



From top: La Colombe d'Or hotel in Saint-Paul de Vence in France, painting, Pouilly-Fumé wine, Elsa Schiaparelli, The Jungle Book, cows, sushi, and Clark Gable in Gone With The Wind

The prized possession you value above all others... My home in Surrey. It was left to my husband [Alexander Plunket Greene who died in 1990] by his great aunt. We moved here after we got married in 1957. It's where I'm happiest.

The unqualified regret you wish you could amend... I've always loved painting and drawing. I wish I'd developed it more and exhibited.

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

I'd have breakfast in the garden at home with my partner Antony Rouse, then we'd go to the Pembrokeshire coast in Wales for a bracing swim. We'd have an alfresco lunch at Il Pomodorino by Lake Como, Italy, with my son Orlando, his wife and my three grandchildren – Lucas, ten, Allegra, eight, and Massimo, seven. I'd have risotto and chilled white wine, then we'd all relax in the afternoon by the lake. I'd end the day staying at La Colombe d'Or hotel in Saint-Paul de Vence, in the South of France.

The temptation you wish you could resist... Wine, especially Pouilly Fumé. I've always enjoyed not resisting temptation, but I'm 78 now and you have to be careful.

The book that holds an everlasting resonance... The Jungle Book by Rudyard Kipling. It reminds you of the potent effect animals have on our lives.

The priority activity if you were the Invisible Woman for a day... It's not in my nature to want to spy on people. I can tell everything I need to know about a person from what they're wearing.

The pet hate that makes your hackles rise... That funerals have to be celebrations! I don't think there's anything wrong with a bit of wailing.

The film you can watch time and time again... Gone With The Wind. I love its grand scope and it's kind of sexy, but in a romantic way.

The person who has influenced you most... Alexander. He encouraged my designs and launched the business. Without his drive and fearlessness I honestly don't think I would have achieved half the things I did.

The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint... The Italian designer Elsa Schiaparelli. She was one of the truly great designers of the 20th century. I'd love to know how she was inspired when she was at her peak in the 20s and 30s.



'I adore cows. There are few things better than falling asleep in a field and being woken by an inquisitive cow'

The

DEFINITE ARTICLE

We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept THE definitive answer. This week it's fashion designer Mary Quant

The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child... Smile. It brings warmth and love into your life.

The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity... I absolutely adore cows. They're the most fascinating, gentle and beautiful animals. Their eyes are so amazing. I have ten that live on the land around my house. I love to talk to them. There are few things better than falling asleep in a field and being woken up by an inquisitive cow.

The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again... My wedding ring. It was handmade for me by the jewellery designer Gerda Flockinger. It was always a bit loose and three years ago it fell off in a car park. It was night-time and I couldn't find it. I went back the next day, but it was gone and I was heartbroken.

The unending quest that drives you on... Curiosity. I hope to never lose that sense of needing to know.

The poem that touches your soul... The Lord's Prayer is the most perfect piece of poetry. I always feel at peace and moved when I recite it.

The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase... That I'm a confident extrovert. People associate me with those glamorous photos from the 60s, but I'm actually incredibly shy.

The event that altered the course of your life and character... Visiting Japan in the early 70s. It changed the way I designed, and my entire perspective on life. I also discovered sushi, which I love to this day!

The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it... I would embezzle money from a bad bank and distribute it to family and friends – keeping a healthy slice of it for myself!

The song that means most to you... Bring Me Sunshine by Morecambe & Wise. Alexander used to sing it to me whenever things were going wrong and it always cheered me up.

The happiest moment you will cherish forever... Getting my OBE in 1966. As the Queen pinned it on me, she said simply, 'More exports please!' It was typical of her to get right to the point.

The saddest time that shook your world... Alexander's death. He was only 57 and it was ghastly losing him.

The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you... I long for my garden to be complete. Working in it is one of my joys but it will never be finished because it's forever changing with the seasons.

The philosophy that underpins your life... Ensure you enjoy it!

The order of service at your funeral... I'll be happy with a small, private funeral at a church near my home. I'd like my ashes scattered in my garden.

The way you want to be remembered... As the girl who made clothes and make-up that brought a touch of fun and colour into people's lives.

The Plug... Mary features in Living The Life, Tuesday, 8pm, Sky Arts 1. Visit www.livingthelife.co.uk. ■

As told to Rob McGibbon

PS...

Dominic West makes his musical debut as Henry Higgins in My Fair Lady at Sheffield's Crucible Theatre. Ang Lee's big-screen version of Yann Martel's bestseller Life Of Pi opens on Thursday. And the cast of Glee's Christmas Album Volume 3 is out Monday



NEXT WEEK

Don't miss your BUMPER Christmas TV issue

All the essential festive viewing right through to New Year