

The DEFINITE ARTICLE

We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept **THE** definitive answer. This week: motor racing legend *Sir Stirling Moss*

The prized possession you value above all others... My ten Gold Stars from the British Racing Drivers' Club for being the year's top driver, starting in 1950 when I was 21 and the youngest to win one.

The biggest regret you wish you could amend... Retiring at 32 after a terrible crash in 1962. I was in a coma for a month and paralysed on one side for six months, and I was talked into making a rash decision. But I was at the height of my career and could have had another ten years.

The temptation you wish you could resist... Ordering ridiculous gadgets from those magazines that come free in newspapers. I'm a sucker for things like atomic clocks and foldable suitcases.

The priority activity if you were the Invisible Man for a day... I'd sit among the tigers of Nepal. They're quite extraordinary.

The book that holds an everlasting resonance... Road Star Hat Trick by Prince Chula. It's about his cousin's life as a racing driver in the 1930s. I read it at 15 and I was amazed by his stories

Right: Fred Astaire. Above right: a 1950s Ferrari racing car. Far right: a tiger in Nepal

of racing and chasing crumpet. That's when I decided to be a racing driver.

The pet hate that makes your hackles rise... Untidiness and disorganisation. I expect my PA to ensure my desk is clear when I come in of a morning.

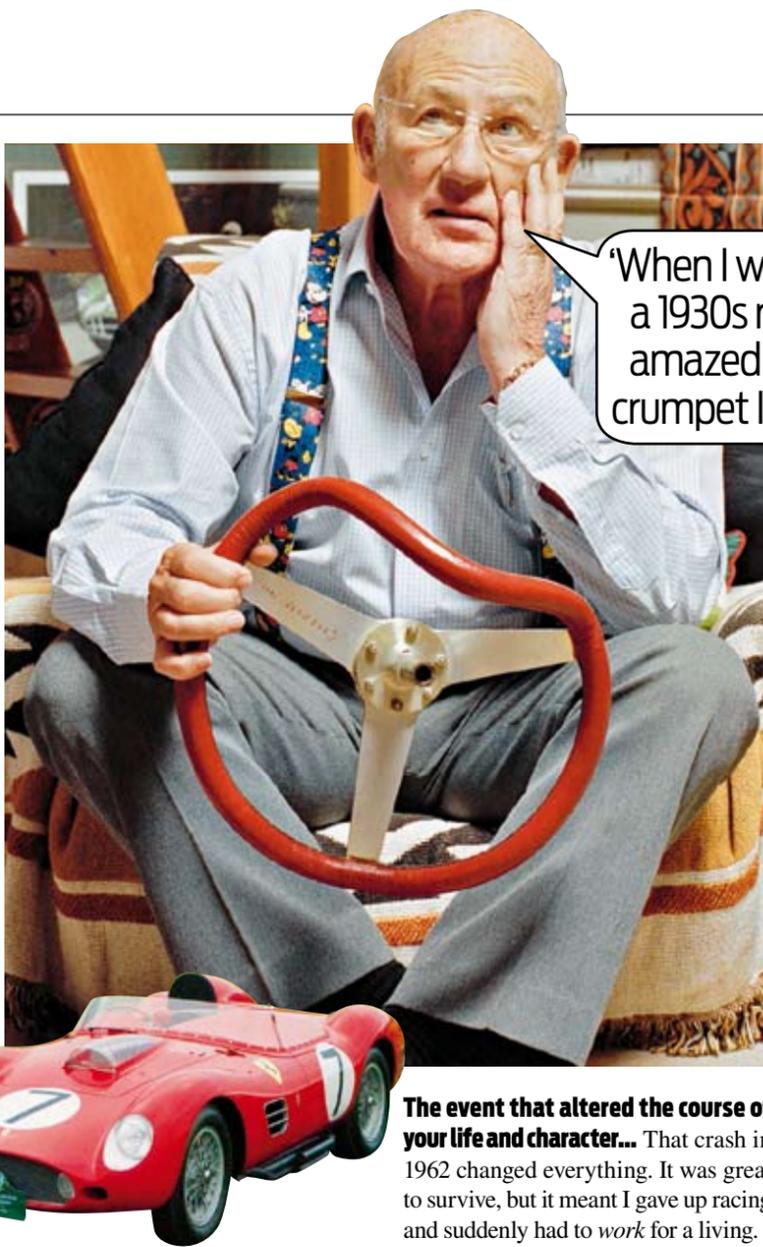
The film you can watch time and time again... Top Hat. Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers are wonderful together and the music always puts a spring in my step.

The person who has influenced you most... My father Alfred. He raced in the Indianapolis 500 and was so encouraging of my career. He was like my best friend. He died in 1972 aged 76.

The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint... Fred Astaire. He was a fantastic dancer and actor and what a life he led. I used to be a fairly good dancer myself – maybe Fred could give me a lesson!

The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it... I'd steal a 1950s Ferrari racing car and drive it around Hyde Park as fast as I could.

The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child... Make sure you always tell the truth.



'When I was 15 I read a book about a 1930s racing driver and was so amazed at his stories of chasing crumpet I decided to become one'

reminds me that I already have the best! We'd head to Singapore for dinner of black pepper prawns, sweet and sour pork and chicken with cashew nuts at a restaurant we love called Fatty's. I'd spend the evening on a sunset game drive in the Masai Mara National Reserve in Kenya. We'd end the day sipping Pimm's at a luxury lodge there.

The happiest moment you will cherish forever... Winning the Mille Miglia in 1955. It's a 1,000-mile endurance motor race around Italy and I was one of the first non-Italians to win it.

The saddest time that shook your world... The death of my friend David Haines in 2009. He was 80 and had cancer. We'd been all over the world together and were closer than brothers.

The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you... I wish I'd driven the Indy 500 – I never had the time.

The philosophy that underpins your life... I've always tried to live by two simple things: honesty and loyalty.

The order of service at your funeral... I'll leave the details to Susie. She's 23 years younger than me, so that's a fair bet. Maybe my ashes will be scattered inside the racing circuit at Goodwood.

The way you want to be remembered... For being fast and fair.

The Plug... Please support the charity Hope for Tomorrow, dedicated to bringing cancer treatment closer to patients' homes. hopefortomorrow.org.uk. ■

As told to Rob McGibbon

The event that altered the course of your life and character... That crash in 1962 changed everything. It was great to survive, but it meant I gave up racing and suddenly had to work for a living. I went into the property business. It was a shock – nothing could live up to racing.

The song that means most to you... I'm Glad There Is You by Frank Sinatra. My wife Susie and I love it because it takes us back to when we were courting.

The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions... I'd wake up with Susie on a Seabourn cruise liner sailing somewhere hot in the Far East, then have a full English breakfast, exotic fruit, and coffee, followed by a stroll on the deck. Later, I'd ski at Les Trois Vallées in France with my children – Allison, 42, and Elliot, 34, and my grandchildren – Oliver, 16, Emily, 12, and Katie, nine. Lunch would be gravadlax at Le Gavroche. I'd spend the afternoon on Copacabana beach with Susie and do some window-shopping. By that, I mean looking at the crumpet! Susie doesn't mind because she knows it

The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity... My guilty pleasure is watching the courtroom TV show Judge Judy. It's great entertainment.

The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again... My sex drive! I first lost the ability to have sex after I had my prostate out when I had cancer at 70. I took pills which solved it and even became the face of them. There was a billboard with my photo that said 'Arise Sir Stirling!' But five years ago the pills stopped working – I ran out of steam.

The unending quest that drives you on... To keep busy. 'Movement is Tranquillity' is a motto I live by. I want to keep travelling the world having fun.

The poem that touches your soul... The only poems I've liked are the limericks my father taught me, but they're far too naughty to repeat here.

The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase... That I'm confident. I hate walking into a room full of people on my own.



PHOTOGRAPHS: PAL HANSEN/CONTOUR, ALAMY, REX, GETTY/WMREIMAGE

PS...

See Eddie Redmayne's brilliant portrayal of Stephen Hawking in *The Theory Of Everything*, in cinemas from New Year's Day. Queen play a New Year's Eve show at Central Hall, Westminster. And *The Lion, The Witch And The Wardrobe* is at Kingston's Rose Theatre



NEXT WEEK

- Kris Marshall takes us behind the scenes on the new series of *Death In Paradise*
- How to cook deliciously authentic curries
- Monty Don's tips to help garden birds survive winter
- Britain's best TV listings