**The prized possession you value above all others...** A Bang & Olufsen Beogram 4000 record player from 1972. It cost me about £30, which was a fortune then. It is a design of classic beauty.

**The big regret you wish you could amend...** Missing my sons growing up. I hardly saw Oli, 38, and Sebastien, 31, in their early years because I was working 18-hour days, six days a week. But things worked out well because we all have a loving bond now.

**The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions...** I’d have a very early breakfast at a café in Place de l’Opéra in Paris and watch the city wake up. I’d have a triple espresso coffee and a croissant. I’d then go to the Maldives to walk on the finest white sand and scuba dive over a beautiful coral reef with my sons. It’s best to have them with me because they have saved my life many times in the water! From there, I’d visit the lemon grass fields in Chiang Mai in northern Thailand. This amazing area has inspired me so much. I’d then travel at Iguazu Falls in Brazil. For dinner, I’d go to the wonderful Japanese restaurant Zuma in London and have a feast with plenty of sake. I’d end the day back in Brazil, dancing the samba on the beach in Rio, before staying the night at the Copacabana Palace hotel.

**The temptation you wish you could resist...** Red pinot noir and cheese to unwind after work. I’m 63 and shouldn’t eat such things so close to midnight!

**The book that holds an everlasting resonance...** *The Idiot* by 19th-century Russian writer Fyodor Dostoyevsky. It’s one of the great human dramas. The activity if you were the Invisible Man for a day... I’d guide the hands of world leaders from signing documents that create war and pain.

**The pet hate that makes your hackles rise...** Bad eating manners. It’s disgusting to the food and the cook.

**The film you can watch time and time again...** *Dr Zhivago*. I love its frozen landscapes and the mastery of its acting. Julie Christie is incredible and Omar Sharif is my hero. I met him recently and I hugged him and told him how much I admire him.

**The person who has influenced you most...** My mother Maman. She’s 91 and when I was a boy she gave me a deep understanding of food, its purity and nobility, and how it celebrates life.

The figure from history for whom you’d most like to buy a pie and a pint... Alexander the Great. He was a military genius who ruled half the world when he was 22. To understand what drove him would be fascinating. The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child... Always consider the consequences of whatever you do.

**The poem that touches your soul...** *Dormeur du Val [The Sleeper Of The Valley]* by the 19th-century French poet Arthur Rimbaud. It’s about a soldier found dead in a valley and I first read it when I was 14. It was so moving it felt like a knife going into my flesh.

**The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again...** My innocence.

**The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it...** I’d steal Marc Chagall’s painting La Mariée [The Bride]. I love Chagall’s work. The song that means most to you... Imagine by John Lennon. I am romantic and its naivety is so touching.

**The happiest moment you will cherish...** The death from liver cancer of my best friend René Simon when he was only 50. We grew up together. The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you... For Le Manoir to remain a centre of excellence.

**The order of service at your funeral...** I’d have a church service and they’d play Arvo Pärt’s *Spiegel im Spiegel* with Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra on grass fields in Chiang Mai in northern Thailand. This amazing area has inspired me so much. I’d then go to the Maldives to walk on the finest white sand and scuba dive over a beautiful coral reef with my sons. It’s best to have them with me because they have saved my life many times in the water! From there, I’d visit the lemon grass fields in Chiang Mai in northern Thailand. This amazing area has inspired me so much. I’d then travel at Iguazu Falls in Brazil. For dinner, I’d go to the wonderful Japanese restaurant Zuma in London and have a feast with plenty of sake. I’d end the day back in Brazil, dancing the samba on the beach in Rio, before staying the night at the Copacabana Palace hotel.

**The saddest time that shook your world...** Being hit by a chef when I was 21 after I questioned his cooking. It broke my jaw and I lost my job. I was exiled to England and it was then that I knew what my life would be.

**The event that altered the course of your life and character...** Being hit by a frying pan by a chef when I was 21 after I questioned his cooking. It broke my jaw and I lost my job. I was exiled to England and it was then that I knew what my life would be.

**The philosophy that underpins your life...** Always be curious.