



From top: Fiji, Nick's Willys Jeep, Cézanne's self-portrait, a fine Pauillac wine, Alan Sugar, Claudia Cardinale, one of Nick's tractors and soprano Renée Fleming

The prized possession you value above all others... My father John's gold Omega watch. It was given to him in 1936 for his 21st birthday. He left it to me when he died, aged 96, three years ago and it connects me with him.

The unqualified regret you wish you could amend... Not taking up my place to study law at Trinity College, Dublin. My parents couldn't afford to pay. It would've been incredible, but in many ways not going was the making of me.

The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions...

I'd wake up on a fine spring day at my home in the Bordeaux region of France, brew some coffee then eat fresh figs from my garden. I'd spend the morning tinkering with my WWII Willys Jeep, before driving it, with the windscreen down, to the village to buy fresh bread. At lunchtime, I'd meet my partner Catherine, my two children, James and Kate and five grandchildren [aged eight months to seven] and we'd have an afternoon skiing at Val d'Isère. Then I'd catch a Learjet to Tahiti and recover on the beach from all that exercise! In the evening, Catherine and I would meet at a villa in Martinique and enjoy a fine Pauillac wine as the sun goes down. We'd return to France to listen to the crickets sing the rest of the night.

The temptation you wish you could resist... Staying at a good party too long and having that final extra glass of wine. At 69 I should be more dignified and leave early – but I'm a fool!

The book that holds an everlasting resonance... If This Is A Man by Primo Levi. A Jewish-Italian chemist, he survived Auschwitz and wrote about the horror with moving forgiveness.

The priority activity if you were the Invisible Man for a day... I'd enconce myself in Kim Jong-un's palace in North Korea to find out what planet he and his team are on.

The pet hate that makes your hackles rise... Those who litter the countryside. Go to the tip, like decent people.

The film you can watch time and time again... The Leopard from 1963 with Burt Lancaster and Claudia Cardinale. There's never been a more beautiful woman than Claudia, and Burt is great.

The person who has influenced you most... Alan Sugar. I went to work as his PR in 1983 and it was like a roller-coaster. He lives life like a battle and I've grown to like the smell of cordite.



'I love mowing the lawn – I have seven lawn mowers and three tractors. I get it from my father, he was obsessed'

The DEFINITE ARTICLE

We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept THE definitive answer. This week: The Apprentice wise man Nick Hewer

The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint... Julius Caesar when Rome was at its pinnacle. I'd love to know how he masterminded all those victories in his empire.

The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child... Judge as you find.

The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity... Mowing the lawn. I have seven types of lawn mower and three tractors. I get it from my father, who was obsessed with keeping the lawn neat.

The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again... A Victorian music box left to me by my grandmother when she died aged 99 in the early 60s. I sold it for £80 to pay for a flight to America. It was a wicked thing to do.

The unending quest that drives you on... To travel to far-off places. I've done the outer reaches of the Andes, Russia, Eastern Europe and Mongolia. Top of my list is to island-hop from Fiji to Japan.

The poem that touches your soul... The Song Of Wandering Aengus by WB Yeats. It has such beautiful language.

The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase... That I have an inside track on finance. People ask what's going to happen with the stock market and I say, 'I haven't a clue!'

The event that altered the course of your life and character... Taking The Apprentice job. For me – a non-entity – to be acknowledged like I am by the public has made me more confident.

The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it... I'd steal a small Cézanne self-portrait from The National Gallery in London. I admired it when I visited there often in my 20s – to chat up American girls!

The song that means most to you... Richard Strauss's Four Last Songs sung by the American soprano Renée Fleming. Her voice is simply fantastic.

The happiest moment you will cherish forever... That's tricky. I'm more predisposed to depression. That said, the arrival of my first grandson, Freddie, was pretty special.

The saddest time that shook your world... The end of my marriage. We were together from 1973 until 1985. Divorce is a failure and it was my fault.

The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you... To have an unexpected and painless death!

The philosophy that underpins your life... To find the humanity in people.

The order of service at your funeral... I'm a traditionalist and want a church service with all of Strauss's Four Last Songs and to be buried in a quiet English country churchyard – the thought of ending my days in a great big municipal cemetery fills me with horror.

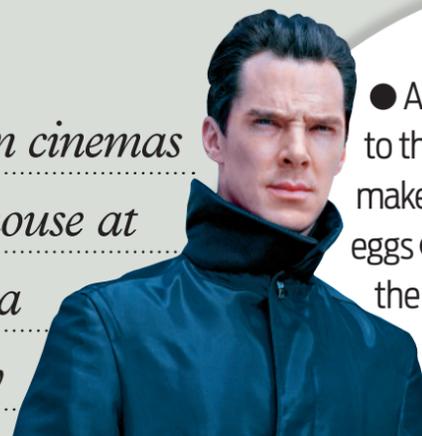
The way you want to be remembered... Just as a decent bloke.

The Plug... The Apprentice premieres on Tuesday 7 May at 9pm on BBC1, then switches to Wednesdays at 9pm on BBC1 from 8 May onwards. The Apprentice: You're Fired! follows the main show on BBC2. ■

As told to Rob McGibbon

PS...

Benedict Cumberbatch goes sci-fi in Star Trek Into Darkness – in cinemas from Thursday. John Simm stars in Harold Pinter's The Hothouse at London's Trafalgar Studios. And The Shocking Miss Emerald, a new album from Dutch sensation Caro Emerald, is out Monday



NEXT WEEK

● An amazing CGI trip back to the Ice Age ● Jamie Oliver makes cracking dishes with eggs ● Monty Don introduces the Mail's National Garden Competition ● PLUS Britain's best TV listings