

The DEFINITE ARTICLE

We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept THE definitive answer. This week it's the turn of chef Michel Roux Jr



'I was a bit of a rocker in my teens, and Child In Time by Deep Purple takes me back. I still love a good headbang to it!'

The prized possession you value above all others... My collection of cookbooks and old menus, particularly a signed 1903 first edition of *Le Guide Culinaire* by the legendary chef Auguste Escoffier. My father Albert gave it to me when I was in my 20s. It's priceless to me.

The biggest regret you wish you could amend... Not letting my daughter Emily, 24, go to the Champions League semi-final, second leg, between Arsenal and Manchester United in 2009. I was meant to have two tickets, but only got one. I'm a big United fan and it took about five seconds for me to decide to take it. She still reminds me about it!

The temptation you wish you could resist... Good-quality confectionery, especially Amedei chocolate from Italy. If I open a box I go on a feeding frenzy.

The book that holds an everlasting resonance... *Cod* by Mark Kurlansky, which recounts the fish's impact on the world. It will get anyone hooked!

The priority activity if you were the Invisible Man for a day... I'd love to have been in the Man United dressing room in 2003 when Alex Ferguson kicked a boot at David Beckham.

The pet hate that makes your hackles rise... Apart from traffic in London, it's graffiti on beautiful old monuments.

The film you can watch time and time again... I love Quentin Tarantino movies, especially the two *Kill Bill* films. They're gory but hilarious.

The person who has influenced you most... I'm hugely indebted to my first head chef Henri Hellegouarch. He taught me so much, especially to never be late. To this day, I'm always on time.

The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint... Napoleon. I'd love to know if he was really such a great tactician.

The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child... Keep a diary of important moments in your life. You can refer back and be inspired, or learn from your mistakes.



was born. It was my wife Giselle and I's fourth and final attempt at IVF, so it was extra special.

The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it... I enjoy fast cars, so I'd steal a McLaren road car and drive it as fast as I could.

The song that means most to you... *Child In Time* by Deep Purple. It's a belter that takes me back to my teenage years when I was a bit of a rocker. I still love a good headbang to it.

The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions... Time is my most precious commodity, so a perfect day would be cutting away from London to enjoy peace with Giselle and Emily, hopping between islands in the Seychelles. I'd wake up in the luxurious cotton sheets of the hotel on Frégate Island. Breakfast would be a croissant, mango juice and an espresso. Then I'd go for a run, a swim and snorkel. We'd then take a speedboat to a bigger island called Mahé for lunch at the Plantation Club Hotel, where Giselle and I got married in 1990. We'd have grilled local fish with a bottle of

The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity... Shark fishing. I love pitting my wits against them with a light rod. The biggest I've caught is a 170lb blue shark, but I always release them unharmed.

The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again... A gold ring my father gave me in my teens. He'd inherited it, but I lost it fishing in the Thames.

The unending quest that drives you on... Perfection, but I seldom reach it.

The poem that touches your soul... Poetry doesn't float my boat but I love rugby and adore Jerusalem. I sing it out loud.

The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase... That I'm Raymond Blanc. People stop me and say, 'How lovely to see you, Raymond.' I often don't correct them, and just let them go on their way, delighted to have met the great Raymond!

The event that altered the course of your life and character... The day Emily

Chapoutier Le Meal 1990. Then we'd spend the rest of the day on Bird Island where I'd swim and read, then go fishing on the beach with a fridge next to me full of Taittinger and Krug champagne!

The happiest moment you will cherish forever... Watching United beat Bayern Munich 2-1 in the Champions League Final in Barcelona in 1999. I was sitting behind the goal where they scored.

The saddest time that shook your world... When my uncle Jean died about 15 years ago from cancer in his 50s. He was super, and I was very close to him.

The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you... To hook a big black marlin. I'm planning a trip to the Azores soon to try my luck.

The philosophy that underpins your life... Fill each day with new challenges and tackle them head on.

The order of service at your funeral... I always shun big parties because I don't feel comfortable, so I don't want anything grand. But I'll leave provisions for a feast with great wine, including Pol Roger champagne, Château Haut-Brion red and Château d'Yquem sweet wine. If I manage to buy a plot at Père Lachaise cemetery in Paris, I'll be buried there.

The way you want to be remembered... For inspiring youngsters to work in my industry. That's the most important thing you can do.

The Plug... Michel and his father Albert have created the *Chez Roux @ Blue Riband* restaurant for the Investec Derby Festival, 5-6 June, epsomdowns.co.uk. ■

As told to Rob McGibbon



Above: Napoleon.
Above right:
Amedei chocolates.
Far right: Frégate
Island in the Seychelles



PHOTOGRAPHS: GETTY, REX, JASON BELL

PS...

*Kristin Scott Thomas plays the Queen in *The Audience* at London's Apollo Theatre from Tuesday. Robert Downey Jr leads a starry cast in *Avengers: Age Of Ultron*, in cinemas from Thursday. And Texas kick off their 25th anniversary tour tonight in Brighton*



NEXT WEEK

- Heida Reed, Elizabeth in *Poldark*, takes us backstage on the series finale
- Strictly's Len Goodman pays tribute to his hero Fred Astaire
- PLUS Britain's most detailed TV listings