

My Haven

RACHEL JOHNSON

The writer and broadcaster, 54, in the sitting room of her home in London's Notting Hill

1 WILD CHILD

Growing up, my three brothers [Boris, Jo and Leo] and I were mischievous and cheeky. We'd get up and think, 'What can we do today to be naughty and drive everybody mad?' And we usually achieved it. My older brother Al, known to most people as Boris, must have felt particularly guilty one day in 1971 to write this note of apology to our mother saying, 'Mama we are sorry [sic] that we were so bad today', and made my brother Leo and me sign it. There's still a bit of the 'mischief gene' in me...

MAMA we are sorry that we were so bad today
Rachel
Alexander

2 IN THE FRAME

My artist mother Charlotte, 77, and my father Stanley, 79, got married in the early 1960s and had my brothers and me in their 20s. She did this striking oil painting of Dad around the same time, and I treasure it. My mother has always made her living as a painter, doing portraits and landscapes, and is still painting away. My parents eventually went their separate ways but I still see a lot of them, and I count myself incredibly lucky to have them both.

3 HAPPY SNAP

I love this photo of my children – [l-r] Ludo, now 27, Charlotte, 25, and Oliver, 23 – by photographer Sophie Baker, who also took a picture of me and my siblings when we were little. Charlotte is named after my mother, Oliver after my father-in-law, and Ludo is just one of the few names we agreed on.



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4 ROMANCE IN RIO

This shows my journalist husband Ivo, 67, and me at our wedding at Chelsea Register Office in 1992. We'd met in Rio de Janeiro, where he was a foreign correspondent, a couple of years earlier, when my father introduced us. I didn't want a big, splashy wedding, so we just invited family and godparents, and I wore an office suit from Next – but I did buy a nice straw hat from Lock & Co in St James's. Behind me is a portrait of Ivo done by brilliant Greek artist Christos Tsimaris.



5 WOMAN'S BEST FRIEND

This lovely Susan Rowland sculpture reminds me of our beloved Labrador-collie cross, Coco. We got her after spotting some puppies tumbling around in a Somerset farmyard and we picked the quietest one. She was the most perfect dog, and a constant companion to me when the children were away. Sadly Coco died four years ago aged 13, though she did get to swim in the River Exe on her last day. I still miss her enormously.



6 RECOVERING REMAINER

I'm a writer and loved my time as editor of The Lady, but back in the early 90s I worked for the Foreign Office for a year, and I'm still quite attached to my old blue passport. I used it to travel to and from Brussels. I lived there for seven years as a child and two as an adult, but it always struck me as a grim, unhappy place. Despite different opinions in my family over Brexit, we stayed civil. I now call myself a 'recovering remainer'.

As told to York Membery. Rachel's new book *Rake's Progress: My Political Midlife Crisis* is published by Simon & Schuster on 19 March, £16.99.

INSIDE



SCREAM QUEEN

Elisabeth Moss on how she caught the horror movie bug – and what we can expect in series four of *The Handmaid's Tale*

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THE BEST TV LISTINGS

Our 52-page guide includes Jaci Stephen's Soap Watch, your essential Movie Planner plus a special preview of star-studded new comedy *Sandylands*

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WILDLIFE CENSUS

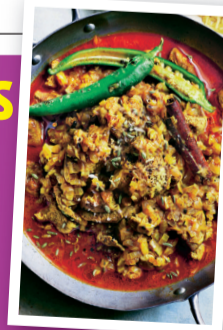
The results of our annual survey of the creatures in your gardens, plus Monty Don's expert advice on how you can help them to thrive

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DELICIOUS COOKERY

Five pages of luscious but light curries from Dan Toombs – aka The Curry Guy – that prove Indian food can be terrific without being calorific

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SAINTLY It's St David's Day tomorrow. The Welsh patron saint has his own flag, a yellow cross on a black background