

The DEFINITE ARTICLE

We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept **THE** definitive answer. This week it's perfumer and businesswoman Jo Malone

The prized possession you value above all others... The Tiffany star necklace (pictured) my husband Gary gave me for Christmas 2011, at a time when I was doubting myself. He said, 'You're a star. Go out and do what you do best.' It reminds me of our love.

The biggest regret you wish you could amend... Never learning to swim. I nearly drowned in the sea when I was five and ever since I've been frightened of having my head under water.

The temptation you wish you could resist... Dairy. I love cream, gooey cheeses... but it packs on the weight.

The book that holds an everlasting resonance... The Hundred-Foot Journey by Richard C Morais, about an Indian chef. I connected with his emotions.

The priority activity if you were the invisible woman for a day... I'd walk with a herd of elephants, or a pride of lions, so I could see them up close.

The pet hate that makes your hackles rise... Ungratefulness and entitlement. I hate it when people are disrespectful to others, whether at work or socially.

The person who has influenced you most... Gary. We've been married for 32 years. We're opposites, but complement one another. I'm volatile, he's very calm. He makes me feel safe.

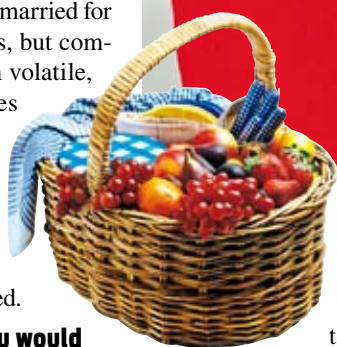
The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint... Moses. I'd ask him how he felt when the Red Sea parted.

The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child... Find what your talent is, then nurture it because it will bring you happiness.

The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity... Glass blowing. I'd love to learn, but it's not easy or glamorous.

The film you can watch time and time again... A Christmas Carol, especially the 2009 animated version with Jim Carrey voicing Scrooge. I have a tradition where I watch the film with a glass of wine while wrapping presents for the Christmas stockings.

The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again... My wedding ring. I lost it about 15 years ago on a beach in Greece when Gary and I were having a kiss and a cuddle.



The unending quest that drives you on... To be better than yesterday, but still to enjoy today.

The poem that touches your soul... I'm not into poetry but the section in the Bible from Ruth, Chapter 1, Verse 16, always touches me. It's about passion and love and much more.

The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase... That because I work in a luxury business I must be a posh bird from a country estate. I'm a working-class girl from a council estate, and I'm proud of that.

The event that altered the course of your life and character... Getting cancer [Jo was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2003 and had a double mastectomy and chemotherapy]. It didn't change my character, but it made me realise what really matters and helped me to love every single minute of life.

The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it... I'd hack into a computer and make sure my family and I are automatically upgraded to first class on flights and to the best rooms in hotels.

The song that means most to you... I'm Still Standing by Elton John. I listened to it during chemo and it reminds me about coming through it all.

The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions... I'd start at dawn in the mountains of Montana, where I ride every year on a horse called Josie. Gary and our teenage son Josh would ride with me and our Border terrier Teri would come too. We'd have breakfast of scrambled eggs and bacon with strong coffee – cowboy style. Later I'd go to New York for a blow dry and a mani-pedi, then have a coffee at Barney's before shopping at the homeware store Crate And Barrel, which I love. For lunch I'd go to Mougins, near Grasse in the South of France, and be inspired by the smells to make some fragrances. I'd have lunch in the village square followed by café gourmand (coffee with miniature desserts). I'd spend the afternoon with Gary, Josh and Teri on Parrot Cay in the Turks and Caicos islands, which has the most incredible white sandy beaches.



We'd share a hamper of fresh fruit, then watch the sun go down at the Residence hotel in Dubai. In the evening we'd see Elton John perform at Madison Square Garden, New York, and the day would end at home in my own bed in London.

The happiest moment you will cherish forever... Watching Josh fence in the under-20s for Great Britain earlier this year. It was magical to see him so calm under pressure, I felt so very proud.

The saddest time that shook your world... When Gary was desperately ill with adrenal failure a few years ago. But he was saved by an amazing doctor and is doing fine now.

The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you... I have it in my mind to do something with food, but I'm not sure exactly what yet.

The philosophy that underpins your life... Always give your best and pause to enjoy the success.

The order of service at your funeral... Maybe the church can be filled with a fragrance I've just made and then I want something happy, something sad, something fun and something mad. I want people to cry but have a laugh too, because I don't think death is the end.

The way you want to be remembered... She lived with passion, never quit, and made life an adventure.

The Plug... Jo Malone: My Story is published by Simon & Schuster, £20, and each copy is scented with my fragrance Pomelo. Visit joloves.com. ■
As told to Rob McGibbon

Right: 2009's A Christmas Carol. Above right: a hamper of fresh fruit. Far right: riding in Montana



PS...

Tom Hanks plays a hero pilot in Sully – in cinemas Friday.

The Rolling Stones' new album Blue & Lonesome is out the same day. And Ed Harris makes his West End stage debut

in Buried Child at Trafalgar Studio One on Thursday



NEXT WEEK

- Christopher Biggins' hilarious tales from his 40 years in panto
- The most delicious party food recipes ever
- Monty Don's tips for dealing with box blight
- Britain's best TV listings