

The DEFINITE ARTICLE

We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept THE definitive answer. This week: former England manager Terry Venables

The prized possession you value above all others... My wedding ring, which was also my mum Myrtle's. She died a year before I married my wife Yvette in 1991. It connects me with the two most important women in my life.

The biggest regret you wish you could amend... Not doing Strictly Come Dancing. I was asked a few years ago, but couldn't accept due to a hip problem. The hip's better now and though I'm nearly 74 I still feel up to it.

The temptation you wish you could resist... I swim most days and always feel peckish afterwards, so I reach for a dark chocolate Bounty bar or some wine gums.

The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint... The Antarctic explorer Ernest Shackleton. I'm fascinated by how he saved his men. I'd like to know how he found the strength to be such a great leader.

The pet hate that makes your hackles rise... People who drop litter. How can they throw it away without a thought?

The priority activity if you were the Invisible Man for a day... I'd go back in time to the FA board meetings after Euro 96 to see why they decided not to keep me on as England manager. The team was playing really well, the results were good and the public wanted me to carry on.

The film you can watch time and time again... The Odd Couple from 1968, with Jack Lemmon and Walter Matthau, has such clever dialogue. I can repeat whole sections from the film.

The song that means most to you... If I Can Dream by Elvis Presley – I sang it for a TV advert to promote the 2010 World Cup.

The person who has influenced you the most... My mum, and my dad Fred. I got my cheeky side from Dad, but Mum was really strict. She instilled in me my work ethic and good manners.

The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child... Never feel you can't achieve anything simply because you're not academically gifted. Everyone is good at something.



'I had to turn down Strictly due to a hip problem. The hip's better now and though I'm nearly 74 I still feel up to it'



The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again... I'm like the absent-minded professor

and I've lost countless things, but fortunately none that are treasured.

The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase... My reputation was attacked in the early 1990s when I was manager of Spurs. So many things were said that weren't true. It was a terrible experience.

The poem that touches your soul... If by Rudyard Kipling. During that horrible time in the 90s a line from it rang so true for me: 'Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken.'

The unending quest that drives you on... For our hotel La Escondida (The Hideaway), which we opened in 2015, to be thought of as one of Spain's nicest. Yvette runs it, I'm front of house. It's hard work but so enjoyable.

The event that altered the course of your life and character... The Munich air disaster in 1958, which killed eight members of Manchester United's team. I was 15 and it made me realise life can be taken away at any time.

The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity... Cooking. I'm ashamed to say I'm useless, but I love watching MasterChef and other cookery shows.

The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it... I'd drive from the East End of London to Hammersmith without stopping at any traffic lights. I could do it in 30 minutes!

The book that holds an everlasting resonance... An East End Farewell, about undertaker Stan Cribb. Yvette wrote it, so if I didn't pick this I'd need an undertaker myself!

The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions... I'd start the day with a fry-up in the sunshine on the terrace at our hotel, then Yvette and I would stroll around Ephesus in Turkey, the best-preserved Roman city in the Mediterranean. For lunch I'd have John Dory and chips at Doyles in Watsons Bay, Australia, looking back at the Sydney skyline. After that I'd go to Antarctica and gaze at the icebergs and

killer whales. We'd then go snorkelling in the Maldives to see sharks and turtles, before walking along the Great Wall of China at sunset. The day would end back at home with a dinner of scallops, fillet steak and a chocolate fondant. I don't drink these days, but as it's a special day I might have a white wine spritzer.

The happiest moment you will cherish forever... Euro 96 was a special time. I had a great bond with the team I managed and we got so close to the final.

The saddest time that shook your world... My father's death in 1988 from a heart attack. I think of him every day.

The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you... Not to have taken my Euro 96 team to the World Cup in France in 1998. We could have won it.

The philosophy that underpins your life... My grandad Ossie always said to me, 'What's right is right, and what's wrong is no man's right.'

The order of service at your funeral... I don't like funerals. I find it torture having to wait a week after a loved one has died, so I'd prefer to be cremated straight away, with a big memorial service and a party later.

The way you want to be remembered... Kind, loyal and funny.

The Plug... La Escondida hotel is an oasis of peace and calm set in 500 acres of beautiful scenery near Alicante. To book, visit hotelescondida.com or call 00 34 96 551 3046. ■

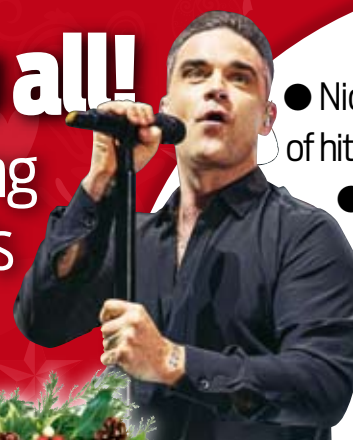
As told to Rob McGibbon



Right: The Odd Couple. Above right: wine gums. Far right: Ephesus in Turkey

A very **HAPPY CHRISTMAS** to you all!

Eat, drink, be merry and enjoy all the festive viewing with Weekend magazine. We're back on New Year's Eve as Robbie Williams sees in 2017 on BBC1



NEXT WEEK

- Nicola Walker on the return of hit crime drama Unforgotten
- Pop star Rick Astley invites us into his home
- Monty Don reveals his successes – and failures – in the garden in 2016