

# The DEFINITE ARTICLE

*We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept THE definitive answer. This week it's designer Jasper Conran's turn*

**The prized possession you value above all others...** My wedding ring. I married Oisin on 12 December 2015. The ring represents my life-long commitment to another person, which is a great thing to do.

**The biggest regret you wish you could amend...** Smoking. I started when I was 13 and only managed to give up five years ago. I look back and think, 'How insane'. I spent most of my adult life smelling like an ashtray. I'm shocked at my own stupidity.

**The person who has influenced you most...** Coco Chanel. She died in 1971 when I was 12, so I never met her, but I hero-worshipped her. She was fascinating, original and did extraordinary things for women.

**The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint...** Elizabeth I. Clearly I have a penchant for strong women!

**The temptation you wish you could resist...** The second vodka martini. The first is delicious, but the second is a bad idea because it can lead to the third, which is always a catastrophe.

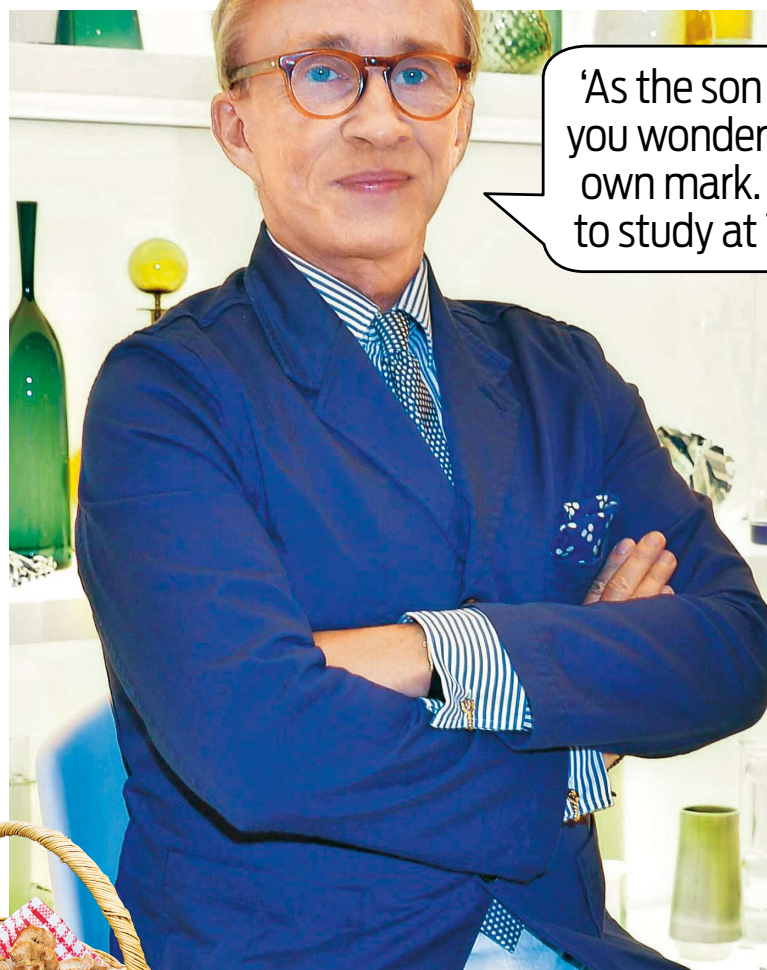
**The book that holds an everlasting resonance...** Madame Bovary by Gustave Flaubert. I read it at school when I was 13 and it was the first time I experienced really beautiful writing.

**The film you can watch time and time again...** Stanley Kubrick's Barry Lyndon. It's about a fictional Irish adventurer and is staggeringly beautiful.

**The priority activity if you were the Invisible Man for a day...** I'd sit alongside the head of MI6 and hear what really goes on with our spies.

**The unending quest that drives you on...** I have an insatiable curiosity about tomorrow. I'm always looking forward, not back, and that drives me.

**The pet hate that makes your hackles rise...** Hypocrisy. I hate it when people say one thing then do another.



'As the son of two famous people you wonder if you'll ever make your own mark. But going to New York to study at 15 gave me anonymity'



**The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity...** Foraging for food. Oisin and I often go walking in the country looking for mushrooms, wild garlic and blackberries.

**The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child...** You can do anything in life, but you have to work for it.

**The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again...** My youth. I'm 57 now and I'd like to go back to when I was 20, knowing what I know now, because I'd be less naive.

**The poem that touches your soul...** Annabel Lee by Edgar Allan Poe. It's poignant, sad and beautiful.

**The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase...** I've always lived my life quite publicly and I realised long ago that you can't stop people writing or thinking what they want about you. It's a futile struggle, so go ahead, have misapprehensions.

**The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it...** Euthanasia, for a friend or family member who's in agony and needing help.

**The event that altered the course of your life and character...** Going to New York to study design when I was 15. As the son of two very famous people [designer Sir Terence Conran and author Shirley Conran] you wonder if you'll ever be able to make your own mark. New York gave me an immense sense of freedom and anonymity.

**The song that means most to you...** Blow The Wind Southerly by Kathleen Ferrier. It's a touching folk song that always reminds me of my grandmother Ida who looked after me when I was little. She died about ten years ago aged 98.

**The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions...** I'd start with a boiled egg and tea at Claridge's. Oisin and I would then have a long walk as the sun rises on Machu Picchu in Peru. Lunch would be at an old restaurant in Rome called Giggetto – I'd have four courses and a bottle of Barolo.

We'd then spend the afternoon at the artist James Turrell's Roden Crater in Arizona, an extraordinary artwork inside a volcano. The rest of the day would be spent in Lindos on the Greek island of Rhodes where we have a house. I'd gather the Conran clan for a big dinner at a little restaurant by the bay called St Paul's. We'd have a dinner of fresh fish and barbecued meats with some retsina. Then I'd stagger up the hill to bed.

**The happiest moment you will cherish forever...** My wedding day, which was on my 56th birthday. To be able to do that and not be legally prejudiced against any more was extraordinary.

**The saddest time that shook your world...** When Aids arrived in the 80s. I saw many friends die in a pitiful way.

**The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you...** To have a washboard stomach with a six-pack.

**The philosophy that underpins your life...** Carpe diem.

**The order of service at your funeral...** It will hopefully be at a tiny church in Wiltshire. I'd like the hymn Eternal Father Strong To Save and ideally my body will be burnt on a pyre before my ashes are scattered on Pilsdon Pen hill in Dorset.

**The way you want to be remembered...** As a kind person.

**The Plug...** Jasper Conran has opened a hotel in Marrakech's Medina. To make a reservation at L'Hôtel Marrakech visit [l-hotelmarrakech.com](http://l-hotelmarrakech.com). ■

*As told to Rob McGibbon*



Left: Coco Chanel. Above: wild mushrooms and blackberries. Far right: A bay at Lindos on the Greek island of Rhodes

## PS...

*Pirates Of The Caribbean 5 with Johnny Depp hits cinemas Friday. A 50th anniversary edition of The Beatles' Sgt Pepper album is out the same day. And Miranda Hart plays Miss Hannigan in Annie at the Piccadilly Theatre from Tuesday*



## NEXT WEEK

- The 100 best-value white wines and sparklers in part two of Matthew Jukes' Summer Wine Collection
- From Thai Turkey to classic beef – our brilliant Bank Holiday burger special
- Britain's best TV listings