The way you want to be remembered... As a happy guy who liked a laugh.

The Plug... Listen to John on Mellow Magic, weekends from 10am-noon on digital radio. mellowmagic.co.uk

As told Rob McGibbon



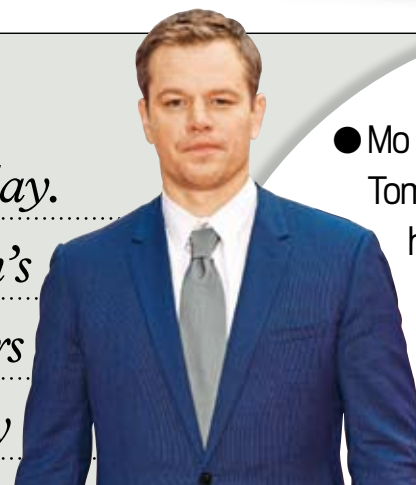
PS...

Matt Damon returns as Jason Bourne – in cinemas Friday.

Based on the classic novel, The Secret Garden is at London's

Ambassadors Theatre from Wednesday. And Tears for Fears

play a one-off UK gig at Newmarket Racecourse on Friday



NEXT WEEK

- Mo Farah, Jessica Ennis-Hill and Tom Daley reveal their Olympics hopes and fears
- Elizabeth David's classic Italian dishes in the final part of our series
- PLUS Britain's most detailed TV listings guide