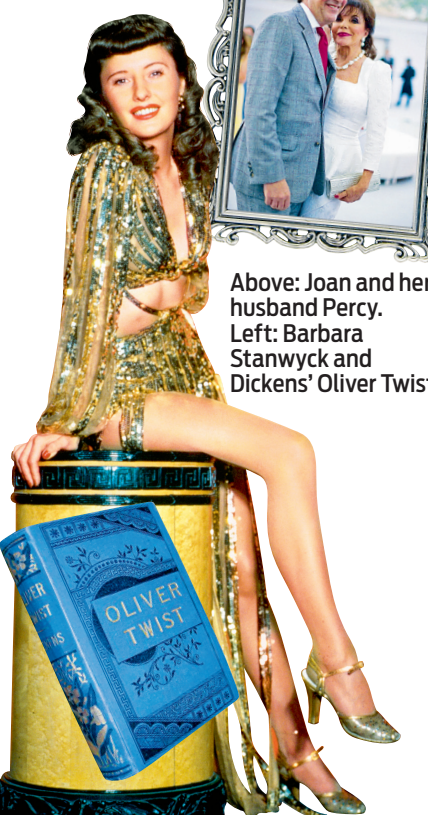




Above: Acapulco. Left: Michelle Pfeiffer in *The Fabulous Baker Boys*. Below: Marie Antoinette, Maxim's in Paris and cucumber sandwiches



Above: Joan and her husband Percy. Left: Barbara Stanwyck and Dickens' Oliver Twist

The prized possession you value above all others... A gold charm necklace I've had for more than 30 years. It's got about 40 mementos on it given to me by loved ones – it's full of memories.

The biggest regret you wish you could amend... Never learning French.

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

I'd wake up at home in the South of France with Percy [Gibson, her fifth husband] and we'd have orange juice, croissants, jam and coffee. Later, I'd travel to Acapulco and go water-skiing, followed by a Margarita on the beach. Lunch would be at Club 55 in St Tropez with all the family – my three children [Tara, Sacha, and Katy] and my three grandchildren [aged nine-15]. I always have a salad Niçoise and the onion tart and we'd all have lashings of the local rosé. After that I'd go shopping in Paris, then nip into Selfridges on Oxford Street. I'd then have tea and cucumber sandwiches at Claridge's. Strong tea for me. The evening would begin with a Cosmopolitan cocktail in the Polo Lounge at the Beverly Hills Hotel. Dinner would be back in 19th-century Paris at Maxim's, preferably at a fancy dress party so I can wear a wonderful gown. I'd go dancing at Loulou's in Mayfair and then sleep at my London flat.

The temptation you wish you could resist... Watching old movies in the daytime. If I see a film with one of the greats like Barbara Stanwyck is on TV I have to watch it.

The book that holds an everlasting resonance... *Oliver Twist*. I read it by torchlight under the bed covers when I was 12. I love the detail in Dickens' writing. You feel as if you're there.

The priority activity if you were the Invisible Woman for a day... I'd eavesdrop on a meeting of casting directors as they decide why I won't get a part.

The pet hate that makes your hackles rise... Rudeness and arrogance.

The film you can watch time and time again... *The Fabulous Baker Boys*. When Michelle Pfeiffer sings while writhing on top of that piano, it's probably the sexiest scene ever.

The person who has influenced you most... My father Joe, who taught me that you make your own destiny.



'People always think I'm like Alexis from *Dynasty*. She was cunning, sexually predatory and cruel. I'm none of those things'

The DEFINITE ARTICLE

We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept THE definitive answer. This week it's actress and author Joan Collins

The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint... Marie Antoinette. She could tell me who made her dresses!

The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child... Eat life or life will eat you. Do not waste it by being a victim.

The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity... People watching. I write novels and I love to sit in cafes observing how people interact.

The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again... A suitcase packed with my life's memorabilia. It went missing in 1987 during my divorce from Peter Holm. It had all my diaries, photos and letters, including some from Warren Beatty when he was my fiancé.

The unending quest that drives you on... To continue to have the lifestyle to which I have grown accustomed. I never intend to stop working.

The poem that touches your soul... *Desiderata* by American writer Max Ehrmann. It contains all the wisdom you need to guide you in life.

The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase... That I'm like my *Dynasty* character Alexis Carrington. She was cunning, deviant, sexually predatory, and very cruel. I'm none of those things.

The event that altered the course of your life and character... Getting the role of Alexis changed my life because it gave me international superstardom.

The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it... I'd rob the big banks and re-distribute the money.

The song that means most to you... *The Way You Look Tonight* – the version by Steve Tyrell. It was played at my wedding to Percy in 2002.

The happiest moment you will cherish forever... My wedding to Percy. We had a reception at Claridge's with everyone who matters to us. It was fabulous.

The saddest time that shook your world... When my youngest daughter [Katy] was hit by a car in 1980. She was in a coma for seven weeks. I thought I was going to lose her.

The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you... To own a private jet. It really is the only way to fly.

The philosophy that underpins your life... Life is a banquet and most poor suckers are starving to death.

The order of service at your funeral... I will be happy for others to take care of the arrangements so long as there's plenty to drink and lots of dancing.

The way you want to be remembered... As someone who entertained people.

The Plug... *One Night With Joan* is at Leicester Square Theatre until 9 February. www.leicestersquaretheatre.com. Her memoir *Passion For Life* and her eBooks are on sale now. ■

As told to Rob McGibbon

PS...

*Catch Matthew McConaughey's Oscar-nominated turn in **Dallas Buyers Club** – from Friday. Caroline Quentin stars in **Oh, What A Lovely War!** at London's Theatre Royal Stratford East. And Taylor Swift kicks off five nights at London's O2 Arena tonight*



NEXT WEEK

- Pop star Pixie Lott on her TV acting debut in *Inspector George Gently*
- How to cook your sweetheart the ultimate three-course Valentine's dinner
- PLUS Britain's most detailed TV listings