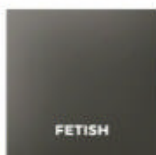




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on her koala
rescue mission*

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Sofa shown is Milford medium sofa in Juno Lace



The price of PERFECTION

Before I started reading our feature *Who Wants to be Perfect?* I assumed this was a rhetorical question. I couldn't imagine why anyone *wouldn't* want to be perfect. And then I read Fiona Gibson's article on page 42. It was a pen portrait of not just myself, but of many women I know. If setting unachievable standards was an Olympic sport, I would undoubtedly be a multiple gold medal winner – although I'd inevitably be worrying constantly I wasn't going to win! There are myriad reasons why women strive for perfection, some of which are outlined in our insightful article. But the important message I took away was the title of a book, *Less Perfect, More Happy*. This seems like an excellent life lesson for me, although I already know applying it will be my biggest challenge.

So while I can't/won't compromise on standards in the day job, I'll be trying to chill out more at home. Although I must confess when I walk through the door after work, I start tidying up, loading the dishwasher and putting the washing machine on, when I really should be pouring myself a large glass of something relaxing and watching Netflix.

I hope our article strikes a chord with you too – whichever side of the perfectionist fence you fall – and please bear with us while we control freaks try and let go a little – at some point!



PS Our fabulous Test Kitchen is now creating all our recipes. Look out for our Approved logo too – we've tested all these products and they're the best!

Catherine

CATHERINE WESTWOOD
Editor-in-Chief, woman&home
catherine.westwood@ti-media.com

MY FAB FOUR

Time to relax with some beautiful botanical buys



Plant wall hanging,
£42, floandjoe.co.uk



Eucalyptus wreath,
£39, ellajames.co.uk



Glass tea light holder,
£6.75, giselagraham.co.uk



Pressed flower coasters,
£14 for 4, paperchase.com

A close-up portrait of a woman with short, wavy grey hair and brown eyes, looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. She is wearing a white collared shirt and small diamond stud earrings. In the foreground, a silver microphone with a black handle and a silver mesh grille is visible, angled towards the right. The background is a soft, out-of-focus orange and white.

*“Still learning.
Still resilient. Still radiant.”*

Claudia Maria Ferreira da Costa
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MEET OUR CONTRIBUTORS



Life coach **FAITH HILL** helps people redesign their lives for more balance and happiness. She left London in 2015 and runs an online coaching business, Spark Escapes. Read

her guide, *Redesign Your Life*, on p24. **Are you sporty or more of a couch potato?** I'd love to say I'm sporty but it's probably more apt to say I'm active. I live on a steep hill in Thailand and walk everywhere – it's more like a mountain hike than a walk! But I also love to veg out with a box set.



PAULA MOORE is woman&home's Fashion Director. As well as working in stunning locations around the world for our fashion pages, Paula also loves home-grown style

– email her if you'd like to appear on her regular Street Style feature on p19. **Are you sporty or more of a couch potato?** I love how I feel after a gym session – it's amazing what our bodies can do and the natural high you get from an intense workout. But – and it's a big but – I'm equally happy at home on the sofa binge-watching something quite forgettable on Netflix!



ELENI KYRIACOU is an award-winning writer and editor who's interviewed many celebrities, but the most interesting people have been those with everyday stories to tell. Her debut

novel is *She Came to Stay*, and she writes about 'Growing up Greek' on p65. **Are you sporty or more of a couch potato?** Both – I go through phases. I'm just as likely to binge-watch *Grace and Frankie* as I am to go for a run. I've done a 10k – my three criteria were to finish, to not come last and to avoid dying. Thankfully, I achieved them all.

woman&home

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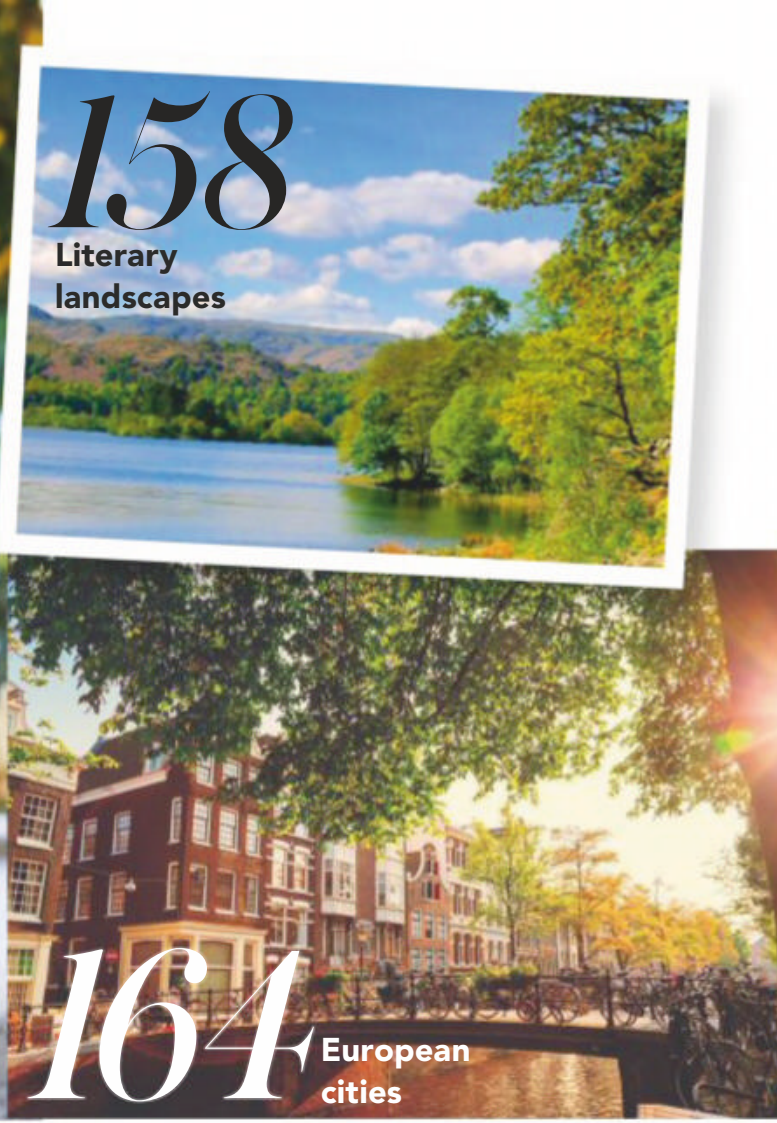


ON THE COVER:
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PHOTO: DAVID VENNI
STYLING: RACHEL FANCONI
HAIR & MAKE-UP: LIZ BECKETT
CARDIGAN: ALL SAINTS
EARRINGS: SIF JAKOBS
NECKLACES: CLAUDIA BRADBY
RING: ALEX MONROE



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GREEN CREDENTIALS



I was delighted to read Lucy Siegle's advice in *Green Made Easy* [February issue]. I've made some easy changes too: in supermarkets, I take a cotton bag for loose

fruit and veg; I also recycle plastic bread bags in store, along with plastic carrier bags. I save plastic tops (eg on milk containers) and take a bag of them to a Lush store, where they will recycle them. Soya milk waxed containers are perfect for growing seedlings in – cut off the top and put drainage holes in the bottom. When planted out, the containers can be taken to a recycling centre.

Rosemary, by email

BLURRED LINES

I'm 55 and have wrinkles on my face, which I've accepted as part of ageing. However, *woman&home* seems to think any lines must be erased with airbrushing and lighting. Please use photos that show women over 50 as we really are, so we can feel confident about how we are ageing. A well-groomed woman can look good with wrinkles. We should embrace lines, not hide them.

Jules, by email

From the editor: We hear you and make every effort not to over-airbrush our photography. Specialist lighting is part of the photographer's skills – after all, everyone wants to look their best, including cover stars! Thanks for your feedback and we agree with your sentiments about confidence and ageing.

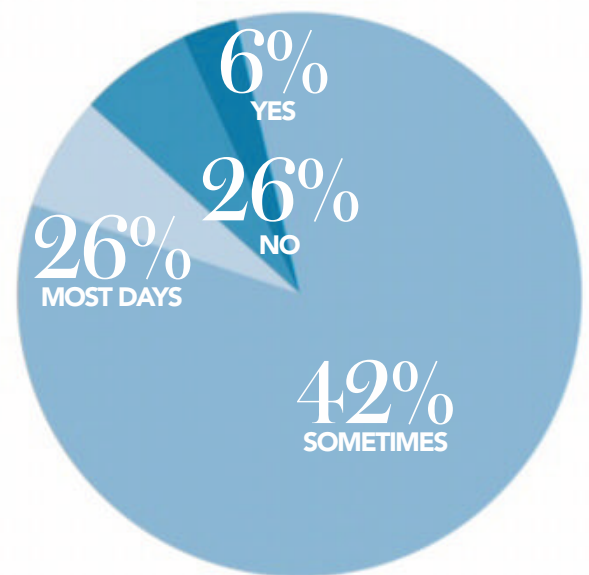
HOSPITAL HABITS

During a recent stay as a parent in hospital with my young daughter, I had plenty of time to note what becomes strangely normal after a while.

- 1 Being overly appreciative of anyone who makes you a cup of tea. (Nurses: never underestimate the impact.)
- 2 Losing all sense of the time – so being awake at 4.54am is just something you do.
- 3 Knowing how to use the 'silencer' button on any beeping machine.
- 4 Believing that your eye-bag concealer is doing a good job (it isn't).
- 5 Getting excited about stepping outside for a few minutes, even if it's pouring with rain.
- 6 Waking up with your phone on your face as you didn't realise how tired you were.
- 7 Feeling smug because you took the stairs.
- 8 Gaining more Costa coffee points in 13 days than most people do in a lifetime.

I'm sure other readers must have experienced similar things?

Jo Snow, by email



WE ASKED

Do you honestly eat at least five portions of fruit and vegetables a day?



SHE SAID IT...
'You're not alone if you want to cut the crotch out of your cheating husband's trousers'

Outspoken author Joanna Trollope, 76, has been writing bestsellers for decades. Read our revealing interview with her on page 173.

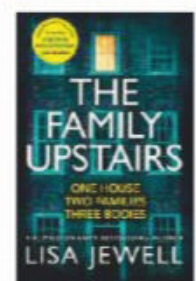
WHAT YOU TOLD US

'Wow! Read *The Family Upstairs* in one sitting – couldn't put it down. She's gone from chick lit which was fab, to thriller – which is even better. Well done, Lisa Jewell!'

Wendy Brooks

Let us know what you've been reading on our Reading Room FB page

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BEST BEAUTY BUYS

1. Blush crush

This pretty, lightweight blush perks up all skin tones without feeling cakey.

Clarins Joli Blush in Cheeky Peachy, £27

2. Perfect palette

Take your pick from three buildable blush shades and three super-smooth gel-to-powder highlighters.

Nars Overlust Cheek Palette, £46

3. Lip service

For an instantly plumper-looking pout, complete with a glossy coat of colour. **Estée Lauder Pure Color Envy Sculpting Lipstick in Wicked Wish, £27**

4. Glow getter

Wear this iridescent peach shade alone or under foundation. **Rodial Instant Glow Primer, £30**

5. Nailed it!

Take your mani back to basics with a neat, square shape and barely-there colour.

Smith & Cult Nail Polish in Ghost Edit, £19

6. Bright eyes

Fuss-free eyes in a flash. Press on for intense colour or buff in for a shimmer. **Chanel Ombre Première Laque Longwear Liquid Eyeshadow in Rising Sun, £26**

7. The new matte

Rich colour pigment paired with a velvety soft texture makes for an enduring lipstick you'll love. **Gucci Rouge à Lèvres Mat Lipstick in Queen Christina, £34**

8. Casting shadows

A does-it-all eye palette with shades for every occasion. **Charlotte Tilbury Pillow Talk Instant Eye Palette, £60**

W&H UPDATE

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CLARINS

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PEACHY QUEEN

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MOOD OF THE MONTH

MINDFUL LIVING

Elodie velvet sofa bed, £299; Lari wicker weave easy fit pendant, £29; faux pampas grass stems, from £5.50 each; cheese plant cushion, £22; Ava pebble cushion, £18; Taza rug, from £55, all **Dunelm**

Tropical leaves trail wallpaper, £15.99 per roll, **Cult Furniture**

Cocoon framed art print, £24.99, **Littlewoods**

Indoor watering can, £15, **Garden Trading**

Faux zebra grass house plant, £92, **Audenza**

Spherical leaf gold and green glass vase, £39, **Beaumonde**

Square pouffe, £95, **Oliver Bonas**

Copper-toned glass terrarium lantern, £12, **George Home**

Bilbao basket, £18, **Very**

THIS IS A LINGERIE AD

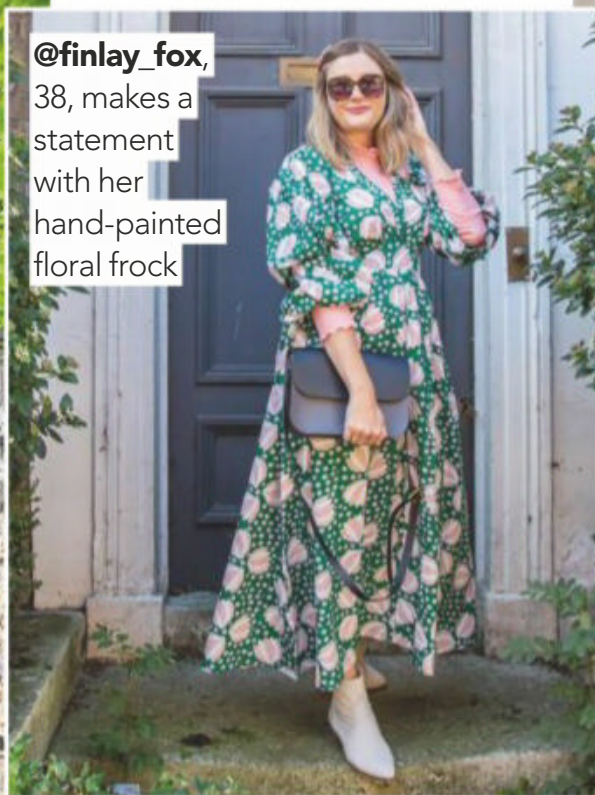
**“I don’t think we can ever fully know ourselves but I do think
we can learn to accept ourselves and what we look like.”**

IT’S WHO I AM

W&H UPDATE



@thegirlwiththebob,
45, proves ditsy prints
are a wardrobe staple



@finlay_fox,
38, makes a
statement
with her
hand-painted
floral frock



@wearsmymoney,
47, keeps her outfit
tonal in a fresh
spring palette



@styleidealist, 32,
gives this pretty pastel
a grown-up feel

IT'S ALL ABOUT YOU!

W&H STREET STYLE



@rutlandgirlfashionstyle,
45, nails daytime chic in
cool khaki and cream



**@chilliesand
clothes,** 47,
teams fun
accessories
with jeans
and a jumper



**@theturquoise
flamingo,** 45,
dresses down a
classic midi dress
with on-trend trainers



@stripeycoral,
47, lets her
accessories
do the talking

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I feel **CONFIDENT,** **STRONG,** *& indestructible!*

Presenter and author Fern Britton talks to Jack White about following her own path in life and the importance of being 'woke'

Fern Britton is the perfect example of why it's never too late to try something new. After years as one of the country's best-loved TV presenters, in her early 50s, Fern decided to try her hand at writing novels – and this June she'll release her ninth.

'My autobiography came out when I was 51 and it did really well,' she explains. 'So they asked me if I'd like to write a novel. My editor held my hand all the way through the first one and then said, "Right, now you're on your own!"'

It's clear to see that life off-screen is agreeing with Fern, 62, who's comfortable with her new life choices, including relocating to Cornwall permanently. She's in London for 24 hours for our shoot and is very relaxed about turning up beautifully bare-faced. 'I'm all about no make-up

and looking terrible!' she jokes. 'Actually, I like it. OK, I'm in my 60s and walking about in funny clothes, but I just don't care!' In fact Fern is applying her sunny outlook to all areas of her life, including the positive way she and husband Phil Vickery revealed they are separating after almost 20 years of marriage.

Phil and I are both doing OK. We simply needed to follow our own paths. Over time we realised we weren't necessarily having the kind of life we once did. It seemed right to say 'thank you' and move on. But we do have a good friendship. Phil and I had the greatest fun together and we have the most beautiful daughter together, Winnie – of course I'm also a proud mum to my super twins Harry and Jack and fabulous daughter Grace from my first marriage – and so we will always be connected.

It's about family now and I've only ever been about family – that's my goal. Life has changed for me in the past 10 years, especially with my career. So it's lovely to think I can just concentrate on writing, the kids and getting on with life. This feels quite comfortable, and Phil and I knew it was the right thing to do.

At this moment in my life I'm feeling really confident, strong and quite indestructible. There are times, of course, when I've been very low and finding life difficult. I toured last year for nine months doing *Calendar Girls*. I missed home and there were days when I thought, 'What am I doing here?' It was a difficult year, but now I'm fine again.

I think that since turning 60, I'm re-powering, which gives you a fresh look at life. It's not that you have to change but you have to find the basic, >>





*'Cycling helps with
managing my
mental health.
It provides the
headspace to think
about something, or
not to think at all'*

real version of who you are and ask, 'what does that person really want?' I'm getting there and it's really exciting.

That said, I'm suddenly on my way to being 63 – just seven years until I'm 70. So I've started thinking, 'I'd better get everything done because life is running shorter!' So now I make the most of it. People will ring up and say, 'We're having this great barbecue and there'll be lots of different people there. They'd really like to meet you.' And I know I'll hate it because they don't want to meet me, they want to meet Fern Britton.

I've never been into fashion. When I was in TV, every day we had to try to find something for me to wear. All of that was never me. People think big shoulder pads or spiky heels are empowering for women – but they just mean you can't walk properly or get through doors!

It's annoying when you think, 'Oh, I can't get those jeans on.' But it's great when you discover 'I can button up that shirt again!' But I think as a society we've finally got over weight, shape, size, sexuality, race and religion – and if that's 'woke', then good.

I find it really difficult to take offence. People have said – and written – all sorts of things about me. The one that my girls and I particularly liked was, 'she's got the face she deserves' – we read it and roared with laughter. I don't mind. If people attack my work it hurts, but if it's me, it's funny. None of that bothers me.

These days I'm cross about the way I was treated over the gastric band I had 12 years ago. At the time I was so under attack I couldn't really think about it, but it was outrageous. When it came out in the newspapers, I got a phone call from the boss at ITV who said, 'You've got to go on air tomorrow and say you were wrong not to tell everybody.' I said, 'Are you asking me to apologise?' And he said, 'I'm being very careful not to use that word.' So I said I wasn't going to, and then I was suspended for a few days.

Throughout my career I've noticed a gender problem. At the time I was merrily going along with it, but looking



back I can see how I always worked with a male presenter and somehow it was always the guy who was on top.

I'm cycling from Land's End to John o' Groats in May, five years after I did it the first time. I've been riding with the same women for 14 years and we are very close. They've changed their lives – marriages have ended, boyfriends have been found – we're going through it together. It reminds you that you're not just a mother and a wife. We have such a laugh – we sing a lot, swear profusely, drink too much and it's brilliant. Cycling helps with managing my mental health. It provides the oxygen and headspace to think about something – or not think at all.

My new novel, *Daughters of Cornwall*, is linked to my own family. Just before World War One my mother's mother fell in love with someone, we're not sure who, and had a baby. She had to give the baby away, but he came into our lives in the 1980s. My grandmother never told anyone – we only found out after she died – but she made sure he was well looked after and had a great family. She'd try to see him as often as possible and send money. I hope my grandmother doesn't mind me writing about it, but it's actually in honour of her bravery – it's a huge thing to do.

❖ Fern's new novel, *Daughters of Cornwall*, will be published in June by HarperCollins

Redesign YOUR LIFE

If you're craving a change or simply want to be happier, it's time to take matters into your own hands, explains Faith Hill

With the world evolving as quickly as it is today, it's become more feasible to make a life change – big or small – without upsetting the status quo.

Where once you were destined to stay in the same job, the same town, with the same partner and the same friends, doing the same pastimes, it's now easier – and more acceptable – to design your life as you want.

A life redesign can be as subtle or dramatic as you choose. Decisions like retraining for a new career or moving abroad are obviously major moves, but even a small shift can bring a much-needed breath of fresh air if something just doesn't feel right any more. These steps will help you identify and activate your own life redesign.

OUR EXPERTS



Bill Burnett and Dave Evans are the authors of *Designing Your Life* (£9.99, Vintage), and run a Life Design course at Stanford University.



Miisa Mink is the founder of DrivenWoman, a platform where women support one another.

1 Get started

Let go of any limiting beliefs that have held you back in the past. Negative thoughts,

such as 'I don't deserve this' or 'I don't have the confidence' will stop you at the first hurdle. **DO IT** Positive self-talk really does work wonders. Saying 'I choose to make this happen' or 'I know no limits' will improve your self-belief. The brain believes what you tell it the most often.

2 The right resources

What or who do you need to make your life redesign happen? Perhaps

you need experience in a certain work field; where can you take a course?

'When you let go of your pride and start sharing your ambitions with others, you open yourself up to a higher level of self-awareness,' explains Miisa Mink. 'As soon as you announce your ideas, even if it's just to one person, there's an urgency to make them happen.'

DO IT Make today the day you take action. If it's a person you need help from, reach out to them. If it's a skill or asset you need, dedicate 20 minutes to research how you can obtain it.

3 Identify your values

Knowing your true values – what is most important to you – will help you

see which life areas need more of your attention. 'A well-designed life is one that makes sense,' say Bill Burnett and Dave Evans. 'It's a life in which who you are, what you believe and what you do, all line up together.'

DO IT Dive deep into your thoughts and habits. Ask yourself the following questions and write down the answers. How do you spend your time, energy and money? What dominates your positive thoughts? What do you most often think about or talk about with others? What inspires you? What goals stand out in your life and have stood the test of time? What topics do you love to study, read about or research?

You should find some key themes emerging – the three most frequent responses are considered your top values. For example, these could be your relationship with your partner, having a calm home environment, and valuable me-time. Your close female friendships or how you work together with your community may feature, or perhaps treasured holidays overseas.

4 Step into your power

It can be easy to lose sight of all your strengths and successes, but now is the time to remind yourself how amazing you are.

DO IT Write three lists: 1 Your personal and professional achievements. 2 What you're good at. 3 Your strengths or positive traits. If you're feeling stuck or shy about blowing your own trumpet, ask a friend or loved one to contribute.

5 Own it!

You deserve the very best life. Allow yourself to feel stronger by making your choices,

and the fact that you are in control of making them happen.

Go forwards with the confidence you have – or are on the way to getting. It's what you need to make your life redesign happen.

DO IT Maintain your enthusiasm and momentum by reminding yourself daily of the reasons why this area of your life is important to you.

6 Choose a target

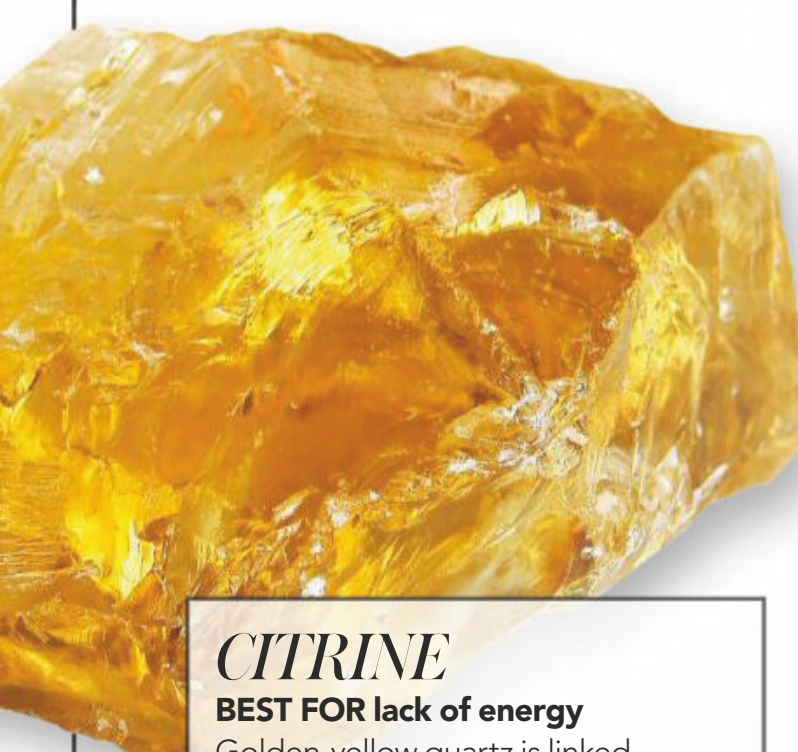
Is one of your top three values lacking in some way? Maybe you put high value on having time with friends but you don't see them as much as you'd like to. Or you want to earn money but you don't enjoy the work you do any more.

To make your life redesign a desirable target, look at the rationale behind your top values. For example, you may want to ask your employer if you can work from home two days a week. This extra time may increase your overall happiness and reduce your stress levels. Or perhaps you would like to find a new partner and want to try dating apps; knowing that this will improve your self-confidence will spur you on, even in moments of doubt. **DO IT** Write a list of reasons why this part of your life is so important to you and what positive aspects it brings.

✦ Faith Hill is a life coach specialising in life redesign. Visit sparkescapes.com. Get 20% off private coaching sessions booked before 1 July 2020 by quoting *woman&home*.



The CRYSTAL CRAZE



TURQUOISE

BEST FOR aching joints

This hydrated phosphate of copper and aluminium is a dazzling blue-green colour. 'Lots of stones have a natural copper content, which can be helpful for joint health,' says Kim.

CITRINE

BEST FOR lack of energy

Golden-yellow quartz is linked to personal power, and helps you achieve your goals and dreams. It's said to carry the energy of the sun, so pop it on your windowsill to reflect sunlight and lift your mood.

Adele uses citrine to help combat stage fright. Victoria Beckham carries a black obsidian with her for protection. And Miranda Kerr keeps rose quartz next to her skincare products to infuse them with energy.

But while celebrities may swear by them, can crystals really have healing properties? And if so, how does that work on a practical level?

Stones are believed to work with chakras – your body's invisible energy centres – to help clear blockages in the 'flow' of energy.

'Crystals emit an energy that can work on the nervous system,' explains crystal healer Kim Alexis. 'They have a vibrational frequency that affects human tissue. This means they can

transform and shift the frequency in our bodies, influencing change.'

Whatever your take on the 'positive energy' theory, there's no doubt that the earth's gemstones offer a kaleidoscope of natural colour and beauty that can lift your spirits.

They come in three main types. A large cut, polished crystal can cost thousands. A tumblestone – smaller but still polished and shiny – can be just a few pounds. For a real bargain, an uncut, unpolished raw stone is said to emit just the same energy as the shiny versions.

Healers recommend carrying them with you, either incorporated into jewellery or simply popped into your handbag. They also suggest using them as ornaments in a space where you need a little extra help – the bedroom to improve sleep, for example, or the living room to boost your mood.

Kim says that when it comes to choosing a crystal, people are often drawn to the ones they need. 'In a healing session I often get a client to pick from a range of different stones. It's usually very revealing.'

Here are 10 crystals hailed for power to help heal specific problems – which one are you most drawn to?



LAPIS LAZULI

BEST FOR lack of concentration

A vibrant blue stone, it's often used in jewellery and features in the funeral mask of Egypt's boy king, Tutankhamun. It can contain gold (pyrite) or white (calcite) coloured flecks. Wear it as a pendant when you need to concentrate.



ROSE QUARTZ

BEST FOR headaches

The romantic pink 'love' stone is a winner with celebs. It's said to ease stress and improve circulation – great fixes for a tension headache. It's also a good choice for your heart. Cleopatra is said to have used rose quartz for its beauty benefits, including clearing the complexion and preventing wrinkles.



AMETHYST

BEST FOR insomnia

The calming properties of this purple favourite are said to help beat sleep problems. Give the stone a soothing rub before bed and then pop it under your pillow for swift, undisturbed slumber.



AMBER

BEST FOR digestive upsets

'Yellow helps the solar plexus, one of the most commonly blocked chakras,' says Kim. 'It can help with digestive-system disorders.' Although often sold as a gem stone, amber is actually fossilised tree resin.



CLEAR QUARTZ

BEST FOR all-round healing

One of the most popular and versatile stones, this 'master healer' is said to cleanse, stimulate and restore you from all sorts of ailments. So if you're looking for the mother of all healing crystals, this is your go-to.



LITHIUM QUARTZ

BEST FOR low mood

'Stones containing natural lithium can be helpful for symptoms of depression,' says Kim. The mineral is used in psychiatric drugs as a mood stabiliser for mental health conditions such as depression and bipolar disorder.



BLACK TOURMALINE

BEST FOR anxiety

Tourmaline comes in an array of different colours but it's the iron-rich black one you need for stress relief, as it's purported to soak up dark energies. Try holding it in your hand when meditating to super-charge the effects.



RED JASPER

BEST FOR loss of libido

Go red to relight your fire! Red Jasper is hailed for its energy, strength and stamina – and could be the perfect pick-me-up for your bedside table.



The physical power of **POSITIVE THINKING**

Could changing the way you think have
a beneficial effect on your health?

Did you know that ditching negativity could add years to your life? A recent US study has found that a positive outlook can help you live up to 15% longer and give you a better chance of reaching 85 years or older. 'The health benefits of positivity are off the scale,' says Andy Cope, who has a PhD in happiness. 'It boosts your immune system, you'll catch fewer colds, recover from illness quicker and have lower blood pressure. You'll also create a ripple effect that impacts on others.'

And that's not all. 'Positive people engage in more health-promoting behaviours around diet and exercise, and have better heart health,' says

positive psychologist Miriam Akhtar. 'Plus, research has shown that happy people suffer less chronic pain when it comes to conditions such as arthritis, and are more resilient to stress, which can affect the cardiovascular system.' Research by the American College of Cardiology even found a sunny outlook may help with chronic angina, while a study in 2009 found it led to better blood glucose levels in those with type 2 diabetes.

'While some degree of our happiness is set by our genetics (experts estimate between 10% and 50%), the rest is down to us,' says functional medicine certified health coach Suzy Glaskie. 'We can learn to be positive and happier, just as we can learn a foreign language.' Here's how...

❖ INVEST IN NEW MEMORIES

According to psychologists at San Francisco State University, experiences make us happier than new objects, because the excitement of buying something new fades faster than memories. 'Positive reminiscence is a way of revisiting pleasurable experiences,' explains Miriam. 'For instance, recreate a holiday meal. The smell and taste can evoke memories and stimulate the happy hormone, dopamine, bringing those feelings right back.'

❖ PUT YOUR TIME TO GOOD USE

Researchers at the London School of Economics found that, compared with someone who never volunteers, your odds of feeling 'very happy' rise by 16% if you do it every week. 'Putting your talents to good use will make you feel fulfilled,' says Suzy.

❖ PINCH YOURSELF POSITIVE

Neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) is based on the theory that by tweaking your physical actions, you can change what happens in your brain. One technique is anchoring – you visualise yourself at your most confident, then link this feeling to an action, such as pinching your thumb and forefinger together. Next time you need to feel confident, do the same pinch to get back to that positive mental state.

❖ THINK-QUICK TRICK

Give yourself just 30 seconds to run through a list of all the things you love

CHALLENGE YOUR MENOPAUSE MINDSET

'There are 34 known effects of the menopause and each woman will have a different combination,' says Miriam. 'So, for some it's scary and fearful but, for others, it's liberating and joyful.' Feeling overwhelmed? 'Challenge the attitude to it and all the negativity,' says Miriam. 'See it as a transition rather than a loss. Yes, we're vulnerable when going through this transition, but eventually it will settle.

Ask yourself what are the positives that have come.'

These can include:

- 1** You're emotionally stable. 'You're less sucked into the drama of emotions. You care less about others' opinions.'
- 2** You're wiser. 'You might have lost youth, but you have all that wisdom to share.'
- 3** You're more confident. 'You've a lot to offer – and confidence is a very sexy quality.' A survey by Superdrug found 64% of women over 50 said they felt more confident now than in their 20s.

BOOST YOUR BRAIN

A positive attitude to ageing could halve your risk of dementia, found a study by Yale School of Public Health.

– thinking really fast is proven to boost your mood, found Princeton University researchers.

❖ TRACK YOUR EMOTIONS

'Keeping a gratitude journal is a powerful way to boost happiness,' says Suzy. 'Keep a notepad by your bed and, before you fall asleep, jot down five things from that day that you're grateful for.'

❖ FAKE YOUR FEELINGS

Simple steps, such as smiling, standing up straight and using positive affirmations such as 'I look great today' can change your inner dialogue to be more positive over time.

❖ SLEEP WELL

A study by A.Vogel found that getting a good night's sleep boosts

happiness by 10%. Make sure you're tired at bedtime by walking outdoors in the day – this optimises your light exposure, while walking triggers the release of naturally occurring feel-good hormones.

❖ CHECK GUT HEALTH

'The gut can affect low mood,' says health psychologist Dr Meg Arroll. Keep yours healthy with a probiotic. 'Studies looking at the effect of probiotics on depression found that within eight weeks mood was improved,' says Dr Arroll. Try Zenflore, £29.99, precisionbiotics.com

❖ CLEAR CLUTTER

Research by Princeton University Neuroscience Institute found that too much clutter makes it hard to focus. 'Simplify the way you run your life, so that you can be present to the joys when they happen,' says Miriam.

Have a clear-out, donate to charity or sell unwanted items online.

DID YOU KNOW?

A 2009 study found that people who adopted a positive outlook had faster wound healing.

ACCEPT, BREATHE, CHOOSE

Turn a negative thought into a positive one with the ABC method from leadership mentor Clare Josa

- ❖ **ACCEPT** Try not to resist the negative thought, or it will 'fight back'.
- ❖ **BREATHE** Three deep, 'sighing' (make a sigh noise) breaths in through the nose and out through the mouth. That starts to reset your nervous system and your body goes back into calm. This is the 'going through neutral' part.
- ❖ **CHOOSE** Think one positive thing about your life in that moment. Be as specific as possible and take a moment to feel the emotion that goes with that.

❖ CHANGE PERCEPTION

Positive emotions help you see different options available to you. 'For example, you could think of exercise as a drag or instead you could think of it as something that comes with a ton of benefits,' says careers coach Gill Hasson. Talking therapies can also help you see things from a new perspective. Speak to your GP to be referred to local services.

**“YOUR BODY IS SO
POWERFUL WHEN YOU
LISTEN TO IT”**

Jonny Wilkinson

Photography By jameswilliamson.co.uk

Suffer from muscle and joint twinges but like to keep fit? Nobody knows more about this than England Rugby World Cup winner Jonny Wilkinson who now believes in listening to his body, and working with it. “I used to push my body to its limits all the time, but now I see the importance of rest. Therapies borne of nature are very powerful ways to get back on track.” **Puressentiel** has developed a combination of natural and sustainable ingredients to create its Muscles and Joints Roller, a pain-killing solution which ticks all the boxes for Jonny Wilkinson. Jonny is now fitter than ever. “When I was playing, I saw my body as a functional tool. Now I know that your body is at its most powerful when you listen to it and work with it.”

Puressentiel Muscles & Joints Roller contains 100% pure and natural active ingredients including Wintergreen and Roman Chamomile and is also available in Gel, Soothing Balm and Heating Patch formats that allow for different parts of the body and personal preference.



How I stopped lying and STARTED LIVING

Author Clare Pooley on the little untruths that can undermine our chances of happiness



We all lie about our lives, don't we? Not necessarily with big outright untruths, but just by making ourselves look that bit happier or glossier than we really are.

The British have always believed in 'keeping up appearances', with stiff upper lips, manners, corsets and make-up, but now – with social media – it's reached a whole new level. Now we can pick only the most flattering photos of ourselves to show to the world. Then we add a filter, a crop and some carefully selected faux-humble words, and ta-da! Life as we wish it were, but isn't.

The problem with all this artificial presentation is it makes us miserable.

I used to scroll through Facebook and Instagram feeling more and more inadequate, but if you looked at my own social media from that era, you'd be (justifiably) rolling your eyes and making vomit gestures. It all looked so enviable. Three gorgeous children with their capable mum in an uncluttered house.

It was fake.

My reality was very different. My 'large glass of Sauvignon Blanc at wine o'clock' habit had got totally out of control, and I was downing up to 10 bottles of wine every week. I was anxious all the time, overweight and a grumpy, shouty mother.

One day, I found myself hiding the fact that I was drinking way too early,

by sipping red wine out of a mug. It had WORLD'S BEST MUM printed on the side. I really, really hated myself.

That was the last alcohol I ever drank. It was also when I started to tell the truth. Not to people I actually knew. I wasn't that brave! I started a blog called Mummy was a Secret Drinker, and shared every embarrassing, shameful, sordid detail about my life with strangers, who only knew me as SoberMummy.

Then, nearly a year later, when my blog had nearly a million hits, I was outed by one of the mums at the school gate. She'd been reading my story for six months, sharing my anecdotes with her husband as they lay in bed. She didn't know it was me until a few details I dropped gave the game away.

Finally 'coming out' was actually a huge relief. For the first time in about a decade I felt honest. Authentic. Paradoxically, in publicly embracing my vulnerability I felt stronger than I'd ever been before. So, I decided to publish my story in a memoir – *The Sober Diaries*, hoping that other women struggling with addiction wouldn't have to feel as alone as I had.

The days before publication, I was terrified. I kept dreaming that I was walking down a crowded street naked. My publisher had organised lots of publicity – including a newspaper serialisation,

an appearance on *Woman's Hour*, *The Steve Wright Show* and *Lorraine*, and a feature in this very magazine.

I was convinced that everyone would hate me and I'd be trolled to death. But that didn't happen.

George RR Martin wrote, 'Once you've accepted your flaws, no one can use them against you,' and that's so true. After all, what were people going to call me? A lush? Selfish? A terrible mother? Those are all accusations I'd already levelled at myself. Yup, hands up. You got me bang to rights.

Then amazing things started to

'I was outed by one of the mums at the school gate'

happen. People from all over the world contacted me, telling me that sharing the truth about my life had transformed theirs. Many of those people started their own blogs, Facebook and Instagram pages, telling their own authentic stories.

All this inspired my novel – *The Authenticity Project* – a story about the magic that happens when six strangers share the truth about their lives.

I no longer look at other people and believe the glossy veneer. I know that the reality is flawed and – frankly – more human and much more interesting.

✦ *The Authenticity Project* by Clare Pooley (£12.99, Transworld) is out on 2 April.

Why we play **TO WIN!**

It's one thing going to the gym but how about getting involved with a team? These three sporting women explain why they're addicted to team spirit





THE FOOTBALLER

‘I always come off the pitch feeling good’

NIKKI COCKAYNE, 60, was a football mum, but now plays herself. She lives in Warwickshire with her husband, Richard, 61. They have three grown-up children.

Football has always featured heavily in my life. Growing up, I supported Manchester United, as my parents were both born there, and I enjoyed watching

FA Cup games on television. Then, when I was 12, I had the thrill of travelling up to Old Trafford and watching my first live game. I loved it.

Our youngest child, Abby, now 28, was the only girl in her primary school football team. Age 10 she went to a local football course and was spotted by the then manager of Aston Villa Ladies U12s.

She progressed to being Captain through her teens, and when she went to Loughborough University, she became Captain of the Ladies First Team. Sadly, at the age of 21, she was diagnosed with a prolapsed disc, which was threatening to paralyse her, so she had an emergency operation and was advised not to play competitive football. It was a devastating time.

I'd never considered playing football myself. Women's football wasn't a big thing when I was younger; there just wasn't the opportunity to play.

When I saw an advert in a local newspaper four years ago asking for female footballers – over-35s welcome

– I went along. At 56 I was the oldest player there but everyone welcomed me and encouraged me to come again.

From that moment, I was hooked and I've been playing once a week for the past three years, with a host of other ladies – the youngest of whom is 27. Our team name is Stratford Tuesday, affiliated to Stratford Town Ladies. We play outdoors whatever the weather. We've also played in a few tournaments, which I really enjoyed, especially when a couple of young lads commented on how good I was in goal. That was a real boost.

I love the comradeship of being part of a team. On the pitch, everyone's equal. It's a great workout, and of course an adrenaline buzz. I always come off the pitch feeling good.

What I like about women's football is that we all just get on with it. There's no feigning injury and rolling on the ground. If someone is tackled, they get up and play on. In my view it's far more genuine than the men's game.

My family are very supportive. We had a family joke when Abby was playing that I'd always tell her simply to 'boot it'. Now, they all tell me the same thing.

It's been said before, but age really is just a number – no one should be fazed by that. If you're thinking about doing something new, have a go. There's nothing to lose. You may just love it. >>

‘There's no feigning injury and rolling on the ground. If someone is tackled, they get up and play on’

THE NETBALL PLAYER

‘Netball is a fast game and a great workout’

ALETIA GILBERT, 47, is a designer and lives in Beckenham. She plays for Ace Netball in south London.

I was never particularly sporty during my schooldays, generally preferring to stick to the creative, arty subjects rather than the physical ones. Then, during my 20s, most of my fitness activities were ones I’d do alone,

such as going to the gym or swimming. But, around 13 years ago, someone at work mentioned they were thinking of joining a netball team. Despite not having loved it as a sport at school, I was interested in finding out more. I thought I’d be more motivated to get out and do something if it was a team activity, and it sounded like a fun way of keeping fit. I went away and did some research to see if anything was happening locally, and found that a club near me called Ace Netball was looking for new players to join them.

A friend and I went along to try it one evening. To begin with, I found it quite intimidating; there were lots of people and I didn’t really know what I was doing. The last time I’d played netball was over 20 years before and I couldn’t remember the rules or what I should be doing. Luckily all the players were friendly and welcoming, and there were other people in the same boat, so I wasn’t alone. They told me not to worry and encouraged me just to ask questions. It was a really relaxed atmosphere and a lot of fun, as well as being a good workout. I decided to carry on, as it was a good way of keeping fit and getting out in the fresh air.

Netball is a fast game and a great workout; there’s a lot of stopping and starting, and sprinting. You don’t know what’s coming next, so it challenges your mind as well as your body, as you’re constantly trying to keep on top of what’s happening, as well as assessing how you can get better during a game or get one over your opponents.

At first, I didn’t feel confident enough to play competitively. But the more I played, the better I became and once I started improving, I realised I wanted to play more and push myself further. My first competitive match was around six months after I joined.

We train once a week,

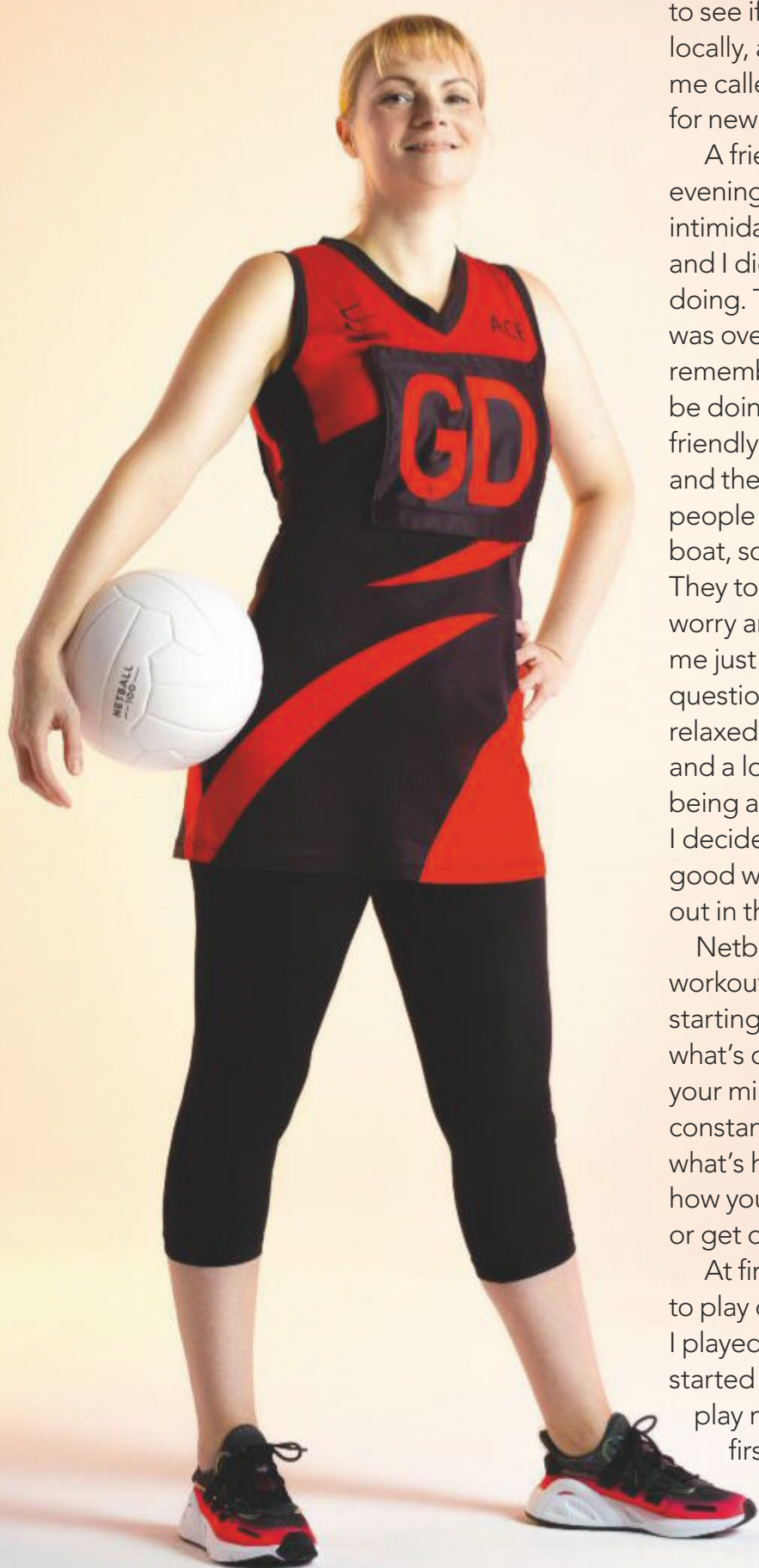
doing ball skills and drills, and we also have a competitive match every couple of weeks during the season, which runs from September to May. Sometimes we play in a casual summer league as well, and some of the team, including me, also play in a smaller independent league every Tuesday night. A few people have joined and left over the years, but at the moment there’s a real range of ages playing. Currently, our youngest player is 24 and the oldest is 62.

You have to think a lot, and adapt to different teams, players and scenarios. You’re constantly assessing how you can get better during a game or get one over your opponents. It’s always a challenge and one that keeps

you on your toes, both physically and mentally. Coming off the court at the end of a match, you really feel like you’ve had fun and achieved something.

I really enjoy being part of a team. The other women are always there with support and encouragement if you’re having a bad day. There’s a great social side to things too, and we often get together off the netball court. I’ve made some great friends through playing. Being in a team means even when you might not feel up to it, someone’s relying on you to turn up, so you are less likely to bail out. And I’ve never regretted getting out and playing instead of spending an evening on the sofa!

‘It’s a challenge that keeps you on your toes, both physically and mentally’



in our experience

‘We had a last-minute spurt of energy and overtook the boat ahead of us’

THE ROWER

‘Being out on the water feels so liberating’

ROSIE BROWN, 64, rows with her local club in West Mersea, Essex. She is married with two grown-up sons.

I joined the Sea Rangers at the age of 16 because I loved the thought of being out on the water. Later, my husband Tony introduced me to sea sailing and I quickly realised how liberating and exciting it was. Now, we have our own dinghy and are members of the local yacht and sailing clubs.

Being out on the water in the fresh air gives me such a sense of freedom and you never quite know what’s coming next. There’s so much to think about: the wind, waves, tide, who else you’re competing against. You have to be

on your toes all the time. But it’s a real buzz when you get it right. There’s no organised dinghy sailing in the winter here, which is how I started rowing as a hobby – it was a way of getting out on the water in the winter months.

I’d rowed a couple of times when I was younger, but not seriously. So after joining our local team, it was exhilarating to find myself taking part in my first competition after only three weeks, rowing in the Mersea estuary.

I was part of a mixed team with three others, plus a cox, competing against 16 other boats. Being new to rowing, I was concerned I’d make mistakes. But I needn’t have worried – the team

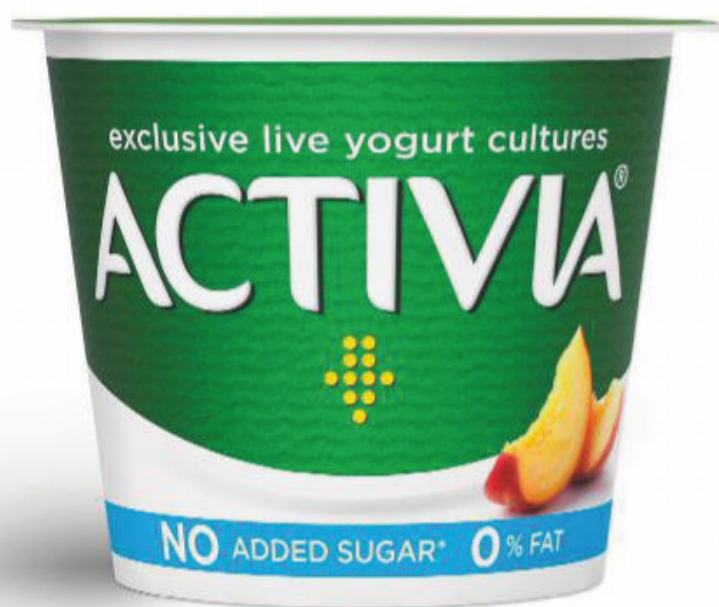
encouraged me all the way; I kept going and loved every moment. Towards the end of the 20-minute race, we had a last-minute spurt of energy and overtook the boat ahead of us, finishing second to last. It was a fantastic feeling.

At the moment I train for rowing one evening a week and then we go out on the water in the early morning at the weekend.

If I’m going to enjoy life to the full, my body needs to be fit. Taking part in sports like rowing is something I really enjoy and I simply couldn’t imagine not doing it now. I feel so much better for being active – not just for my body, but my mind too.

WORDS: ALICE GREBOT. PHOTOS: SAM RILEY. NIKKI: FOOTBALL KIT, HER OWN. TRAINERS, DEATHLON. ALETIA: DRESS, HER OWN. LEGGINGS, NEW BALANCE. TRAINERS, ADIDAS. ROSIE: JACKET, HER OWN. TOP, NIKE. LEGGINGS, M&S. TRAINERS, ADIDAS

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WHAT I'VE LEARNED

'Family comes first, money isn't everything'

Christine McGuinness, 31, mum-of-three and wife to television presenter Paddy, shares her wisdom

Our six-year-old twins were the first of our three children to be diagnosed, and a lot of people don't understand this condition.

I'm still learning that although people have heard of autism, many don't understand it because it's not a visible disability.

I took Leo and Penelope, and two-year-old Felicity (now three), to Sea Life on a busy day and it was quite overwhelming. There was a water tank tunnel and Leo really wanted to go in, but other children kept pushing in front. They were just being kids and couldn't see that he's got autism, but it triggered a massive meltdown.

Not everywhere is suitable for autistic children. Meltdowns in public don't faze me and I'm there to support them. We try it and if it's bad, we go home and start again the next day. But it's taken years to get to that point. I don't want to upset them by going somewhere that would be a normal experience for other children. I always have to think about how much anxiety and distress it could cause them.

Don't rush to fit in with others. We've tried for two years to stick to the school's 8.30am start time, but the more we rush them in the morning, the more they get stressed. Children with autism do things in their own time. It wouldn't matter how many people I got in to come and help me, there's no compromise. I stick with their routine instead of trying to fit in with other people – I've learned not to make any early-morning appointments!



Never tell them off during a meltdown.

When that happens, I try to focus on the child, but because I have three kids, sometimes it can all kick off at once. Usually I'll try and separate them and stay really calm while I try to figure out what started it. I never shout or tell them off – if they're scared, that can trigger a meltdown and that's not their fault. If they're emotional, cuddles are welcome, but if they're angry they don't want anyone near them so you talk from a distance.

Pick your battles. Sometimes it's easier to stay home. We went on holiday for the first time last year, but it's taken us six years to become confident enough. You have to weigh up the pros and cons – do we go for it so they can have this

experience, while at the same time risk upsetting them so we can have that time away with them?

Sometimes life doesn't go to plan. I've turned down 80% of the jobs I've been offered to fit around the children. A lot of them I'd love to do and they could be really good money, but I'm needed at home and that's always going to come first. I've had to change my life plans. My husband's got a good job so we're very fortunate financially. I always thought we'd be staying in the best hotels, eating the best food, travelling the world together, but it never happened.

Celebrate small milestones. To wait four-and-a-half years to hear the twins say 'Mummy' was a long wait, but when they did it was so amazing. Even if they argue with each other now, I'm glad they're communicating. Small milestones for other people are huge for us, so we get to celebrate much more. They're doing really well and I've got high hopes for them.

Fight for support. In school I believe a quiet area should be created for autistic children to go to when they need it. We're lucky in our school that our kids get that, but there are many that don't. It's like not providing a ramp for a child in a wheelchair. If you invest in them now, as they grow older, they will need less support and that's what we want. We're trying to prepare them for adulthood.

✦ Christine is an ambassador for the National Autistic Society

Fendi Baguette

In 1996, when Silvia Fendi created a neat little shoulder bag that could be tucked under the arm like a baguette and reworked in endless materials and decoration – beaded, embroidered, woven, appliqué – she transformed the fortunes of her historic family-owned label (luxury goods corporation LVMH bought into the company three years later) and created a pop culture sensation. In 1998, the Baguette starred in *Sex and the City* as Sarah Jessica Parker's most loved accessory, and later had its own storylines in two episodes.



Sarah
Jessica
Parker



The 'IT' bags that became ICONS

It's the ultimate accessory that can define a style – and even an era. With the V&A's new show coming up, join our celebration of the most beautiful bags

Anya Hindmarch I'm Not a Plastic Bag

Not all iconic bags come with a dizzying price tag – accessories designer Anya Hindmarch's cotton, rope-handled totes were just £5 when they were launched in 2007 to support the campaign against plastic carrier bags. Carried by celebrities including Keira Knightley and Lily Allen, they were soon selling at more than 30 times their original price on eBay.



Keira
Knightley



Prada nylon backpack

In 1984, when Miuccia Prada discovered the industrial-weight pocone nylon in a factory making parachutes, she crafted an androgynous backpack that flew in the face of the ladylike bags of the time. It took a decade to become a cult hit but it would eventually become a star of her family firm and define the sporty spirit of the 1990s. In 2019 the bag was reissued in sustainable nylon.



Pippa Middleton



Lulu Guinness Lips bag

The reigning queen of the novelty accessory turns to art to inspire her collectible designs, and her red lips bag – first created in 2004 – certainly owes a debt to Salvador Dali's infamous lips sofa of 1938. Guinness has said she wants her tongue-in-cheek bags to be talking points, and they're a hit with celebs, including Helena Bonham Carter.



Helena Bonham Carter



The Hermès Kelly

This sleek, neat holdall made its name when Hollywood star Grace Kelly fell for it while filming the Hitchcock classic *To Catch a Thief* in 1955. The following year, as Princess of Monaco, she made the bag a global star when she used it to shield her pregnancy from the paparazzi. Two decades later the bag, which is reputed to be a better investment than gold, was officially named after her. >>



Grace Kelly





Launer bags

Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, first bought her eldest daughter a Launer handbag in the 1950s, and in the seven decades since, the Queen has rarely been spotted without this boxy, classic bag on her arm. She's reputed to own over 200 Launer bags and orders a few new bags each year with some regal adjustments, including a slightly longer handle to make greeting people easier.

Margaret Thatcher was also a fan and her bag famously become a symbol of the Iron Lady – described by a biographer as 'the sceptre of her rule'.



Margaret Thatcher



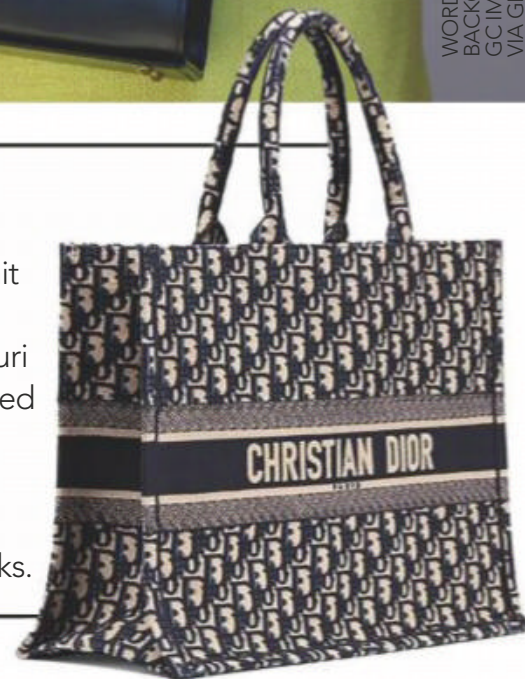
Her Majesty The Queen



Naomi Campbell

Dior logo Book Tote

The historic French house has a knack for creating hit bags, including the Lady Dior and Saddle bags of the 1990s. Under creative director Maria Grazia Chiuri another cult hit has emerged in this often personalised tote carried by Rihanna, Jennifer Lawrence and Naomi Campbell. Designed as a vehicle for the oblique canvas created by Marc Bohan in 1967, the roomy tote was made to carry Chiuri's favourite books.



WORDS: CLARE COULSON. PHOTOS: ALAMY, ALLPIX/FLASHNEWS.COM, BACKGRID, BRIDGEMANIMAGES.COM, EAGLEPRESS, GETTY IMAGES, GC IMAGES, JOHN REDMAN/AP/SHUTTERSTOCK, UK PRESS VIA GETTY IMAGES, VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM, LONDON

Louis Vuitton wheelie case

Is any bag rolled through the world's upper-class lounges more than a Louis Vuitton wheelie? This neat, logoed case is a celebrity mainstay. Famed for its collaborations in recent years, in 2017, the Parisian firm teamed up with Supreme on a line of logoed luggage. In December 2019, a Louis Vuitton X Supreme trunk sold at Christie's for \$125,000.



Elizabeth
Hurley

Gucci Dionysus

Gucci boasts numerous It bags in its illustrious history but in the 21st century it's all about Alessandro Michele's Dionysus with its clasp featuring a double-headed tiger. It's based on the myth of Dionysus, who was sent a tiger by the god Zeus to carry him across River Tigris. Dakota Johnson, Beyoncé, Salma Hayek and the Duchess of Sussex are all fans since its launch in 2015.



Salma
Hayek

Balenciaga Lariat

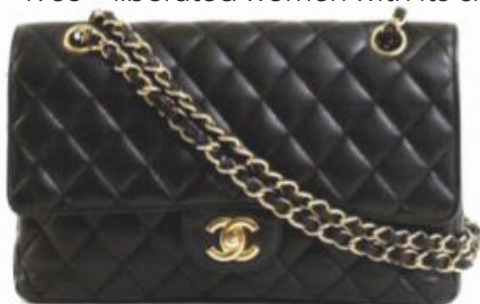
Remember when Kate Moss wore fur gilets and Ugg boots? Her other staple was Balenciaga's first hit bag, created in 2001. Based on biker leathers with studs, zips and lariats, the lightweight bag was originally produced by creative director Nicolas Ghesquiere as a gift for models, but on release it became a sell-out hit.



Kate
Moss

Chanel 2.55

Coco Chanel was the queen of practicality so it follows that her most famous quilted calfskin bag – designed in February 1955 – liberated women with its chain strap and pragmatic shape that tucked under the arm. Her successor, Karl Lagerfeld, added the iconic CC clasp to the 2.55 after he joined the house in 1983, and re-popularised the brand and its star bag.



Alexa Chung

❖ *Bags: Inside Out* is at the Victoria & Albert Museum, London, from 25 April-31 January 2021, featuring over 300 items from around the world, dating from the 16th century to the present-day, vam.ac.uk

Who wants to be PERFECT?

The restless search to achieve life goals and get everything right is exhausting – and it has to stop, says Fiona Gibson

My friend Julie and I were walking our dogs. It was a beautiful spring day but, rather than taking in our surroundings, I was detailing my training plan for a forthcoming half marathon and berating myself for being behind schedule with a book I was writing.

Was it good enough, I wondered? Would I be able to 'run through' my knee pain, meet my work deadline, delight my editor and oversee the renovation of our house? And how would I steer my husband away from booking a holiday when I simply couldn't bear to take time off?

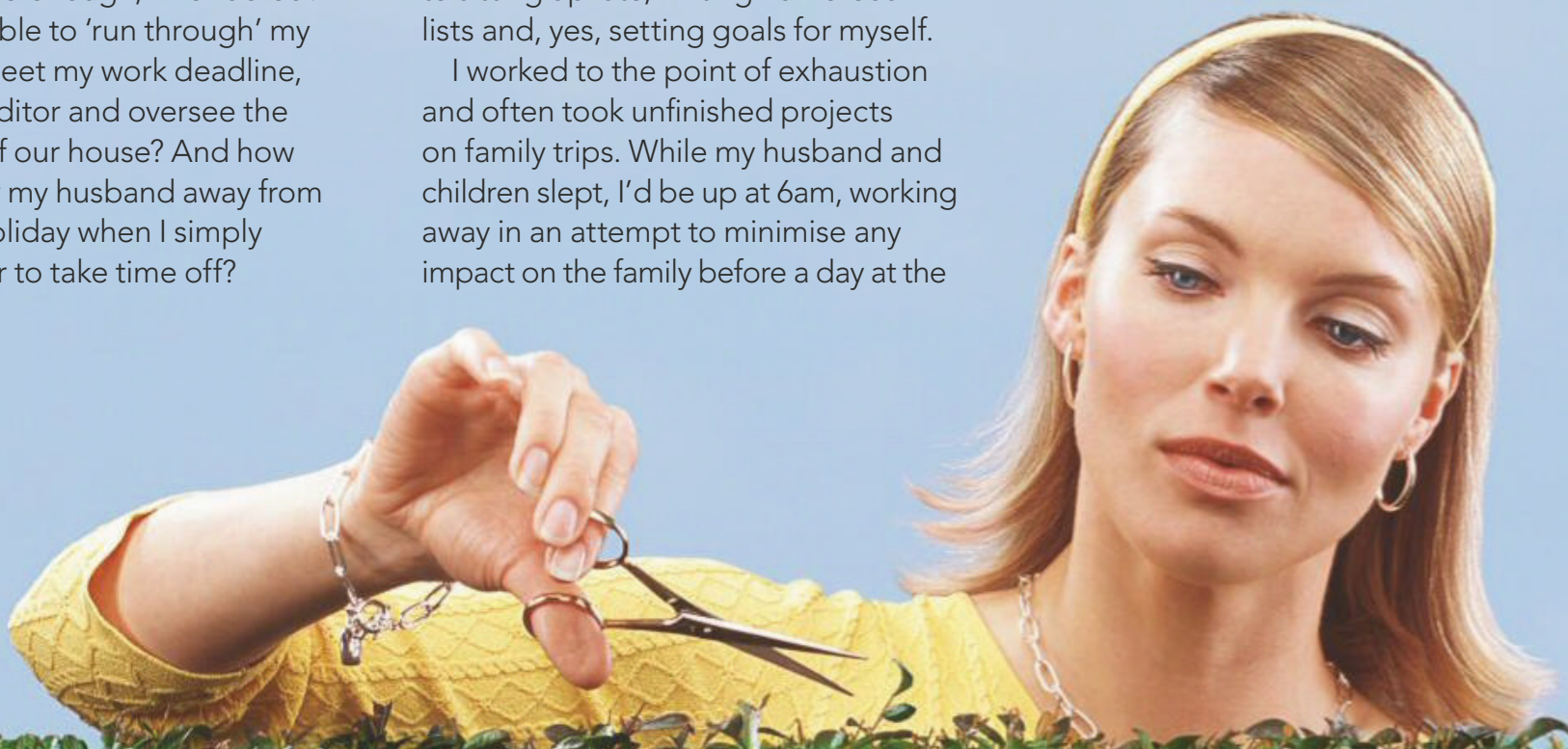
Julie gave me a look that I could only interpret as, 'My God, am I dog-walking with a madwoman?'

'You're very... goal-oriented, aren't you?' she observed.

No one had ever suggested that before, but I had to admit, she had a point. In terms of my working life – and self-improvement – I was driven to sitting up late, writing numerous lists and, yes, setting goals for myself.

I worked to the point of exhaustion and often took unfinished projects on family trips. While my husband and children slept, I'd be up at 6am, working away in an attempt to minimise any impact on the family before a day at the

I'd no more go on holiday without my laptop than a supply of knickers



beach. I'd no more go on holiday without my laptop than a supply of knickers. Yet nothing ever felt like enough.

I'd never have believed the term 'perfectionist' would apply to me. The word conjures up images of a woman in a pinny, producing towering cakes in a spotless kitchen, her garden abundant yet beautifully tended. But our garden was so unkempt, a neighbour said, 'Maybe I could mow your lawn for you if I used my mower on its side?' Our home was so ramshackle, another neighbour remarked, 'Whenever I feel bad about my house, I come down to yours and feel so much better.'

Yet, according to Chris Ward, author of *Less Perfect, More Happy* (Blue Dot World), it's a common misconception that perfectionists aim for impeccable standards in all aspects of their lives. 'What perfectionists do is focus on one aspect, whether that's their work or fitness, or whatever it might be – and they obsess over that. Anything less than perfection is viewed as failure.'

Perfectionists keep on striving, pushing themselves beyond reasonable limits and potentially sabotaging their own success and personal relationships in the process. They can be obsessive, distracted, controlling and, frankly, difficult people to live and work with.

Yet once you can nail the reason for those obsessive tendencies, they begin to fall away naturally. The vital step is to figure out why we set such unattainable goals for ourselves.

Chris Ward and his wife Helen have both struggled with perfectionism. For

Chris, it was based on an obsessive desire to be the best in competitive sport. But Helen's experience was very different.

She explains, 'I thought perfectionism was just about working too long and too hard – but that's not always the case.' Helen felt an overwhelming need to be in control of all her family's social events and big occasions. She has since recognised that this stemmed from her own childhood.

'I was raised in a family where being the very best host was the most important thing in life to my father. No one put on a spread like him. At the same time, my mum spent all day, every day, being the perfect mother to me, her youngest child and only daughter. They raised me on a pedestal that I've never felt I was good enough for.'

Helen has come to recognise that her need to control and direct all her family's socialising was a 'my way or the highway' approach that stemmed from trying to live up to her parents' expectations – but this didn't always fit in with her own family's needs.

Other perfectionists spend a lifetime trying to be 'good enough' for parents who were critical or distant during their childhood.

I found my own workaholic tendencies abating when I joined a creativity coaching group. Six of us get together monthly to chat about our creative lives, and it's helped me to look afresh at my unhelpful habits and constant feelings of frustration and failure. Through our group chats, it dawned on me that, despite freelancing for 23 years, I had

never shaken off the fear that work might dry up and I'd be on the scrapheap. Plus, I had a strongly held belief that worthiness is tied in with being an actual workhorse, and I had almost forgotten how to switch off. It seemed normal to say yes to everything and battle through it to the detriment of everything else.

Thankfully, I have now learned to not view thinking, planning and resting time as 'faffing around' and am – hopefully – less of a stressed-out nark to live with.

And guess what? The work still gets done, and weekends are now about relaxing and enjoying life. My heart doesn't lurch with alarm when my husband suggests a holiday. And, best of all, when we set off to the airport, I can proudly admit that I can now leave my cares – and my laptop – at home.

I'M MARRIED TO A PERFECTIONIST

'He thinks no one could decorate as well as him'

AMANDA, 49, is an oncology nurse whose husband refuses to let anyone else work on their house renovations.

'The supposed renovating of our house has taken 13 years to date and all we have to show for it is a beautifully decorated guest room. Mark has a demanding job and virtually no spare time. Yet he refuses to call in tradesmen as he thinks they won't take as much care as he does. It's maddening, yet he refuses to budge. I'd override him and call in the tradespeople myself, but it would cause an almighty row. And so we live in squalor.' >>

A perfectionist can be obsessive, distracting, controlling and difficult

BEING A PERFECTIONIST MADE ME MISERABLE

'I was scrubbing the loo with a toothbrush'

LAURA, 58, is a deputy head teacher who admits that her own obsessive tendencies stem from trying to achieve a sense of control.

'My childhood was pretty unstable. Mum suffered from severe depression and was often absent emotionally. Until recently, my focus was on my home. I felt that if it wasn't perfect, I was failing. I'd become irritable with my husband and children, and I missed a lot of the fun. In the past I've found myself cleaning a light flex and scrubbing the loo with a toothbrush.

'Through therapy, I began to understand why those gleaming surfaces mattered so much – I was trying to prove that I was in control of my life, and was a good enough wife and mother. Having an explanation made me feel more compassionate towards myself. The toothbrush still comes out for certain crevasses of the bathroom, but I have two dogs who bring mud into the house daily and I don't mind. It's about filtering out what's unimportant.'



I LOVE BEING A PERFECTIONIST

'Being organised is good for the soul'

RACHEL SOUTHERN, 43, is a lifestyle blogger (theordinarylovely.com) and content creator. She lives in North Wales with her husband Paul and their sons James, nine, and Matthew, six.

'It's important to me for things to be neat and organised. I love storage. I've always been like this. As a child, I kept my bedroom impeccably tidy, probably as a reaction to the rest of the house, which was, shall we say, pretty chaotic! As a mum, I've accepted that the boys can have their own rooms as messy as they like. But in the playroom everything has to go away at the end of the day. Having life planned properly, and everything in its place, is good for the soul.'

IS PERFECTIONISM HOLDING YOU BACK?

NINE DANGER SIGNS – AND HOW TO BEAT THEM

1 You need to control and correct everyone and everything.

When someone does something that's not to your liking, remind yourself you have nothing to prove by controlling a situation or correcting them. Let it go.

2 You feel the need to impress.

You may have unconsciously felt a need to inform everyone about your achievements, but you don't need to 'humble brag'.

3 You have all-consuming personal goals.

Resolve to join in with activities that involve your family and other people.

4 Vital jobs don't get done.

Problems don't just disappear; they get bigger unless you deal with them. Production is far better than perfection.

5 Other people's clutter drives you crazy.

It's rarely worth harming your

relationship by taking issue with the people you live with. Enjoy a happy home in an imperfect mess.

6 You can't make quick decisions.

You really don't need to consider every piece of information before making a decision or starting a task.

7 Your deadlines are always far too tight.

When you're working out the time it will take to do anything, not every single

second will be a productive one. Leave time to be able to finish something on time.

8 It infuriates you when things don't go to plan.

People love you more for working with and alongside them, not criticising them.

9 You're constantly checking your phone.

Be mindful of other people. Check your phone before you walk in the door, not after. Leave distractions outside. Be there for others.



“Apparently brushing only cleans about 60% of my teeth. **TePe helps me reach up to 100%**”

– *Gabby Logan*

Research shows oral health is related to overall health. TePe interdental brushes help clean the 40% of your teeth that toothbrushes can't reach. No wonder 94% of hygienists recommend them*.



*Source: A survey of 201 dental hygienists in the UK, Ipsos, (2019)

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woman&home

AMAZING WOMEN AWARDS 2020

BRAND
NEW
FORMAT!

Who is the most amazing 50+ woman you know? Well, don't just sit there! Nominate her for one of our Amazing Women Awards community categories for 2020. Here's how

Hard to believe it but it's already time for the Amazing Women Awards 2020. This is our chance to celebrate the utterly brilliant women aged 50 and above who make a difference to our lives – from high-profile businesswomen and celebrities to women giving their all to their communities.

And this year we've changed the format so that now, more than ever, it's all about YOU! In 2020 we're having FIVE REGIONAL READER-NOMINATED AWARDS from every corner of the UK. This is an amazing opportunity for you to put the unsung heroines of your lives and communities in the spotlight. So wherever you live it's time to start thinking about who you will nominate. Last year's brilliant winners and nominees in the community hero category included a

nurse pioneering for end-of-life care; a charity fundraiser who'd raised over £1 million for breast cancer; a town improvement guru; a super foster carer; a special needs educator and mental health advocate; a women's champion; a fundraising adventurer; a rower and brain tumour awareness fundraiser; and a walking campaigner for more access to the countryside for everyone.

See the box on the opposite page for how to enter the Community Hero Awards for your region. It's really easy.

We will also be featuring five categories nominated and voted for by our woman&home panel of judges, including editor in chief Catherine Westwood and columnists Kathy Lette and Katie Fforde.

As usual these categories include:

✦ **BRAND NEW DIRECTIONS**

Brilliant entrepreneurs leading the way.

✦ **SMASHING THE GLASS**

CEILING 50+ role models at the top of corporate environments.

✦ **CHANGING OUR COUNTRY**

Women in high places dedicated to making our lives – and the lives of others – better.

✦ **DON'T TELL ME I CAN'T**

Women having exciting adventures and fulfilling their dreams.

✦ **CELEBRITIES DOING GOOD**

Stars of stage and screen who also do great work for charity.

Last year we were blown away by the winners across all categories. We partied on and celebrated their triumphs in style – as the pictures on this page prove. Over the coming months in woman&home we will again reveal our 10 shortlists in the Amazing Women categories.



AMAZING WOMEN AWARDS 2020

**NOMINATED
BY READERS!**



Just some of last year's winners, plus (above right) w&h editor Catherine with Shirley Ballas and Sally Phillips



COMMUNITY HERO AWARDS HOW TO ENTER

Welcome to the Community Hero Awards, nominated by readers and voted for by readers. It's simple to enter.

These awards celebrate the heroines in our community. Whether it's your friend, your relation, your co-worker or your boss, these are the women that keep our world going around, from caring for others, to fighting for our countryside and our high streets, to going the extra mile for charity.

We're looking for three nominees from each of the following regions:

- + Scotland and Northern Ireland
- + North East, North West and Yorkshire
- + Wales and West Midlands
- + East Midlands and East Anglia
- + South West and South East

JUST GO TO:

womanandhome.com/awardnominations. You will need your nominees's permission, plus a photo of them, and tell us in 250 words or less why they deserve to win.

DEADLINE TO ENTER:

30 April 2020



Kathy Lette (above, far right) was also on hand to support our worthy winners





How I find my HEADSPACE

Taking time out to do the things you love can have huge benefits for your wellbeing, as these women have discovered

When did you last do something just because you wanted to? Not because you were helping anyone else, pleasing anyone else or working for someone else – just making yourself happy?

If you can barely remember when, you're not alone. We Brits work the longest hours in Europe, and research from adult educational college City Lit found that a third of us spend less than 42 minutes a day doing something we enjoy.

Finding time to fit in a new hobby or activity may seem unrealistic. But prioritising your own headspace and a

mental 'escape' – whether through arts and crafts, exercise, singing, baking, playing an instrument or gardening – is something we should all aim to do, not least because activities like these are known to reduce symptoms of anxiety, stress and depression.

'Imagine your brain being like a computer,' explains Dr Kate Mason, clinical psychologist of Roots Psychology Group. 'We'll often allow ourselves to have too many "tabs" open. Eventually we slow down, become overwhelmed and less productive.'

'Engaging in an enjoyable activity increases endorphins and dopamine

– happy hormones – and gives your brain a chance to reboot.

'Allowing time to immerse yourself in a single activity and close down those extra tabs leaves us feeling calmer and, ultimately, more productive. If you're not firing on all cylinders, how can you expect to be on form for others you care for?'

Making a conscious effort to look after your own needs can make you feel good about yourself and your life; it conveys to others that you value yourself, which contributes to a long-lasting sense of wellbeing.

Here, we speak to five women about how they find headspace.

THE SEA SWIMMER

'It's a form of moving meditation'



Pippa Best, 47, lives in Cornwall with her husband, Carn, and their children Jago, 12, and Loveday, nine. She runs Story of Mum, a social enterprise.

During a stressful time when my husband was working away, I was searching for a moment of peace, and started swimming off Penzance Promenade. I happened to be there at the same time as a group of regular older swimmers, who welcomed and encouraged me.

I was 44, and since then, sea swimming has transformed my life for the better.

'Being in my bikini has a positive impact on my body confidence'

It has improved my physical health, overcoming the pain of early onset arthritis and keeping me flexible and strong. It has also helped me manage anxiety.

It feels spiritual, and I use it as a form of moving meditation.

A sea swim is the best way I've found to start the day. It makes me feel strong, and being out in my bikini has had a really positive impact on my body confidence.

The sea is where I go to clear my head and make some daily time that's

just for me. It's where I'm able to think clearly, remember what really matters, and find courage to move forward in the rest of my life. I can release a lot of stress and anxiety and internal chatter there – and start afresh.



Pippa likes to start her day with a swim in the sea

THE ARTIST

'Painting helps me find stillness'

Author and publisher Kari Herbert, 49, is married to Huw. They live in Cornwall with their daughter Nelly, nine.

Around two years ago I was introduced to Kate Walters, an artist with a deeply personal style of art. Her work is about drawing out your own experiences, to make impressions on paper.

At the time, my health wasn't great and I was struggling with the pressures of work deadlines, on

top of the wonderful, but tiring, demands of being a mum.

I felt so stretched and fractured, I needed to

find a way of releasing the pressure valve and reconnecting with myself. So one morning I headed to the beach and tried physically drawing my breaths. I felt so relaxed, peaceful and calm doing it. It was almost hypnotic. From then it became a daily ritual. I'd take a small sketchbook with me on walks, with just a calligraphy pen and a paintbrush, and draw, using the pen to describe my intake of breath and my exhalation.

I then began to sketch my surroundings too, using water from puddles, the sea or dew to create movement in the small artworks. Apart from reconnecting with nature, I find art utterly absorbing and it helps me to find stillness from my overbusy brain. >>



Kari needed a way of releasing pressure



THE HORSE RIDER

Being around my horses is so rewarding and calming'

Organic hairdresser Tabitha James-Kraan, 50, lives in the Cotswolds with her husband, Dennes.

I grew up riding horses and ponies. But I then had a huge period of my life without them. I can now see that the relationship I had with them as a child completed me. I didn't realise that's what was missing until I had horses in my life again. They are such wonderful animals. I really believe that they can see into our souls and, through their eyes, we see into theirs.

I've had my two horses – Jack and Dora – for five years now. They live at a nearby organic farm. He's an ex-racehorse that I've taken in; she's a traditional Irish Cob.

I believe horses can see into our souls'

It's not just riding them that gives me headspace; it's much more than that. Being around my horses is so rewarding and so calming.

I have quiet meditative time early in the mornings and, in the summer months, I can sit with them in their meadows in what feels like a powwow with their friends. When I ride, I love to get lost in nature.

Time with my horses is my everything in terms of my work/life balance. They provide my mindfulness, meditation, fitness, spirituality and leadership skills. From my need to escape the rat race and lose myself in nature, to the way they challenge me and help me grow as a human, I couldn't imagine my life without them.

Tabitha is happy to be horse riding again and loves to get lost in nature



THE KNITTER

'The whole process moves me, from my mind into my body'

Rebecca Perkins, 56, lives in South Wales. She has three grown-up children and works as a wellbeing and resilience coach and author.

I'm an avid knitter and sewer. I grew up surrounded by thread and yarn, and because my mother taught needlework, I could sew when I was four. I was holding a needle before a pencil!

I remember helping my grandmother Violet to unwind wool when I was a little girl, but it was my maternal grandmother, Elizabeth, who taught me to knit. She was always crocheting something. So I grew up seeing sewing as a relaxing activity and I've done it ever since.

I find it very calming to concentrate on the pattern, and keeping up the rhythmic motion of knitting the stitches for row after row. I'm so focused on the work that nothing else matters when I'm doing it, and other thoughts that may have been causing stressful feelings take a back seat.

I knit anything from sweaters to socks and scarves. I love the feel of the yarn in my hands. The whole process is very tactile and moves me from my mind into my body. People think it's hard, but it comes so naturally to me.



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from
day-to-day
life'*



Georgie grows all sorts of fruit and vegetables on her allotment, and tailors her cooking at home depending on what's in season at that time

THE ALLOTMENT GARDENER

'Life is hectic... it's my little sanctuary'

Georgie Perkins, 40, lives in Leigh-on-Sea, Essex, with her husband, Lee, and their son Evan, four. She owns an events company.

My allotment is my go-to for 'me time', finding calm and getting the headspace I need. I grow vegetables for our family meals and it's the best

place to be, away from the chaos that everyday life can bring.

I'd always wanted an allotment. I had an idyllic vision of growing my own vegetables – something I wasn't able to do in our small garden at home. So when the opportunity to rent one came up last year, I jumped at the chance. It was completely wild and overgrown but I worked hard and transformed it.

I grow a huge range of produce, including carrots, leeks, courgettes, potatoes, raspberries and plums, as well as edible flowers. It's so satisfying

eating what you've grown yourself and everything tastes so fresh. It's hard work but it's worth it. Last Christmas, I was even able to make a wreath with greenery and flowers from the allotment.

Life is pretty hectic, so my allotment is my little sanctuary. It's so peaceful. I try to go at least twice a week in the winter and every day on summer evenings.

It's all about pure escapism from the day-to-day. Picking a basket of lovely foods that I've grown gives me utter joy.

Peter Hahn

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The trip that SAVED ME

In a movingly honest account, Amanda Austen describes how she found help where she least expected it when she was struggling after her divorce

Thirty years ago, my marriage ended in miserable failure. It had only lasted six years. My family were aghast – I'd grown up in a culture where having a husband meant everything.

Friends sympathised with sad head tilts, but also seemed to hold on to their partners that little bit tighter, as if what had caused my broken relationship was something they could catch.

With hindsight, the marriage had never stood much of a chance. I'd always lived at home with my family, and my boyfriend only proposed when his job took him to another area. We drifted into marriage, with me aged 21 and wondering how things had moved so quickly.

My new husband wanted to save for a flat straightaway and with that came a very strict budget, which allowed for no fun and no travel. It was a very sensible plan, of course. But the novelty of playing house soon wore off for me – inside I was a rebellious teenager who found the drudgery of domesticity unbearable.

I was 27 when it all ended. I decided to quit my secretarial job and use part of my divorce settlement to travel to Egypt, a country that would offer the stark contrast to my humdrum life I craved.

When I told my mother I'd booked a cruise from Cairo to Luxor she angrily told me I was being financially

irresponsible, and even predicted my untimely death with the salvo, 'I'm not flying over there to identify your body.'

Defiantly, I set off. But I hadn't thought through what it would be like to be truly alone for the first time in my life. When I stepped aboard the cruise ship, I found that the other passengers were much older than me, and in families and couples. I smiled weakly at everyone and retreated to my expensive cabin.

I felt as if I was the sum of my divorce experience and little else.

Then one afternoon, when other passengers were off to shop for souvenirs, Margaret, our tour guide, came over to me. She had clearly realised I was struggling on my own and, rather than enjoy some well-earned time off, she invited me to join her on a spontaneous adventure.

'Do you really want to go shopping for lapis lazuli or would you like to see the real Egypt with me?' she asked kindly.

That afternoon, we walked the hot, dry streets of Cairo like locals. I saw veiled women at the shutters of their houses, stood back for mourners running down a road carrying a coffin, and tried the strongest coffee I've ever tasted in a café owned by an Egyptian celebrity.

In one afternoon, Margaret had cranked open my tiny world and showed me that there was life after divorce, and that I could live it.

The cruise became so much more enjoyable after that. Then one day I became so sick I was convinced that my mother's predictions of my death on the Nile were about to come true. Margaret noticed I hadn't appeared for breakfast and knocked on my door. One look at me and she diagnosed dehydration.

She organised salted watermelon and a cup of sugary, salty tea – and I was better in an hour.

Back in London, Margaret invited me to her home. Her walls were covered in pictures of Egyptian scenes – she couldn't wait to go back.

We wrote to each other for a while, but sadly lost contact. I want to thank her for being kind to me when I was floundering at my lowest ebb. She made me see that it was time to develop my own life and that, as you always take yourself with you, you may as well enjoy yourself.

SAY IT HERE

Is there someone you'd like to thank? Tell us about it at w&hmail@ti-media.com or write to woman&home, TI Media, 161 Marsh Wall, London E14 9AP

My son became my daughter

Caroline Martin knew her son was unhappy, but it wasn't until he was 22 that she finally discovered the truth, and helped him on a journey to become Hannah

As soon as he started school my little boy changed from being happy and carefree to quiet and withdrawn. He would cry at night and be in sheer terror whenever the school holidays ended. I'd ask him what was wrong, but he'd never say. He was friendly with a little girl from up the road, but never had many friends at school.

In secondary school, whenever I asked him how his day was, he'd just mumble it was fine. He was always playing on his computer. I'd say, 'Are you happy?' and he'd reply, 'Yeah, yeah, I'm all right Mum.' Even at his graduation ceremony from university he'd barely let me take a photo.

Finally at the age of 22 in March 2015, while my husband Dave was out playing snooker, my lovely son walked into my bedroom, in utter turmoil. Wringing his hands, he sat at the end of my bed and could barely get the words out. 'Mum, I've got something to tell you,' he began. 'I want to be a woman, I'm a woman inside and I have to do something to change the rest of my life.'

'He felt trapped in the cage of a male body'

I was so shocked I didn't know what to say. I felt so guilty he'd been through this all alone. I love him so much and felt so sad thinking, 'Why didn't I realise this sooner so I could have helped?'

He told me, 'I've seen specialists and psychiatrists who've diagnosed me with gender dysphoria. I've been like this since I started school.' Everything suddenly fell into place.

I knew nothing about transgenderism and asked if he would be happy just dressing up as a woman now and then. He explained that wasn't enough. Instead, he wanted to have hormone treatment and an operation to become

a woman – and he wanted to be known as Hannah. He said he felt like he was trapped in a cage of a male body, adding, 'When people look at me, they don't see the real me.' I was scared of the operation, but there was no doubt in my mind that his transition to become female had to happen.

Over the next few days I cried and cried. At work, I'd shed tears in private, then pretend I was upset about my dad

As a little boy he was quiet; now Hannah is happy to be a woman



having dementia. I wasn't ready to tell my friends, or even my husband Dave. I needed time to come to terms with it myself before telling anyone else. But keeping it secret was so hard. It was an incredibly lonely time.

I read widely so I could support my son on his journey. At first I was terrified by all the stories on the internet about the abuse transgender people could face, but then I focused on looking for more positive portrayals.

On the NHS website I read about a young woman called Ruth, who shared her experience of transitioning from male to female. It made me see my future daughter could do this too, and that I had to be there for her. I contacted the Gender Identity Research and Education Society (gires.org.uk), which helped me



Mum Caroline with Hannah, who underwent gender confirmation surgery last year

'I CRIED WITH JOY AFTER MY OPERATION'

HANNAH, 26, SAYS:

Even when I was six, I knew I didn't fit in. I became very low and often had suicidal thoughts. In secondary school I knew I wasn't gay, but I didn't feel any attraction to girls either. I couldn't see any future for myself. Mum took me to the doctor, who told me it was just part of puberty.

At university, with space to think, I realised it's not that I want to be a woman, I already am one inside.

I told a close female friend who was wonderful, putting me in touch with her transgender friend. I chose not to tell my parents until after my degree, as I was worried they'd try to stop me from transitioning. They didn't understand at first, but they were supportive. Dad told me, 'This is your life – do what you need to do.'

I was volunteering at a nature reserve and my female boss told me they'd support me in coming to work as Hannah. I started wearing push-up bras and shopping in Long Tall Sally. The children I taught were curious, asking whether I was a girl or boy. They were fascinated, one little boy telling me how 'cool' I was.

I cried with joy after my operation last year. Finally, I felt like the real me. I've just moved in with my partner, who I met online, and this is the happiest I've ever been in my life.

Find support at beaumontsociety.org.uk

to see my son had a bright future ahead. I saw a counsellor and got in touch with the Beaumont Society for support.

The first time we went out with her dressed as Hannah in skinny jeans, a blouse and a cardigan, I was terrified everyone would stare in the shopping centre, especially as she's 6ft 1in, but no one did. She has always had delicate features and beautiful, full Angelina Jolie lips, so she looked fabulous dressed as a girl.

Two months later, we decided we had to tell her dad. He'd had no idea and was clearly shocked, but told Hannah, 'If you ever want my help, just come and ask.' After that, Hannah dressed androgynously when out, then feminine at home.

Next we told a few close friends and work colleagues, sharing a brilliant article

Hannah had written. Everyone was fantastic and my friends asked why I hadn't told them sooner.

Eventually we broke the news to Dave's parents. (With my dad having dementia, to him Hannah was just someone new who came to visit.) They were gobsmacked but said they still loved their grandchild as much as

ever and would try to make sure they said 'she' instead of 'he', and called her Hannah. I cried with relief afterwards, promising to bring a new

photograph to replace their male picture of Hannah.

Soon after, with the new photo on the wall, two of their friends asked who it was and Grandma said, 'That's my granddaughter.' 'But you haven't got a granddaughter,' they replied, and she

'Friends asked why I hadn't told them sooner'

promptly told them, 'I have now!'

Hannah finally underwent gender confirmation surgery last March. Lying in her hospital bed afterwards, even with all the bandages, she looked so happy.

She has since given a talk to 250 people at an NHS event about being transgender. I was so proud. She recently moved out of the family home to live with her partner, another trans-woman. I really miss Hannah, but I'm so happy she has found love and started a wonderful new life. >>

the honest truth



After years of conflict, Chloe has become Toby



My daughter became my son

DEBORAH SUPPORTED HER CHILD, BORN AS CHLOE, AS SHE TRANSITIONED INTO TOBY



DEBORAH ROGERS, 54, FROM WARE, HERTS, SAYS:

In February 2011, my daughter Chloe had set off for school when I received an enigmatic

text from her, asking if I would love her 'whatever'? I was worried why she would send a text like that. 'Of course I would, I love you very much,' I replied.

Then she sent a text telling me that she was transgender. It came completely out of the blue. I'd seen nothing in her behaviour or anything she'd said to suggest the possibility.

I spent the rest of the day in a daze, stunned. The only way I made sense of the news was remembering what I'd said to her – that I would love her whatever

– because I did love her very much.

As Chloe explained what being transgender felt like, I realised that all Chloe was doing was striving to become the person they were supposed to be.

I wanted my children to grow into happy, authentic people, and if for Chloe that meant going on this difficult transformational journey, then so be it. Some people were less receptive and sent Chloe letters condemning her.

She began dressing as a male that spring and came out at school that summer. By Christmas he told people that he would like to be called Toby.

It took me about six months to adapt to the new name and I found it hard at first.

Going out in public was fine because lots of women dress in boyish clothes nowadays, so Toby didn't stand out. The

'She texted to ask if I would still love her'

EXPERT VIEW

FROM PSYCHOLOGIST AND COUNSELLOR SUSAN QUILLIAM:

The good news is that both Caroline and Deborah realise the situation of their children being transgender is natural, not a disease, mental illness or 'lifestyle choice'. Plus, both women have themselves found peace. They've

worked through shock, fear, grief, guilt. They've learned to understand gender incongruence, and to withstand society's disapproval, they've continued to give their children the love they need.

The bad news? While a full 1% of the UK population are transgender, not all get support.

If your child is transgender, or you're supporting another parent

'TRANSPHOBIC COMMENTS COME FROM IGNORANCE'

TOBY, 25, SAYS:

'It's been a long and incredibly tough journey and I'm so grateful for Mum's support. Sadly, not everyone has been supportive.

I've faced abuse – I've had people shouting crude things at me, I've had to defend myself against strangers and I still don't feel safe using male public toilets.

I feel lucky to have the love of my partner, Seth, 25, and close family, who will be supporting me when I have surgery to transform the lower half of my body, completing my transition.

I'm always open to questions because transphobic comments usually come from ignorance, which is why I remain openly trans. How are people meant to learn if no one speaks up about it?

first time we went into a male shop the assistants didn't even bat an eye when Toby went into the changing room.

We went to meetings for transgender people, and I found a lot of support there. My faith also helped me to support Toby, but there were times when I grieved for the daughter I'd lost. On birthdays especially, it hit home that Chloe wasn't ever going to turn 18. But Toby was, and is, the same person. It was just hard to tie the two up in my mind.

It's taken years of conflict for him to be able to tell the world about the person he really is. Toby's grown into a wise, caring young man. I am very proud of him.

in this situation, remember:

- ❖ Your child's pain isn't down to what you have or haven't done as a parent.
- ❖ Understanding the issues will increase your emotional strength and capacity for action.
- ❖ You can find support from advice lines, peer groups and counselling – for more information, visit gires.org.uk and beaumontsociety.org.uk



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THE WAY I AM

‘I want to die working – why stop if you still love it?’

Actress Amanda Redman, 62, shares her passions and memories.
She lives in London with her husband, Damian Schnabel

Are there any similarities between you and the characters you play?

With any role you have to find something that's as close to you as possible. Dr Lydia Fonseca, who I play in *The Good Karma Hospital*, doesn't suffer fools gladly and neither do I! Like her, I'm passionate about my work and hate laziness. Then there are huge differences – I'm not as single-minded as she is and I'm not quite as bullish – nearly, but not quite!

What was your plan B?

I would say teaching probably, but not maths or science – I'd teach drama. I think being a drama teacher would be very rewarding.

What was it like filming *The Good Karma Hospital* in Sri Lanka?

It's beautiful. The people are fantastic and the food, countryside and beaches are amazing – it's got absolutely everything. But it's hot and extremely humid, so when you're filming, the heat and mosquitoes can be challenging. I also miss my family when I'm filming away for such a long time.

Do you watch yourself on TV?

Yes, it's the only way you can learn, but it's horrible, so I won't watch anything with others. I scream at myself, 'I don't believe you for a second – that was rubbish!' My husband won't watch any of my work until I've seen it first. And if I say, 'I don't like myself in that,' then he won't watch it because it makes him upset for me. He only tunes in when I say he can!



Do you think you have to look a certain way on camera?

It depends on how you're perceived. I get employed because they want a certain look and I have to keep that up. When I get offered a role that is not me, like when I played Tommy Cooper's wife, Gwen, in a feature film about his life, it was divine, marvellous and wonderful. She was a drunk and I had to wear body padding, so being offered those roles is just the best. I worry, though, because you don't get as many when you're older.

How do you feel about ageing?

I hate every second of it, as does every single woman I know. The people who say it's great are lying through their

teeth! Don't listen to them. What's to like? Absolutely nothing – especially if you've got the energy and want to do so much more. I'm always thinking, 'Jeez, my time is running out, how am I going to fit it all in?'

How do you relax?

I like to watch TV. I binge-watch shows such as *The Bodyguard* and *Killing Eve* – the amount of good drama that's been on telly recently has been extraordinary.

What's at the top of your bucket list?

There's so much I want to do – classic plays and new dramas. I'm constantly reading new work and there are people I want to collaborate with that I haven't yet. I want to die working – why stop if you still love it? I'd also love to learn to dance, but I've turned

Strictly down three times because I'm not going to be the butt of the nation's jokes.

You've been married for a decade this year, so what's the secret?

We both make each other laugh! And we're very romantic with each other, from sending flowers to small thoughtful things, and we still go on dates. I'm the happiest in my personal life that I've ever been, simply because I have a successful marriage and my daughter Emily is very content, so all that makes me happy! I'm ready for grandchildren now, so hurry up Emily!

✦ *The Good Karma Hospital* returns to ITV in March.

Help! I DON'T FANCY my husband

Loss of desire can threaten even the most loving partnerships – but there can be a way back to finding bedroom harmony, explains psychologist and counsellor Susan Quilliam

Your commitment to your partner is strong, your lives are entwined. But deep down, though you may not

admit it even to yourself, you simply don't fancy him any more. When you catch his eye, you feel no flutter of attraction. When you happen to touch, you want to shift away.

Is this the end of lovemaking? Not necessarily. Sex may still be happening, even regularly – but real motivation for it has disappeared.

Is this the end of your relationship? Surely not. But lacking desire for your partner leaves you feeling not only sad but also anxious, and this is certainly a danger sign.

Such fading attraction is a problem faced by many clients I coach, but often there are ways forward. Here are three success stories.

PROBLEM 1 'He's let himself go and stopped trying'

'When we met, Tim took my breath away,' Allie told me. 'Fit, athletic, looking good – and just as much in love with me as I was with him.'

Fast-forward to settled family life and their love survived. But over time, Tim had let himself go – perhaps because he was no longer young, perhaps because of a stressful career, perhaps because he felt so secure in their marriage that he didn't bother trying any more.

Fit and athletic became podgy. Looking good became scruffy. Allie sadly explained, 'I want to feel desire, but I can't. He doesn't seem to care about

himself – and I wonder if that means he doesn't care about our relationship.'

The good news is that of all the 'not fancying' scenarios, this one's often the easiest to resolve. Because many of the causes, and solutions, are purely practical – so if the partner who's stopped making an effort starts trying again, the other will likely regain desire.

There are traps. Age takes its toll and you can't expect your other half to look the same as they did two decades ago. Blaming or nagging will also have negative effects – if you pressure your partner to change, he may first resist and then actively resent

'He may resent your input'



PROBLEM 2 'I love him, but he's more like a brother to me'

Tina's first marriage was deeply unhappy. When it ended, she jumped into online dating, found Will, and was immediately won over by his kindness. She realised from the start that she wasn't much attracted to him sexually but, 'the relief of feeling loved made up for everything.'

Over time, though, while Tina and Will's emotional bond grew, her sexual feelings for him never blossomed. Two years after they met, she came to me for help: 'Will and I are so close – like brother and sister. But how can I make love with someone I don't even fancy?'

In this situation – where a relationship may be emotionally fulfilling but fundamental desire is at rock bottom – you may have to make difficult choices. In the end, not fancying your partner can override the good things in the relationship; you may choose to leave rather than feel constantly unfulfilled.

I encouraged Tina to explore why

she'd originally chosen Will. After her difficult marriage, she'd leapt at the affection he offered. But was that a good choice? Were they actually compatible? Together we explored in detail what she valued in Will and in their relationship. And in the end she was fully convinced, telling me, 'He's

such a good man. He is the partner I want.'

The challenge then became how to help her enjoy lovemaking. Will came along to our coaching sessions, and together the couple

learnt to talk about sexuality, to understand each other's desires, to pleasure each other successfully.

This was not a quick fix. But as Tina's enjoyment of lovemaking increased, she started to experience Will as an arousing sexual partner and love him even more. 'I have to admit, I used to think about sex with him and cringe,' she said. 'Now I remember what we did in bed last night and smile.' >>

'Learn to talk about sexuality'

your input. The result can be a vicious circle of relationship negativity.

I helped Allie to find a solution that centred on positivity, encouraging Tim to step up to healthy self-care. She got the whole family shifting to a better diet. She went with Tim to the local gym. She supported revamping his wardrobe.

Allie's campaign soon began to show results. And I advised her to make it very clear – in bed as well as out – just how much she valued those results. That motivated Tim to continue making the effort, which in turn made Allie feel more positive about him, more convinced of his commitment. The result was a virtuous, rather than a vicious, circle and a newly enthusiastic sex life.



PROBLEM 3 'I find that I'm just too angry to enjoy sex with him'

Frankie and Greg came to see me together – and started rowing the minute they entered the room. 'We fight most days,' admitted Frankie. The couple still made love occasionally, but far more often they made each other miserable.

Greg's desire for Frankie wasn't much affected by their rows – he bounced back quickly after each one, keen to have sex again. But for Frankie, the arguments were a total turn-off. 'He's so irritating I can't help being angry – then the last thing I want to do is tumble into bed. Fancy him? I haven't for years.'

This kind of problem can be difficult to resolve.

Desire has died because of a wide range of bad feelings, often built up over time and therefore hard to reverse. Plus, not fancying your partner may be an unconscious way of making a serious point to him – that something's wrong between you, that something needs to change. Until and unless it does change, the lust won't return.

So I suggested Frankie and Greg had to look closely at their partnership problems – and what they discovered

wasn't comfortable. They realised they'd started their relationship with the expectation of 'happy ever after', the perfect partnership that would never go wrong. But when things went even slightly adrift, their default was to blame and attack each other, which made the situation even worse.

There were some tense and unhappy sessions. But eventually both partners learned effective ways to avoid conflict.

'Blaming each other makes things worse'

How to calm themselves when they got angry.
How to explain their feelings to each other rather than kicking off.
How to forgive each other rather than constantly blaming.

As conflict decreased, Frankie's desire for Greg increased. She found herself wanting to have sex. And given a better relationship, there was more incentive to have sex – to show their affection, to give and receive pleasure.

Now, as in most partnerships, the couple still occasionally row. But anger isn't such a big part of their relationship that it destroys Frankie's desire. Now she's more able to love and be loved by Greg, she's also able to fancy him.

6 WAYS TO TACKLE THE 'DON'T FANCY HIM' TRAP

1 If you have 'off' days where you don't find your partner attractive, don't panic! But if you have 'off months' or 'off years', take that seriously.

2 However unsexual you might be feeling, try to keep the physical affection. Hold hands, cuddle or sleep naked to keep the connection alive.

3 If you feel desire, have sex, even if there's only time for a quickie. If you're not 'using' it, you risk 'losing' it.

4 Remember – and remind your partner – that in order to be desired, each of you needs to be desirable. Don't lose interest in your physical appearance. And don't default into unkind behaviour.

5 Emotional negativity is the biggest passion killer. My book *Stop Arguing Start Talking* (Vermilion), written with relationship organisation Relate, can help.

6 Get professional support as soon as possible – don't just put up with a situation as the problem may become harder to resolve. Log on to relate.co.uk to find details of local counselling services.

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Growing up Greek

What's it like when your family culture makes you feel different from other kids? Eleni Kyriacou explains

Popular culture has never been kind to Greeks. The French have Catherine Deneuve, the Italians Sophia Loren. We get Demis Roussos and Harry Enfield's Stavros.

I was eight years old when I realised being born to Cypriot parents wasn't the glamour ticket I'd hoped it would be. One morning at school I was teased by classmates because the night before, they'd watched a singer called Nana Mouskouri on TV. Nana had worn a hideous floral maxi dress and thick, square, black-rimmed spectacles, God bless her. I argued that, with my parents originating from Cyprus, I was Greek Cypriot rather than just Greek, so Nana's wardrobe choices were not a reflection on me. But the nuances were lost on Class 3H. From that moment, being Greek was officially uncool.

This was compounded days later in the playground when, after a history lesson about the Trojan War, a re-enactment of the soldiers storming out of the wooden horse took place, with yells of 'Never trust a Greek!' as kids bundled on top of me.

But many of my memories of growing up Greek are lovely. The way a new teacher would pause before tackling my name, and the whole class would correct her if she got it wrong. The foil-wrapped

slabs of halloumi in my packed lunch, which I'd swap with my best friend Jackie for her exotic Dairy Lea Triangles.

The best thing was the secret language. My parents didn't speak much English so we spoke a mix of Greek and English – Gringlish – at home. When my sister and I were out and about, we could talk about anyone and not be understood. It felt like a superpower.

The most difficult aspect of my teen years was accepting how strict my parents were. While my English friends could go anywhere (or so it seemed), I was a Greek girl and things didn't work that way. With only a handful of going-

out credits a year, I had to ask myself if I really wanted to go to a party or film. If the event was unmissable, I'd start negotiations days before, mentioning it a few times to get my parents on board and throwing in the name of a friend who'd

attend. This needed to be someone Cypriot or with equally strict parents – but not the friend they saw smoking St Moritz cigarettes in the local café on schooldays.

A big part of my childhood was the euphoria of Greek

weddings. Often held in the town hall – or a hotel if you were fancy – these events were free-for-all parties, with heaps of food made by the family served on buckling paper plates. Cratefuls of alcohol were shared out and nobody cared how much anyone else drank. Yes, you might be 16 and on your third Metaxa brandy 'n' Coke, but as long as you were having the time of your life, all was well.

Our parents recounted stories of arriving in the 1950s in a city of strangers where they couldn't speak the language, and didn't know the customs. Years later, after decades of wanting to write a novel but not knowing what it would be about, I realised it had to be about that experience.

Turns out I'm a proper Greek girl, after all. The aspect of myself I most wanted to shrug off is now central to who I am.

✦ *She Came to Stay* by Eleni Kyriacou (£18.99, Hodder & Stoughton) is out now.

We could talk about anyone and not be understood – it felt like a superpower



Eleni with her mother (middle) and members of her extended family in Cyprus



FIRE UP

We watched from afar as catastrophic bush fires ravaged Australia, but for Aussie Kathy Lette, experiencing it on a recent trip back, the flames led to a mix of rage, heartbreak, and admiration for the courage of her fellow countrymen and women

I'm cradling a singed possum, feeding her water from a bottle. She's looking up at me with big, terrified eyes, as if asking why her home is going up in smoke. If things don't improve, we'll soon have to change our national anthem from *Advance Australia Fair* to *Smoke Gets in Your Eyes*, and alter our coat of arms from an emu and a kangaroo to a fire hose and a smug Prime Minister jetting off to a Hawaiian holiday while his country goes up in flames.

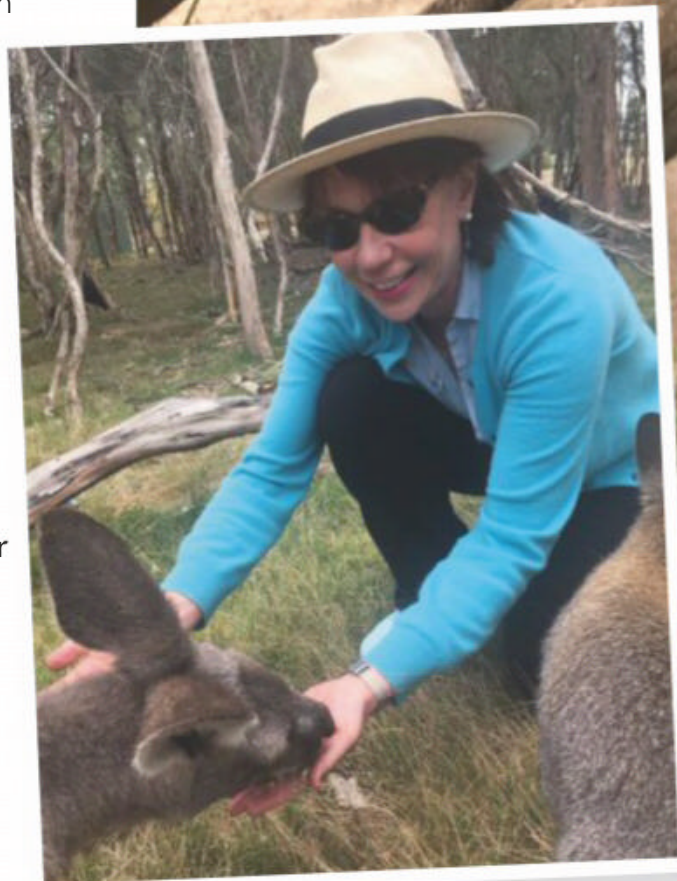
The worst bush fires in Australia's history have left at least 30 people dead so far, more than 5,900 buildings destroyed, including 2,683 homes, 18.6 million hectares burnt and a billion native animals lost, with many endangered species driven to extinction. Normally laid-back, laconic, easy-going Aussies are reeling with shock, grief and red raw anger.

Our blinkered, climate-change-denying Prime Minister's brilliant advice is to tell us to pray... um, note



to Scott Morrison – with an area the size of England alight, God has clearly taken a sabbatical and left some hopelessly unqualified intern in charge. ScoMo's other response to this ecological cataclysm is to license more water-devouring coal mines. Oh yes, the bloke's a mine of information on the benefits of coal mines, which rob billions of litres of water from our drought-stricken land. It might be smoky, but even I can see there's not much point having a booming economy in an uninhabitable country.

The reason the bush fires are so catastrophic is twofold. In a stunningly short-sighted act of false economy, conservative state governments made savage cuts to National Park staff so there are fewer rangers to do preventative 'back-burning' (controlled bush burns). This, combined with the effect of global warming, which has reduced the cold, winter months during which the fuel load can be safely





Kathy at an animal shelter with a koala and kangaroo, left, rescued from the fire



They paddled in the dark, watching their house burn down

burnt off, meant that when lightning struck, our dry, drought-ravaged bush combusted, creating vicious, ravenous firestorms, which then joined up to create mega infernos.

This is the first natural disaster where every Australian seems to have been affected in some way. Like thousands of others, my littlest sister, Carolyn, was evacuated from her farm on the NSW South Coast just after Christmas. It was a nail-gnawing wait at my Sydney apartment, as we tried to comfort her stressed teens, aged 13 and 17. When she finally got back to her property, three days later, orchards, flower beds, sheds and barns were destroyed. But a few puddles of water indicated that their house itself was saved – by some unknown volunteer firefighters. These selfless heroes should all win Australian of the Year. All around the country, makeshift signs adorn trees, with heartfelt scribbles reading 'Thank you Fireys'.

My sister's best friend Natalie, who lives a few miles away on the coast, was not so lucky. Trapped by a sudden wind change, she had to jump into Lake >>



Animals are saved from the burning forest; below: an NSW Rural Fire Service volunteer douses a fire



Conjola, and tread water for an hour with her mum and two other 70-year-olds. They just doggy-paddled in the dark, watching their house burn down. Natalie now has no eyelashes and her hair is singed to a crisp, but she's just happy not to have been incinerated, drowned or eaten by a shark. Then again, most of Australia's deadliest sharks are wearing pinstripe suits in federal parliament, recklessly fiddling their emission figures while Rome burns. Australia's carbon emissions reduction target is the weakest of the developed countries, and our carbon dioxide emission per person is one of the highest rates in the world.

The conservative party's reputation may be going up in flames, but everywhere you look, the Aussie spirit of camaraderie shines through. I'm currently staying at my sister's scorched farm, joining the many volunteers searching the surrounding, smouldering National Park for injured or starving animals. We pick our way through blackened tree stumps, putting out water bowls, laying out hay bales for kangaroos, and stringing up garlands of fruit and vegetables for gliders, parrots and possums. The possums like stone fruit, quartered oranges and watermelons. The wombats – lucerne chaff. The bandicoots – sweet potatoes, apples, pumpkins and corn. The parched koalas are in desperate need of saline and paw paw ointment.

When we find injured, orphaned or starving animals we call WIRES – Australia's wildlife rescue organisation, whose trained, dedicated, licensed volunteers evacuate the poor, distressed creatures to shelters for

We string up garlands of vegetable and fruit for gliders, parrots and possums

specialised care, or euthanasia. Hearing hurt, traumatised koalas crying from the pain of third-degree burns, seeing dehydrated flying foxes fall from the skies, watching emaciated kangaroos limp through decimated habitat or pulling shocked joeys from the pouches of dead mothers, stumbling over wallabies electrocuted from fallen power lines and digging out wombats buried alive in their burrows – well, it would break the hardest of hearts.

Unless the bulldozing of forests and global heating is brought under control, our core wild koala populations will disappear forever. The most effective way to help our beleaguered, endangered wildlife is to donate at **wires.org.au**. And the most meaningful way to honour those who lost their lives in the ongoing bush fire crisis is to dismantle the systematic disinformation campaign that has prevented climate action for so long.

The world must take heed of Mother Nature's SOS smoke signals, force our politicians to develop more vision than what's on offer through our smoke-shrouded windows, and rise from the ashes by embracing a low-carbon future with an innovative wind and solar approach to energy consumption. Otherwise Australia will soon have less bush than a vajazzled lap dancer in Vegas and the only animals we'll ever see will be in a zoo.



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Cressida's stories were inspired by her childhood holidays in the Hebrides



Our secret island

For author and Children's Laureate Cressida Cowell, being stranded on a remote Scottish isle when growing up was magical

It was the 1970s – a decade many would call a more innocent and carefree time for children. A time when you were sent off for the day and wouldn't return until you were hungry, or it got dark. But my darling dad, who died in 2018, always liked to take things one step further, which is why we spent our summers on a remote Scottish island with no electricity, no shops and no means of getting back should anything go wrong. He always did like a little bit of danger!

But there we were every year, armed with our supply of food, dropped off on the little island by a local boatman who said he'd be back in a couple of weeks. We had no phone or means of contact with the outside world, and we'd cook on open fires and go fishing for our dinner.

When Vikings invaded Scotland in the 9th century, they came as pirates but stayed to settle. It's the stories from these seaborne Scandinavians that inspired my *How to Train Your Dragon* books. As our little house had no TV, we'd read tales to each other at night.

'We had no electricity, no shops and no means of getting back'

A lot of the stories were about dragons because the Vikings believed they really existed. One story was about a dragon that turned into a mountainside. The hill at the back of our house looked a lot like a sleeping dragon, so I imagined him waking up. The correlation between our island and my books is very direct.

As the eldest child, I was head of entertainment, which meant coming up with games. If we were bored we were told, 'Only boring people are bored.' I would read to my younger siblings and tell them tales of Viking tribes tricking each other. It definitely inspired me to do what I'm doing now.

My relationship with my father was a little like that of Hiccup and Stoick – the characters in my books. I would do all the worrying, like Hiccup. I think my mother stressed slightly about the fact we were so cut off, but went along with it. Once we were out in a boat and mistakenly anchored ourselves to a lobster pot instead of a buoy, and drifted out to sea!

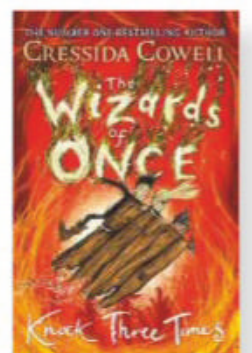
I promised my dad I would never tell anyone the name of our island. He was a very private person and a

keen environmentalist. The island was small and you could see the sea all around when you stood on top of the hill. When he died, we surrounded him with photos of his little haven.

You didn't need to be on an island in Scotland to feel that freedom in the 1970s, though. My new books, *The Wizards of Once*, were inspired by trips to my grandmother's house in Suffolk, where we used to go off on our bicycles unsupervised. And we can't do that with our kids now – it's just a different time.

Yet one lesson we can learn from those more carefree times is not to overprescribe children with things to do. Boredom can encourage creativity. I want to see them reading and enjoying stories for the joy of it, and to remember that playing is learning. Nothing reminds me of that more than those summers on an island in the Outer Hebrides, where we enjoyed so many magical adventures.

❖ *Knock Three Times*, the third book in *The Wizards of Once* series, is out now in hardback (Hodder Children's, £12.99), and the paperback is out in May.



BRAND NEW DIRECTIONS

Meet the SKINCARE entrepreneurs

These women have turned home-made products into sought-after brands
'Mum had the expertise to research and test ingredients'

Sarah Thomas, 34, and her mother, Karen Horsley, 61, live in York. They joined forces five years ago to create Clockface Beauty, a range of natural, waterless skincare products.

THE IDEA

Sarah When I was pregnant with my first son, Alfie, who's now four, my skin developed problems – from breakouts to dryness. After trying over-the-counter products, which either didn't work or were not suitable to use in pregnancy, I turned to my mum, Karen, who had created her own serum when she started getting dry skin in her mid-50s. She's retired now, but Mum was a biomedical scientist in the NHS for 30 years, so she had the expertise to research and test different natural ingredients. After using Mum's serum regularly, my skin changed dramatically for the better. I thought, 'I want to take this to market!'

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT

Karen After Sarah had her brainwave, I carried on developing skincare formulations. We spent two-and-a-half years getting 16 organic and cruelty-

free products ready for our launch in October 2018. It's important we use natural, sustainable and vegan ingredients. We also wanted our skincare to be waterless – unlike many products that are made up of 70% water, ours only contain active botanical ingredients.

Sarah I gave up my job as an accountant and juggled the business with being a parent – my second son, Henry, arrived in October 2017. There were accreditations to work through – for instance, our products had to be certified by an external chemist and registered with The Vegan Society. We gave testers to friends and family in exchange for filling in feedback forms, and engaged a marketing company to create the branding and a website. I came up with the name when I realised our core message was all about time – a combination of the 'me time' associated with a spa experience, and concerns about anti-ageing.

BREAKTHROUGH MOMENT

Sarah When we won three beauty industry awards in the same week in February 2019!

Karen As a scientist, it was achieving a texture from a vegan candelilla wax – that took a lot of work.

STEEPEST LEARNING CURVE

Sarah I underestimated the time and resources needed to reach a customer base from nil. Despite that, we achieved a lot – in the six weeks before we officially launched, we went from zero to 3,000 followers on social media.



The products
are organic,
vegan and
cruelty free



TOP TIP

Sarah: Don't compromise on your core message. Ours was being waterless. Now it's a big trend in skincare!

WHERE WE ARE NOW

Sarah We added three more products in 2019 and have a couple more for next autumn. We sell mostly from our website and small businesses around the UK, but our target this year is to get a large retailer on-board.

Karen It's been amazing to go on this new journey after retiring from the NHS, and to work with Sarah on a shared passion. >>

BUSINESS BREAKDOWN

Start-up costs: £35,000

Comprising...

Website and branding: £15,000

Stock and packaging: £15,000

In-house development: £5,000

Current turnover: £75,000

clockfacebeauty.com



I can't think of anything I'd rather do'

In 2014, Shann Jones, 52, successfully treated her son's eczema using goat's milk. Since then, she and her husband, Richard, have built an award-winning skincare and gut health business, Chuckling Goat, using goat's milk kefir made on their farm in south-west Wales.

THE IDEA

When my son Benji was little, he suffered recurring bronchial infections and eczema. Antibiotics didn't help, so we turned to the traditional Welsh remedy of using goat's milk. We bought a pedigree Anglo-Nubian goat, Buddug, and gave her milk to Benji. His condition improved dramatically. I learned to make kefir with the leftover milk, and I started wondering about using it in skincare products. After a lot of research, I couldn't find anyone else making and selling kefir products direct to the public, so I knew there was a gap in the market.

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT

I went to soap school and learned to make cold-pressed soap and lotions. No one knew how to infuse kefir into the formulations, so I had to figure that out. I spent nine months developing my recipes, using 100% natural ingredients, including Finnish oat oil, essential oils, herbs, spices and, of course, goat's milk kefir. I concocted everything at the kitchen stove, with friends, family and mums from the school run testing the products. Richard managed the farm and grew the herd.

My products then had to be safety checked, which took around six months. Richard sold his motorbike to fund our venture – our mantra being if we couldn't afford to pay for something in cash, we couldn't have it. We launched Chuckling Goat in 2014, selling soaps, skin lotions and kefir drinks.

BREAKTHROUGH MOMENT

In 2016, I was invited onto the Steve Wright show on BBC Radio 2 to talk

about kefir. The publicity melted our website and, as we make everything by hand, it took eight weeks to ship orders!

STEEPEST LEARNING CURVE

Learning to trust ourselves. It's tempting to hire a consultant, but no one knows our business as well as us. We want to make our own decisions.

WHERE WE ARE NOW

We've had amazing growth, increasing sales by 6,000% and shipping to 55 countries. There have been exciting events, including being mentioned in the Duke and Duchess of Sussex's book, *Our Royal Baby*. In March 2019, we launched microbiome testing, where we identify bacterial flora in a person's gut, as I believe this is critical to good skin health.

We've chosen not to automate our processes, but employ local people. We have 22 staff, including my three daughters and son-in-law. We've added a hydrating balm to our range, and there's a 'dream cream' for dry skin in the pipeline. My fifth book, *How to Start a Business on your Kitchen Table*, is due out in May. I have such a passion for this business, I can't think of anything I'd rather do – it gets me up in the morning and keeps me awake at night!

BUSINESS BREAKDOWN

Start-up costs: £1,700

Comprising...

Our goat, Buddug: £200

Kefir grains and equipment: £300

Safety testing: £200

Website and packaging: £1,000

Current turnover: £3.4 million
chucklinggoat.co.uk

TOP TIP

It's important to stay true to your values and only use the best ingredients for your products – people will find you and support you.

Shann and Richard knew the power of goat's milk kefir





Rabia and Samar's green beauty line has taken off



TOP TIP

Rabia: Take time and invest in branding and your story. People want to buy from independents, but need a story that resonates with them.

STEEPEST LEARNING CURVE

Samar We didn't anticipate just how saturated the market would become. When we started, green beauty was just gaining momentum, but now there's more competition.

'Our brand reflects our heritages'

Friends Rabia Khan, 39, and Samar Fazil, 41, became business partners in 2015 when they launched natural organic skincare brand, soapNskin. Both have three children and live in Hertfordshire and Wembley, north-west London, respectively.

THE IDEA

Samar I couldn't find skincare that didn't irritate my skin, so I started making my own soap and body butters with storecupboard ingredients my mother and grandmother had used. When I was a teenager, my mum – who is of Pakistani heritage – used to tell me to wash my face with chickpea flour to help with my acne. From research, I now know its high-zinc content helps calm the skin and balance excess oiliness.

Rabia After my daughter was born, my skin became super sensitive and I ended up using olive oil, as it was the only thing that didn't hurt. I was moaning about it to Samar, and she gave me some of the body butter she made for herself. After trying it, I said, 'You're a magician! Why don't you sell it?' She was reluctant at first, but I suggested we do it together.

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT

Rabia We gave ourselves a year to launch, which was tough. There was so much work formulating the products and complying with regulations. We invested in better equipment and called in favours to get the website done for free. We aimed to sell online, and at trade fairs and markets, so we could educate customers about natural skincare.

Samar I was reluctant to go into business with someone so dear to me, but we work together so well, I couldn't have done it with anyone else! After launching soapNskin, we had such positive reactions, and we won several indie beauty awards. But over the next couple of years, we let things coast and didn't achieve the sales we wanted.

BREAKTHROUGH MOMENT

Rabia In 2017, we went to a trade fair and met big retailers. They thought our products were lovely and that we had a great story, as British Muslim women with a brand that reflected our twin heritages. But they were also brutally honest in telling us our packaging and branding were not strong enough. It propelled us to relaunch the brand.

WHERE WE ARE NOW

Samar We relaunched in 2019, using feedback from retailers and mentors to help us define our brand. Our story revolves around reviving ancient beauty rituals from the Silk Roads, with products such as Skin Cashmere, a nourishing mask inspired by Kashmiri bridal rituals. Gentle and multitasking, customers can tailor many items to their own skin concerns.

Rabia We changed our packaging to make it more premium and to increase its gift appeal. We make everything in our London studio, with ingredients still used in the Silk Road regions, including argan oil and turmeric, as well as British ingredients such as lavender. Response to the relaunch has been great and I'm concentrating on social media and SEO. We're confident we've got our branding right, and sales reflect that.

BUSINESS BREAKDOWN

Start-up costs: £20,000

Comprising...

Ingredients and safety

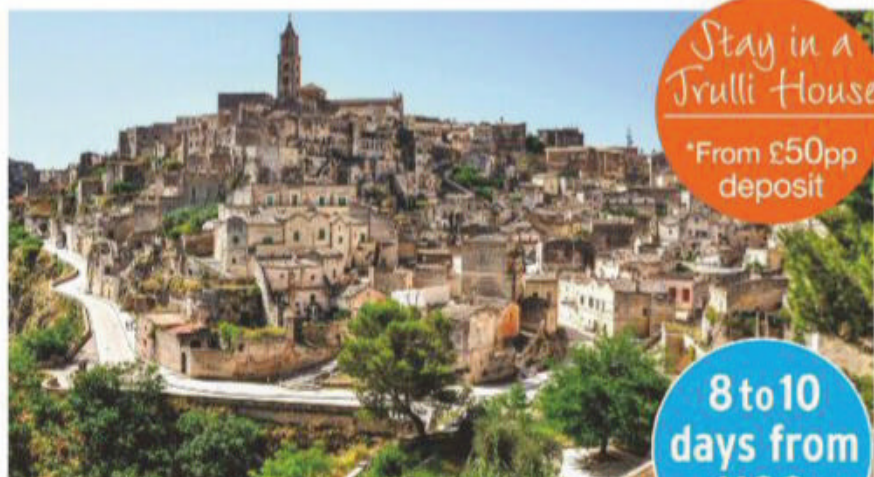
assessments: £5,000

Design and packaging: £10,000

Marketing £5,000

Estimated turnover: £20,000

soapnskin.com



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woman&home

READER SURVEY 2020

Complete our questionnaire by 22 March and we'll use your feedback to improve what we do.

You could win £250 or one of 10 runner-up prizes of £25 as a 'thank you'. You can also take

part online by going to womanandhome.com/readersurvey2020

WIN
£250

A. BUYING MAGAZINES

1. Do you tend to buy:

- Mainly/exclusively monthly magazines ☐ 1
Mainly/exclusively weekly magazines ☐ 2
An even mix of both ☐ 3

2. How often do you buy each of the following:

	Subscribe 1	Regularly 2	Occasionally 3	Never 4
Good Housekeeping	☐	☐	☐	☐
Platinum	☐	☐	☐	☐
Prima	☐	☐	☐	☐
Red	☐	☐	☐	☐
Woman	☐	☐	☐	☐
Woman's Own	☐	☐	☐	☐
Woman's Weekly	☐	☐	☐	☐
Yours	☐	☐	☐	☐

3. How often do you buy woman&home?

- I subscribe ☐ 1
Every month but don't subscribe ☐ 2
Every other month ☐ 3
Every 3-4 months ☐ 4
Less often ☐ 5
Never ☐ 6

4. If you subscribe, is your subscription:

- A gift ☐ 1 Paid for by you ☐ 2

5. How likely are you to resubscribe when your subscription expires?

- Definitely ☐ 1 Possibly ☐ 2 Unlikely ☐ 3 Don't know ☐ 4

6. How long have you been buying woman&home?

- Under 1 year ☐ 1 6-10 years ☐ 4 Can't remember ☐ 7
2-3 years ☐ 2 10-20 years ☐ 5
4-5 years ☐ 3 20+ years ☐ 6

7. How often have you bought each of these themed magazines published by woman&home?

	Regularly 1	Occasionally 2	Heard of, not bought 3	Not heard of 4
Feel Good Food	☐	☐	☐	☐
Feel Good You	☐	☐	☐	☐

B. WOMAN&HOME MAGAZINE

8. Would you describe woman&home as:

- Your favourite women's monthly magazine ☐ 1
One of your favourites ☐ 2
Not usually one of your first choices ☐ 3

9. Do you feel the content of woman&home is:

- A bit young for you ☐ 1
Right for women around your age ☐ 2
A bit old for you ☐ 3

10. How long do you usually spend reading your copy of woman&home?

- Under 1 hour ☐ 1 2-3 hours ☐ 4
1-1½ hours ☐ 2 Over 3 hours ☐ 5
1½-2 hours ☐ 3

11. Have you noticed any changes to woman&home in the last year or so?

- Has improved considerably ☐ 1
Has improved a little ☐ 2
I have noticed some changes but preferred it the way it was ☐ 3
I haven't noticed any changes ☐ 4

12. What changes have you noticed?

.....
.....

13. How important are each of the following subjects to your enjoyment of woman&home?

	Very important 1	Quite important 2	Not important 3
Beauty	☐	☐	☐
Books	☐	☐	☐
Celebrity	☐	☐	☐
Columnists (eg <i>Town & Country</i>)	☐	☐	☐
Competitions	☐	☐	☐
Consumer/money advice	☐	☐	☐
Cookery/food	☐	☐	☐
Diets/slimming	☐	☐	☐
Exercise	☐	☐	☐
Fashion	☐	☐	☐
Fiction/short stories	☐	☐	☐
Film/concerts/theatre/arts	☐	☐	☐
Health and wellbeing	☐	☐	☐
Home	☐	☐	☐
Offers/deals	☐	☐	☐
Puzzles	☐	☐	☐
Stories about real people	☐	☐	☐
The environment	☐	☐	☐
Travel	☐	☐	☐
TV	☐	☐	☐

14. And how do you rate the quality of the content in the following areas of the magazine?

	Very good 1	Quite good 2	Average 3	Poor 4
Beauty	☐	☐	☐	☐
Celebrity	☐	☐	☐	☐
Fashion	☐	☐	☐	☐
Food	☐	☐	☐	☐
Health and wellbeing	☐	☐	☐	☐
Home	☐	☐	☐	☐
Real life	☐	☐	☐	☐
Travel	☐	☐	☐	☐

15. At £4.99, what do you think of woman&home in terms of value for money?

- Very good ☐ 1 Good ☐ 2 Fair ☐ 3 Poor ☐ 4

16. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about woman&home?

	Agree strongly 1	Agree slightly 2	Disagree slightly 3	No opinion 4
Keeps me up to date with things people are talking about	☐	☐	☐	☐
I trust the information and advice	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am often inspired by the content	☐	☐	☐	☐
Thought-provoking/makes me think	☐	☐	☐	☐
I mainly buy it out of habit	☐	☐	☐	☐
A bit of a treat	☐	☐	☐	☐
Attractively presented	☐	☐	☐	☐
Lots of useful content	☐	☐	☐	☐
Relates to me and my life	☐	☐	☐	☐

17. How much do you agree or disagree with these statements about the fashion and beauty content in woman&home?

	Agree strongly 1	Agree slightly 2	Disagree slightly 3	No opinion 4
Uses models I can relate to	☐	☐	☐	☐
Attractively presented	☐	☐	☐	☐
Lots of clothes I would wear	☐	☐	☐	☐
Items are generally in my price range	☐	☐	☐	☐
Encourages me to try new looks	☐	☐	☐	☐
Suitable for my age group	☐	☐	☐	☐
On trend	☐	☐	☐	☐
Good for advice and tips	☐	☐	☐	☐

18. Overall, how much did you enjoy this issue of woman&home?

- Very much ☐ 1 Quite a lot ☐ 2 Not very much ☐ 3 Not at all ☐ 4

19. Listed below, in page order, are all the articles that appear in this issue of woman&home. For each item please tick the column that comes closest to your opinion. Tick one box per item

Page No	Did not read	Very interesting	Quite interesting	Not very interesting	Not at all interesting
3 Editor's letter	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11 Join the conversation!	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
13 High street heroes	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
15 Best beauty buys	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
17 Mood of the month	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
19 It's all about you!	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
20-23 Fern Britton	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
24-25 Redesign your life	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
26-27 The crystal craze	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
28-29 The physical power of positive thinking	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
31 How I stopped lying and started living	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
32-35 Why we play to win!	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
37 What I've learned	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
38-41 The 'IT' bags that became icons	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
42-44 Who wants to be perfect?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
46-47 Amazing Women Awards 2020	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
48-51 How I find my headspace	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
53 The trip that saved me	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
54-56 My son became my daughter	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
59 The way I am	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
60-62 Help! I don't fancy my husband	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
65 Growing up Greek	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
66-68 Fired up	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
71 Our secret island	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
72-75 Meet the skincare entrepreneurs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
79 Smart with money	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
81 Fashion & Beauty opener	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
82-87 Laid back & luxe	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
88-89 Cheat yourself slim	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
90-92 Yes you can wear stripes!	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
93 20% off Hotter shoes	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
94-97 Look amazing without trying!	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
98-101 Fabulous skin at every age	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
102 Drop a dress size or two from £6.21 a day	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
103 Speed glamour	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
104-106 The truth about beauty sleep	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
107 Enjoy £15 off at elemis.com	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
109 What I really use	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
111 Health & Wellness opener	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
112-113 How you can fight pollution	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
114-115 Are your scales telling the truth?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
117 Medicinal mushrooms	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
119 The power of muscle	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
121 I was crushed by a car and left unable to walk	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
122-123 Your health	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
125 Food, Home & Travel opener	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
126-129 Refresh your home for spring	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
130-134 Blooming lovely	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
135 How to get the look	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
137 Green made easy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
139-145 Welcome to Easter!	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
146-152 Bake it special	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
154-155 Good eggs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
157 Bottoms up!	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
158-163 Literary landscapes	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
164-167 Hidden city gems	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
170-171 April's book club	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
173-174 In conversation with Joanna Trollope	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
175 Book club event this spring	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
176-177 A taste of la dolce vita	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
178-179 w&h weekend	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
180-181 Hot tickets	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
193 Your stars	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
194 Town & Country	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

20. How interested are you in reading about the following health features in woman&home?

	Very interested	Quite interested	Not that interested
	1	2	3
Holistic health	☐	☐	☐
Natural medicines/remedies	☐	☐	☐
Mental health and wellbeing	☐	☐	☐
Healthy recipes	☐	☐	☐
Advice from medical specialists	☐	☐	☐
Diets	☐	☐	☐
Exercise	☐	☐	☐
Men's health	☐	☐	☐
Children's health	☐	☐	☐

C. YOUR LIFESTYLE

21. What do you particularly enjoy doing in your spare time? Tick as many as apply

Animals/pets	☐ 1
Cinema	☐ 2
Concerts/music events	☐ 3
Cooking/baking	☐ 4
Crosswords/puzzles	☐ 5
Days out	☐ 6
Gardening	☐ 7
Gym/exercise class	☐ 8
Home improvements	☐ 9
Knitting/crochet	☐ 0
Reading	☐ X
Sewing	☐ V
Shopping	☐ 1
Social media	☐ 2
Socialising	☐ 3
Spa days/beauty treatments	☐ 4
Theatre	☐ 5
Travel	☐ 6
TV	☐ 7
Volunteering	☐ 8
Walking	☐ 9
Other crafts	☐ 0
Other types of exercise	☐ X

22. Which of the following diets have you tried? And which are you interested in reading about in woman&home?

	Tried	Interested
Slimming World	☐ 1	☐ 1
WW (Weight Watchers)	☐ 2	☐ 2
Fasting (including 5:2)	☐ 3	☐ 3
Meal replacement	☐ 4	☐ 4
Low-carb (including Keto, Paleo)	☐ 5	☐ 5

23. How would you describe the number of changes you've made in order to live a greener lifestyle?

Not many ☐ 1 Quite a few ☐ 2 Quite a lot ☐ 3

D. ABOUT YOU

24. Are you: Female ☐ 1 Male ☐ 2 Prefer not to say ☐ 3

25. Please write in your age last birthday years

26. And now tell us what age you feel! years

27. Do you live:

On your own	☐ 1
With partner only (no children)	☐ 2
With partner and children	☐ 3
With children only (no partner)	☐ 4
Other	☐ 5

28. What is your working status?

Working full-time	☐ 1
Working part-time	☐ 2
Self-employed	☐ 3
Do not work	☐ 4
Retired	☐ 5

29. How would you describe your financial status? Please be honest

Very comfortable	☐ 1
Comfortable	☐ 2
Managing	☐ 3
Struggling a bit	☐ 4
Struggling a lot	☐ 5
Not sure	☐ 6

30. Which of these best describes where you live?

Countryside ☐ 1 Village ☐ 2 Suburban ☐ 3 Urban ☐ 4

31. Please write in your postcode:

Thank you for your time. Please place your completed questionnaire in an envelope, affix the correct postage and return to us by 22 March to: **woman&home Reader Survey, Box 113, 20 Winchcombe Street, Cheltenham GL52 2LY**

If you wish to be entered into our free prize draw, please fill in your name, email address (or your phone number if you don't have email) below. This contact data will only be used for the administration of the prize draw.

Name:

Email address:

Phone number:

SMART *with money*



Faith Archer's top tips on how to spend smarter – and save money – this month



Thrifty trick

With familiar high street names disappearing or facing financial difficulties, a credit card could be your secret weapon. It offers you extra protection, compared with paying by cash, cheque or debit card.

Under section 75 of the Consumer Credit Act, you can claim against the card provider if you don't receive a product or service. This also covers faulty and mis-sold items.

The item needs to cost between £100 and £30,000, but even if you only pay a few pounds of the total by credit card, you could recoup the entire bill. For items worth less than £100, you could claim a refund from the provider under a 'chargeback' scheme, if you used a debit, credit or prepaid card.

TREAT YOURSELF

Fancy picking up big designer brands for tiny prices?

Head for sample sales, with the chance to nab designer labels with 50%, 70% and even 90% off. End-of-season sales typically pop up from now to May and then October to December. I've spotted flash sales by designers including Prada, Givenchy and Kate Spade to more niche brands such as Preen, Bella Freud and Isabel Marant.

Blink and you'll miss them, as they only last a few days. Sign up for alerts from sites such as showcase.co and chicmi.com for mainly London venues, and samplesaleguide.co.uk across the country. Then brace yourself for queues, sharp elbows and a small entrance fee at the most popular places.

This month I'm... buying Easter eggs at the last minute. Supermarket shelves are stacked with tempting offers on goodies for months before 12 April, relying on people stocking up, eating the lot, and coming back for more. But bargains don't save money if you end up forking out twice – so I'm delaying my purchases until just before Easter Sunday!



Need to know

The Bank of Mum and Dad hands out so much money to help children onto the housing ladder that parents have effectively become the UK's 11th biggest mortgage lender, according to Legal & General.

If you want your child or grandchild to get a boost from the Government too, consider giving them money to put in a Lifetime Individual Savings Account (LISA).

Anyone between 18 and 39 can stash away up to £4,000 each tax year, and the Government will add a 25% bonus. The money can then grow untouched by income tax and capital gains tax. Dole it out pronto if you'd like them to nab a bonus of up to £1,000 before this year's £4,000 allowance expires on 5 April. You could contribute again in the new tax year, so they get another grand added for free.

Your child can only use funds in a Lifetime ISA towards their first home worth up to £450,000, or after the age of 60.



“SOMETIMES,
I CAN'T STOP
SCRATCHING”.

NATALIE, UK

2x

MORE RELIEF
FROM ITCHING*



Save 20% on Dermalex

Available at Boots and Boots.com

Valid across Dermalex Eczema, Psoriasis & Acne products. Offer ends: 24th March 2020. Subject to availability. Available at larger Boots stores.

*Only for adult. 6 weeks pruritus data from Koppes, 2016.

Boots
Let's feel good

FASHION & BEAUTY

If you buy one thing this month

TRY A BRIGHT NAIL POLISH

If you want on-trend talons, try a gradient manicure – painting each nail a lighter hue as you work from thumb to pinky. Swap a spring pastel palette for sunset-inspired shades, starting with pale nude through to deep berry. It's the journey through colour that counts, so include cinnamon reds and sunny oranges.

From left: Givenchy Paris Le Vernis Nail Polish in Grenat Initié, £19.50. Sally Hansen Good. Kind. Pure. Vegan Colour in Pomegranate Punch, £8.99. Barry M Gelly Hi Shine Nail Paint in Ginger, £3.99. YSL La Laque Couture Nail Polish in Orange Fusion, £21.50. Leighton Denny Nail Polish in Bon Voyage, £12. Essie Nail Lacquer in Not Just A Pretty Face, £7.99



DENIM UPDATE

Add a feminine touch to a pair of chinos with a pussy bow blouse. Indigo always looks chic teamed with shades of oatmeal and camel.

Cardigan, £69, trousers, £79, both sizes 8-20, Kin at John Lewis & Partners; shirt, £30, sizes 10-32, JD Williams; earrings, £59, Missoma >>

L A I D B A C K & L U X E

Breathe new life into the classics
with spring shades of khaki,
dusty pink and tranquil blue

FASHION EDITOR: HANNAH HUGHES



TIMELESS APPEAL

Everyone should own at least one fabulous white shirt! Invest in one with a twist, such as a pie-crust collar, wrap-over style or subtle shoulder frills, which enhance a classic cut.

Blouse, £185, sizes 8-18, Marc Cain;
trousers, £69, sizes xs-l, Cos; hat,
£12, Asos; necklace, £65, Olivia Burton

MAXIMUM STYLE

Elegant tailoring doesn't just mean trousers – this versatile floor-skimming shirt dress can be dressed up with heels, or paired with trainers for an off-duty look.

Dress, £125, sizes 6-16, Gant;
trainers, £55, Hotter >>





STRIDE OUT

Knitted wide-leg trousers are both comfortable and stylish. Try teaming them with a softly tailored white blazer that instantly smartens up any outfit.

Blazer, £210, sizes s-l, White Label at The White Company; cashmere jumper, £130, sizes xs-xl, Boden; culottes, £79, sizes xs-l, Cos; bag, £24.99, bonprix.co.uk; glasses, £245, alexisamor.com

✧ The w&h fashion team stayed at Heritage Le Telfair Golf & Wellness Resort, Mauritius. Rooms from £105pp per night on a B&B basis; heritageresorts.mu
✧ They flew with Air Mauritius. Direct return flights from £629pp; airmauritius.com



BRIGHT IDEAS

Linen gets a colour makeover this season and this stunning summer suit comes in Caribbean blue or sun-bleached raspberry. Natural fabrics complement linen, so choose woven or tan accessories.

Blazer, £69, trousers, £35, both sizes 6-24, necklace, £9.50, all M&S; top, £69, sizes xs-xl, Kin at John Lewis & Partners; bag, £29.99, Mango



STRIPE OUT

Navy and white don't have to look nautical, as this body-skimming shirt proves. And leaving a longer-length design untucked also makes your body appear longer and leaner.

Shirt, £55, sizes xs-l, Arket; trousers, £44.95, sizes 4-20, Gap; shoes, £295, Russell & Bromley

Cheat YOURSELF SLIM

The key spring buys to help you trim your figure without trying!

Amazing all-in-ones

We can't get enough of the effortless jumpsuit. The bold colour and flattering fit doesn't require anything more than trainers and fun accessories. Roll up the hems to avoid fabric gathering around your ankles, making you appear shorter.



£110, sizes 6-16, **Hush**



PAIR WITH

Scarf, £18, **Oliver Bonas**

Earrings, £5, **Accessorize**

Belt, £36, **Oliver Bonas**

Bag, £17.99, **Mango**



Trainers, £20, **Dorothy Perkins**



£26, sizes 6-22, **F&F Clothing**



£289, sizes 4-18, **Whistles**



£250, sizes 6-22, **Boden**

STYLE TIP
A busy print will disguise any lumps and bumps

The magical midi dress

The secret to looking great is feeling comfortable, which is why we love a midi dress. There are so many designs to choose from, it's easy to find one that suits your shape. If you're curvy, try a wrap-over style to create an hourglass effect, while an empire line that falls from under the bust will skim and conceal your tummy. Highlight a slender waist in a classic belted shirt dress, and look for styles with sleeves to slim your arms.

£150, sizes 6-26, **Studio 8 by Phase Eight**



MICHAEL KORS

Slimming statement skirts

Pencil, A-line, wrap... here's our pick of the best skirts to suit your shape.



Enhance your curves with a pencil skirt.

Jacket, £45; top, model's own; skirt, £28, sizes 10-32; shoes, £25, all **JD Williams**



£22, sizes 10-30, **JD Williams**

Pear shapes look best in an A-line skirt, which will highlight a smaller waist and flare out over the thighs.



£79, sizes 6-18, **Cos**

The wrap skirt is a great all-rounder. They allow the legs to move freely without revealing too much skin.



£69, sizes xs-xl, **& Other Stories**



£25, sizes 6-24, **M&S**



£90, sizes 6-22, **Boden**

Wonderful wide-leg trousers

This design suits all shapes, but is perfect for pears. The width at the bottom helps balance and visually slim the proportions of curvy hips, while highlighting your waist.

PAIR WITH



Necklace, £70, **Olivia Burton**

Jumper, £89, sizes 6-16, **Hush**

Shoes, £75, **Dune London**

Simply genius jeans

Denim is working harder than ever to suit your shape. High-rise styles create the

illusion of longer legs, while sculpting fabrics give a 'nip and tuck'. Lots of these jeans below come with built-in support to shave inches off your thighs and bottom!



Top, £29.50, jeans, £25, both sizes 6-24, **M&S**

STYLE TIP
Look a size smaller in these!



£35, sizes 6-24, **M&S**

Magic Sculpt High Waist Skinny Jeans



£59.95, sizes 2-24, **Gap**

High Rise Cheeky Straight Jeans



£45, sizes 6-26, **Next**

Lift, Slim & Shape Skinny Jeans



£70, sizes 8-24 (4 lengths), **Long Tall Sally**

Wide Leg Jeans

YES you can wear STRIPES

Our resident style guru Amber Graafland shows how this tricky trend can suit all shapes

I can guarantee you won't get much further into this season without seeing stripes. Most women find them like Marmite, you either love them or loathe them, and the fashion industry is nothing short of obsessed with them. Every year the classic Breton top is wheeled out by the high street retailers and we're reminded we simply can't live without one.

However, you've probably discovered by now that stripes aren't always easy to wear. In reality it doesn't matter how stylish they're deemed to be, a giant horizontal stripe across your bust, tummy or thighs can be somewhat unforgiving. Horizontal stripes draw the eye outwards, making things appear wider than they really are – and I have yet to meet many women who want to look bigger.

So the key to successful horizontal stripes is to only wear them on a body part you're happy to draw attention to/your best asset/slimmest point – delete as applicable.

The good news is, vertical stripes can elongate your



FROM
RUNWAY
TO YOU

figure when worn in the right places. One stripe down the side of a pair of tailored trousers, for example, will do wonders for slimming legs.

The other important factor is to choose the right fabrics to flatter your shape. Think elegant tailoring rather than cling. In other words, unless you're a Kardashian, stripy Lycra is to be avoided at all costs.



Holzer dress, £250, sizes 6-18, Fern snakeskin shoes, £195, both LK Bennett

1 CLEVER CONTOURING

Horizontal lines add unwanted width, which is why larger-busted women tend to avoid them. But mismatched stripes, or a mix of slanted and angular stripes, can be used to create a clever contouring effect that reduces curves. The angled lines on this dress, combined with the V-neck line, are perfect for minimising big boobs. So placed strategically, stripes can have a rather fabulous slimming effect.

Lola jersey dress, £55, sizes 6-22, in petite, regular or long, Boden

2 LONGER LEGS – AT ONCE!

There's a very good reason we all went mad for side-stripe trousers last season. The continuous vertical line makes your legs look longer and who, apart from supermodels, doesn't want that? So this summer you may want to invest in a pair of all-over print trousers – because more stripes equal more slimming benefit. There's nothing not good about these, in fact they should probably be made standard issue.

Olive stripe trousers, £29.99, sizes 8-24, Sustainable Collection at bonprix.co.uk

3 THE INSTANT UPDATE

The easiest way to wear any trend is simply to add a statement accessory. It's the oldest trick in the book and is perennially popular because it works every time. So if you're a lover of stripes and want a quick and easy

2

style hack, this LK Bennett clutch really is a no-brainer. It will lift even the plainest of outfits and falls neatly into what we love to call the 'timeless classic' territory, making it the perfect investment piece.

Lucia stripy clutch, £125, LK Bennett

4 BLAZE OF GLORY

A tailored cotton jacket is a summer wardrobe staple, possessing the superpower to make any outfit look instantly chic. Everyone looks good in a blazer, it goes with everything and you can dress it up, down or any which way you choose. This double-breasted gem from Mango has certainly earned its stripes – from the vertical lines elongating the body, to the fine stripe preventing you from looking like Michael Keaton in *Beetlejuice* – snap one up now and you'll be wearing it for years to come.

Fine stripe vertical stripe blazer, £59.99, sizes 6-14, Mango

4

5 THE THIN BLUE LINE

The general rule for stripes is the broader they are, the more they will appear to widen and draw the eye outwards. However, if the stripes are narrow, they draw the eye upwards, which elongates and has a slimming effect. So bear that in mind when investing in that classic Breton tee – it's all about flattering fine lines, not big, bold, chunky stripes. This version from J.Crew is pretty much perfect in every way, and fits all dress sizes too.

Striped top, £44, sizes xxs-xxxl, J.Crew >>

5

6 THE BUY-ME BLOUSE

Same rules apply here. Vertical stripes = long, lean torso. It's also the ideal blouse for anyone with a large bust who wants to detract attention away from it. This adorable *Little Women*-inspired blouse is romantic enough for you to indulge your deepest feminine urge, without verging on the theatrical. Team with a denim skirt for maximum style points.

Ruffled collar cotton poplin shirt, £150, sizes 4-16, Ganni

7 IT'S A WRAP

So the search for the perfect floaty summer midi skirt ends here. Meet Gracie – a flirty stripy creation from Rixo – the label everyone is coveting right now. This will not only make you look longer and leaner thanks to the vertical stripe, but the wrap effect allows it to move and even show a bit of leg if you fancy. It's a sassy summer number that's well worth splashing out on. Pair with a crisp white shirt or simple T-shirt and you'll be all set for this summer, and for years to come.

Gracie two-stripe wrap skirt, £225, sizes 6-16, Rixo

8 MEET YOUR NEW BEST FRIEND

We all need a bit of extra support now and then. But if the idea of the traditional squeeze-it-all-in body control undies makes you shudder, this will make you think again. Instead of sucking you in



7



8



9

10



and making you all hot and bothered, Heist's body is on the less brutal side of the slimming spectrum and still allows you to breathe! Just the thing for creating a streamlined silhouette underneath a stripy dress or top. It also happens to look good and is incredibly comfortable. You're welcome.

The Outer Body, £95, sizes xs-xl, available in black, brown and beige, heist-studios.com

9 ALL IN THE MIX

While the main rule of stripe club is not to wear them head-to-toe, you might want to break it for this amazing trench coat. This chic design is reversible, making it a hard-working two-in-one coat that allows you to dial the stripes up or down depending on your mood. The more subtle version offers flattering striped panels down the side, while the full-on option on the reverse is ideal if you want to really make a statement.

Candis reversible stripe belted trench, £160, sizes 6-16, French Connection

10 YOUR STYLE SAVIOUR

An amazing pair of shades is the secret weapon in the bottom of your handbag. Great sunglasses will redeem any outfit and make you look polished. I'd go so far as to say when you wear these, all your problems will fade away. OK maybe not all of them, but you'll certainly be able to stride out with confidence. Yes, some things really are that easy.

Oversized cat-eye sunglasses, £235, Gucci

reader offer

20% OFF Hotter shoes

Treat yourself to some stylish new season footwear



The new season footwear and accessories collection at Hotter has arrived and promises to be one of its best spring/summer ranges yet!

Thoughtfully designed and expertly crafted in the UK, Hotter's latest offering is vivacious, energetic and full of the joys of life, with a renewed palette of delicate pastels, shimmering metallics and understated neutrals.

We all know that style is only part of what makes amazing shoes; a pair of beautiful shoes is pointless if you have to compromise on comfort. Hotter's dedicated footwear designers ensure that their shoes feel as good as they look, with hidden comfort features integrated into every pair, a wide selection of whole and half sizes, four width fittings and clever adjustable fastenings for the perfect precision fit.

Hotter also offers a free personal shoe fitting service across its network of over 70 stores, where fully trained Fit Experts will measure your feet and advise you on which styles will fit you like a glove. You can also speak to a trained adviser on the phone for help on sizing and styles.

TERMS & CONDITIONS

*Promotional offers must be quoted at the time of placing an order and cannot be applied retrospectively or used in conjunction with any other offer unless this has been specified separately. Shoe care products, discounted products (including sale and clearance), Limited Edition shoes (RHS and Marie Curie), and orders under the value of £25 are excluded from promotional offers. Offer ends 31 March 2020. For full terms & conditions, see www.hotter.com/gb/en/info/TermsConditions#promotions

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LOOK AMAZING without trying!

Four readers show how simple tricks and tips are the secret to effortless style

BE BRAVE

Corrienne, 53, lives in Hertfordshire and works as an office manager.

While it's great to have a signature style, it can be fun to try something new.

A jumpsuit might feel like a bold choice but it's surprisingly easy to wear and suits most figures too.



Bold lilac calls for minimal accessories, so stick to classic cream.



Scene-stealing outerwear is a worthwhile investment. This trench coat is perfect for special occasions, but also ideal for every day, paired with jeans.

This utility-inspired design would also look great dressed down with trainers.



Jumpsuit, £69.95, sizes 4-18, Gap; coat, £298, sizes 6-16, Anthropologie x Delpozo; boots, £139, Mint Velvet; bag, £125, French Connection; earrings, £14.99, necklace, £27.99, both Pilgrim; bracelet, £34.95, Seolgold.com; rings, £75 and £79, Stellar 79

ADD A TWIST

Marion, 62, lives in Kent and works as a customer host.

Coat, £180, sizes 8-24, Long Tall Sally; jumper, £79, sizes xs-xl, Hush; trousers, £35, sizes 6-22, M&S; shoes, £98, Boden; bag, £65, Dune; earrings, £41.99, Anna-nina.nl; burgundy ring (left hand), £31, Les Georgettes, and Marion's own; rings (right hand), from £59, all Stellar 79



real fashion

You get two coats for the price of one with this clever reversible design. Simply switch from pink to red according to your mood or outfit!



Roll the cuffs and pop the collar up to show off the clashing colours.



Don't play it safe – sporty stripes and classic checks might seem like an unexpected pairing, but they work well together. The trick is to keep the second print simple and tonal. >>



Try a mini bag in a contrasting shade to make an on-trend style statement.

A VERSATILE DRESS

Sarah, 52, lives in Essex and ran mum and baby groups.



Don't be afraid to team 'tough' accessories with feminine pieces. These chunky boots provide a nice contrast and help make this statement print work as daywear.



Every wardrobe needs one of these. Stylish, comfortable and flattering, simply swap your accessories according to the occasion and you're good to go.

Dress, £265, sizes 6-16, Rixo; jacket, £65, sizes 8-20, J by Jasper Conran at Debenhams; boots, £79, M&S; bag, £50, Vagabond.com; earrings, £50.99, Anna-nina.nl; necklace, £27.95, rings, £24.95 and £22.95, all Seolgold.com

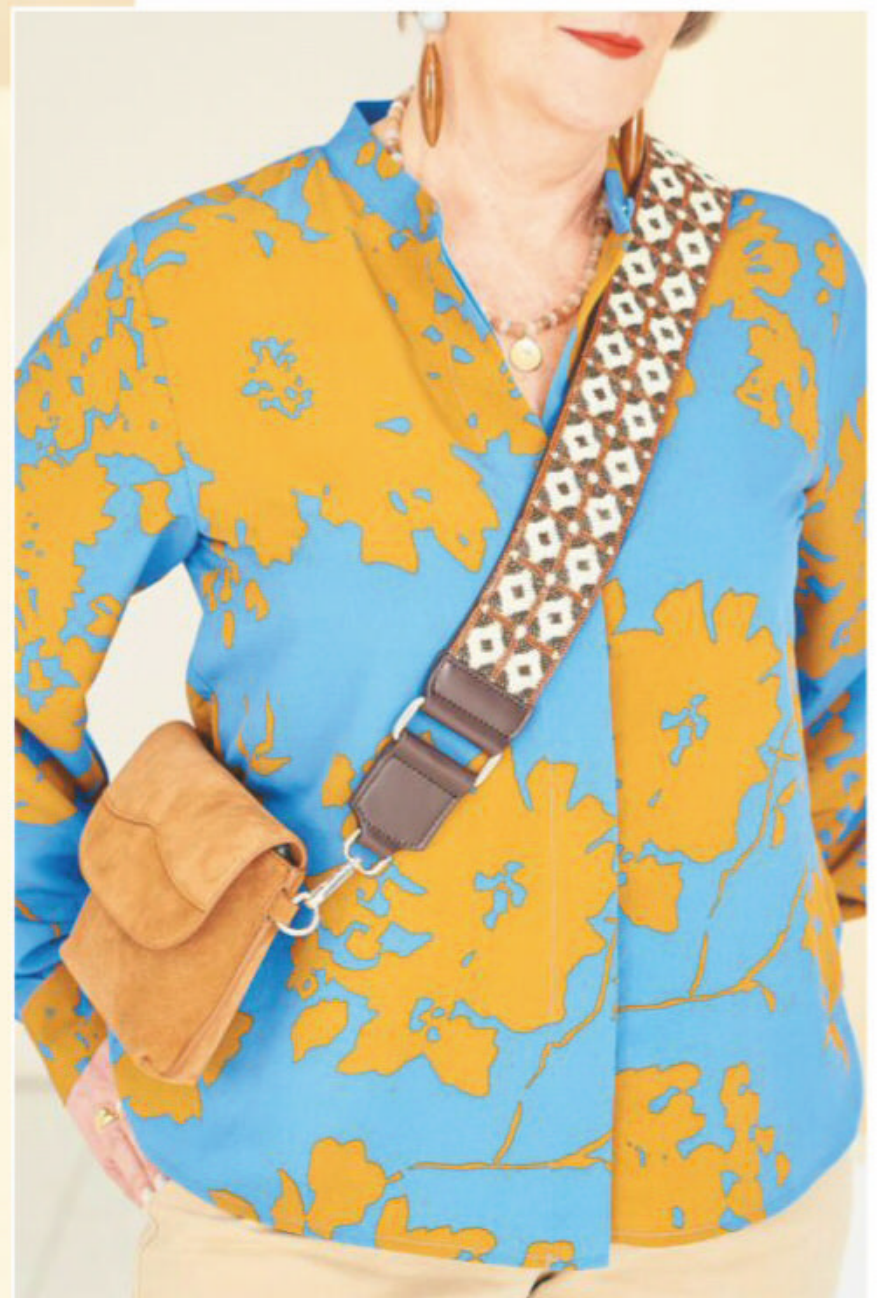
HAVE FUN WITH ACCESSORIES

Elaine, 60, lives in Norwich and works as a matron at a prep school



Statement jewellery is a speedy and effective way to boost any outfit and make you feel fabulous!

Go hands-free with a cross-body bag. This one is stylish and practical – we love the contrast of the beaded strap against the vibrant shirt.



Liven up classic chinos with a striking pair of shoes and clash with a bold printed blouse.

Top, £55, sizes 8-16, Selected Femme at John Lewis & Partners; trousers, £44.95, sizes 2-24, Gap; sandals, £90, Steve Madden at Asos; bag, £59.99, Zara; earrings, £12.50, M&S; necklace, £105, Lola Rose; bracelet, £69, Les Georgettes; ring (right hand), £24.95, Seolgold.com

Fabulous SKIN at every age

Charley Williams-Howitt reveals the best beauty routine for your 40s, 50s, 60s and beyond

40

It's now when the signs of ageing start to become more obvious, in fact it almost feels like lines appear overnight. Leading facialist Sarah Chapman says, 'Levels of collagen, which keeps skin firm, and elastin, which keeps skin bouncing back,

start to deplete, resulting in visible wrinkles.'

But all hope is not lost! If you haven't used line-softening wonder product retinol before, now's the time to start. Begin with a low dose, two days on, two days off, and use it at night, wearing an SPF in the day, because skin will be more sensitive.

This is also the decade that skin starts to appear thinner and its naturally protective barrier, lipids, are not as pronounced, which can lead to dehydration. Elemis co-founder Noella Gabriel recommends using products that support skin's natural collagen, increase elastin production and replenish lost moisture.

It's likely at this stage in your life you are always pushed for time and juggling commitments. This too can take its toll on your skin, making it appear dull and jaded. Up your exfoliation to three times a week, using an alpha-hydroxy acid peel to encourage cell turnover and reveal a brighter complexion. >>



BOOST COLLAGEN

+ ELEMIS Pro-Collagen Marine Cream, £87, John Lewis & Partners

+ Paula's Choice Resist Anti-Aging 10% AHA Exfoliant, £35, lookfantastic.com

+ SkinCeuticals Retinol 0.3, £55, lookfantastic.com

beauty in-depth



50+

It's very likely this decade will bring the biggest skin upheaval since your teenage years – thanks to seismic hormonal shifts that can cause all sorts of side effects. 'You lose a third of your collagen within the first five years of the menopause,' reveals Sarah, 'and with it, your skin's bounceback, moisture and glow.'

Noella adds, 'There is also a reduction in the communication between the epidermis, the outermost layer of skin, and the dermis – the layer of living tissue below the epidermis – meaning skin has less structure and strength.'

Honestly speaking, only surgery will completely iron out deep lines and wrinkles. But the good news is, there are numerous clever firming and sculpting products to boost your skin. Look for ingredients including plant stem cells that will help to combat loss of density. If your skin begins to feel parched, invest in an emollient-rich moisturiser or product containing hyaluronic acid – which holds 1,000 times its weight in water – and will instantly plump your skin, reduce dryness and restore a youthful luminosity.

PLUMP LINES

- + L'Oréal Paris Revitalift Filler Hyaluronic Acid Replumping Serum, £19.99, Boots
- + Clarins Nutri-Lumière Treatment Essence, £55, clarins.co.uk
- + Clinique Repairwear Uplifting Firming Cream, £58, John Lewis & Partners



70+

We all want our skin to look radiant, healthy and plump, irrespective of our age, and the good news is, this is achievable. Start by boosting your natural oils and you'll quickly see a difference. Choose effective, yet gentle products made from natural ingredients. Use skincare free from irritants, additives and fragrances, to replenish lost moisture and encourage radiance. Plus, most importantly, it's kind to your skin. You'll get your glow back in no time. If you've noticed the skin around your eyes looks thinner and drier, invest in a good eye cream and use it religiously morning and night to keep the area looking supple, protected and less puffy.

IMPROVE HYDRATION

+ Kiehl's Pure Vitality Skin Renewing Cream, £52, John Lewis & Partners + Vichy Mineral 89 Eyes Hyaluronic Acid Eye Fortifier, £19.95, Superdrug + Garnier Organic Lavandin Smooth & Glow Facial Oil, £11.99, Superdrug



woman&home IT'S ALL ABOUT YOU! 101

60+

The secret to amazing skin over 60 is simple – learn how to massage your face and neck. It can help counteract your skin losing elasticity, thinning and even reduce weak muscle tone. You don't have to use any expensive creams or oils, just use some entry-level products with this simple technique. Starting from your décolletage, use your lotion of choice and smooth it onto your skin in long, diagonal strokes upwards to tone and lift. Continue upwards until you reach your hairline. Practised every day, you'll notice positive results in a couple of weeks. If hyperpigmentation – brown patches, marks, splotches – are your bugbear, you can now fade and prevent by wearing a SPF all year round. Team with a vitamin C serum, which is a powerful antioxidant to help prevent uneven skin tone. If vertical lip lines, often triggered by smoking and UV exposure, are causing you concern, look for a topical 'filler' to smooth, hydrate and plump the area.

TONE UP

+ No7 Protect & Perfect Intense Advanced Facial Suncare SPF50+, £11.25, Boots
+ PIXI Vitamin-C Serum, £26, Boots
+ PRAI Ageless Lip Line Filler, £25, M&S



W&H OFFER

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SKINCARE
SPECIAL

Speed glamour

Meet the make-up/skincare hybrids that perfect, protect and cut your beauty routine in half

1 Make sun protection easy with **Sensai Silky Bronze Anti-ageing Sun Protective Compact SPF30, £43**. Its radiance boosting, glide-on coverage is housed in a handy compact.

2 Create a smooth finish and stop your make-up from sliding down your face by 3pm with **Laura Mercier Pure Canvas Primer Perfecting, £32**. Packed with antioxidants, this is the ultimate skin perfector.

3 Invest in **RevitaLash Double-Ended Volume Set, £29**, a volumising primer and mascara in one. It strengthens and hydrates for dramatically longer, fuller lashes.

4 The correct foundation works as a canvas for the rest of your make-up. **Caudalie Vinopperfect Radiance Tinted Moisturiser, £27**, blends skin-plumping hyaluronic acid with complexion-

correcting pigments. It's the perfect way to cheat a flawless look.

5 Fearful of bright lipstick smearing? **Clarins Joli Rouge Lipstick, £22**, in Papaya, Joli Rouge and Pop Pink, are pretty, flattering shades that give an intense colour shot that lasts. Plus, the super-hydrating formula feels comfortable to wear and won't bleed into lip lines.

6 Loss of volume around the mouth is one of the earliest signs of ageing, while smooth, plump lips signal youth. **Charlotte Tilbury Collagen Lip Bath in Pillow Talk, £25**, not only drenches your lips in a glossy, super-flattering shade, but the plumping qualities of mustard sprout extract gives your lips some oomph too.

7 If your skin has been robbed of its glow, reach for **Pixi +C Vit Glow-y Powder, £14**. A combination of vitamin C and a pretty sheeny powder creates a natural flush on your cheeks.



The truth about beauty SLEEP

SKINCARE
SPECIAL

Fiona McKim
reveals how to
make it last longer,
work harder
and fake it when
eight hours isn't
an option

Your whole body kicks into repair mode when you switch off, skin included. New cells are created and old ones shed, excess fluid is drained and toxins are broken down. And naturally, the more time there is to do this the better. Your circadian rhythm – body clock – is wired to work through the night, so poor sleep means incomplete tasks. Fluid is retained and becomes puffiness, toxins surface as dark circles and natural moisture is lost though an unrestored skin barrier. And hormones play a part too.

Protein-building human growth hormone is produced during a good night's sleep, while the stress hormone cortisol is released after a bad one. 'Not getting enough sleep can trigger a response from your adrenal gland that leads to the overproduction of sebum, clogging pores and causing blemishes,' confirms dermatologist and skincare founder Dr Murad.

This may all sound bleak as being tired is rarely a choice, but with a little knowledge (from us!) comes the power to make the most of your beauty sleep, no matter how much you're getting.

Which products should I sleep in?

Tailor your night-time regime to your skin's needs and make the most of natural repair by wearing your most active skincare to bed.

✦ Start with a really good cleanse, so everything absorbs properly. **SkinCeuticals Glycolic Cleanser, £30**, exfoliates dead skin as it dissolves make-up and grime. If you're sensitive try **Curél Foaming Facial Wash, £12.50**, a soft mousse with ceramides to strengthen the skin barrier.

✦ Every expert's favourite ingredient – retinol – works best at night, as it's destabilised by UV light. 'Retinol is a fantastic active, increasing skin cell turnover while the body is in its resting state,' agrees cosmetic surgeon Dr Jonquille Chantrey. **Murad Retinol Youth Renewal Night Cream, £70**, combines slow-release retinol with picolinamide, which helps deliver the retinol into skin.

✦ 'For spots, look out for salicylic acid, which helps control sebum,' says Skin Lounge director Rachel Huskinson. We

recommend **The Ordinary Salicylic Acid 2% Solution, £4.20**.

✦ Tired and skin looking dull? **L'Oréal Laser Glycolic Acid Ampoules, £24.99**, is a potent seven-day peel course to shift dead cells.

✦ And if you tend to wake up with skin that feels dry or tight, look for night creams that prevent water loss. New **It Cosmetics Confidence In Your Beauty Sleep, £43**, combines jojoba oil, pore-clearing salicylic and exfoliating lactic acid in a glossy cream. >>

Over 50?

According to The Sleep Council, our sleep patterns shift at this age, so expect more brief awakenings in the night, less of a drop in body temperature during sleep, and a growing preference for earlier bed and waking-up times.

Three effective overnight masks

Soothe

Sleep loss can lead to skin inflammation. Slather this on after a late night and let the cannabis sativa seed oil and aloe soothe and quench your face.

Botanics Simply Calm Hydrating Overnight Mask, £11.99



Energise

This leave-on gel has a skin-strengthening peptide that works specifically at night to energise cells and fight environmental damage.

Indeed Labs In-Circadian Night Mask, £19.99

Hydrate

A little wonder that packs in four types of hyaluronic acid to hold in moisture, plus cacay oil and phytic acid, a mild exfoliant that's high in antioxidants.

Naya Overnight Hydration Mask, £30





*Almost three-quarters (74%) of Brits sleep less than seven hours per night**

YOUR SLEEP-WELL KIT

+ Experts agree that the bedroom should be for sleep, sex and not much else, so the new **This Works Love Sleep Pillow Spray, £30**,

is a sensual update on their clinically proven sleep mists, with ylang-ylang and patchouli.

+ **Crabtree & Evelyn's** new The Gardeners Sleep Collection includes the aromatic **Falling Stars Body & Hair Overnight Oil, £27**, and **Star Showers Tea, £22.50**, which together make a deeply de-stressing night-time ritual.

+ Studies show that a warm bath and subsequent drop in

body temperature tells your circadian rhythm that it's bedtime. Ramp up the relaxation with **Rituals The Ritual of**

Jing Bath Crystals, £13.90,

made with muscle-soothing magnesium and lavender.

+ Finally, finding the right temperature is crucial for sleep and the **Nanu Hot&Not Duvet, from £50**, will settle any disputes with your other half over what that is. Visit nanusleep.co.uk, pick a warmth level for each side, from 4.5 to 15 tog, and your customised split-weight duvet will be delivered to your door.



HOW TO FAKE EIGHT HOURS

+ **111Skin Sub-Zero De-Puffing Eye Mask, £12**

Keep this on standby in the fridge! The energising peptides and brightening red algae extract are encased in a cool gel patch.

+ **Dior Capture Totale High Performance Treatment Serum-Lotion, £59**

A hi-tech treatment that re-energises stem cells. Press into skin before your usual day cream for instant hydration and glow.

+ **Soaper Duper Zesty Sicilian Lemon Body Wash, £7.50**

Don't underestimate the power of shower gel. This is zingy, pleasingly foamy and will give you an effective boost, along with a blast of cold water.

+ **Bobbi Brown Instant Full Cover Concealer, £24**

If all else fails, conceal. This will cover the deepest dark circles, plus any redness, and has a perky, light-reflecting finish.

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TERMS AND CONDITIONS

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Cancel THE CLINIC

If you're looking for clinically proven, line-reducing skincare, look no further than No7's most targeted serum

We all want different things from our skincare, but there's one thing we're unanimous on: we want it to work. Beauty is not the place for broken promises; whatever skin issue we're tackling, we want to see results, and no more so than when it comes to reducing the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles. But without booking in to the nearest reputable clinic, what should we be looking for to really make a difference in our skincare routines?

Enter No7 Laboratories LINE CORRECTING Booster Serum. The brand's most targeted serum yet, it's also the most powerful. As Dr Mike Bell, Head of Science Research for No7 explains, 'The result of many years of scientific research into skin ageing, it contains our highest concentration of Matrixyl 3000 Plus™, No7's powerful age-defying peptide blend.' The

groundbreaking technology supports the skin's natural springs, providing elasticity and bounce, which depletes as we age; users have seen such impressive results that No7 has gained cult status for successfully reducing the appearance of telltale lines – with many saying you have to see it to believe it.

It's not only the active ingredients that make the product special. Both the formula and packaging have been designed so that you can apply the product directly to wrinkles, allowing you to give lines an intense dose of smoothing power exactly where you want it – so not a drop is wasted. What's

more, you can also add one or two drops to your chosen eye cream, moisturiser or foundation for an extra boost.

Boasting universal appeal, the serum leaves no line unplumped; it has proven efficacy on six key areas*, so whether you're looking to treat your forehead, crow's feet, lip, under-eyes, between the brows or nasolabial folds (the lines from your nose to the corners of your mouth), this is the targeted treatment that does it all. In fact, in clinical studies the product was proven to reduce the appearance of wrinkles by up to five years – so if you're looking for skincare that keeps its word, this is it.

No7 Laboratories LINE CORRECTING Booster Serum, £38, 15ml, is available at Boots.

No7 Only at
Boots

*TESTED ON 98 WOMEN IN A CONSUMER STUDY OVER 8 WEEKS.

Trinny Woodall

She is best known for her no-nonsense attitude on cult fashion show *What Not to Wear*. But these days, Trinny's a social media superstar, with more than 500,000 followers on Instagram, where she shares videos about style, skin and make-up advice. She launched her Trinny London make-up brand in 2017 after spotting a gap in the market, encouraging customers to swap bulky make-up bags for curated 'stacks' of high-tech cosmetics.



What I REALLY USE

The stylist and skincare expert, 55, shares her beauty wisdom

MY HAIR HERO

Hair by Sam McKnight Lazy Girl Dry Shampoo, £19, Net-a-porter.com

I always get my frizzy hair blow-dried, so I need something to zhoosh it when it gets a little flat. I love this product, but use it as a texturising spray, not as a dry shampoo.



MY GO-TO INGREDIENTS

DCL C Scape High Potency Night Booster 30, £108, Space NK

A retinol and vitamin C serum helps rebuild collagen. I alternate a prescription retinol called Tretinoin with this vitamin C night booster to keep my skin plump.



MY CULT BODY BUY

Ameliorate Transforming Body Lotion, £14.50, Space NK

Exfoliating helps products sink into your skin better. This both exfoliates and hydrates, and leaves my complexion fresh, glowing and soft. It's a good price too.



MY LOOK-GOOD SECRET

Trinny London Flush Blush Blusher, £20, trinnylondon.com

I want women to look and feel good, and a bit of blush really gives life to your skin, even when you're tired!



MY AT-HOME SALON TREATMENT

Boost Hydrogel Face Mask, £42 for a pack of 3, Net-a-porter.com

I've been using these masks with The Light Salon Boost Advanced LED Mask, £395, for the past year. My skin is brighter and more hydrated. Pricy but worth it – they leave me glowing.



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Save up to 50%! Plus, Book by 31 Mar and get 6 free bottles of wine!*



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Cruise Itinerary	Days	Departure Port	Date	Ship	Full Fare Was	Saver Fare From
Best of Norway & Scottish Isles	10	Dundee†	14 Jun	Magellan	£1,479	£889
River Seine Experience	9	Greenock	23 Jun	Magellan	£1,759	£969
Fjordland Wonders	10	Greenock	1 Jul	Magellan	£1,479	£819
Round Britain & River Seine Experience	14	Greenock†	10 Jul	Magellan	£2,029	£1,019
Baltic Treasures & St Petersburg	15	Hull	26 Jul	Marco Polo	£2,169	£1,309
Majestic Fjordland	9	Hull	9 Aug	Marco Polo	£1,669	£1,009
Iceland, the Land of Ice & Fire	13	Hull	17 Aug	Marco Polo	£1,949	£1,079
Round Britain & River Seine Experience	12	Liverpool	12 Jul	Magellan	£1,799	£899
Iceland & Faroes	13	Liverpool	23 Jul	Magellan	£1,959	£1,079
Spain, Portugal & Morocco	13	Liverpool	4 Aug	Magellan	£2,589	£1,559
Majestic Fjordland	11	Liverpool	16 Aug	Magellan	£1,599	£879

Cruise Itinerary	Days	Departure Port	Date	Ship	Full Fare Was	Saver Fare From
Whitsun Fjords Cruise	8	Tilbury	26 May	Columbus	£1,279	£769
Grand British Isles Discovery	12	Tilbury	8 May	Columbus	£1,849	1,019
North Cape & Spitsbergen Adventure	17	Tilbury	7 Jun	Marco Polo	£2,479	£1,369
British Isles Midsummer Discovery	12	Tilbury	16 Jun	Columbus	£3,319	£1,999
Hidden Baltic Treasures & Kiel Canal	12	Tilbury	23 Jun	Marco Polo	£1,749	£969
Iceland & Northern Isles	13	Tilbury	27 Jun	Columbus	£3,339	£2,009
British Isles Discovery	11	Tilbury	9 Jul	Columbus	£1,859	£1,119
Majestic Fjordland	8	Tilbury	19 Jul	Columbus	£1,429	£789
Baltic Cities & St Petersburg	15	Tilbury	26 Jul	Columbus	£2,579	£1,549
Iceland & Northern Isles	13	Tilbury	9 Aug	Columbus	£1,959	£1,079
Summertime in the Fjords	8	Tilbury	21 Aug	Columbus	£1,129	£629

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HEALTH & WELLNESS

If you try one thing this month

EAT FIGS

Jane Clarke is a dietitian and founder of Nourish by Jane Clarke (nourishbyjaneclarke.com). She says:

'Swap your chocolate fix for dried figs. They're rich in magnesium, which helps to relax muscles, encouraging us to wind down at the end of the day and sleep better. Their famous gut-moving properties keep your body in balance too.'

'If you don't like figs, there are other ways to add more magnesium to your diet. Nuts, seeds and dark green leafy veg are all rich in the mineral, so an oatcake with almond butter, or a few kale crisps will do the trick too.'

'And for a final wind-down moment, have a milky drink, as it's also rich in soothing magnesium. Warm milk with cinnamon on top will help you relax so you're ready to nod off.'





HOW YOU CAN **FIGHT** pollution

Clean air is increasingly hard to come by,
so what can we do to stay healthy?

Could the air you inhale be harming your health? According to the Royal College of Physicians*, air pollution is responsible for around 40,000 deaths a year in the UK. 'Air pollution is a known cause of lung cancer and is connected to heart disease, stroke, diabetes and changes in the brain linked to dementia,' says Professor Stephen Holgate, RCP's adviser on air quality. Other chronic health conditions, such as asthma,

bronchial diseases and skin problems, are also triggered by exposure to pollutants. And for children, the elderly and those with existing respiratory conditions, pollution is a major concern, states Dr Nick Hopkinson, medical director at the British Lung Foundation. With pollution levels in many parts of the country regularly exceeding the World Health Organization's safety guidelines, try these tips to help you swerve the damage...

The particle problem

So, what is it about air pollution that's so toxic? Gases and particle pollution, known as 'particulate matter' – or PM, is the issue, explains Professor Holgate.

This airborne material is a mix of carbon emissions from vehicles and the burning of fossil fuels, soot, windblown dust, sand and sea salt, and tiny specks of rubber and metals. PM10 is large particulate matter and the finer, more harmful particles are measured as PM2.5. 'These can penetrate deep into the lungs and potentially enter the bloodstream,' warns Dr Hopkinson. Breathing this on a high-pollution day has a short-term impact, but it's possible to be affected by low levels over a long period of time.

DID YOU KNOW?

Urban planners are now creating green zones, tree avenues and hedge walls that act as 'vegetation barriers', to block the flow and speed of noxious gases from vehicles.

Keep dirty air out

In pollution hotspots, shut the windows when indoors – or driving. An air purifier will clean up the immediate air that you inhale. The most effective ones have a HEPA filter to remove PM2.5 particles, but using one with a carbon filter will combat vehicle gases too. Try Philips AC2889/60 air purifier in the home, £399.99, John Lewis & Partners, and pop the Autowit Fresh 2 Air Purifier in your car, £61.14, autowit.com

Have a health check

As air pollution often can't be seen, many people are unaware of its dangers. 'There's growing evidence linking it to more common conditions, such as bronchitis and pneumonia. On days when air pollution levels spike, so do the number of people seeking medical attention,' says Dr Hopkinson. See your GP at once if you're experiencing breathing difficulties.

Be air aware

Track the pollution levels in your area. Visit uk-air.defra.gov.uk, or call Defra's air pollution hotline on 0800 55 66 77. On days that show a high-level warning, limit outdoor strenuous activity and, unless you're wearing a heavy-duty gas mask with carbon filter, covering your nose and mouth won't keep you safe.

Minimise exposure

While it might sound obvious, avoiding busy roads when walking will help. 'Take the back streets instead,' advises Professor Martin Williams, air quality scientist and clean air champion for UK Research and Innovation (UKRI). Even retreating a few metres from the kerb can reduce your exposure. Joggers and dog walkers can potentially cut exposure to nitrogen dioxide by 50%, by mapping out a 'clean' route through parks and side roads.

Urban vs rural life

With its 'Big Smoke' nickname, it's no shock that London is home to the highest concentration of PM in the UK. 'Vehicles are a significant source of nitrogen oxides so higher concentrations of it are usually found in urban zones,' says Claire Reeves, Professor of Atmospheric Science at University of East Anglia. 'But they can also be high in rural areas along busy commuter roads, especially when congested. Curiously, ozone pollution levels are often higher in rural areas too.' Warm and wind-free weather conditions also make it worse.

BOOST YOUR DEFENCES

Maintaining a diet rich in antioxidants fortifies the body against pollution damage.

✚ **Vitamin E** Research has found an association between vitamin E levels, exposure to particulate pollution and lung function, suggesting it plays a protective role. Find it in nuts, seeds, avocado, dark green leafy veg, oily fish and olive oil.

✚ **Vitamin C** 'In a study, asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) sufferers who had low levels of vitamin C, experienced an increased risk of breathing issues on days when air pollution levels were high,' says nutritionist Rob Hobson. Rich sources include peppers, citrus fruits, berries, kiwi fruit, broccoli, peas, kale and tomatoes.

✚ **Beta-carotene** It can help mop up excess free radicals caused by air pollution. Go for carrots, sweet potato, butternut squash, mango, cantaloupe melon, orange peppers, dried apricots and dark green leafy veg.

✚ **Omega 3** A study found that omega 3 fatty acids delivered a 30-50% reduction in damage associated with air pollution. Eat more oily fish, dark green leafy veg, seeds, quinoa and nuts, or top up with a supplement, such as Healthspan Veg-Omega 3, £7.95 for 30 capsules.

3 WAYS TO CUT YOUR CONTRIBUTION

The Government's Clean Air Strategy aims to slash air pollution by 46% in the next 10 years. In the meantime, make small changes:

1 **TWEAK YOUR TRAVEL HABITS** 'Walk or cycle instead of using a car,' says Professor Williams. 'If you do drive, choose a clean model and go easy on your right foot.'

2 **WATCH YOUR WASTE** Recycling and composting food minimises emissions.

3 **BE ENERGY EFFICIENT** 'Make sure your house is insulated and wear a sweater rather than turn up the heating,' says Professor Williams. 'And avoid wood burners – they create harmful particulates.'

A close-up photograph of a person's feet standing on a white and grey digital weighing scale. The person is wearing grey leggings. The background is a blurred indoor setting.

Are your SCALES TELLING THE TRUTH?

ACCURACY FACTOR

'One of the problems with home scales is knowing whether they are accurate,' says the BDA's Marcela Fiuza. 'Look for a respected brand and do your research. Find out how their accuracy has been validated.' She also recommends focusing on progress rather than numbers, which may not tell the whole story.

Weighing yourself may not be as helpful as you think. Now there are savvier ways to track your progress

After embarking on a diet or fitness regime, nothing feels more of a success than seeing the number on the scales drop. But when that figure won't budge or, worse, goes up, it can feel hopeless. As it turns out, however, not only can weighing ourselves be demoralising, it may be misleading.

MORE THAN A NUMBER
If jumping on the scales has become a habit, you're not alone. Many people get fixated by the number on theirs, when what they need to do is change their body shape and health, advises dietitian Marcela Fiuza, a spokesperson for the British Dietetic Association (BDA). Exercising regularly and eating more

healthily will help you visibly lose fat and gain muscle, but this might not always translate to the scales. 'Since muscle weighs more than fat, your number on the scales might not change as much as you expect. If that is the only way you are measuring your progress, it can be misleading,' says Marcela. Your weight can also fluctuate as a result of

GETTING THE MOST FROM SMART MONITORS

Stick to the same machine and take a measurement every four or eight weeks. 'Keep the variables the same; same day, same time and, ideally, the same point in your menstrual cycle. Avoid using straight after exercising, which can affect accuracy,' says Alastair Crew, head trainer at David Lloyd. Also use with caution. 'If you're prone to worrying about weight, a smart scale gives more numbers to obsess over and could potentially make the problem worse,' warns Dr Joanna Silver, a therapist at Nightingale Hospital London.

hormonal changes and water retention. 'Depending where you are in your cycle, it can add or take 2kg, which is not representative of your fat mass,' she says.

BODY COMPOSITION

When losing weight, water loss also plays a part, says Simon Bradeley, a sports scientist and commercial manager of the health monitoring device company Tanita. 'At the start of a low-calorie or low-carb diet, you may lose more water than fat,' he explains. 'It's because, as your glycogen stores (which bind water in the muscles) start to drop, the level of water also reduces. So there's a chance you can lose muscle mass when you start a carb-restricted diet, even if you exercise. A traditional scale only shows weight loss, rather than water or muscle loss – so many people falsely assume they've purely lost fat.'

Why does this matter? 'Well, the initial water loss can give a false reading and indication on the success of a particular diet. When the water loss plateaus and weight loss slows, people often lose faith and end up reverting to earlier eating habits. Combined with a potential loss of muscle, this can result in a lower calorie burn rate and you can end up heavier or with more fat than to begin with!'

A HEALTHY FIGURE

Being a 'good weight' can also be a poor indicator of health. 'Your weight tells you nothing about fat distribution, which is vital for good health,' says Caroline Sherlock, a nutritionist at Eat Drink Live Well. 'You can be very slim but have a high level of visceral fat, which is dangerous fat stored around your middle and near vital organs, increasing your risk of type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease.' By embarking on a healthier diet and exercise plan, you can make significant changes to your cholesterol, blood pressure and blood sugar levels, but still only see a very moderate decrease in what you weigh.

MEET THE SMART SCALE

The fallibility of weight as a measurement has led some weight-loss experts to forgo using scales.

Others use it within a range of tools, including blood tests and body measurements, to assess clients. There are, however, new scales available that aim to bridge the information gap by measuring body composition, rather than weight alone. Dubbed 'smart scales', they give readings for body fat, visceral fat, muscle mass and quality, total body water and even a rough bone mineral mass.

They are now available in gyms, pharmacies and for home use, and can even be linked up with your smartphone to give a digital snapshot of your progress. 'These devices work by sending a small electrical current through the body,' explains Simon. 'Since muscle, fat, water and bone conduct electricity at different rates, it's possible to calculate each as a percentage of your body composition and then interpret that data, comparing it to the average for your age and sex.'

FITNESS MOTIVATION

While an initial smart scale reading often spurs people into action, follow-up readings can provide continuing motivation by proving that the work you're putting in is worth it – even when you can't see much change to your weight. 'It can identify where you need to make changes too, such as increasing resistance work to build muscle mass,

or addressing an imbalance in muscle strength,' explains Alastair Crew.

LIFESTYLE FACTOR

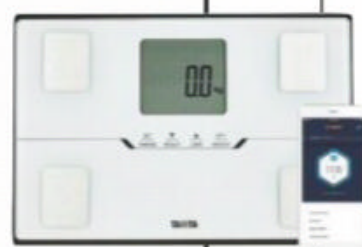
Smart scales may be a useful tool for women approaching the menopause, when muscle and bone loss can accelerate. As well as measuring muscle mass, some smart scales also give a rough bone mineral mass measurement. 'It's definitely not the same as a medical bone density scan and shouldn't be relied on for that, but if the measurement were to drop in future scans, it could indicate a potential problem, which would encourage people to get it checked by their GP,' says Alistair.

These scales can also check the amount of internal fat. 'If a scan indicates that a client has a high level of visceral fat, I know to focus not just on exercise and building muscle, but to look more closely into their nutrition and lifestyle,' says Paolo Gimenez, master trainer at Virgin Active. 'You can be the most unhealthy person, almost starving yourself to reach a weight goal and, without any extra information, unaware that your body is losing muscle mass and slowing your metabolism. Understanding more about your body composition can enable you to make better choices,' he says.

3 TO TRY

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MEDICINAL mushrooms

Forget those baby buttons in the supermarket, 'functional' fungi with special properties are the next big health trend

Most of us reap the health benefits of mushrooms by chopping them up into a risotto, stew or pasta dish. But their popularity is currently soaring and you'll find 'functional' mushrooms being packed into health and beauty products too. Why? Not only are they bursting with essential B vitamins and the mineral selenium, which helps protect our immune system, but they also contain high levels of antioxidants, which could give them anti-ageing potential.

Mushrooms' benefits have been known for centuries. 'Many people are only familiar with the white, chestnut and porcini varieties,' says Dr Sarah Brewer, medical director of Healthspan (healthspan.co.uk). 'Increasingly, though, medicinal mushrooms are becoming available that have been revered in Asia for over 3,000 years. While some are sold

fresh, such as shiitake, many are only available dried or in tablet form – for example, maitake, coriolus and reishi.'

You've probably experienced some of the powers of mushrooms already, without even realising. 'People are often surprised to learn that around 40% of modern medicine uses extracts from the mushroom kingdom,' says Julian Mitchell, founder of Life Cykel, an Australian biotechnology company.

And regular consumption can have profound benefits on health and wellbeing. 'As a result they're being used around the world to supplement daily routines,' says nutritionist Libby Limon. The cordyceps variety is being used to improve energy levels before a workout as a healthy alternative to caffeine, while 'Turkey Tail' mushrooms could boost gut health and the body's immune system.

KNOW YOUR VARIETIES

Dr Brewer reveals how different types of mushroom may have a range of benefits for your health

❖ **AID MEMORY** Lion's mane mushroom (*Hericum erinaceus*), is particularly valued in Asia for its ability to protect brain cells. It stimulates the growth of neurons, and production of new brain cell branches (dendrites).

❖ **LOWER CHOLESTEROL** Extracts of the reishi mushroom have been found to significantly decrease blood cholesterol and triglycerides, a type of fat found in the blood.

❖ **REGULATE BLOOD PRESSURE** Some edible mushrooms can block the action of a certain enzyme in a similar way to blood pressure drugs. Those that can help include 'tricholoma giganteum', as well as reishi and maitake.

❖ **BOOST IMMUNITY** In Japan, varieties such as reishi and shiitake are used to protect the body's defences against viral and fungal infections.

TRY SOME FUNGI POWER

❖ **Link Nutrition Mushroom Plus** are boosted with turmeric for anti-inflammatory benefits; £18.95 for 60 capsules, linknutrition.com

❖ **Mushroom Coffee Mix** contains that all-important Lion's Mane variety; £9.50, biovea.net/uk

❖ **Pukka Mushroom Gold** includes seaweed and spirulina; £21.96, Holland & Barrett

❖ **Dr. Andrew Weil For Origins Mega-Mushroom Relief & Resilience Soothing Treatment Lotion** helps reduce skin redness; £32, lookfantastic.com

❖ **TianDe Root Strengthening Shampoo With Extract of Lingzhi Mushroom** helps to protect against environmental damage; £10, tiandeshop.co.uk

WATCH OUT

Only use exotic 'wild' mushrooms from a trusted source, as some varieties are poisonous





NEW

Hair Volume is also available in a tasty apple gummy - For more information visit www.newnordic.co.uk

I panicked - My hair was thinning!

Maya was shocked by the change in her hair. Fullness and volume were replaced by thinness and lifeless hair. She had to do something. The hair I found in my brush, in the shower and on my cardigan was unfamiliar to me. It was thinning like never before. How could this be happening?

I had to do something

I found out my mother experienced the same problems when she was younger, and she accepted her fate. But much of my personality is in my hair, and I did not want to have the same problems. I read about the importance of hair nutrients, so I went looking for a good supplement.

My hair now feels fuller

I was recommended a natural product from Sweden called Hair Volume™, which contained a special apple extract. I have now used this supplement for 2 months

and I am really satisfied. My hair feels full and healthy and even my nails feel much stronger. The best part is that the shedding has almost stopped completely. This is proof to me that proper nutrition on the inside helps you look your best on the outside. **I highly recommend Hair Volume to women who want to promote full and beautiful hair.**

CLINICALLY PROVEN TABLET

9/10

Women felt their hair was healthier, thicker and shinier after taking Hair Volume™*

*Clinical study carried out on 60 volunteers aged 32-52.

You can find Hair Volume™ in Holland & Barrett and Leading Independent Health Stores. For an information leaflet call 0800 389 1255 or purchase online at www.newnordic.co.uk

HOLLAND & BARRETT



Did you know?

Hair Volume contains 4 proven hair growth promoting ingredients: Apple extract, Millet extract, L-Cystine and vitamin B5. But Hair Volume also contains more of these ingredients, in one tablet, than any other leading hair supplements. Visit us online to learn more about Hair Volume™.

Hollywood actress Teri Hatcher has been named as global ambassador for Hair Volume™. "I'm very excited to come on board as ambassador, and even after a few weeks taking Hair Volume™ my hair already seemed stronger."

- Teri Hatcher



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The power of MUSCLE

Strength is the way to beat the menopause, advises our personal coach Annie Deadman



Let's look at some numbers. Between 2007 and 2017, the population of those aged 65+ increased almost 3% to 12 million people. Six million of those are women. Life expectancy in the UK is 82.9 years for women (79.2 years for men). Women aged 45-55 are the fastest-growing demographic in the workforce.

Don't you feel just a little frisson of pride? Like you want to elbow your way into a chink of that limelight?

We are, girls, potentially, a force to be reckoned with. Trouble is, the black cloud of the big 'M' looms large, and with it a host of unpleasant physical symptoms and a massive drop in self-confidence. But I say this [stands on soapbox]: There is so much we can do, *must* do, starting right now, whatever our age, to prepare our bodies for what it may bring. Yes, even if you're in it now! Let's not wait until the first hot sweat cometh. Gird thy loins, stuff this article in front of your daughters' faces and let's all get cracking.

BUILD DEFENCES

Let's embrace the words 'muscle' and 'strong'. We're talking mental empowerment and physical survival. As we age (that's men and women), we lose muscle, anything from 1-5% a year.

Muscle is our friend and ally for so many reasons and we need to nurture it. How do we do that? By resistance training.

Resistance training is using your muscles to work against a resistant force provided either by your own body or by bands, dumb-bells and barbells. Placing a demand on muscles means they'll adapt, become stronger, firmer and eventually throw egg in the face of 'age-related muscle loss'.

Firm muscle and strength gives us ammunition, too, against osteoporosis, a silent menopausal threat to so many midlife women. Strong muscles provide an essential support network for bones, joints, tendons and ligaments, which may have been weakened from the drop in oestrogen.

Resistance training will not make you muscly. You will not look like an Olympic weightlifter after three weeks at the gym. You are simply building a defence to what is round the corner. In the process, you are improving your physical health, your mental and emotional wellbeing and putting a little sassiness back into your spirit. The sense of fulfilment I promise you will feel, will surprise you.

RAISE YOUR METABOLISM

I'm sensing you're nodding off. How about this? Muscle needs more energy (calories) to maintain its new dense state so your metabolism will rise. With that you'll notice your body shape tightening up and gradually your testosterone levels will also improve – the fairy dust we need to sprinkle on a flagging libido.

'We're talking mental empowerment and physical survival'

Start with your own home programme of squats, press-ups and core movements to gain confidence (google 'beginner strength workouts online' or visit my YouTube channel Annie Deadman Training, which has a range of options). Seek help from a reputable trainer (get a small group together to keep costs down) or join a local strength-training class. Two sessions a week is a great start.

Muscle needs feeding so include plenty of protein in your diet. Replace any high-sugar carb-y snacks with more fish, eggs, tofu, yogurt, meat and pulses.

None of this means a life consigned to the gym.

Walking, running and other weight-bearing activities are vital for bone density and important mood enhancers. The value you will gain from a little puffing will show in your cardiovascular fitness, your sleep and your confidence, plus you are lowering your risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes and numerous cancers.

Everyone's experience of the menopause will be different. One woman's thinning hair and dry vagina may be overshadowed by another's sore joints and murderous mood. Let's use our bodies, be ready for it and give ourselves the best possible chance.

✦ Annie Deadman is a health, fitness and weight-loss coach. She is the creator of the online 21 Day Blast Plan (theblastplan.com) and author of *The 21 Day Blast Plan* (HarperCollins). Follow her on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/anniedeadmantraining) [anniedeadmantraining](https://www.instagram.com/anniedeadman); [@anniedeadman](https://www.instagram.com/anniedeadman)

PHOTO: ALAMY





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Mrs Etherington – *Lake Como, St Moritz & the Bernina Express*



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I WAS CRUSHED by a car and left UNABLE TO WALK



An accident left Sue Bathmaker, 70, unable to walk. Here's how she got back to fitness in just over two years

The car was accelerating towards me at speed and I started to shout. I could hear other people yelling 'stop, stop'. I remember thinking, I'm going to be run over. The car hit me head-on and the pain was incredible.

I was screaming, absolutely screaming. The car came to a grinding halt with the front wheel on top of my knee and tibia (the larger of two bones between the knee and the ankle). A man and a woman rushed over; one took my hand, asking me my name. A voice asked if they could contact somebody and I was lucid, giving my husband Peter's mobile. Another voice said they had contacted the emergency services and gasping with pain I said, 'Please don't let them be too long.'

The driver came over then, lent down and I can see his face now. I'd recognise him. He said, 'Sorry, love.'

After an agonising eight minutes, the emergency services arrived and the car was lifted off my leg. The pain was incredible. Morphine was injected into me, offering instantaneous relief.

I was four hours in A&E. I had a dislocated right hip and a crushed tibial plateau, but there was no damage to my spine or brain, so that was the positive. My right hip was operated on the next morning, the first of eight operations over two years. I asked the surgeon if I would ever walk again. He said yes. That gave me a great sense of relief. 'It will be a long time though,' he added.

I was in hospital for six days, desperate to get home. When I did, all I could do was lie on the sofa; a huge change from my active life. I organised a wheelchair and put a single bed downstairs. That was it for nine weeks until the next operation.

My confidence was around my ankles; I retreated because I felt safe in the house. Going out was intimidating, traffic was threatening. I had nightmares that I was being hit by a train.

I was allowed crutches after nine weeks and was able to get around the house, and at last could go upstairs to bed and have a shower. I got down

to just one crutch and could drive again. The independence was lovely.

I went back to the gym, amazed at how much muscle mass I'd lost, and did exercises on the gym floor. It helped me physically and psychologically. I was getting back to normality – but one icy day I went out of the back door and slipped, fell and broke my left hip.

I was back to square one. I was told I didn't need a new hip and was given a rod and screw, but two months later I started to deteriorate. It was agony to walk. The surgeon who had replaced my knee said I should have had the hip replacement.

I was devastated. I had to have plates put in, then eight weeks later another hip replacement. I'd lost so much weight I looked 95 (I was 69!); skin was hanging off my bones. That was the low point.

But, two months later I went back to the gym – a personal trainer gave me resistance exercises. I was progressing and that gave me confidence. I was determined to get back to how I was. And I have. I now walk again like normal, without a limp or any pain.

The experience has given me an awareness that things change but that I am resilient, and it's possible to rebuild your life. It's not the end.

'Going out was intimidating, traffic was threatening'



Your HEALTH

THIS MONTH

- ✦ Pain in the cheek
- ✦ When thrush attacks
- ✦ Coming off statins

Got a medical problem or need health advice? Ask GP Dr Rosemary Leonard

I was diagnosed with a high cholesterol level a couple of years ago, and put on statins. I've had no nasty side effects, and my cholesterol level is now back to normal. I've also overhauled my diet and lost weight, so could I stop the statins now?

About a quarter of the cholesterol in your bloodstream comes from the food you eat, and the rest comes from your liver. This part can be influenced by your genes, which is why having a high cholesterol level can run in families, and why some people have a high level regardless of how little saturated fat they eat. Whether or not

you can stop your statin depends on how high your level was prior to treatment and also whether your diet was high in saturated fat. If the level was only slightly raised, and you were eating lots of fatty cheese, pastries and meat, then it may well be that your blood cholesterol level will stay in the normal range on your new healthier diet. But if your level was really quite high (over 8mmol/L), then it's likely that your liver is producing too much cholesterol, and the only way to control this will be with statin treatment. You can always try stopping the statins, and check the level three months later, then restart the tablets if necessary. If you do have a high level, it would also be sensible for any children you have to get their cholesterol checked too, as they may also need treatment.

I keep getting attacks of thrush. I've tried numerous treatments from the chemist, and my partner has used them too, even though he's had no symptoms, but I still keep getting itching in my genital area. Switching to cotton underwear hasn't helped. What else can I do?

Though many women assume genital itching is due to thrush, there are numerous other possible causes, and it may well be that thrush is not to blame for your discomfort. The yeast candida that causes thrush thrives in an oestrogen-rich environment, and this means that after the menopause, when oestrogen levels are low, thrush is unusual. In this age group, inflammation secondary to vaginal dryness is a more common cause. Irritation from perfumes in bath or shower products, and biological detergent residues can also cause skin irritation and, less commonly, itching can be due to eczema, or the skin condition lichen sclerosis. So rather than spending more money at the chemist, see your GP, who can take a swab to confirm whether thrush or another infection is to blame, and also check for other underlying causes.

FACT OR FICTION?

CAN CRANBERRIES HELP PREVENT URINARY INFECTIONS?

Hands up now – I expect most of you said this one is true, and in fact, if you had asked me a couple of years ago I'd have agreed with you. The idea behind this is that cranberries make the urine more acidic, which makes it more difficult for bacteria to grow and multiply, and indeed a study back in 2010 did report that people who drank regular cranberry juice had a lower chance of getting a urinary infection than those who didn't. But recent advice from NICE has said that, especially in older

women, there is no evidence that it works, and this applies both to the berries and the juice. That said, it's unlikely to do any harm, though both are high in sugar, so they are not suitable for diabetics, or if you are trying to lose weight. The best way to avoid repeated urine infections is to drink lots of water, and always wipe yourself from front to back after going to the loo. This way, you avoid pulling bacteria from around the back passage forwards to the entrance to the bladder.



PHOTO: ALAMY

I've had a pain in my right cheek for a couple of weeks and I'm not sure whether it's from a tooth or my sinuses. Getting an appointment with either my dentist or my GP is a struggle, and I'm not sure which to try and see first.

A Sinusitis often follows a cold and is usually, but not always, accompanied by a bunged-up feeling in the nose, and sometimes in the ears too. The sinuses in the cheeks are close to the top back teeth, and pain in the upper back teeth is a fairly common symptom with sinus infections. Unlike pain originating in a tooth, sinus pain is usually much worse on bending down, which tends to cause

a throbbing sensation in the front of the face. Sinus pain can often be eased by taking a decongestant, such as pseudoephedrine, or by a menthol and eucalyptus inhalation, but these won't make any difference to toothache.

It's also worth having a good look inside your mouth. Check if any of your teeth look discoloured, and also try tapping each tooth in turn with the back of your toothbrush, and see whether that causes any pain down at the root. Look at your gums too – see if they look red, or whether they bleed when you floss between your teeth. If so, you should see a dentist, especially if you haven't had a check-up for over six months. But if your symptoms suggest a sinus infection, and your symptoms have not improved after three weeks, then see your GP.

promotional feature

I'm 49, and recently I've been experiencing hot flushes – a sudden feeling of intense heat that makes me sweat and go very red in the face. Is there anything I can do to stop them from happening, or make them less severe?

A Hot flushes are one of the most common symptoms of the menopause, which typically occurs for most women between the ages of 45 and 55. The rush of heat can last for several minutes, but they are usually harmless, albeit uncomfortable. However, there are things you can do to help. Hormone replacement therapy (HRT) is a treatment option, but you can also avoid potential triggers, such as spicy foods, alcohol and caffeine, and wear light, breathable fabrics. For fast relief, try a spray such as Flourish Cooling Mist; the soothing chamomile mist is specially formulated for the menopause and helps to instantly cool and calm hot, flushed skin when you need it most.

❖ **Flourish Cooling Mist is available in Tesco, Superdrug and Holland & Barrett, RRP £6.99. For more info: lets-flourish.com**

WORDS: LOUISE OWENS



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FOOD, HOME & TRAVEL

If you do one thing this month

PUT ON AN EASTER LUNCH FOR FRIENDS

✦ Get out your fanciest crockery and invite your nearest and dearest over – it's time to celebrate the arrival of spring. Dress your dining table with a fresh linen tablecloth and layer up crockery. A spring bulb wrapped in newspaper and tied with twine and a name tag directs guests to their seats, and makes for a great seasonal gift, while an arrangement of fresh herbs or a greenery-filled trug creates a stunning centrepiece.

Gingham napkins, £25 for 4; jute place mats, £12 each; seagrass bottle holder, £25; Milford carafe, £25; glass candleholder with tray, £25; seat pads, £25 each, all The White Company



**PASTEL
PERFECTION**

Enchanted 4-
seater sofa, £799;
Enchanted armchair,
£299, both in Sensual
Blush velvet, DFS

Refresh *your home for* spring

Banish those winter blues and ring the changes
in your home with these new-season trends

MINT MARVEL Wall mirror,
£12; side table, £40; fringed
pendant light, £50;
mint cushions, £8 each;
pink tray, £8, all Matalan

GLAMPASTELS

Pale blush pink has become the new neutral and is ideal as a backdrop to add subtle warmth to your home. Mint greens, creamy yellows, light greys and lilacs are given a grown-up makeover when paired with metallics – whether brass, copper or silvers. Keep furniture shapes sleek and simple, and don't be tempted to over-accessorise, or your home could become too fussy.



Mint
jewellery
box, £12.99,
TK Maxx

Espresso cups,
£14.95 for a set of 2,
Bombay Duck





Grey linen cushion, £38, **The French Bedroom Company**

Etruscan lamp, £120, **Hudson Home**

Rustic wooden crate, £19.99, **Sarru**



MODERN DINING

Starburst dining table, £649; Loft dining chairs, £149 for 2; popcorn rug, from £219, all **M&S**



BLUE HUES Barmouth cuddle chair in Stripe, £550; Bournemouth tray table, £70; Herringbone throw in Oatmeal, £16; flatweave rugs, from £40, all **Argos Home**

RELAXED COUNTRY

A contemporary take on the traditional country style, this look is a little more pared-back and introduces colour, especially bluebell grey and leafy greens. Touches of coastal style creep in, merging the two looks to create a fresh and easy-to-live-with style that will give your home a light, bright feel. Both rustic and painted wood finishes sit side by side, and accessories are a bit more refined.



CREAM DREAM

Floral blind, from £45; large Adelaide sideboard, £599, both **Next Home** >>



Metal hanging lamp with plant pot, £95, **Cult Furniture**



Garden Herbs candle, £8, **M&Co**

Sleep More Sustainably double duvet set in Plain Grey, £23, **Sainsbury's Home**



ON REFLECTION
Mirror, £125, Next Home

SWEET DREAMS Denver double bed, £219.99, Furniture Choice



CLEAR WINNER Recycled glass jug, £12; recycled glass tumblers, £3.50 each; dinnerware, from £4 for a side plate, all Dunelm



BREATH OF FRESH AIR

With wellness and sustainability still huge buzzwords for 2020, we look for more ways to bring this ethos into our homes. From recycled glass items and textiles made from recycled plastic bottles, to plenty of plants to bring life into each of our rooms, fresh colours, considered buys and relaxing scents all fill us with mindfulness.

SAFARI SUPPER Tourron black dinnerware, from £23 for a dessert bowl; Broadway black cutlery set, £250 for a 24-piece set; leopard place mats, £36 for 2; spot vase, £20; terracotta candle stand, £20, all A by Amara range, Amara



NATURAL CHOICE Shoreline dinnerware, from £8 for a bowl; sunburst wooden pizza tray, £25; sunbleach parquet wooden boards, from £20 each, all French Connection Home

TEXTURED ARTISAN

With this trend, more emphasis is given to the way things feel and their organic shapes, rather than striving for perfection. Handcrafted textiles and dinnerware paired with natural materials make for an exotic yet homely feel. Earthy shades such as terracotta, ochre and slate greys are complemented by lush greenery.

TACTILE TOUCH Cushions, clockwise from top left: cluster tassel, £14; textured pom-poms, £14 each; diamond geo, £16; recycled Bora tufted geo, £20; macramé, £22; Bronx okara, £22, all Next Home



Faux Boston fern in pot, £19.50, **M&S**

Orange seagrass basket with lid, £40, **Habitat**



Rattan-effect planter, £45 for 2, **Very**



Blooming *LOVELY*

A family home
filled with freshly
picked flowers is
the perfect way to
welcome spring





LIVING ROOM

The painted chimney breast prompted the lilac and plum tones. Beige sofa, Christopher Pratts Furniture. Cushions, Dunelm. Footstool, Maison Home Interiors. Walls painted in Ammonite by Farrow & Ball. Feature wall painted in Juniper by Neptune. Wood burner, Dovre. Lilac sofa, Homesense

HALLWAY

A console table and lamps give a welcoming feel. Lamps, The Range. Table, Next. Mirror, Fern & Foxglove Interiors



Located with the perfect combination of both village and countryside on their doorstep, it was Hannah Gray's mother who spotted the house where she now lives, together with her husband, Mal, an electrician, and sons William, five, and baby Archie.

'The location drew us to this house. It's on the outskirts of the village, overlooking fields for miles. We could be a part of the village community, yet be in the countryside too,' says Hannah. With Leeds, Harrogate and Ilkley close by, the family get to enjoy the best of both town and country life.

The move had been prompted by Hannah's wish to return to the Yorkshire village where she grew up, and leave behind the new-build property the couple had previously

owned on a housing estate. 'The village is such a lovely place to be and to bring up a family. We're also close to my parents, who still live here,' she describes. Yet the new property was not without its drawbacks, as Hannah recalls, 'The house itself, originally built in the late 1920s, wasn't very attractive, with no kerb appeal and in need of redecorating.'

The previous owners, who had lived there for 30 years, had extended the property, but its layout wasn't suitable for Hannah and Mal's purposes, the main difficulty being a small kitchen. 'We were eager to open up the interior and have a large family kitchen,' says Hannah. During the renovation, the family moved in with Hannah's parents, meaning they were conveniently close to their big project. 'The day we got the keys, >>





‘We were eager to open up the interior and have a family kitchen. The day we got the keys, we started knocking down walls with a sledgehammer!’

KITCHEN DINER

The range stove and reclaimed beam in the chimney breast, together with the shaker units, give the kitchen a country cottage vibe. Table, Ercol. Dining chairs, Christopher Pratts Furniture. Cabinets, Howdens. Patisserie sign and cushions, Style By Stars. Heart-shaped stool, Perfectly Lovely Interiors. Walls painted in Hardwick White by Farrow & Ball. Flooring, Karndean

we came round with a sledgehammer and started knocking down walls!' she says. 'There wasn't a wall, floor or ceiling that we didn't touch.'

The small kitchen was a major priority and, being next to a dark, panelled dining room with no natural light, the obvious solution was to knock through to create one spacious room. 'We wanted to have an open-plan kitchen diner with a family room, as we had a separate living room at the front of the house that the grown-ups could enjoy in the evening,' Hannah explains.

A rustic country-cottage feel was achieved with classic Shaker-style units, a range cooker and a reclaimed beam above the hearth. The couple realised a conservatory would be an excellent way to gain more space and light, while creating a greater connection to the garden, so they

began planning one with an architect to Hannah's specifications while the kitchen was being renovated.

Grateful the family could live elsewhere, Hannah describes the whole property as being a building site for months. 'We spent weeks with plywood across the back of the house because the conservatory wasn't built until spring 2015,' she says. 'It was difficult living three months with my parents, as we were all sharing one bedroom and William was only two at the time. My husband was working night shifts, too, so we could work on the house through the day. It was fab having my parents' help to look after William, though,' Hannah recalls.

The family moved into the still-to-be-completed home two days before the >>



CONSERVATORY

Checks, spots, paisley and star motifs add interest to the neutral scheme. Sofa, Next. Throw, Ikea. Cushions, Homesense. Floor lamp, similar from Very. Table painted in Purbeck Stone by Farrow & Ball. Footstool, Homesense. Candlesticks and jug, Style By Stars

HOME EXTERIOR

Bifold doors at the rear of the house make the patio feel like an outdoor room. Garden furniture, Homebase





MASTER BEDROOM

A round mirror makes a focal point of the chimney breast. The headboard was made by Mal. Cushions (beige), Style By Stars and (pink), Laura Ashley. Throws, Bronte by Moon. Chest of drawers, similar from Wayfair. Mirror, Ikea

Christmas of 2014. 'The house was freezing for four months until the conservatory was finished,' Hannah says.

In addition to the upheaval of the ground floor improvements, the house was rewired, replumbed and replastered, and new heating was installed. Upstairs, where there were originally five bedrooms, one of the smallest was knocked through to create a larger main bedroom. Eager to give the front of the house a facelift, Hannah and Mal also made the carport into a garage and added the rustic frame and stone porch.

A fan of neutral shades, Hannah gave the house a cohesive look with warming putty colours. 'I can add colour with accessories if I want a change,' she explains. 'I like the way I can alter schemes according to the seasons and move things around.' The living room is Hannah's favourite. 'It's south-facing and gets the loveliest light. I've filled it with Abraham Moon plaids and Bronte by Moon throws as I'm a big fan and they're located nearby. I also love to shop at Neptune and The White Company.'

Both big fans of the Yorkshire countryside, Hannah and Mal are delighted with the house they've worked so hard for. 'It's very homely and the views that we have are simply beautiful. We can climb over the stile and head out to walk in the countryside for miles.'

BATHROOM

Shaker units and a Belfast sink give the bathroom a country feel. Washstand and bath, Roper Rhodes



ARCHIE'S BEDROOM

The mainly neutral colours in Archie's room will work as he grows. The chest of drawers was upcycled by Hannah's mum. Curtains, Charlotte Briscoe Interiors. Cot, Argos



Petunia cushion cover, £35, **Sweetpea & Willow**

Burlington crystal lamp base, £185; Henry shade, £50, both **Neptune**

Elliot footstool in Highland check, from £625, **Laura Ashley**

Easter wreath, £21.99, **Lights4Fun**

Norton rattan basket, £90, **Garden Trading**

Faux bay tree in wooden pot, £45, **Sainsbury's Home**

Roman rustic solid oak chest of drawers, £499.99, **Oak Furnitureland**

Mirror, £80, **The Farthing**

Faux medium bouquet, £7.99, **Homesense**

Lantern, £24.99, **TK Maxx**

HOW TO GET THE LOOK

- ✦ Add vibrancy with beautiful faux flowers.
- ✦ Introduce checks and tartans into your scheme with cushions, throws and upholstered furniture.
- ✦ Repeat different-sized motifs such as stars, hearts or wreaths throughout your home.
- ✦ Go for rustic touches such as bare brick fireplaces and wooden crates as storage cubes.

Florence cream fabric dining chair, £349 for 2, **Modish Living**

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GREEN *made easy*



Eco expert Lucy Siegle is here to help you do your bit for the environment



Share the love

Let the bells ring out... the eco wedding has arrived! Such nuptials will eschew carbon-intensive meat, use locally grown flowers, have electric cars for wedding parties and feature rented gowns – not just for brides. This trend chimes with the emergence of online clothing rental apps, such as HURR and My Wardrobe, which aim to liberate underused clothes. Why buy new when you can book and borrow?

Switch it

Energy is a household's single biggest climate-change contributor, so swapping to a green tariff (energy produced from renewables) is the best thing you can do to reduce your carbon footprint.

Wind is now the cheapest source of energy in the UK, and the more we use it, the cheaper it will be. There are lots of options, so it pays to shop around first. Octopus uses technology to bring you cheaper rates when renewable energy powers the grid (ie when the sun shines or the wind blows), while Ecotricity (the only vegan-rated supplier in the UK) offers energy that is guaranteed zero carbon. Find out more about the options at energysavingtrust.org.uk



Sir David Attenborough live

On Thursday 16 April, UK cinemas will host a special broadcast from London's Royal Albert Hall, featuring a film screening of *A Life on Our Planet*, followed by a live on-stage discussion between Sir David Attenborough and special guests. The film charts Sir David's 93 years of bearing witness to the Earth.

During this time he has visited every continent on the globe, bringing nature's wildest places into our homes, deepening our love for the natural world and increasing awareness about its prospects.



THREE ECO INNOVATIONS...

LAUNDRY BOOST

New laundry products from eco stalwart Ecover are formulated to extend the lifespan of clothing. Using powerful, plant-based enzymes, they revive colours, prevent greying and remove bobbles from cotton fibres after many washes.



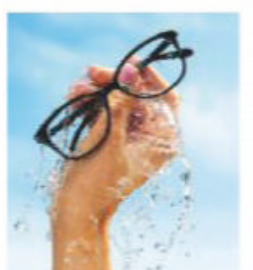
BEST BUDS

LastObject is the brainchild of Danish designer Isabel Aagaard, whose aim is to create alternatives for single-use items. Her first product, LastSwab (125,000 sold already) is a reusable cotton bud. Every day 1.5 billion are produced globally, many with plastic stems, and only used once. Visit lastobject.com



2020 VISION

A range of sustainable spectacles made from recycled fishing nets (about 64,000 are ditched at sea every year), has been launched by student George Bailey, 19. Coral Eyewear has frames made from marine plastic, crafted by a firm in Italy; coraleyewear.com





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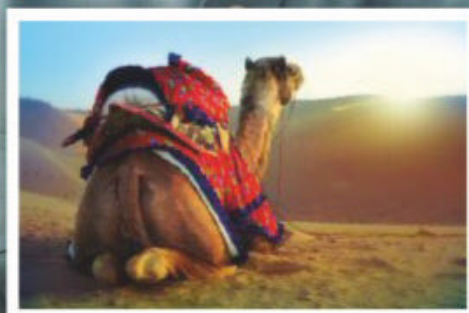
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TEST
KITCHEN
UK

Enjoy entertaining
this Easter with
recipes from our
Mediterranean-
inspired buffet, all
created by our Test
Kitchen experts

Welcome to
EASTER!



Stuffed lamb with oranges, olives and pine nuts

Bursting with all the sunshine flavours of the Mediterranean, we ordered the lamb online from sustainable butcher The Ginger Pig as a special treat. The secret ingredient? A glug of concentrated orange cordial.

Serves 8 • Ready in 1 hr 45 mins (for pink), plus resting

2.5kg leg of lamb, bone in, at room temperature
6 garlic cloves, skin-on, bashed
5 bay leaves
5 fresh thyme sprigs, leaves picked off
5 fresh rosemary sprigs, plus 5 for decorating
4 anchovy fillets
50g breadcrumbs
juice of ½ lemon
around 40ml olive oil, plus extra for drizzling
50g pine nuts, toasted
110g jar stoned black olives, drained
2 oranges, pared and sliced into 2cm-thick rounds
300ml dry white wine
50ml full-sugar orange cordial (we like Belvoir)

1tbsp plain flour
350ml chicken or veg stock
30g butter

1 Heat the oven to 200C/ Gas 6 and make sure the meat has come to room temperature for at least 1 hr.

2 Take a sharp knife and follow the leg bone from ankle to thigh to create a pocket. This does not have to be neat. Season the lamb all over with salt and pepper, and make slits in the fatty skin. Stuff half the garlic into these slits.

3 In a food processor, whizz the rest of the garlic and herbs together, then add the anchovies, breadcrumbs and lemon juice. Slowly

add the oil, until the mix resembles the texture of loose pesto.

4 Fill the cavity of the lamb with the stuffing, pine nuts and olives, then tie up with string to hold it together. Put the lamb in a roasting tin, then tuck rosemary sprigs and orange slices under the string and drizzle with oil.

5 Roast for 1½ hrs at the higher temperature, adding the wine after 30 mins and basting every 20 mins. One hour into cooking, start basting with the orange cordial too – just pour directly onto the hot lamb.

6 For the final 10 mins, turn the temperature down to 110C/Gas ¼. Transfer the lamb to a large plate or shallow bowl, cover with foil and allow to rest for 20 mins.

7 Meanwhile, make the gravy. Strain the juices from the roasting tin into a pan, add the flour, then cook, stirring with a whisk over a low heat for a few mins. Then stir in the stock and any resting juices from the lamb. Turn off the heat, stir in the butter and serve.

Per serving: Cals 660, Fat 34.5g, Sat fat 12g, Carbs 5.9g

TIP Mediterranean lamb is best served slightly pink

Roast side of salmon with blushing veg

This mouthwatering salmon is so easy to prepare and will make a delightful, impressive centrepiece at your Easter table.

Serves 8 • Ready in 40 mins

450g mixed radishes
250g fine asparagus tips
300g baby leeks
3tbsp olive oil
zest of 1 lemon
1kg side salmon, skin on
for the dressing:
1 banana shallot, finely chopped
large bunch of fresh herbs (we used parsley, dill and lemon thyme)
50g olive oil
juice of 1 lemon
1tsp cracked pink peppercorns, to garnish

1 Heat the oven to 200C/Gas 6. Place the radishes, asparagus and baby leeks on a large baking tray, and drizzle with 2tbsp of the oil, and season with salt and pepper. Toss everything together with the lemon zest to coat the veggies evenly.

TIP This salmon flakes beautifully into sandwiches for lunch the next day

2 On a separate baking tray lined with parchment, place the salmon on top, skin-side down, and brush with the remaining olive oil. Season well.

3 Place both trays in the oven for 25 mins, until the salmon is just cooked through and the vegetables are nicely roasted. Serve hot or at room temperature with the dressing.

4 For the dressing, simply blitz all the ingredients together, and drizzle over the salmon and vegetables.

Per serving: Cals 420, Fat 26g, Sat fat 6g, Carbs 2.6g >>

Roast side of salmon with blushing veg





Warm Med salad with grilled halloumi and mint

Juicy tomatoes and crunchy red onions make up the bulk of this hearty, healthy salad that's packed with lip-smacking, hot salty cheese.

Serves 6 • Ready in 45 mins

2 pitta breads
6tbsp olive oil
1tbsp dried oregano
2 red onions, cut into wedges
6 tomatoes, halved
200g mixed cherry tomatoes
100g pitted Kalamata olives
20g fresh mint leaves

1 garlic clove, crushed
1tbsp red wine vinegar
1 pack halloumi, sliced

1 Heat the oven to 200C/Gas 6. Slice the pitta breads in half so that they are 1 layer, then cut into smaller wedges. Mix 2tbsp of the oil with the oregano and brush both sides of the pittas. Cook on a baking tray for 10 mins until crisp, then transfer to a wire rack to cool.
2 On the same baking tray, place the onion wedges and drizzle with ½tbsp of the oil. Cook for 10 mins, then add the tomatoes, olives and another

½tbsp oil. Season with salt and pepper, and cook for another 10 mins.
3 Make a mint dressing by blitzing the mint, garlic and red wine vinegar with 2tbsp of the oil.

4 Brush both sides of the halloumi with the remaining 1tbsp oil. Heat a frying pan and cook the halloumi for around 1 min on each side until golden.

5 Transfer the roasted onion, tomatoes and olives to a serving platter. Scatter over the pitta chips and halloumi, and drizzle over the mint dressing.
Per serving: Cals 329, Fat 16g, Sat fat 11.6g, Carbs 18.9g

Rainbow carrots with tahini dressing

*Fibre
rich*

This side dish takes heritage carrots to the next level with a Turkish twist.

**Serves 6 • Ready in
20 mins**

**750g mixed large heritage
carrots, washed and
large ones cut in half
lengthways
small bunch coriander
2tbsp tahini
1tbsp lime juice
2tbsp olive oil**

1 Put the carrots in a pan, cover with cold water and 1tsp salt, bring to the boil and cook for 10 mins.

2 Blitz the coriander, tahini and lime juice together with a pinch of salt and a generous grind of black pepper. If the mixture is too thick, add a little water.

3 Drain the carrots, arrange on a serving plate and drizzle over the dressing and olive oil.

*Per serving: Cals 169, Fat 12.6g,
Sat fat 1.9g, Carbs 5.2g >>*

TIP Carrots are a great source of vitamin A. If you like, add a sprinkle of pomegranate seeds

Ham, mint and broad bean potatoes

*Minty
salad*

This is the perfect dish for a celebratory Easter buffet, or equally lovely as a tempting side or cold salad option.

**Serves 6 • Ready in
30 mins**

**750g baby new potatoes
or Jersey Royals
200g frozen broad beans
100g ham hock
10g unsalted butter**

**15g mint leaves, picked
and finely chopped**

1 Cover the potatoes with cold water, add salt, bring to the boil and cook for 10-15 mins, until the potatoes begin to go soft.

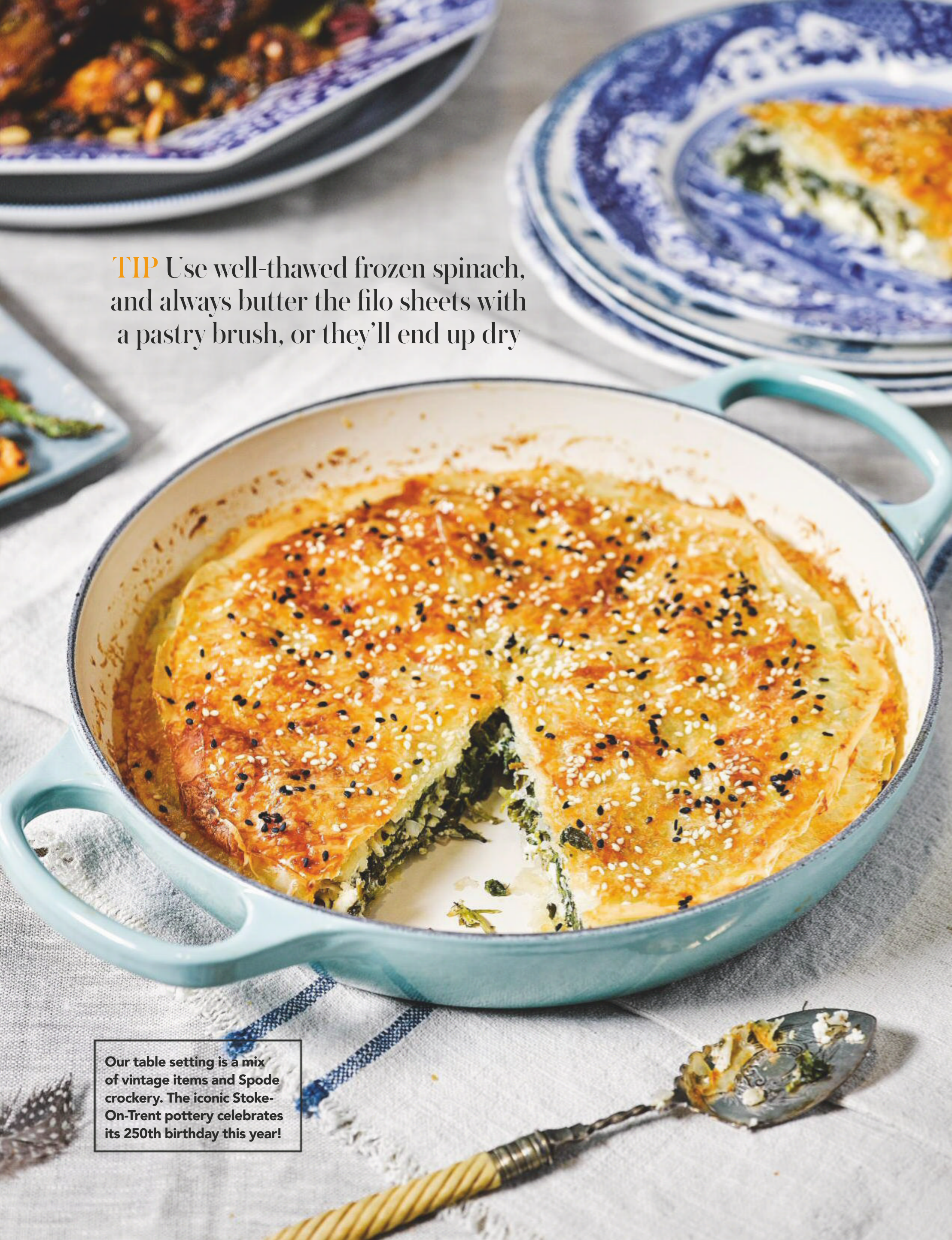
2 Add the broad beans and cook for a further 5 mins.

3 Drain and mix through the ham, butter and mint.

*Per serving: Cals 460, Fat 26g,
Sat fat 3.1g, Carbs 34g*

TIP Make the most of the first mint and Jersey Royals of the season with this tasty dish





TIP Use well-thawed frozen spinach, and always butter the filo sheets with a pastry brush, or they'll end up dry

Our table setting is a mix of vintage items and Spode crockery. The iconic Stoke-On-Trent pottery celebrates its 250th birthday this year!

Spanakopita (Greek spinach pie)

This makes a great meat-free option. Serve as a main dish, an accompaniment, or as finger food.

Serves 8 • Ready in 1 hr

520g spinach
80g watercress
200g feta cheese
4 shallots
2 large eggs
small handful dill, chopped
2 garlic cloves
zest of 1 lemon
½tsp nutmeg
12 sheets filo pastry
75g butter, melted
50g Parmesan, grated
2tbsp sesame seeds
you will need:
30cm shallow casserole dish or medium roasting tin, buttered

1 Heat the oven to 200C/Gas 6. Put the spinach and watercress in a microwaveable bowl with 3tbsp water and microwave until the spinach has wilted. Remove and drain, then squeeze out as much liquid as possible, using the back of a spoon. Transfer the mix to a tea towel and remove any excess water. Then put in a large bowl and stir in the feta, shallots, eggs, dill, garlic, lemon zest and nutmeg, plus salt and pepper.

2 Lay a sheet of filo pastry on top of the buttered dish, butter and lay another sheet on top. Repeat until you have 6 sheets of filo on the base.

3 Spread the filling over the filo, leaving a 0.5cm gap around the edge. Lay a sheet of pastry on top, brush with butter and sprinkle with 1tbsp grated Parmesan. Lay another sheet of filo on top and repeat the process until you have 6 stacked sheets of filo. Using the palm of your hand, press down the layers. With a knife, score through the top 3 layers of filo pastry into 8 slices. Brush with butter and sprinkle over the sesame seeds. Bake for 20-25 mins, or until golden.

Per serving: Cals 191, Fat 18g, Sat fat 10g, Carbs 14g

Asparagus pastry twirls

This spring vegetable always brings a touch of class to a party – our recipe will impress your guests.

Serves 6 (Makes 18) • Ready in 40 mins

75g Boursin garlic and herb cheese
320g ready-rolled puff pastry
25g Parmesan, grated
2tsp smoked paprika
18 asparagus spears
1 egg, beaten

1 Heat the oven to 200C/Gas 6. Place the Boursin in a microwaveable

bowl and heat on high for 30 secs to soften. Unroll the pastry and spread the Boursin all over. Scatter over half the Parmesan and half the paprika. Cut the pastry into 18 long strips around 1cm in width.

2 Starting at the bottom of the asparagus spear, twirl the pastry strip around it to create a spiral effect. Repeat the process. Glaze each spiral with the beaten egg and sprinkle the remaining Parmesan and paprika over each one. Bake for 15-20 mins, or until the pastry is golden brown.

Per 3 twists: Cals 169, Fat 24g, Sat fat 8.6g, Carbs 20g

Finger food



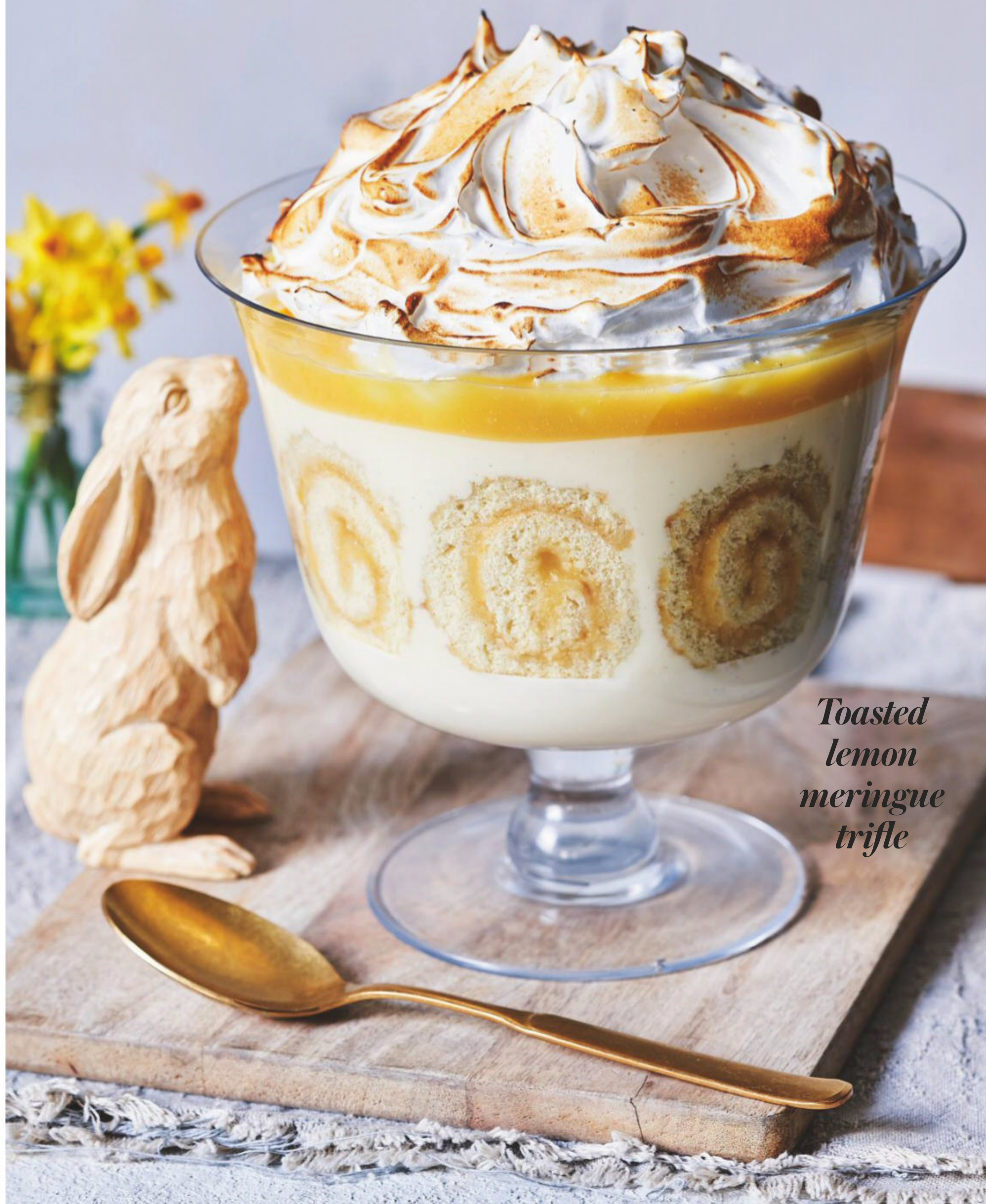
*Dark chocolate
and cherry
Simmnel cake*

Bake it *SPECIAL*

TEST
KITCHEN
UK

Our Test Kitchen
have reinvented
the classic Easter
desserts, but with
a twist for 2020!

Easter bakes



*Toasted
lemon
meringue
trifle*

Dark chocolate and cherry Simmel cake



We've given the classic Easter cake a sophisticated chocolate and spirits makeover. Our food director called this 'the best cake I've ever eaten'.

Serves 22 • Ready in 3 hrs, plus soaking and cooling

for the chocolate marzipan:

300g ground almonds
250g icing sugar
60g cocoa powder
120g glucose
50ml kirsch or amaretto

for the cake:

400g dried sour cherries
400g Amarena cherries or cherries in kirsch, chopped
100ml kirsch or amaretto
350g unsalted butter
350g dark brown sugar
6 eggs at room temperature
350g plain flour
90g cocoa powder
2tsp baking powder
200g ground almonds
2tsp ground cinnamon

for the ganache:

3tbsp cherry jam, to assemble
150ml single cream
150g dark chocolate

you will need:

2 x 18cm cake tins, double-lined with baking parchment

1 Heat the oven to 170C/Gas 3. For the chocolate marzipan, put all the ingredients in a food processor and pulse until it forms a ball; you'll need to add more glucose if the marzipan isn't coming together. Divide into 5 equal-sized balls and roll 4 into 18cm discs. Divide the remaining marzipan ball into 11 smaller balls for decoration.

2 For the cake, soak the cherries in kirsch or amaretto and leave for at least 1 hr. Cream the butter and sugar together until light, then add the eggs gradually until the mix is smooth. Sift the flour, cocoa powder, baking powder,

and ground almonds and cinnamon together, then fold into the egg mix, followed by the cherries.

3 Fill each cake tin halfway with cake mix and add a disc of marzipan. Add the remaining cake mix and smooth the tops with the back of a spoon. Bake in the middle of the oven for 2-2½ hrs, or until the tops of the cakes spring back when pressed. Leave to cool.

4 To assemble, trim the tops of each cake, heat the jam and brush over each one, leaving some for the top. Place a disc of marzipan on top of one cake and smooth. Place the second cake, upside-down, on top of the marzipan layer, so the top of the cake will be completely flat. Brush the top with jam, add the final marzipan disc and arrange the 11 marzipan balls around the edge.

5 For the ganache, heat the cream, then pour over the dark chocolate and mix until melted. Cool the chocolate slightly and then pour onto the centre of cake, so it drips down the edges.

Per serving: Cals 579, Fat 27.5g, Sat fat 9g, Carbs 70.6g

Toasted lemon meringue trifle



When spring has sprung and your sweet cravings go from indulgent puds to something a little fresher, it's the perfect time to make our dreamy lemon meringue trifle.

Serves 24 • Ready in 1 hr 10 mins, plus setting

for the sponge rolls:

120g golden caster sugar
3 large eggs
zest of 2 lemons
120g plain flour
2 x 325g jars lemon curd

for the mousse:

400ml whole milk
800g whipping cream
2tsp vanilla extract
zest of 2 lemons
6 egg yolks
30g sugar

7 gelatine leaves, submerged in cold water to soften

for the meringue:

3 egg whites
180g sugar

you will need:

23 x 33cm baking tray lined with baking parchment; thermometer; kitchen blowtorch (try Lakeland)

1 Heat the oven to 180C/Gas 4. For the sponge, whisk the sugar, eggs and zest in the bowl of a stand mixer over a pan of simmering water, until the batter leaves a trail when the whisk is lifted. Remove from the heat, place on the stand mixer and whisk on high for 3-5 mins until thick.

2 Sift in half the flour and fold in gently. Add the remaining flour, fold again and pour the mix onto the baking tray. Smooth the edges with a palette knife and bake for 10-12 mins until lightly golden.

3 Sprinkle parchment paper with sugar and turn out the sponge on top. While it's still warm, roll up the sponge, starting at the shortest end, keeping the paper inside the roll. Leave to cool before carefully unrolling, filling with 1 jar of the curd and re-rolling. Put in the fridge.

4 For the mousse, heat the milk, 300ml of the cream, the vanilla extract and zest until steaming. In a bowl, whisk the egg yolks and sugar together and pour over the milk and cream. Pour back into the pan and cook over a medium heat, stirring until thick enough to coat the back of a spoon. Sieve to remove the zest.

5 Squeeze out any excess water from the gelatine. Add to the custard, stir to dissolve and cool slightly. Whip the remaining cream and fold through the custard.

6 To assemble, pour a layer of the mousse into the bottom of a trifle bowl and place in the fridge to firm up. Cut the Swiss roll into 1cm slices, place around the side of the bowl and layer the rest in the middle. Pour over remaining mousse and set fully in the fridge. Once set, spread over the second jar of curd.

7 For the meringue, whisk the egg whites in the bowl of a stand mixer. Meanwhile, heat the sugar and 30ml water in a pan and cook to 121C. Turn the mixer to low and slowly pour in the sugar. Turn up the speed and whip until thick. Spoon onto the trifle and blowtorch, if you like.

Per serving: Cals 339, Fat 48g, Sat fat 8.6g, Carbs 51g

Almond and amaretto hot cross pudding

This is not just any bread and butter pudding – it's boozy, nutty and packed with fruit too. We went back for seconds!

**Serves 4 • Ready in 50 mins,
plus soaking**

25g butter
9 mini hot cross buns, sliced in half
5tbsp amaretto
2 medium eggs, plus 1 egg yolk
(reserve the white for glazing)
15g caster sugar
250ml milk
100ml single cream
2tsp vanilla extract
30g toasted almond flakes
you will need:
1-litre baking dish, greased

1 Heat the oven to 180C/Gas 4. Spread the butter over the hot cross buns then slice the bottoms into chunks and place in the baking dish.
2 Spoon over 2tbsp of the amaretto and leave to soak. Meanwhile, whisk the eggs with the sugar.
3 Gently heat the milk and cream in a pan until warm, then remove from the heat and add the vanilla extract and remaining amaretto. Gradually add the warm milk mixture to the eggs and mix.
4 Transfer to a clean pan and warm to thicken, stirring constantly. Strain half over the buns in the dish, then top with the bun 'lids' and pour over the rest of the creamy liquid, but be careful not to cover completely. Leave to soak for at least 30 mins or overnight.
5 Before baking, glaze with egg white. Bake for 25-30 mins until golden brown and set. Sprinkle over the toasted almonds and serve.
Per serving: Cals: 541, Fat 33g, Sat fat 16g, Carbs 64g >>

TIP This recipe is perfect
for stale hot cross buns

Easter bakes



TIP Use a hot, sharp knife to crack open your chocolate egg



Mad hare chocolate cake

Celebrate Easter with this fun, chocolate-packed Easter cake.

Serves 12 • Ready in 1 hr 30 mins, plus cooling

for the cake:

100g cocoa powder
240g self-raising flour
1½tsp baking powder
¼tsp bicarbonate of soda
240g butter, softened
400g caster sugar
1tsp vanilla extract
4 eggs at room temperature

for the buttercream:

200g white chocolate
250g butter, softened
500g icing sugar, sifted
2-3tbsp milk

to decorate:

1 white chocolate egg, split in half, and smaller chocolate speckle eggs

you will need:

2 x 25cm round baking tins, greased and lined with baking parchment

1 Heat the oven to 180C/Gas 4. Mix the cocoa powder with 400ml boiling water, and leave to cool.

2 Sift the flour, baking powder, baking soda and ¼tsp salt into a bowl; set aside. Cream together the butter, sugar and vanilla. Mix in 1 egg and then a third of the flour mix. Repeat with the remaining eggs and flour. Fold in the cooled cocoa.

3 Divide the mixture into the tins and bake for 30-40 mins or until a cocktail stick inserted into centre of each cake comes out clean. Loosen the edges with a knife and leave to cool for 20 mins, then turn out onto a wire rack.

4 For the buttercream, melt the chocolate in the microwave. Cream the butter, add the icing sugar gradually and cream until fluffy. Add the chocolate and beat until combined, then the milk to loosen the buttercream, if needed.

5 Spread a coating of buttercream on top of the bottom layer and place the other layer on top, then cover the entire cake. Put Easter egg halves on top (like ears) and scatter on chocolate eggs.

Per serving: Cals 632, Fat 34g, Sat fat 19g, Carbs 85g



No-bake egg hunt tart

No-bake egg hunt tart

This gooey chocolate tart is one that even beginner cooks can master. It's great to make with young relatives who can go crazy with decorations!

Serves 12 • Ready in 30 mins, plus cooling and overnight chilling

for the base:

190g digestive biscuits, finely crushed
170g unsalted butter, warm and melted
4 sprigs lemon thyme
½tsp mixed spice

for the filling and decoration:

250ml double cream
350g dark chocolate, finely chopped
100g chocolate mini eggs

you will need:

23cm loose-bottomed baking tin, greased

1 For the base, in a large bowl, mix the biscuits with two-thirds of the butter, plus the thyme sprigs, leaves only, and mixed spice. Press into the base and sides of the cake tin using the back of

a spoon until around 4mm thick. Pop into the fridge to cool.

2 For the filling, gently warm the cream and remaining butter in a pan over a low heat until smooth and combined. Remove from the heat and add the chopped chocolate, stirring well until melted and glossy-looking.

3 Allow the mixture to cool for 5 mins, then pour into the cold biscuit base.

4 Chill for 40 mins, then check if the tart is ready to decorate by pressing 1 mini egg into the top of it. If it sinks in nicely without creating any cracks in the chocolate, continue with all the mini eggs. If it creates a crack, allow the tart to come to room temperature and try again.

5 Pop into the fridge for 3-4 hrs or overnight to set. Cut into slices and serve, decorated with mini eggs.

Per serving: Cals 521, Fat 33g, Sat fat 21.5g, Carbs 42g >>

Fruity coconut pavlova

The Carmen Miranda of the dessert world, impress guests with this magnificent and fruit-packed centrepiece. Trust us – it's far easier to make than it looks!

Serves 10 • Ready in 2 hrs, plus cooling

400ml can coconut milk (leave in the fridge overnight so the fat separates)

4 medium egg whites

225g caster sugar

2tbsp desiccated coconut

2tbsp maple syrup

100g plain coconut yogurt (we love Co Yo)

2 mangoes, peeled and cubed

2 kiwi fruit, peeled and sliced

2 passion fruit, seeds scooped out

90g toasted coconut shavings dried mango (optional)

you will need:

baking tray lined with baking parchment

1 Heat the oven to 150C/Gas 2. Whisk the egg whites to soft peaks and keep whisking while adding the sugar, 1tbsp at a time, until the mixture forms peaks.

2 Fold through the desiccated coconut then pile the meringue onto the baking tray. Using a palette knife, spread out to make a 25cm disc. Make a dip in the centre and push the mixture up the sides. Bake for 1 hr 30 mins and allow to cool before transferring to a serving platter.

3 Drain the liquid from the coconut milk and whisk the remainder until thick. Fold in the maple syrup and yogurt. Place the mixture on top of the meringue then add the fresh fruit, coconut and dried mango, if using.

Per serving: Cals 632, Fat 34g, Sat fat 19g, Carbs 85g

TIP Use your favourite selection of seasonal fruit



The secret to the perfect SPRING CLEAN

Clear out the clutter and make your home shine this year. All while saving time, money and effort – what's not to like?



Tidy house, tidy mind. That's what they say and there's little more satisfying than getting your house in tip-top shape for spring.

Bring in some extra help with leading household cleaning brands Marigold and Vileda. Their innovative products will help make light work of household tasks – saving you time, money and effort.

CUT THROUGH GREASE

Introducing the Vileda SuperMocio 3Action XL Mop (RRP £6.99) and Torsion Bucket & Wringer (RRP £6.99), the UK's bestselling mop & bucket*. The specially designed mop head has 3D flocked power dots for extra dirt pick-up and a non-scratch scourer for stubborn marks. Its microfibre zone gives a deep-down clean. The bucket has a two-force system, which twists and compresses the head to wring out excess water with minimal effort.



STREAK-FREE SHINE

Get the ultimate smear-free finish on shiny surfaces and glass with the Marigold Squeaky Clean Microfibre Cloth (RRP £1.99). This handy two-in-one cloth cleans and buffs in one.

The microfibre gives a deep clean, while the unique super-absorbent coating locks in liquids to ensure no smears are left behind. It's even machine washable.



HELPING HANDS

Marigold Longer Bathroom Gloves (RRP £2.70) feature extra-long cuffs to give your arms even more protection when cleaning the toilet. They have special roll-top cuffs to help them stay up and to prevent water from running down into the glove. Plus they're aqua coloured so you won't get them mixed up with your yellow kitchen gloves!

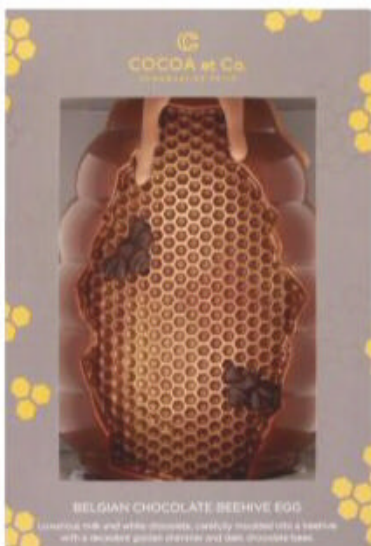


JUST-WASHED FRESHNESS

Make the most of the spring sunshine to dry your clothes with the Vileda Viva Air 45m Outdoor Rotary Dryer (RRP £39.99). We Brits can spend up to £140 a year on tumble-drying our clothes, but they can last longer and smell fresher when dried in the open air. Not to mention freeing up drying space within the home. Offering 45m of line length and designed to hold up to four wash loads at a time, this dryer also features hooks for attaching hangers at the end of each arm for additional space. Durable and robust, this steel dryer has a three-year guarantee and comes with a plastic socket for easy installation. The main pole also comes in two parts, which is convenient when transporting home. It can then be easily assembled and ready for use.



✚ To find your nearest stockists, visit marigold.co.uk and vileda.co.uk



BUZZING

This rose gold egg is the bee's knees, made with Belgian milk and white chocolate, plus an edible shimmer.

Cocoa et Co Belgian Chocolate Beehive (220g), £10, Sainsbury's



Best
for
kids

JELLY BELLY

This colourful egg is encrusted with treats that will delight sweet-toothed adults and children alike.

White Choc Tutti Frutti Egg with Jelly Beans and Jazzy's (200g), £4, Morrisons



COCKTAIL HOUR

This hollow milk chocolate egg, with its own edible straw, is deliciously studded with milk chocolate-coated pretzel pieces and creamy fudge.

Caramel and Fudge Easter Sundae (210g), £10, M&S



WACKY WONDERS

We love this unique collection of eggs. Each is studded with dried fruits, pretzels or jellies, and blends nostalgic flavours that are sure to wow the child inside us all.

Curious Inventions Eggs (200g), £2.99 each, Aldi

TEST
KITCHEN
UK
APPROVED

Good Eggs

From high street to high-end, we reveal this year's best chocolate offerings – every egg on the page has our Test Kitchen's seal of approval!



Veggie
choice

FAMILY EXPERTISE

This offering from James Cadbury, great-great-great grandson of Mr John Cadbury, partners milk chocolate with caramel and Maldon salt. **Love Cocoa Salted Caramel Milk Chocolate Easter Egg (150g), £10.95, lovecocoa.com**



SIMPLY DIVINE

These little Fairtrade eggs are great quality and feel heavy with chocolate. Pretty enough to dress your Easter table with, or to gift to friends.

Divine Smooth Milk Speckled Eggs (155g), RRP £4.75, Waitrose and Ocado

Easter treats



NEW CHOC ON THE BLOCK

Our team loves Tony's chocolate. This Fairtrade bar uses ingredients bought directly from cocoa farmers. **Tony's Chocolonely Meringue And Lemon bar, (180g), £3.98, Whole Foods and Sainsbury's**

Fair trade



EGGCITING

Heston Blumenthal's white banoffee eggs are a real showstopper.

Eggstraordinary Chocolate Hen's Eggs (150g), £6, Waitrose



PERFECTLY POSH

A quintessentially British egg from the official grocer to the Royal Family. If it's good enough for the Queen, it's good enough for w&h readers. **Praline Scotch Egg (150g), £15.95, Fortnum & Mason or fortnumandmason.com**

PRETTY IN PINK

We were impressed by the luxury look and feel of this deluxe 48-egg gift box. **Shell We Have Another One? Chocolate Truffle Eggs (372g), £12.95, Harvey Nichols**



ALL EARS

One of the finest chocolatiers in the world, Pierre Marcolini's rabbit in milk, white or dark chocolate is an affordable way to try the brand. **White Chocolate Heart Rabbit, (100g), £9, Pierre Marcolini**



NICELY NUTTY

Buttermilk's Easter range is plastic-free, and the rich ganache melts in the mouth. **Hazelnut and Chocolate Ganache Duo Easter Egg (235g), RRP £9.99, Waitrose**



BUTTONED UP

This luxurious egg, made from creamy Swiss milk chocolate, sports its pastel-coloured chocolate buttons with pride. A dapper choice.

Bettys Milk Chocolate Buttons Egg (170g), £11.95, Bettys stores or bettys.co.uk



FAIRTRADE AND FABULOUS

This hand-finished egg is dripping with rich, dark Belgian chocolate. Looks and tastes high-end, but a high-street price.

Irresistible Rose Gold Milk Chocolate Egg (200g), £6, Co-op

SPRING LEMON

Waitrose's zesty white chocolate lemon treat is a real winner – and the store wins our vote for its entire chocolate range.

Chocolate Spring Lemon (45g), £3, Waitrose

High street pick





REFRESHINGLY CRISP MORNINGS

FOR A LIGHT AND INVIGORATING START TO YOUR DAY,
TRY REFRESHINGLY CRISP OCEAN SPRAY.



Bottoms UP!



If you're hosting over Easter, try our Test Kitchen's pick of the best drinks, with great choices for every taste

From left to right:

1 A blend of mineral water with white Chardonnay grape juice makes a refreshing alcohol-free choice.

Irresistible Sparkling Chardonnay Grape Juice, £2.80, Co-op

2 This brooding intense red holds notes of cherry and blackberry against hints of mocha, pepper and oak. The perfect match for meat.

Carnivor Zinfandel 2017, £10, Tesco and Sainsbury's

3 Orange wine – white wine with an orange tint, originating from Eastern Europe – is becoming more popular, and this Romanian choice will impress guests. Fresh with a hint of quince, this naturally produced wine would work with our tropical pavlova on page 152.

Orange Natural Wine, £6 Asda

4 Salmon pink with a subtle violet glint, this delicate wine features scents of wild rose and red fruits. Drier in style than most sparkling rosés, it pairs exquisitely with salmon or cheeses.

Martini Rosé Extra Dry, £10, Asda

5 Made to a 100-year-old recipe with no artificial sweeteners, each bottle contains less than 60 calories. Lovely alone, but an Easter treat with gin.

Fentimans Light Gently Sparkling Elderflower, RRP £1.25, Sainsbury's and Ocado

6 Pink Champagne at the top of its game, this keeps winning awards. Amazing with fish but also works with our hot cross bun pudding on page 149.

Oeil de Perdrix Rosé NV Champagne, £27, Majestic

7 A refreshing gin from the Highland glens, with a touch of Perthshire fruits that won't overpower salmon dishes.

Caorunn raspberry gin, £20, Morrisons

8 Serve Slingsby Yorkshire Marmalade Gin with a dash of juice and pink peppercorns. Try it with fish, or our lemon meringue trifle on page 148.

£39.99, spiritofharrogate.co.uk

9 This refreshing white offers great value and is best paired with salad and Mediterranean flavours.

Tesco Finest Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc, £8

10 This New Zealand pinot recently won Gold at the Oscars of the wine world and is perfect with lamb.

Tesco Finest Central Otago Pinot Noir, £13

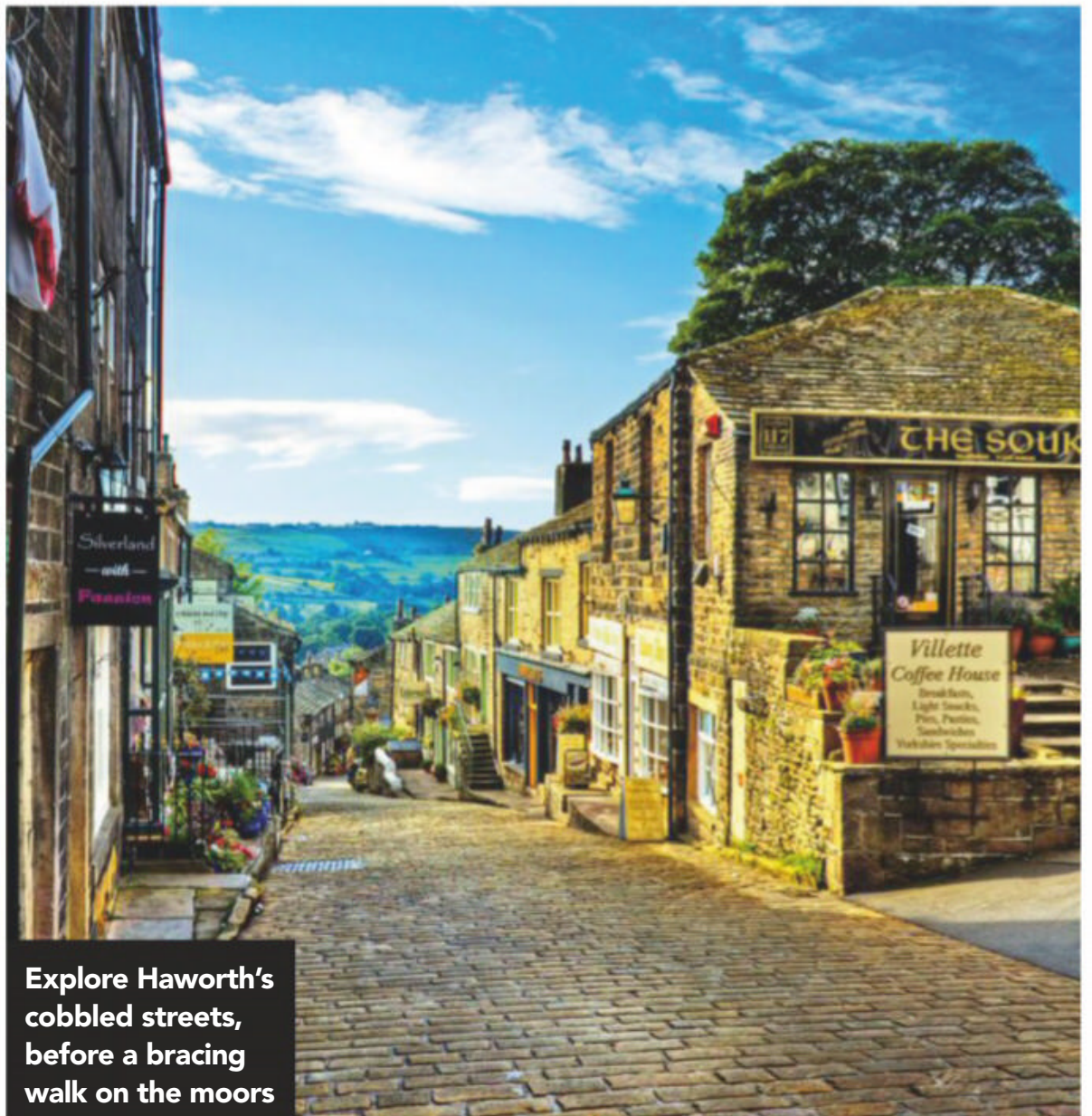
COMPILED BY: ELISA ROCHE. PHOTO: SAM STOWELL.
GLASSES: LSA FROM LAZIO LIVING



LITERARY *Landscapes*

Whether clambering up a craggy Yorkshire moor in search of Heathcliff, or taking a genteel stroll around Jane Austen's Bath, Britain's breathtaking locations are as diverse as the writers they inspired





Explore Haworth's cobbled streets, before a bracing walk on the moors

YORKSHIRE

THE BRONTES

The windswept moorlands of West Yorkshire brought endless inspiration to the Brontë sisters, Charlotte, Anne and Emily. They roamed the rugged landscape while conjuring up ideas for their novels, including Emily's *Wuthering Heights*, Charlotte's *Jane Eyre* and Anne's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*. The brooding South Pennines, aka Brontë Country, is studded with fascinating attractions. Visit the hilltop village of Haworth, with its original tea rooms and antiquated bookshops, and pop into the Brontë Parsonage Museum – the Brontë family home from 1820 to 1861.

Now a world-famous museum, you can wander through the well-preserved living quarters and see original letters and manuscripts written by the famous siblings.

Numerous splendid walks from Haworth include

the footpath to the Brontë Waterfalls – it's around 45 minutes from Haworth Main Street – and The Brontë Chair, a chair-shaped rock where the sisters are thought to have taken turns to sit and write their first stories. Part of the glorious 64km-long Brontë Way, this route leads through the valley and up to the moors, to Top Withens, a desolate ruin believed to be the setting for Heathcliff's farmstead in *Wuthering Heights*.

Where to stay The Dairy is a quirky semi-detached stone cottage with vintage fittings and a luxurious free-standing copper bath, just a few minutes from the centre of Haworth. 7 nights from £344, sleeps 2; sykescottages.co.uk >>



'A heaven so
clear, an earth
so calm'
Emily Brontë

inspirational travel

WALES

DYLAN THOMAS

The true identity of Llareggub, the sleepy village in *Under Milk Wood*, has never been confirmed, but Laugharne, in the historic Welsh county of Carmarthenshire, has long staked a claim as Dylan Thomas's muse. Sitting on the estuary of the River Tâf, with its majestic Norman castle, this is where Wales' most celebrated poet spent the final years of his life. Take the two-mile Dylan Thomas Walk to see the views across the estuary and over the harbour to Thomas' writing shed, the Boathouse, where he lived from 1949 to 1953. Pause for a pint at one of the writer's favourite drinking spots, the Cross House Inn. Above the village is the graveyard of St Martin's Church, where the poet and his wife, Caitlin, are buried.

Where to stay The boutique Brown's Hotel in Laugharne was once Thomas' favourite drinking spot. Double rooms from £105 per night; browns.wales



‘We are not wholly bad or good, who
live our lives under Milk Wood’

Under Milk Wood



BATH

JANE AUSTEN

When the author's father moved his family to Bath in the early 1800s, the city was a flourishing spa resort, much favoured by fashionable society. Jane Austen's time spent here inspired two of her famous novels, *Northanger*

Abbey and *Persuasion*, and many of its Georgian features remain unchanged. Visit Bath Assembly Rooms, with its original crystal chandeliers – the setting for many balls depicted in *Northanger Abbey*. Also stop by at The Pump Room, frequented by the Austens. The Jane Austen Centre houses the Regency Tea Rooms, and

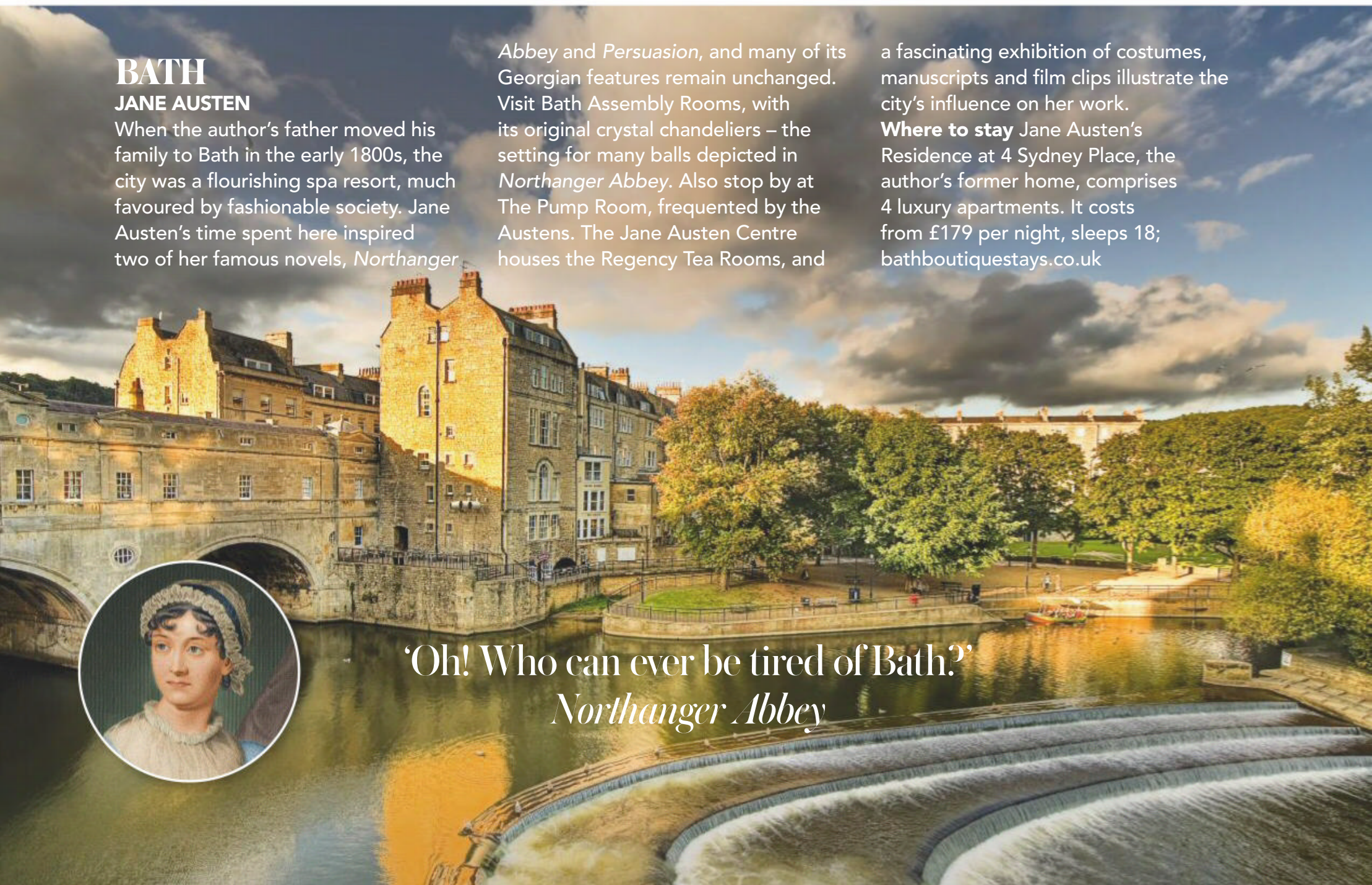
a fascinating exhibition of costumes, manuscripts and film clips illustrate the city's influence on her work.

Where to stay Jane Austen's Residence at 4 Sydney Place, the author's former home, comprises 4 luxury apartments. It costs from £179 per night, sleeps 18; bathboutiquestays.co.uk



‘Oh! Who can ever be tired of Bath?’

Northanger Abbey



SCOTLAND

JM BARRIE

The remote retreat of Eilean Shona was a source of endless inspiration for JM Barrie. 'It almost taketh the breath away to find so perfectly appointed a retreat on these wild shores,' he wrote in the 1920s, and it retains that power today. The private isle, in a tranquil

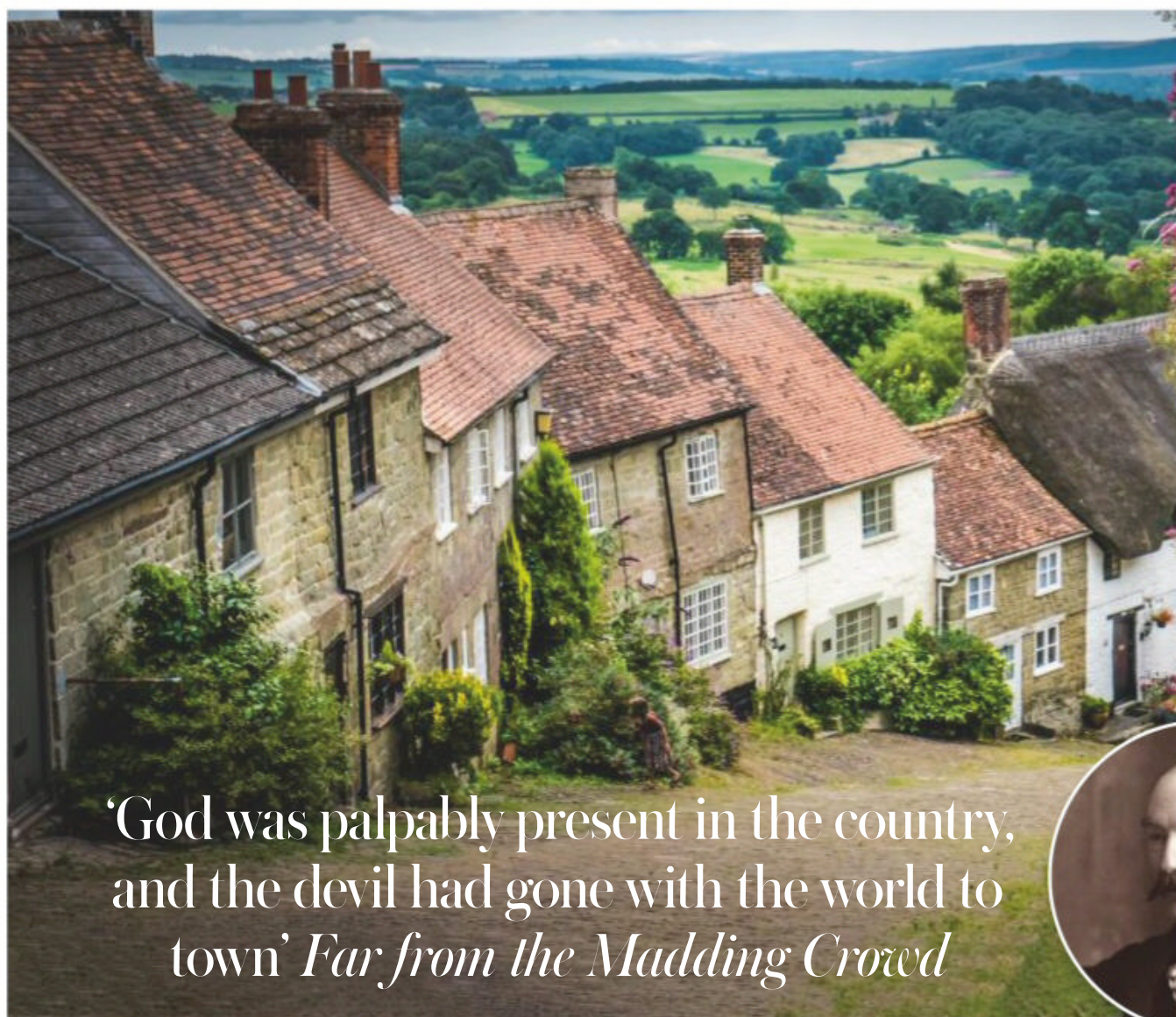
loch near the isle of Skye, inspired the dream landscape of Neverland. Barrie spent a summer here, renting the island as a holiday home with his foster sons and their friends. They became the inspiration for the Darling family characters and the Lost Boys, plus the mischievous boy who never grew up – Barrie wrote the play script of

Peter Pan here. Just a short boat ride from the mainland, the island is a haven of tranquillity – explore moss-covered woods, open hills and the sandy beach.

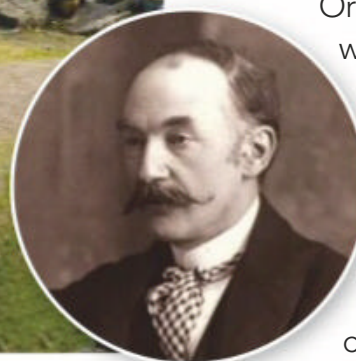
Where to stay Book one of the island's cottages, sleeps 2 or 4, or rent Eilean Shona House, sleeps 20. A week at Shepherd's Cottage, sleeps 2, costs £900; 01967 431 249, eileanshona.com



'Just think of happy things, and your heart will fly on wings, forever, in Never Never Land!' *Peter Pan: Fairy Tales*



'God was palpably present in the country, and the devil had gone with the world to town' *Far from the Madding Crowd*



DORSET

THOMAS HARDY

Explore the rolling landscape of Thomas Hardy's Wessex on a walking tour of Britain's first literature-themed long-distance path, the backdrop to many of the author's celebrated novels. Saunter between villages with thatched cottages and through chalky landscapes. Stop at the Inn in Cranborne where Hardy stayed, follow in Tess of the d'Urbervilles' footsteps to Win Green, and Shaftesbury (Shaston in *Jude the Obscure*).

Where to stay A walking holiday created with Margaret Marande, author of *The Hardy Way – A 19th-century Pilgrimage*, takes in the highlights. From £670pp including 6 nights B&B; inntravel.co.uk

Or book in to Chesil Cottage, with sea views over Chesil Beach – Hardy's house, Max Gate, and Hardy's Cottage are a few miles away. Sleeps 4, from £397 for 2 nights; nationaltrust.org.uk/holidays/chesil-cottage-dorset >>

ENGLISH RIVIERA

AGATHA CHRISTIE

Dame Agatha Christie loved Devon, and it's rich with landmarks that'll fascinate fans of the Queen of Crime. Walk the Agatha Christie Mile along the seafront at Torquay, her birthplace, to see various spots that were intrinsic to the author's life, including the secluded bay where

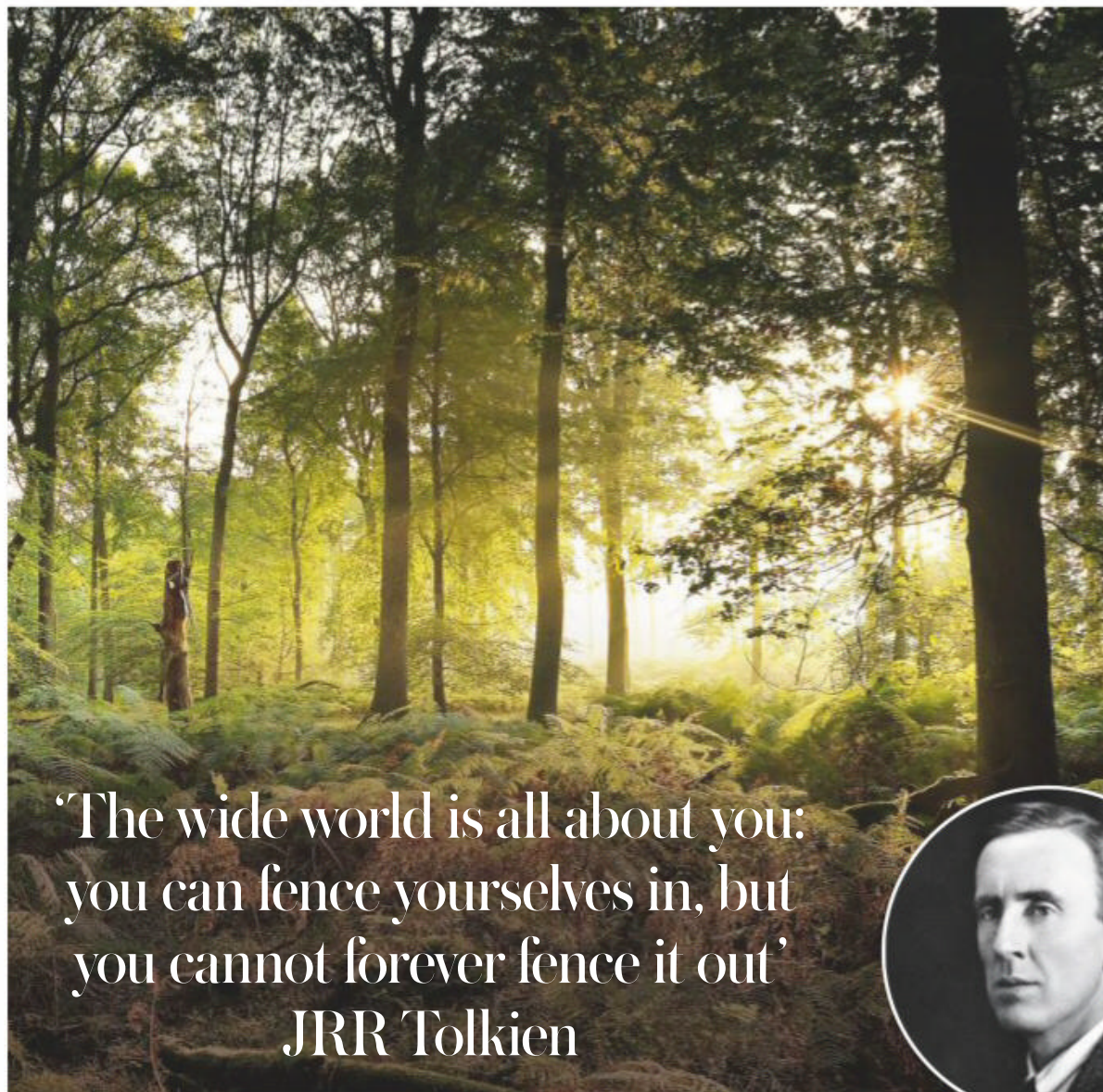
she liked to swim. Take a trip to the eerie caves at Kents Cavern, a short distance from Torquay's town centre, to view where she found inspiration for Hampsley Cavern in *The Man in the Brown Suit*. Six miles down the coast you'll find Greenway House, the Christie family's beloved holiday home, carefully preserved by the National Trust. And any Christie fanatic should pay a visit to

Burgh Island, the author's writing retreat, with its sandy beaches and silver seas. This wonderful little tidal island is well known as the setting for *And Then There Were None* and *Evil Under the Sun*.

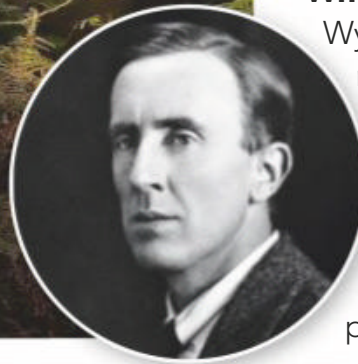
Where to stay The iconic Burgh Island Hotel, fully restored to its 1930s glamour, offers rooms including Agatha's Beach House. From £328 a night for Hercule Poirot, a cosy double; burghisland.com



'Devon is so beautiful, those hills and the red cliffs...' *And Then There Were None*



'The wide world is all about you: you can fence yourselves in, but you cannot forever fence it out'
JRR Tolkien



FOREST OF DEAN

JRR TOLKIEN

The Royal Forest of Dean in Gloucestershire is where you'll be surrounded by the magic of Tolkien's Middle-earth. The author is believed to have been a frequent visitor here, influenced by its rich folklore – a walk through the tangled primordial forest's Puzzlewood conjures up the intricate landscapes of his *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy and *The Hobbit*. With mossy rocks, twisted roots, woodland bridges, and pathways winding through the gullies, you'll almost expect to spot a hobbit or two. The surrounding ancient Forest of Dean offers forested hillsides, with ancient villages, castles, museums and cathedrals to discover.

Where to stay Check into Lower Wythall B&B, Herefordshire, 10 minutes from Puzzlewood. Set in a Grade II Elizabethan timber-framed house, with 1.3 acres of gardens, it enjoys views across the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Doubles from £97 per night; lowerwythall.co.uk

CUMBRIA

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

The Romantic poet William Wordsworth's beloved Lake District is celebrating the 250th anniversary of his birth throughout 2020, with lots of new things to see and do, thanks to the Wordsworth Trust's multimillion-pound Reimagining Wordsworth project. Dove Cottage, the poet's former home, sees new exhibits including sister Dorothy Wordsworth's *The Grasmere Journals*, and a recreation of the family's beloved orchard. The Wordsworth Museum is also being expanded and modernised, providing views of the surrounding fells, giving you the chance to stop and reflect on the landscape that brought to life many of

the poet's finest masterpieces. Wander lonely as a cloud around Ullswater, the inspiration for Wordsworth's most famous lyric poem, *Daffodils*, and check in at his birthplace at Cockermouth, presented exactly as it would have been in the 1770s, with a garden full of fruits, vegetables and flowers, and an open fire burning in the kitchen.

Where to stay Grasmere, in the heart of this newly designated World Heritage Site, was described by Wordsworth as 'the loveliest spot that man hath ever found'. Stay in the heart of the village at Herdwick Cottage, a traditional slate hideaway. Sleeps 4; 7 nights from £715; sallyscottages.co.uk/herdwick-cottage



'The loveliest spot that
man hath ever found'
William Wordsworth





Hidden CITY GEMS

Discover these celebrated spots and fabulous finds in four popular European destinations



AMSTERDAM

Follow the locals to discover this super-chilled, stylish city.

Amsterdam is a city that venerates art, architecture and design. The atmosphere is extremely relaxed and pleasant, the culture mind-blowing, and its buildings and canals beautiful enough to rival Venice.

Plus, there's less pollution than in UK cities – it's all about bikes and trams in Amsterdam. There are 881,000 bikes for 811,185 residents, and 58% of them cycle daily – be careful when crossing the road!

A good way to find your bearings is with a canal trip. There are scores on offer, such as 'The Tourist', a gem of a 1920s 'salon boat' owned by the Pulitzer Amsterdam luxury hotel. This wooden beauty boasts a bar, floral arrangements worthy of a Dutch flower painting, red leather banquettes and, best of all (when I went), Captain Tony, who leads a 75-minute round trip of the city's waterways pointing out sites of interest (the houses of Rembrandt and Anne Frank, for example), in perfect English with a gorgeous Dutch accent. A must. Real Amsterdammers hang out in the cool hipster end of town – Jordaan and the Western Canal/9 Streets area, all ultra-tasteful health food cafés, and art and design shops. This is an endlessly attractive place to compare the subtle differences in the main canals, the red and yellow roses growing up the fronts of houses, the lavish window boxes, the houseboats and gabled 17th-century terraces.

Definitely worth a trip is Ons' Lieve Heer op Solder. This translates as 'Our Lord In The Attic' and is a clandestine Catholic church set in the roof of a perfectly preserved 17th-century home, which feels a bit like entering one of the paintings by a Dutch Old Master, with black-and-white floors, narrow staircases and beds in cupboards. Be warned – it is situated in the heart of the infamous red-light district, which is itself worth a quick look if you have the stomach for reefer smoke and sex shops.

For the city's major art treasures, visit the Van Gogh Museum – a fascinating

exploration of the artist through a chronological display of paintings and letters. Among more than 200 artworks are the famous *Sunflowers*, *The Bedroom* and *The Harvest*. Queues (as for the Anne Frank museum) are huge, so pre-book and arrive as early as possible. Slightly less crowded, though equally stuffed with extraordinary artworks is the Rijksmuseum, a huge national gallery where every corridor leads you to a yet more recognisable paintings – Vermeer's *The Milkmaid*, Rembrandt's *The Night Watch* – you get the idea. The museum is epic and the side galleries featuring special exhibits are another treat.

If you go to Holland, you must eat two things. The first is an Indonesian meal – as compulsory to the Dutch as a curry would be to a Brit. Try Puri Mas, a first-floor restaurant near Leidseplein, where the waiting staff wear traditional batik and they play calming jazz. Rijsttafel is a traditional, mezze-type Indonesian meal featuring multiple dishes of mouth-watering satay, gado-gado, noodles drenched in coconut, peanut sauce and fragrant spices.

The other culinary must is a pancake house. The Pancake Bakery on Prinsengracht is prettily situated canalside and while the menu features

modern twists, such as caprese with tomato and pesto, you really can't go wrong with the old Dutch classic (apple, bacon and syrup) – a dream come true.

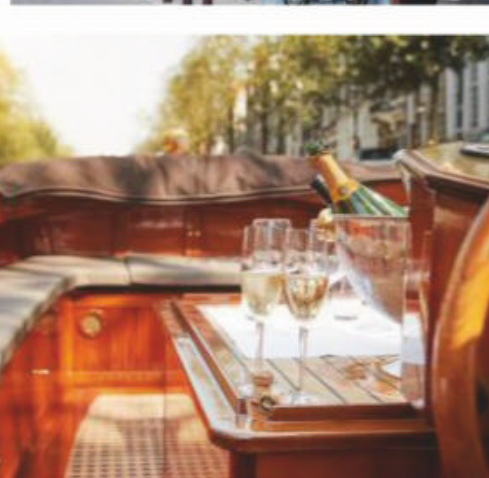
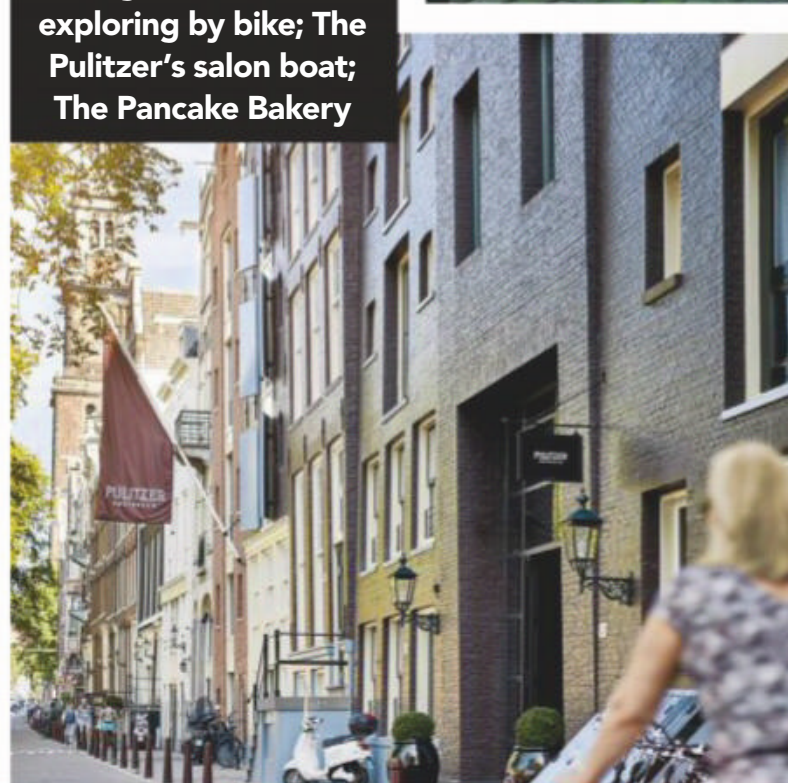
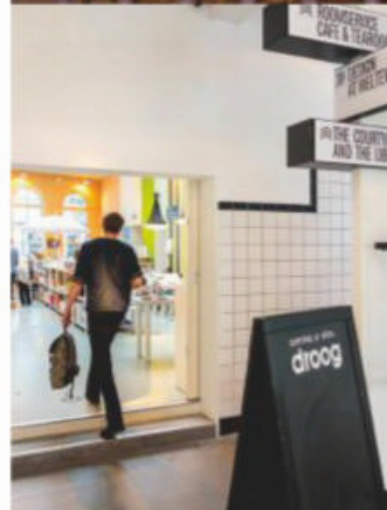
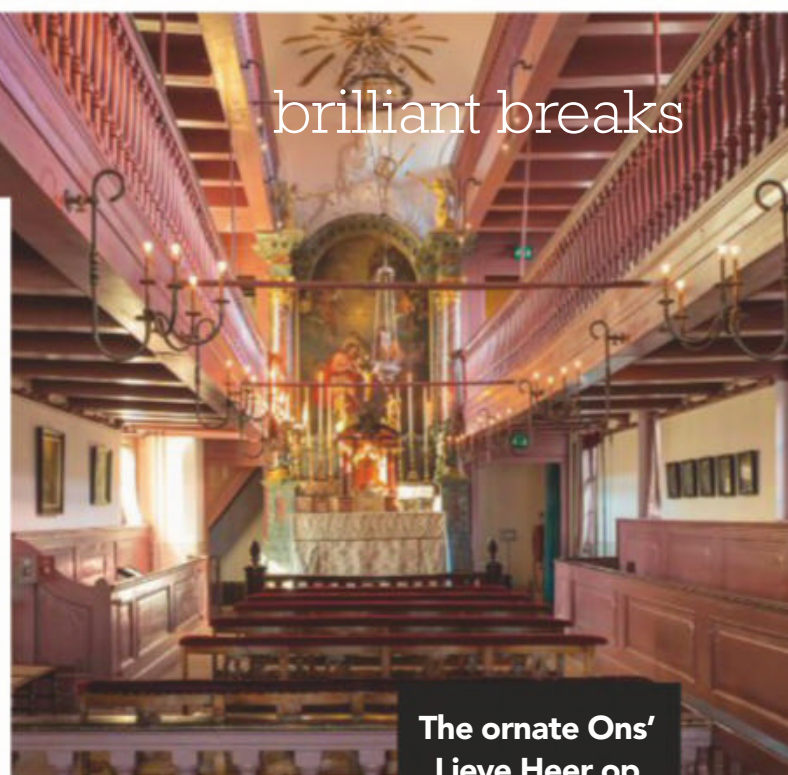
Dutch cheese, gin and tulip bulbs are the clichés, but shop in the Art Deli (art-deli.com) or Droog (hoteldroog.com) for a great gift range to impress folks back home. >>

✚ **For flight options, see skyscanner.net, or take the train via Brussels; eurostar.com**
✚ **For more information see iamsterdam.com and holland.com**

brilliant breaks

The ornate Ons' Lieve Heer op Solder museum

Clockwise from left: Droog; Dutch cheese; exploring by bike; The Pulitzer's salon boat; The Pancake Bakery





Clockwise, from top:
Mandarin Oriental
terraces, with a view
of the Eiffel Tower;
Beaupassage; the
Marais district; Buly



PARIS

Enjoy fashion, food and French chic.

The Paris Fashion Week crowds may have disappeared, but for style and luxury this city has year-round appeal, with top-notch art, fashion, cuisine and entertainment at every turn.

You can't beat simple pleasures such as strolling along its elegant, tree-lined boulevards, or watching the sun set over the River Seine – but there are tucked-away gems you need to know about.

On Rue Saint-Honoré, the Mandarin Oriental hotel is the epitome of refinement, with its own secret garden in the heart of the city, luxurious rooms and a superb spa. In its Michelin two-star restaurant, Sur Mesure, overseen by one of France's leading chefs, Thierry Marx, the dishes are as much about art as food.

What's more, the Mandarin Oriental has introduced a Shop Like A Parisian package with an insider's guide – *The Parisienne's Notebook* –

co-curated with the city's iconic, online lifestyle magazine, *Do it in Paris*.

One of the latest lunch destinations is Beaupassage, in the heart of the 7th arrondissement, where the crème de la crème of the Parisian food scene have set up shop. Thierry Marx La Boulangerie on Rue de Laborde makes for an inexpensive stop-off, with delicious savouries that fuse oriental and French flavours and irresistible sweet fancies.

If you've never visited a fashion atelier, nearby Maison Rabih Kayrouz, tucked away in a courtyard, is the place to try. Featuring a workshop and boutique, you can glimpse the team making the Lebanese designer's stunning clothes – from gorgeous draped dresses and blouses to chic, structured designs.

And if you're going to splash some cash on style, a visit to a bijou perfumier is a must. Situated in the trendy Le Marais district, with its medieval network of lanes, Buly is filled with divine scents. Dark, polished wood, marble counters and fragrances based on Mexican tuberose, Peruvian heliotrope or Scottish lichen make for a truly

memorable experience. The Marais is also home to a marvel of renaissance design – Musée Carnavalet on Rue des Francs Bourgeois. It's the place to discover the history of Paris, as told

through art, design and architecture – and has reopened after a three-year renovation project.

A 10-minute walk away in Rue Froissart, you'll find one of the area's newest eateries, Malro. Contemporary with a buzzy vibe and delicious Mediterranean-inspired dishes, it's the perfect way to round off a day's exploring.

✦ **The Mandarin Oriental Shop Like A Parisian package, €1,185 for 2 per night; mandarinoriental.com**
✦ **For general info on Paris, visit en.parisinfo.com**

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EDINBURGH

Be inspired in Scotland's capital.

There's always something special to discover in Edinburgh, whether it's the historic Old Town and Castle, the elegant New Town (actually not so new, as it was built in the 18th century), the world-class museums, or simply the stunning street vistas and open spaces.

A good place to start is the famous Princes Street. Be sure to admire the Scott Monument, and call into the Scottish National Gallery, where you'll see the much-loved 'Skating Minister' – a painting that seems to embody the calm, unruffled character of the courteous Edinburgh Scots.

And if you're looking for a quality venue to dine, head to Ondine, an excellent seafood restaurant in the Old Town. While walking there from the New Town, literature fans should look out for Deacon Brodie's Tavern at 435

Lawnmarket. Brodie was one of the real-life inspirations for Robert Louis Stevenson's Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde.

After a busy day, try the Printing Press Bar & Kitchen on George Street. And why not finish the night with music at The Jazz Bar on Chambers Street?

On Sunday, you may want to do more sightseeing. Keen readers should enjoy The Writers' Museum in the Old Town,

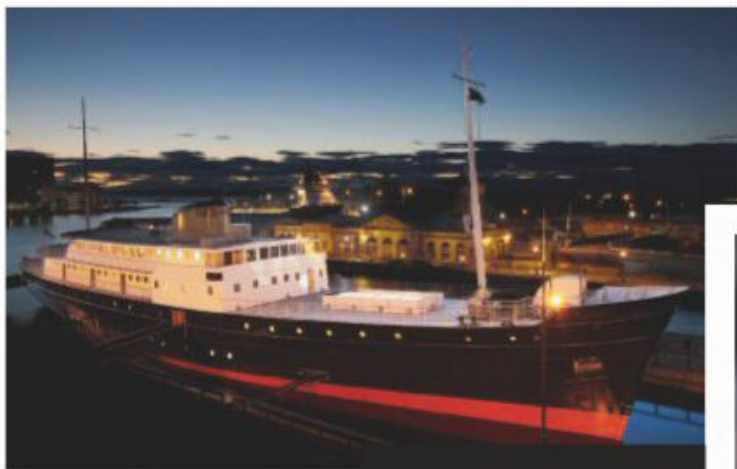
located in Lady Stair's House, built in 1622. It's packed with portraits, books and belongings of famous Scottish writers Robert Burns, Sir Walter Scott and Robert Louis Stevenson.

Another area worth exploring is the old Leith

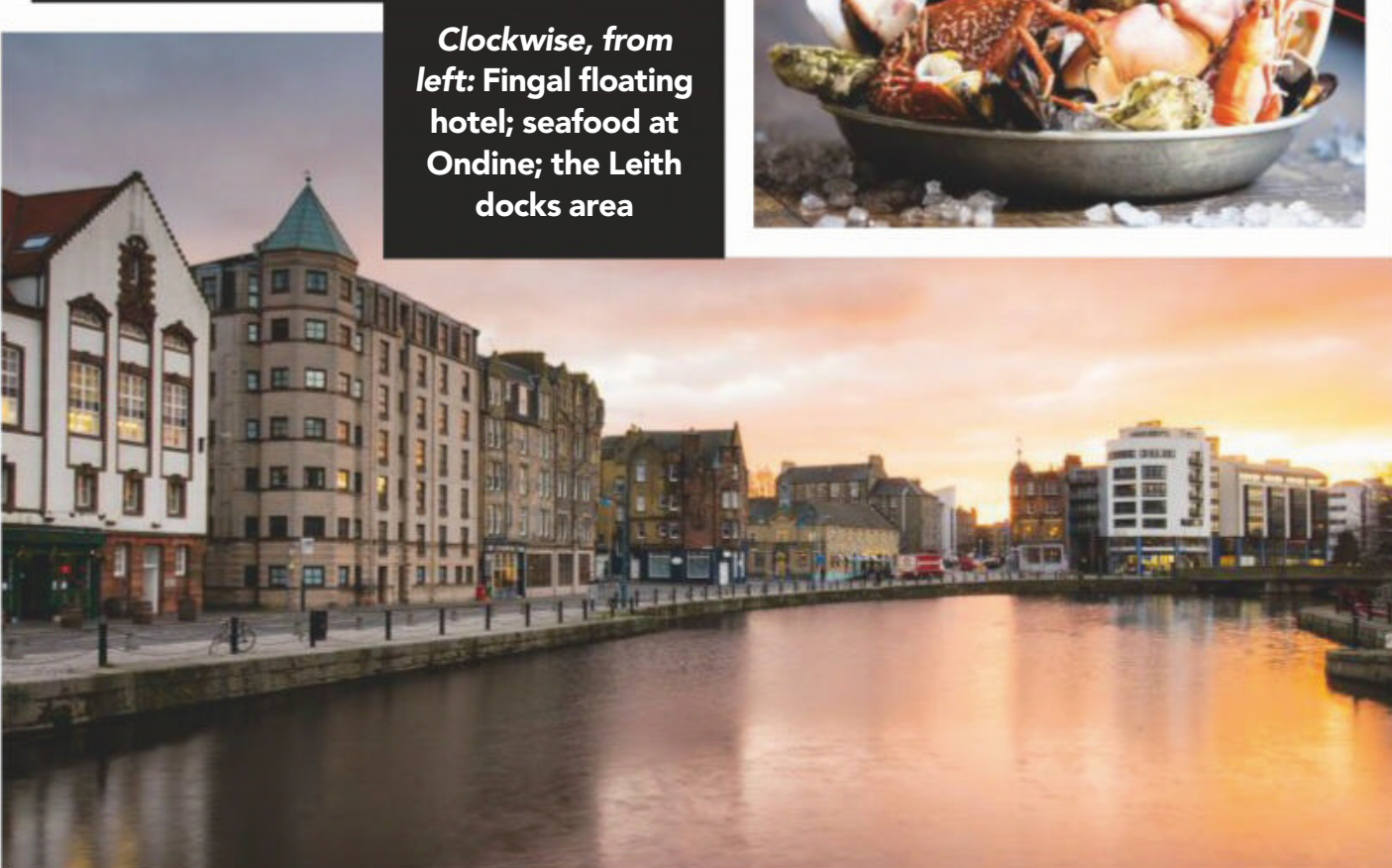
docks area and The Shore, now an attractive waterside hang-out. After, for a real treat, go for drinks and dinner at the nearby Lighthouse Bar on the floating ship, Fingal. Hugely romantic and Art Deco stylish, Fingal has leather sofas and marble-topped tables.

To round off the weekend, head to the Scottish National Portrait Gallery on Queen Street. Just sitting in the Great Hall of this neo-Gothic palace, with its frieze of the great and good of Scotland, is an experience in itself.

✚ **Fly to Edinburgh Airport, then take the tram into town. Or go by rail on the LNER to Edinburgh Waverley station; edinburgh.org**



Clockwise, from left: Fingal floating hotel; seafood at Ondine; the Leith docks area

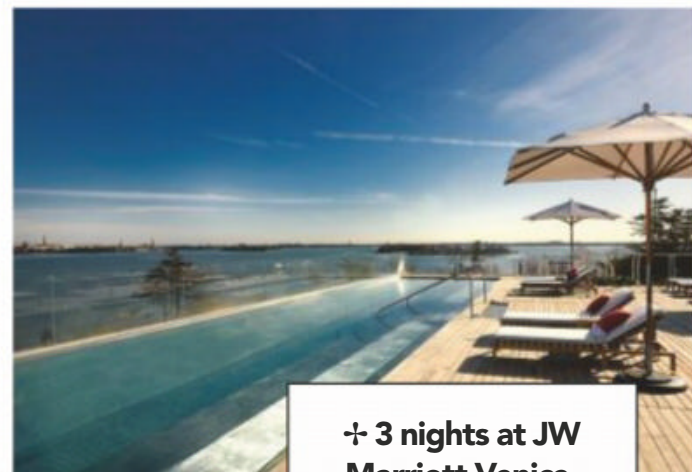


VENICE

A hideaway island with a cooking academy.

The lure of Venice's historic centre is irresistible but there are little-known delights too. One such is Venice's 'youngest' island, Isola delle Rose, a lush, green retreat that sits on the edge of the lagoon, backed by the deep blue Adriatic Sea. It's now the home of the luxurious JW Marriott Venice Resort & Spa, which you can get to via a James Bond-style 20-minute speedboat shuttle from Marco Polo Airport (around €150), or the tourist water bus (two hours).

This hotel is the perfect destination for combining culture with some R&R – it has a stunning outdoor rooftop pool (pictured below), with incredible views of Venice and St Mark's Square. And if that doesn't lower your cortisol levels, the fabulous spa certainly will.



✚ **3 nights at JW Marriott Venice, from £845pp, based on two sharing B&B, including return flights with easyJet from London Gatwick and private transfers; destinology.co.uk**

But the hotel's gem is its very own Sapori Cooking Academy, which is set amid beautiful gardens complete with a kitchen garden and orchards.

Classes with expert chefs will take your culinary skills to a whole new level (from €80pp). Learn how to make Italian biscuits with a top Italian pastry chef, try your hand at making fresh pasta, Venetian-style tapas, pizzas or focaccia, or book the 'Authentic Venice' course, which involves a trip to the famous Rialto Market to stock up on local produce before returning to the Academy to learn how to turn them into mouth-watering Italian dishes. Return home and you'll be able to recreate la dolce vita in your very own kitchen.

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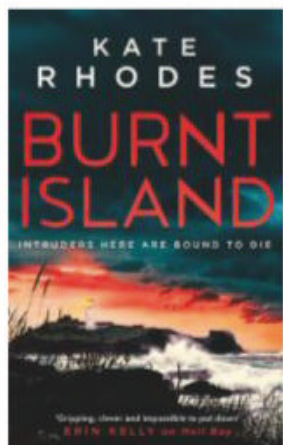


April's BOOK CLUB



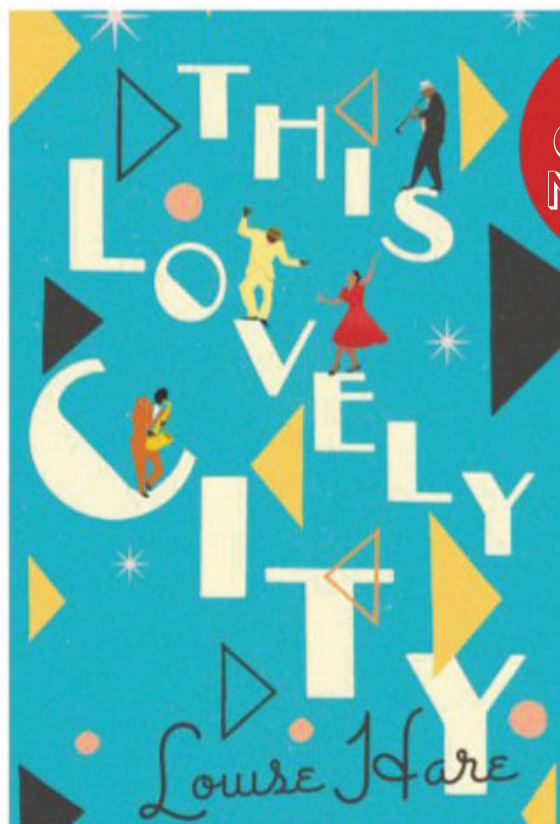
Our books editors Zoe West and Emma Shacklock share their favourite picks for the month, plus Maggie O'Farrell reveals her writing secrets

CRIME THRILLER



BURNT ISLAND
by Kate Rhodes
(£20, Simon & Schuster)

Everyone on the small island of St Agnes is excited about the fireworks display, but when a charred body is discovered on the bonfire, Scilly Isles Deputy Chief of Police Ben Kitto is on the hunt for a killer. Threats written in Cornish arrive and fires are lit, suggesting someone is targeting newcomers. Kitto is running out of time when artist Naomi Vine is kidnapped. A fast-paced whodunnit.

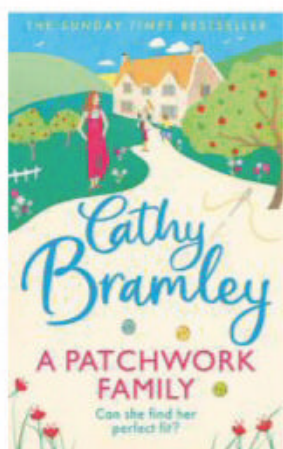


BOOK
OF THE
MONTH

**LIFE AND LOVE
THIS LOVELY CITY**
by Louise Hare
(£12.99, HarperCollins)

In her atmospheric debut novel, Louise Hare transports us to post-war London. It's 1950 and jazz musician Lawrie, fresh off the *Empire Windrush*, has taken lodgings and fallen in love with Evie, the girl next door. Touring the music halls of Soho by night, by day he works as a postman. But when he makes a terrible discovery, he becomes the prime suspect. It soon becomes clear that the new arrivals from the Caribbean may not be as welcome as they'd been led to believe. A thought-provoking mystery.

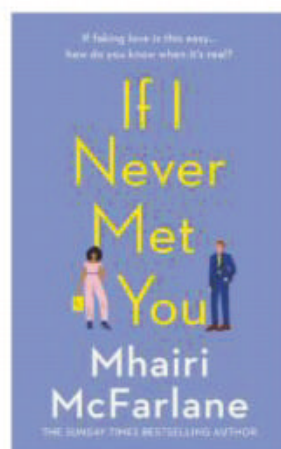
NEW BEGINNINGS



A PATCHWORK FAMILY
by Cathy Bramley
(£7.99, Orion)

A heart-warming tale of self-discovery sees newly divorced Gina taking back control of her life, starting with expanding her childminding business. But she needs bigger premises, especially when she takes on two new arrivals, twins Lily and Isabel, who need extra care. You'll be swept along by the bubbly narrative and picturesque setting – and promise of a romance with Dexter, a handsome visitor from New York.

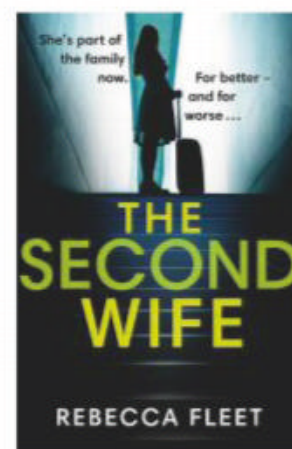
FAKE ROMANCE



IF I NEVER MET YOU
by Mhairi McFarlane
(£8.99, HarperCollins)

Lawyer Laurie is heartbroken when her partner of 18 years dumps her. Worse still, she has to work with him. So when she is stuck in a lift with handsome colleague Jamie, who suggests they 'fake date' as a revenge plan, she agrees. Only things don't go to plan – and it's not long before the two start to wonder if this really is just for show. Mhairi works her magic with these very likeable characters. Poignant, smart and witty.

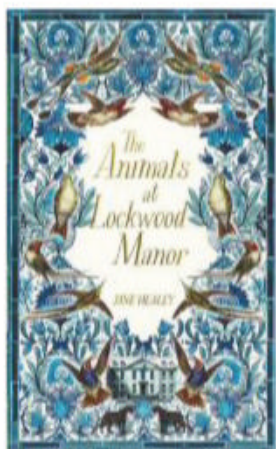
TENSE DRAMA



THE SECOND WIFE
by Rebecca Fleet
(£12.99, Transworld)

Alex arrives home to discover his home on fire – and wife Natalie and teenage daughter Jade are inside. The inferno is just the start of his world quickly unravelling. We flip back almost 15 years to Natalie's past life with her sister, and the secrets they're still running from. The tension slowly builds as Natalie's former identity is revealed. With twists and half-truths, Alex has to decide who he can trust to keep his daughter safe. A fabulous read.

GHOSTS OF THE PAST



THE ANIMALS AT LOCKWOOD MANOR by Jane Healey (£14.99, Pan Macmillan)

In the early days of World War Two, Hetty, a museum curator and evacuee, arrives at Lockwood Manor

with part of the Natural History Museum's collection. Yet there are strange goings-on and when Hetty feels she is being stalked, the book takes a ghostly turn. This hypnotic tale will keep you emotionally invested to the end.

SOHO SECRETS



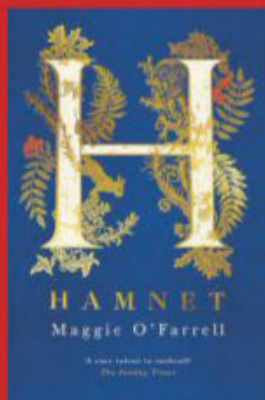
SHE CAME TO STAY by Eleni Kyriacou (£18.99, Hodder & Stoughton)

It's 1952 and the Great Smog has settled over Soho, London. Dina has arrived from Cyprus with her brother,

looking for a better life. When she meets the glamorous Bebbia at the notorious Pelican Revue, where she's started sewing costumes, she sees her chance to start living. Only, it appears that everyone has a secret. An intriguing tale of friendship, family, betrayal and hope.

HOW I WRITE

Maggie O'Farrell



Maggie O'Farrell is the author of seven books, including *The Hand That First Held Mine*, which won a Costa Book Award. Her latest historical novel,

Hamnet, is the thrilling story behind Shakespeare's famous play.

Nothing prepared me for how disorientating it would be to write a novel about the 16th century. I felt I had to relearn everything I knew about constructing a sentence, a paragraph, a line of dialogue. Swathes of metaphors and images were unavailable to me. Writing *Hamnet* reminded me most of my first forays and attempts into fiction.

I love research. For *Hamnet*, a lot of it was practical – I flew kestrels, planted a herb garden, walked around Stratford-upon-Avon and the Globe, and learnt how to make cures from plants and flowers. More fun than sitting at a desk!

Living with small children trains you to write in short bursts. It has become an ingrained habit of mine to rejoin the flow after an interruption.

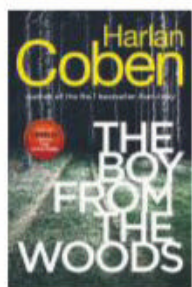
I'm pathologically secretive about my first draft. But when I feel that I've written myself into a corner, I show the manuscript to my husband, then editor.

My best piece of advice I ever got was: 'Keep going'. It was given to me by Barbara Trapido and Elspeth Barker, on an Arvon writing course, in 1996.

❖ *Hamnet* by Maggie O'Farrell (£20, Tinder Press), is out on 31 March.

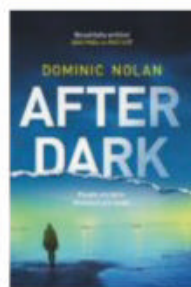


5 OF THE BEST *Intriguing investigations*



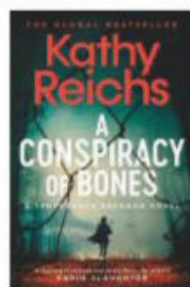
THE BOY FROM THE WOODS by Harlan Coben (Century)

When a girl goes missing and a finger arrives in the post, Wilde is called on to investigate. Dramatic and tightly plotted.



AFTER DARK by Dominic Nolan (Headline)

This gripping follow-up to his debut DS Abigail Boone thriller sees the detective on the trail of a terrifying criminal.



A CONSPIRACY OF BONES by Kathy Reichs (Simon & Schuster)

Forensic anthropologist Temperance tries to solve the case of a faceless corpse who had her phone number.



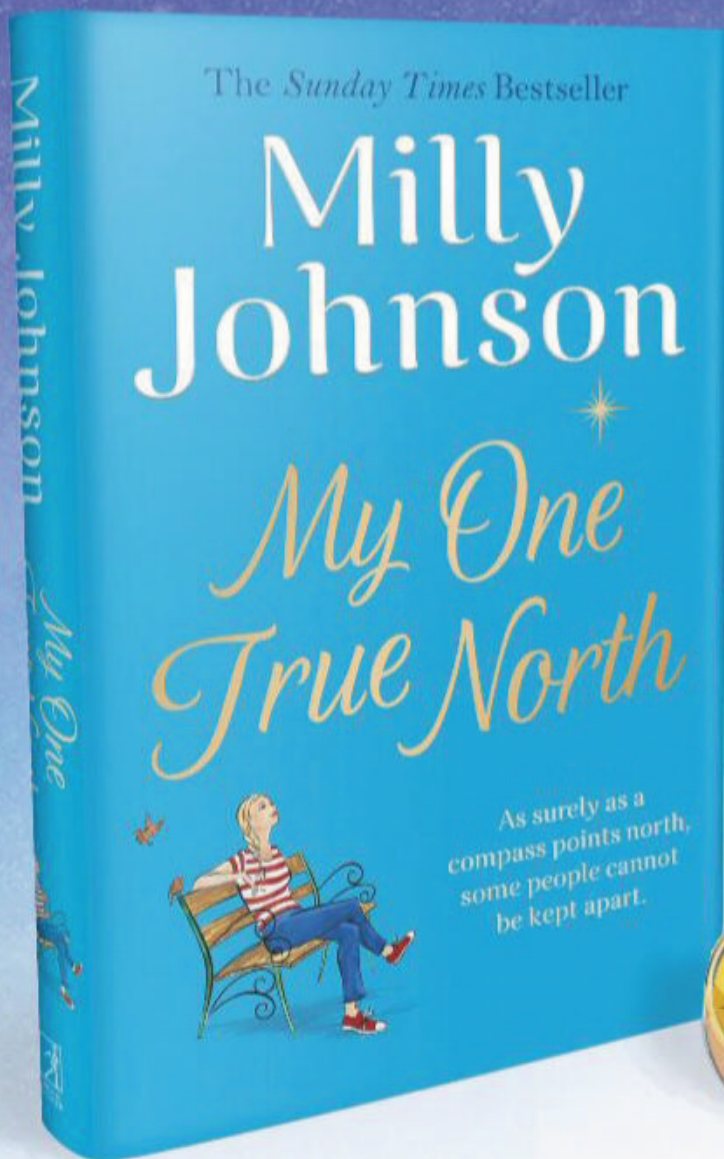
THE SILENT HOUSE by Nell Pattison (Avon)

When the deaf Hunters wake to find their daughter murdered, interpreter Paige suspects they are hiding something.



THE OTHER MRS by Mary Kubica (HQ)

An unsettling read. The brutal murder of a woman in a coastal town is witnessed by Camille, former mistress of a man who's moved to the area.



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IN CONVERSATION WITH

Joanna Trollope

Her new novel, *Mum & Dad*, looks at the balance families have to strike when things go wrong – and why we can't always have it all

The novels of Joanna Trollope famously shine a forensic but acutely sensitive

light on complex family dilemmas. Her latest novel, *Mum & Dad*, deals with the Beachams, who are thrown into disarray when expat father Gus suffers a stroke. It's up to the three children based in London to travel to Spain and untangle their parents' lives. The novelist lives in London, has two daughters and two stepsons, and is a doting grandmother.

What I'm trying to create with each new novel is a handbook of what it's like to live now. I started writing when my youngest daughter was three, and now she's 48, so things have certainly changed. I just write about whatever is grabbing me – whatever the preoccupation is in society.

With *Mum & Dad*, I was conscious that both my daughters work, and it isn't easy for anyone. It seems society hasn't quite caught up with the fact that women are expected to do all the caring for the family. My youngest daughter, who is the breadwinner in hers, still wants domestic control, even though she may



go into court as a barrister wearing a shirt ironed by her husband.

I hope my books act as conversation starters. My aim is to be right at the heart of what we're dealing with now. It doesn't matter if you're with family or a bunch of friends, in a book group or at work, you can say, 'I've just read a book about this.' You may be able to share it with others and say that it got you thinking about stepfamilies or later-life marriages.

I want people to know they are not alone. Anyone reading my books will hopefully feel that they are not excluded from the human race. It's not strange to feel jealousy, fury or anger – it's normal. In fact, it's OK for the reader to feel whatever they're feeling. I want to

entertain but also console. You're not alone if you want to cut the crotch out of your cheating husband's trousers.

***Mum & Dad* is partly set in Spain where the parents have set up home.** It's wonderful that so many parents live abroad, and it can relieve their children from cherishing them, but it's also >>

'You're not alone if you want to cut the crotch out of your cheating husband's trousers'

terribly hard to get to them. The children in this book have their lives – school runs and carol concerts – so when something terrible happens, it's difficult to just drop everything and go.

In my research I asked expats how they felt about coming back. All the women said they wanted to see out their old age in their own country and language, but the men didn't want to return. Gus – the father in the book – was more detached from his children as he was from that generation, but Monica, the mother, wants to be useful to them.

Some people think that by living abroad they can escape their woes.

But of course your baggage goes with you. I once thought I might go and live in Brussels, but work is here, and I love parts of England. I also don't want to lose touch with my grandchildren.

The cliché is that grandparents and grandchildren have a common enemy – the mum.

As a mum, you have to make a good citizen of your child. A grandmother doesn't have that same responsibility, so it can be an easier relationship. And as far as adolescents are concerned, it just wasn't as complicated when I was young. Today, girls may find themselves excluded from 'the group', and then, of course, their hormones are all over the place. It makes a huge difference to keep the lines of communication open.

Possessing the strength to deal with what life throws at you is of great importance.

It's false to think that life should be a bed of roses. You can have everything during your whole life, but you can't have it all at once. Even if you're extravagantly wealthy you'll never be free of worry, existing in a bubble and only associating with other people who are as wealthy as you. You can't appear without make-up, you can't be invisible. There's immense pressure with that.

I'm very fortunate that I have the opportunity to speak to children in schools.

I like to use my Freedom Pass

to travel around London. One thing I always say to the children is, 'the only person you're stuck with is yourself, so you may as well make yourself an irresistible, entertaining and satisfying companion.'

To be a good writer, I think you need to be knocked about by life a bit.

You need to have had your heart broken, lost your job. You need to have survived a lot of life's difficulties and disappointments. There is no such thing as an ordinary, easy, comfortable existence. The school of hard knocks isn't just about dealing with the setbacks, it toughens you up.

I think my writing has changed over the years.

I now know that I can hint at things without going into great detail, as I did in my earlier novels. I was alarmed that the readers might not get it, so I over-described. Now I know how clever and instinctive they are.

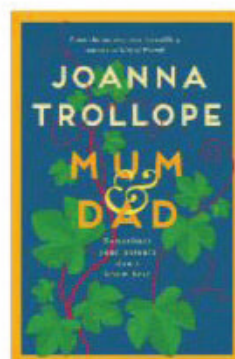
Do I still love writing as much as I did when I was younger?

I'm miserable when I'm not doing it. The difference is that 45 years ago, I was writing books off the back of a full tank, whereas now the tank is emptier. But I have more experience, I'm more tolerant and wiser. I know a lot more than I did.

I was really pleased to receive a CBE for services to literature.

I am a trustee of the National Literacy Trust, and it troubles me that what is known as 'book learning' isn't seen as a cool skill, with dire consequences in terms of mental health and career options. Prince William presented me with my award. He was terrific; taller and more personable in real life than he sometimes appears in photographs. I took my daughters and my son-in-law to the ceremony. We then went to The Wolseley, which gave me Champagne on the house to celebrate – a wonderful extra in a memorable day.

❖ *Mum & Dad* by Joanna Trollope is out now (£14.99, Pan Macmillan)



Joanna's BOOK CHOICES

FROM THE GOLDEN AGE OF FICTION

MIDDLEMARCH by George Eliot

This is the best handbook for ordinary life in the 19th century and one of the greatest Victorian reads. Aside from giving us an insight into the human struggle for pleasure, it explores all of life, from art to science, politics and romance.



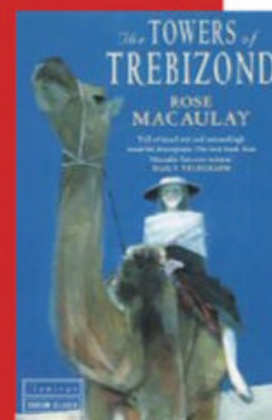
AN EPIC JOURNEY

THE TOWERS OF TREBIZOND by Rose Macaulay

A 20th-century novel that has everything – it's a polemic, a travel book, a romance.

It's also terribly funny.

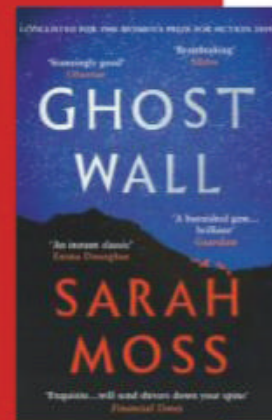
It has arguments for the rights of women in it and even a religious aspect. It's a complete masterclass in social observation, and it's a book I will read again and again.



THE AWARD-WORTHY ONE

GHOST WALL by Sarah Moss

Sarah Moss is an extraordinary writer and, in my opinion, she should have won the Women's Prize For Fiction. *Ghost Wall* is a story about a bus driver obsessed with the Anglo Saxons, so he makes his poor wife and daughter go on holiday to live like them. But while he is living out his dream, daughter Silvie begins to imagine another kind of existence. It's utterly brilliant.



reader offer



Join *w&h* and Mint Velvet for a Book Club Event THIS SPRING

Enjoy a fun evening with the author of *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel*

This May, women's fashion brand Mint Velvet is teaming up with the Bookends reading community to bring you an evening of drinks and book-related chat in two of their UK stores – Oxford and Muswell Hill – in the company of bestselling author Deborah Moggach (pictured above right), whose books include *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel* and *The Carer*.

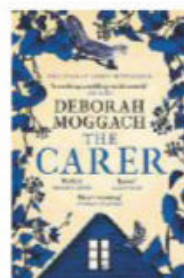
THE EVENT

Hosted by Mint Velvet, you can catch up with friends over a drink or two, talk books and treat yourself to something new for your spring wardrobe! You'll also be joining author Deborah Moggach for a live discussion as she regales you with

tales from her time working on the film version of *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel*, as well as her latest bestseller, *The Carer*. A funny, poignant and wry novel, it has been making big waves in the media over the past year...

'Unputdownable, fun and tender... perfection' *Marian Keyes*
'Joyous' *Daily Mail*
'A cracking social comedy' *The Times*

The ticket price will include a goodie bag and a copy of the book, which you can have signed on the night by the author. Mint Velvet will also offer guests a 15% discount voucher* on their spring/summer collection to spend on the night.



WHEN & WHERE

20 May Mint Velvet, 141 Queen St, Oxford

21 May Mint Velvet, 172-174

Muswell Hill Broadway, London

TIME

Arrive from 6.30pm for a prompt 7pm start. The event will finish at 8.45pm

PRICE

£10 (includes a copy of the book, drinks, nibbles, a goodie bag and a 15% Mint Velvet discount voucher*)

BOOK AT

Oxford:

headline.co.uk/mintvelvetoxford

Muswell Hill:

headline.co.uk/mintvelvetmuswellhill

MINT VELVET
Bookends

*FULL PRICE ONLY, NOT IN CONJUNCTION WITH ANY OTHER OFFER, EXCLUSIVE TO THE STORE ON EVENT NIGHT



A taste of LA DOLCE VITA

by Catherine Isaac

Booking a luxury holiday for us both was completely out of character for Mum, but was there a worrying secret behind her invitation?

I was surprised when my mum agreed to go on a wine-tasting tour, given that the last time she saw me order a double G&T, she was compelled to remind me of the perils of binge drinking.

'When in Rome,' she says, sloshing back a Bardolino. We are actually 400 miles from Rome, mini-breaking in a former Renaissance palace that sits high on a rock above the turquoise water of Lake Garda. The stone walls are dotted with lipstick-red geraniums, palm trees rise above the terrace and sports cars in kick-ass shades line up outside.

This is not the standard of accommodation Mum is used to.

In the 12 years since my dad died, to say she has been cautious with his pension is an understatement. She trades predominantly in money-off coupons and only puts the heating on if icicles are forming inside the windows. Her last holiday was to Llandudno, where she shared a twin room in a B&B with her friend Marjorie, until they were upgraded to a 'deluxe suite', which meant they got net curtains.

'Could we try the fizzy one?' she asks the wine guide.

'Of course,' he replies, pouring some award-winning Spumante Brut and inviting her to sip.

'Very nice,' she nods, pursing her lips like she's Oz Clarke.

The showroom has a view directly over the vineyard, where rows of tumbling grapevines ripple in the haze. There are only two other people browsing the shelves, an impossibly stylish couple in cool shades of designer linen. As our guide disappears to fetch the next bottle, my gaze slides to Mum. I wonder if this – the rare occasion of her being squiffy – is my opportunity to raise an issue that has been burning me up since we arrived.

'This one's aromatic, isn't it?' she says, rather pleased with the word.

'It's lovely. The whole trip is.' I force a smile.

'You deserve it. I know how hard you work and three children is a lot, especially when they're as much of a handful as yours.'

I can't bring myself to object, given that my teenager is currently working towards a PhD in backchat.

Mum's paid for the whole three days, refusing to allow me to cover anything except some Werther's Originals at the airport. It's not that she can't afford it – Dad left her enough to cover a couple of world cruises – but she's always been reluctant to spend it. 'Who would I go

on a cruise with?' she'd argue. She had a point, but it made me wish she and Dad had sailed away while they could, instead of saving for a future snatched away by fate and a dicky heart.

Now, here we are – mother and daughter – on a trip that has never been adequately explained.

The idea for this unprecedented adventure came only days after Mum's appointment at the breast clinic. Her checks were every six months in the first years after her mastectomy, but now

they're annual. I'd offered to accompany her, but she's never been one for fuss and considers 'moral support' to be a waste of bus fare.

Only, when I texted that afternoon asking

how it went, she didn't respond. I phoned later, but she couldn't get me off the line fast enough, insisting her lift was outside, waiting to take her to book club. It clearly slipped her mind that my husband David took her there the previous week.

'She probably just forgot to tell you the results of the screening,' he shrugged.

'You don't forget that kind of thing. She's hiding something.'

'Then she'll tell you when she's ready, Sarah. Back off and she'll raise the

My teenager is currently working towards a PhD in backchat



subject in her own time.'

I gave him the benefit of the doubt, but two days later all I'd got out of her was an invitation to Italy, to spend 'quality time' together.

'That doesn't mean she's dying,' David argued, at which point a sob escaped from somewhere in my throat and he hugged me and apologised.

'Mum,' I say now. 'What's the real reason we're here?'

She sighs. 'I should probably come clean, shouldn't I?'

I feel my chest tighten, my heart begin to race. 'Whatever it is, I'm here for you.'

She breathes deeply, then says, 'I've met someone.'

I blink, feeling unsteady on my feet. 'What? You mean... a boyfriend?'

She nods. 'I say I've met him... really, I've known him a long time. It's Mr Ahsan.'

It takes me a moment to place the name. 'Our dentist?'

I recall the gentle man who looked after our family's teeth for three decades and was very understanding when, aged four, I attempted to bite off two digits during an examination.

'I call him Samir these days,' Mum adds, turning pink around the temples.

'Mum,' I say now. 'What's the real reason we're here?'

'And he's no longer my dentist. I've had to register with Mr Monkwhistle instead.'

'I thought Mr Ahsan was married?' I ask.

'Brenda died in 2009.'

'But what about your breasts?'

Mum looks down, from one side to the other. 'What about them?'

'You've never told me what they said at the clinic,' I say. 'I assumed that's why we're here – because it was bad news.'

'Oh Lord, no – it was all-clear. And I did tell you. I sent a text straight afterwards.'

'A text? Mum, I never received anything,' I say, incredulous. 'You didn't save it as a draft again by mistake, did you?'

She considers the possibility and her expression wavers. 'It's not me who does that. My phone just decides to do these things sometimes.'

'Why didn't you phone me?' I ask.

'You always seem too busy,' she argues.

'I wouldn't have been for that!' I reply, hearing my voice rise. I take a large mouthful of wine, before turning to Mum and reaching for her hand. I squeeze her fingers briefly then withdraw and look down at my glass, feeling heat behind my eyes. 'God, I'm so glad you're OK.' The words are released from my mouth like air from a balloon.

She smiles. 'Me too.'

'So why are we here?'

'It was Samir's idea. He says I should enjoy my family while I'm "still young". I thought he was probably right. Do you... mind about him and me?'

Do I mind? Should I mind? I would have minded 12 years ago, in the days when I missed Dad so much I couldn't get out of bed in the morning without crying. I can't deny it feels odd, uncomfortable even, to hear my mother using the phrase 'him and me' about any man that isn't my father. But the moment the thought enters my head, I remind myself that at least I've got a mum, who is cancer-free and finally rediscovering some happiness.

'Absolutely not,' I say, emphatically.

'He's not a replacement, Sarah,' she continues. 'Nobody ever could be. We just enjoy each other's company. I've been so worried about telling you –'

'Mum, it's wonderful. You can finally go on holiday with someone other than Marjorie – or me, for that matter.'

'Oh, I've rather enjoyed holidaying with you.'

I clink my glass against hers. 'Mum, the feeling's mutual.'

❖ *Messy, Wonderful Us* by Catherine Isaac (£8.99, Simon & Schuster) is out now.

W&H WEEKEND

GREAT FILMS, TV AND CULTURAL TREATS



HEART-WARMING FILM

MUST-SEE MOVIES

Military Wives

Kristin Scott Thomas and Sharon Horgan are on song in this funny film inspired by Gareth Malone's chart-topping choir of army wives. Blending humour, heart and pathos, the movie hits all the right notes, making it hard to remain dry-eyed as this motley bunch of women find confidence, camaraderie and singing. **Out 6 March**



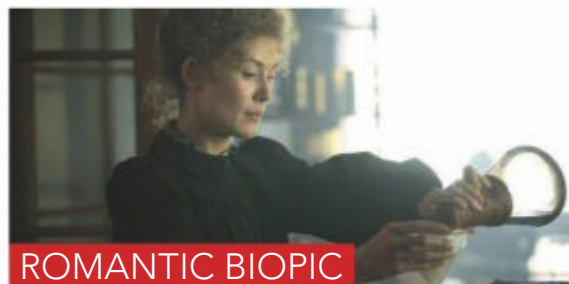
ACTION-PACKED PLOT

Misbehaviour

This sassy comedy drama takes us back to the 1970 Miss World contest, where Gugu Mbatha-Raw's Miss Grenada bids to make history, while women's libbers Keira Knightley and Jessie Buckley plot to disrupt the ceremony. **Out 13 March**

Radioactive

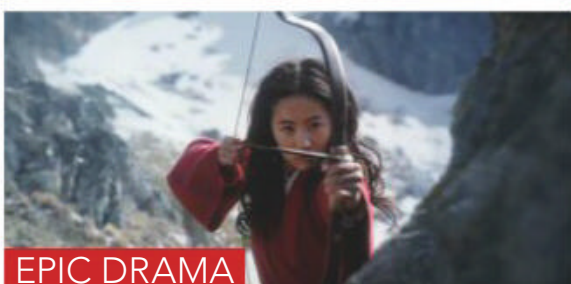
Rosamund Pike radiates human passion and scientific zeal in this biopic of two-time Nobel Prize winner Marie Curie, which both charts her pioneering life and the dangerous consequences of some of her discoveries. **Out 20 March**



ROMANTIC BIOPIC

Mulan

A plucky young woman (Liu Yifei), disguises herself as a man and takes her ailing father's place in China's army to defend the country from invaders in this live-action remake of Disney's 1998 animated adventure. **Out 27 March**



EPIC DRAMA

Hot new shows ON THE BOX



The Trouble with Maggie Cole

Dawn French joins Julie

Hesmondhalgh to play friends Maggie and Jill in this light-hearted drama. The revelation of big secrets ends up causing huge ructions in a small coastal community. **ITV**



The A Word

This emotional family drama moves on two years, with

autistic Joe, now 10, and living in two places because his parents are divorced. Joe's grandad, Maurice (Christopher Eccleston), helps to hold things together. **BBC1**



Hitmen

Former *Bake Off* duo Sue Perkins and Mel Giedroyc star in

this six-part comedy, playing hapless best pals Fran and Jamie, who have stumbled into a career in contract killing. But things don't go to plan thanks to their incompetence. **Sky1**



Belgravia

Tamsin Greig and Philip Glenister star in this adaptation

of the Julian Fellowes novel, set in 19th-century London high society. The pair play the Trenchards, who get an invite to a ball, leading to an unlocking of dangerous secrets. **ITV**



MY CULTURE DIARY

English tenor Russell Watson, 53, lives in Cheshire with his family

THIS MONTH YOU'LL FIND ME...

Watching *I'm a Celeb*, *Strictly* or whatever everyone else is tuning into at the time. Years ago, before I met my wife, I would sit through *Eggheads* or *The Chase*. But not any more.

Reading *Freakonomics* by Stephen J. Dubner and Steven Levitt, which is about the economics of society and how they can impact years later. I like complex reads.

Listening to Whatever my kids have on – Dua Lipa, Maroon 5 and Mabel. I set up different playlists depending

on how I feel at the time. If the kids are in the car, it's pop favourites. With the brother-in-law it's 80s, classical for Mum and if my wife's in the car, I go straight for relaxing.

Learning to Play tennis. Even though I've been practising for 20 years I'm still picking up different things on the court. I also try to keep brushed up on my languages and I'm learning new songs.

Scrolling Twitter and looking at what fans are saying. If I get anything written about me that's not nice I just block them.

Eating at The Coast, an Italian in Prestbury, Cheshire. And Yellow Broom in Twemlow Green is where I'd go for a romantic dinner with the missus.

Shopping at Prada,

Armani and Dolce & Gabbana. I'll spend £350-£400 on a Prada shirt and have it for 10 years. I've got a black one I've had for 15 years.

Buying Sportswear. I spend 99% of my time in tracksuit top, shorts and trainers. I like to keep my eye on the latest tennis fashions.

Visiting Scotland, particularly around Argyll Forest Park. But if I could go anywhere it would be Bora Bora in Tahiti. It's a dream place.

✦ For Russell Watson tour dates, visit: raymondgubbay.co.uk

LISTEN UP

Three fascinating podcasts you'll enjoy listening to while you're travelling or working out

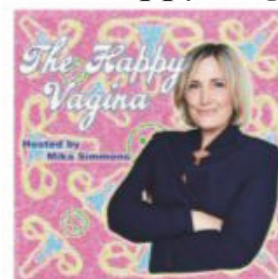
The RHS Gardening Podcast



With spring upon us, our minds turn to gardening, and what could be better than insider info, advice and inspiration from

RHS experts? Covering horticultural news, flower shows and tips, this is entertaining for greenhorns, as well as the green-fingered. **Apple Podcasts**

The Happy Vagina

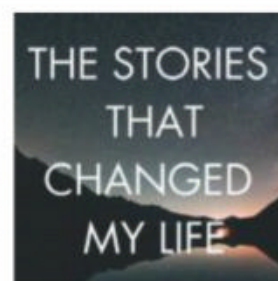


Sex, gynaecology and female body judgement are up for debate in this informative podcast hosted by Mika Simmons.

Guests include *Sex Education*'s Aimee Lou Wood and Tanya Reynolds, Bryony Gordon and Chloe Delevingne.

Thehappyvagina.co, Acast

The Stories That Changed My Life



A warm-hearted listen that features a different guest in each episode, who shares revealing life stories

and talks about the books and stories that inspired them. Interviewees include authors Daisy Buchanan, Zing Tsjeng and Elizabeth Day. **Acast**

STREAM IT Our pick of what to watch, whenever you want



Spenser: Confidential

Mark Wahlberg plays Spenser, a private detective

from Boston, who uncovers the truth about a murder. He then decides to take justice into his own hands, despite threats on his life. **Netflix**



All the Bright Places

Based on a novel by Jennifer Niven, this one-off drama

follows Violet (Elle Fanning) and Theodore (Justice Smith), who change each other's lives, but both struggle with scars from their pasts. **Netflix**



The Mandalorian

If you're mourning the end of the *Star Wars* film

franchise, then check out this spin-off series. It follows a lone Mandalorian gunfighter (Pedro Pascal), who works in the galaxy's outer reaches. **Disney+**

HOT TICKETS

THE SHOWS AND EVENTS YOU CAN'T MISS

Radical theme

In *Faustus: That Damned Woman*, award-winning playwright Chris Bush reimagines the Faust myth to explore what we must sacrifice to achieve greatness. Caroline Byrne directs this new work in which Faustus becomes female. **Until 7 March, Birmingham Rep; 10-21 March, Bristol Old Vic; 24-28 March, Leeds Playhouse; 31 March-4 April, Northern Stage, Newcastle; headlong.co.uk/productions**

THE LIFE OF TREES



NATURE AND ART

London's Hayward Gallery is hosting *Among the Trees*, a thought-provoking exhibition that explores the role trees play in our lives. Featuring works by artists such as William Kentridge, Tacita Dean and Jennifer Steinkamp, there will also be talks about climate change.

4 March-17 May;
southbankcentre.co.uk

Toe-tapping delight

With original music by the Gipsy Kings and a dashing romantic hero, *Zorro the Musical* will draw you in – literally. This dramatic tale of good versus evil puts the audience at the heart of the show, with an invitation to take part in flamenco dancing and sample tapas.

14 March-18 April, Hope Mill Theatre, Manchester; hopemilltheatre.co.uk

FEMININE TWIST



RAZOR-SHARP SHOW



SOCK-IT-TO-THEM OPERA

Operatic rom-com

Marking his debut as a director on the main stage at the London Coliseum, rising star Joe Hill-Gibbins offers a brand-new production of *The Marriage of Figaro* sung in English – complete with bedsocks! Susanna and Figaro are caught up in a whirlwind of mistaken identities as they try to elude the philandering Count Almaviva. **14 March-18 April; londoncoliseum.org**



ADVENTURE TALKS

Literary festival

There's a fascinating line-up of local and international talent at the Words Weekend festival at The Lowry in Salford, which will showcase the literature and music of the North West. There will be talks from people as diverse as explorer Sir Ranulph Fiennes, national Poet Laureate Simon Armitage, the Happy Mondays' Shaun Ryder and historian Selina Todd, who will look at the life of dramatist Shelagh Delaney.

27-29 March; wordsweekend.com

WHAT'S TRENDING

From a gin adventure and lavish afternoon teas in castle grounds, to wonderful walks

It's Mother's Day on 22 March and while Sunday lunch never fails to delight, there are many other ways to celebrate. Quaffers will love a chauffeured Gin Lover's Guide with Sipsmith in Liverpool, which includes tastings and cocktails; or hop aboard a steam train at Merthyr Tydfil and ride the Brecon Mountain Railway, complete with a cream tea. National Trust properties with

Say cheers to gin cocktails



Picnic at Highclere Castle



beautiful spring gardens are always a treat. Many, like Baddesley Clinton in Warwickshire, will offer walks, lunch and afternoon tea specials. There are activities too – make a seed bomb at Tattershall Castle in Lincolnshire; indulge in gin-tasting at Waddesdon in Buckinghamshire; or splash out on a family portrait against the beautiful backdrop of Box Hill, Surrey, with award-winning photographer Rachel Thornhill on Saturday 21 March, 10am-3pm.

Downton Abbey fans will love a tour of Highclere Castle in Hampshire, with Champagne afternoon tea, plus the Egyptian Exhibition that charts the 1922 world-famous discovery of the Tomb of Tutankhamun by Howard Carter. Or try a spa day – check out spabreaks.com, groupon.co.uk or wowcher.co.uk

BOOK NOW

✦ Classical music lovers will be pleased to know the Spitalfields Music Festival is back, bringing unforgettable live music experiences to unusual East End venues, with a blend of early music and pioneering contemporary pieces. 24-28 June; spitalfieldsmusic.org.uk

✦ Queen of British soul Beverley Knight is to star in *The Drifters Girl*, a new musical that tells the story of the legendary group and the woman who made them. Premiering in Newcastle Theatre Royal on 5-19 September, then from 1 October at London's Garrick Theatre; thedriftersgirl.com

Discover the stunning **AMALFI COAST**

Your chance to experience the glamour of Capri, the ancient history of Pompeii and the stunning scenery of the Bay of Naples

**8 DAYS
FROM ONLY
£729**

PER PERSON*

**Selected departures
April to November 2020**



View from
Ravello



Ruins of
Pompeii



Italy has retained its roots and traditions, offering excellent food and wine, sublime scenery, a great climate and a phenomenal cultural legacy.

Our base for this tour is picturesque Sorrento, with the chance to explore the Amalfi Coast (left). Next it's the island of Capri, whose romantic allure has attracted visitors for hundreds of years.

The skyline of the Bay of Naples is dominated by Mount Vesuvius, most famous from 79 AD, when Pompeii and Herculaneum were entombed by a sea of molten rock and ash.

FULLY ESCORTED PRICE INCLUDES

- ✦ Exploring Herculaneum with an expert local guide
- ✦ Boat trip to the island of Capri, with the opportunity to visit the Blue Grotto
- ✦ Guided tour of Pompeii
- ✦ Full day touring the Amalfi Coast, with a visit to hilltop Ravello
- ✦ Stay in Sorrento and a walking tour
- ✦ Return flights from a selection of regional airports with hotel transfers
- ✦ Seven nights in a choice of three- to four-star superior accommodation inclusive of all local taxes, with breakfast and dinner. Stays at the Hotel Mediterraneo and the La Badia are on a B&B basis
- ✦ The services of our experienced tour manager throughout

YOUR ITINERARY

DAY 1

ARRIVAL IN SORRENTO

On arrival we transfer by coach to Sorrento, where you have a choice of carefully selected hotels to stay for seven nights.

DAY 2

WALKING TOUR OF SORRENTO

Our first full day in this centuries-old resort is at a suitably relaxed pace, beginning with a short walking tour. The region has a long history of lemon cultivation, and it seems that anything can be made from the local citrus fruit, including soaps, cosmetics and ice cream.

DAY 3

POMPEII

This site is so much more than a collection of ruins. Our tour of the Roman town highlights its astonishing state of preservation – streets, temples, baths and the amphitheatre remain largely intact.

DAY 4

FREE DAY

Today is a free day to spend at leisure in Sorrento, and enjoy a relaxed lunch at a restaurant of your choice.

DAY 5

CAPRI

This island is renowned the world over, and today we take a short boat ride to discover its charms. It has long been the most desirable part of the Bay of Naples – as we approach, you'll see why the island is regarded as a true Mediterranean paradise. There is also the option to visit the famous Blue Grotto – the large sea cave that takes its name from the incandescent blue light that bathes the cavern.

DAY 6

NAPLES AND HERCULANEUM

This morning we drive north around the bay to Naples, and enjoy a guided walking tour of the historic centre. After free time over lunch we will visit Herculaneum, located in the shadow of Mount Vesuvius. Like Pompeii, it was buried under mud and ash when the volcano

erupted in 79 AD. Our local guide will bring the history of Herculaneum to life as you walk around this preserved UNESCO World Heritage Site.

DAY 7

AMALFI COAST

Today you'll have a chance to experience the Amalfi Coast on our coastal drive that takes us above the exclusive resort of Positano.

DAY 8

RETURN HOME

Transfer to the airport for your flight home.

TO BOOK OR
FOR A FREE
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Call 01283
742348
OR VISIT
wahriviera.co.uk

TERMS & CONDITIONS
*Additional entrance costs may apply. Prices are per person, based on two sharing and subject to finite availability. Images used in conjunction with Riviera Travel. Offer operated by and subject to the booking conditions of Riviera Travel Ltd, ABTA V4744, ATOL 3430, a company wholly independent of woman&home, published by TI Media Limited. Prices correct at time of going to print.



VIENNA, BOHEMIA & TREASURES OF THE DANUBE

Save up to £200 per person*

Five days from only £1,599PP

Take a stroll along Vienna's grand boulevards, admiring its magnificent Baroque architecture and dazzling palaces. Discover the famous abbeys at Göttweig and Aldersbach, one of the most important Baroque churches in southern Germany. Lose yourself amongst the quaint jumble of houses in delightful Passau and bustling Linz with its fascinating Roman past before we return to glorious Vienna, a spectacular finale to a truly exceptional cruise.

Fully escorted price includes:

- Guided tour of Vienna and visit the dazzling Schönbrunn, the Habsburgs' splendid summer palace
- Visit to medieval Regensburg, with its soaring Gothic cathedral and iconic 13th-century bridge
- Full day excursion to the picture-perfect medieval town of Český Krumlov
- Guided tour of Göttweig Abbey
- Visit to Aldersbach Abbey, one of the most important Baroque churches in southern Germany
- Enjoy visits to the attractive medieval city of Krems and strikingly situated Passau, 'Town of the Three Rivers'

It's all included in the price

- Eye-opening tours with expert guides
- Return flights from a selection of regional airports
- The services of an experienced cruise director and concierge
- All meals on board from dinner on your day of arrival until breakfast on your day of departure
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INTIMATE

My friend laughed when I told her I'd bought a vibrator... but now we're both smiling!

I enjoy a better sex life, enhanced libido and even better sleep since I bought my PicoBong Zizo from Jo Divine!

I'd been intrigued by Jo Divine's adverts for beautiful vibrators since they started advertising back in 2008. Eventually, curiosity got the better of me and I phoned for a brochure, which they sent in a plain envelope. Jo Divine have been trading since 2007 and know ALL about discretion - they never send unsolicited post or sell on customer details.

I was impressed by the brochure. It is beautifully produced and very stylish! I settled on the slim PicoBong Zizo battery-operated toy. PicoBong's quality speaks for itself - they have sold over a million vibrators! A couple of days after ordering, a discreet plain box arrived in the post, within which was the Zizo. The vibrator is made from smooth silicone and is skin safe, powerful, quiet and 100% waterproof. Don't think that vibrators are just for use alone - I love to use mine with my husband and my Zizo means that I never have difficulty reaching orgasm.

Since my first purchase, I've been a frequent visitor to Jo Divine's web site. There's so much free information and advice and it's all presented in a very pleasant manner - it has certainly made me feel much more confident about trying out new toys! Oh, and remember that friend who had a little giggle at my expense? Well, she's the very happy owner of a PicoBong Zizo too!

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Mrs Etherington – Lake Como, St Moritz & the Bernina Express

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Your STARS

Astrologer Wendy Bristow's predictions for the month of April

TAURUS

21 APRIL – 21 MAY

On the 20th your birthday season begins with a bang, building to the big Taurus new moon on the 23rd. Now's the time for trying new hobbies, diets and jobs.

Call 0905 789 4151* and choose weekly, monthly and yearly updates

GEMINI

22 MAY – 22 JUNE

On the one hand, Venus is on side from the 4th, bringing harmony. On the other, a painful theme emerges mid-month. It will pass quicker if you take feelings seriously.

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CANCER

23 JUNE – 23 JULY

The full moon on the 8th brings an issue to a head. Don't let someone impose their will on everyone else. Negotiate decisions – even if difficult, it's worth it.

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LEO

24 JULY – 23 AUGUST

Your ruler sailing through Aries helps you get lots done before the 19th, especially if you rope in others. If there's a dodgy moment at April's start, it's temporary.

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VIRGO

24 AUGUST – 22 SEPTEMBER

The days before the 10th have huge romantic potential and, after that, other concerns take over. Watch out for a financial hiccup mid-month.

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Famous Aries:
Keira Knightley,
Victoria Beckham,
Emma Thompson,
Emma Watson

Star sign of the month

ARIES

21 MARCH – 20 APRIL

The month starts on a tricky note when criticism wounds, so don't blurt out something that makes it worse. From mid-April, you'll enjoy great progress.

YOUR MONTHS AHEAD

In late June your ruler enters Aries and life picks up, so focus on your goals between then and mid-September. Call 0905 789 4150* and choose weekly, monthly and yearly updates

LIBRA

23 SEPTEMBER – 23 OCTOBER

On 8 April the annual Libran full moon brings an important matter to a head. It's a great time for talking things over, especially relationships, so be brave.

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SCORPIO

24 OCTOBER – 22 NOVEMBER

April Fool's Day presents a challenge, but keeping the bigger picture in mind helps sort it. Partnerships and friendships can improve no end after the 23rd.

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SAGITTARIUS

23 NOVEMBER – 22 DECEMBER

Around the 5th something stirs deep feelings. Step up to what is involved, or it will drag on. Luckily, romance is on a roll.

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CAPRICORN

23 DECEMBER – 19 JANUARY

During April's first half, say yes to any opportunities. Don't let recent difficulties put you off, as life can change instantly.

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AQUARIUS

20 JANUARY – 19 FEBRUARY

Don't be an April Fool if the month starts with a challenge and you're tempted to act impulsively. Use that anger in positive ways. As the days pass, the dust settles.

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PISCES

20 FEBRUARY – 20 MARCH

With positive influences working before the 11th, early April is great for talking things over. Let the inspiration you feel on the 4th guide you to go for it.

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last laugh



KATHY LETTE

The comedian and author loves city life and has lived in London for 31 years

TOWN & COUNTRY



KATIE FFORDE

The bestselling author lives in the Cotswolds and is a country girl at heart

This month, Kathy and Katie decide to get fit – or maybe not...

'I've tried Jazzercise, pump, cardio-funk, Zumba...'

In the days of Rubens and Botticelli, to be a socialite you needed cellulite. But today, skinniness is inniness. With spring approaching, I packed away my woollies and de-mothballed my summer clobber. But having exceeded the feed limit all winter, when I tried to zip up my cotton trousers, my neck got thicker. It was clearly time to get fit.

But, how to lose the pounds? Living in London, there's a vast array of exercise options available. In the past month, I've tried Jazzercise, pump, cardio-funk, CrossFit, bootcamp, Spinning and Zumba. The worst thing about all these classes is the female instructors. Swizzle stick-thin and condescendingly bossy, they obviously keep fit by doing step aerobics off their own egos. Equally horrific is the eardrum-grating 'doomf doomf' music blaring forth in every class. After weeks of being tortured and contorted, my brainwashing's so complete that if I'm in a lift and Pharrell Williams starts playing, I immediately drop everything and automatically galvanise into body scissors, tummy toners and rear oblique lunges.

When I complained to a girlfriend about how much I hate the deafening gym muzak, she persuaded me to try marathon running. 'Not only is it quiet, but also fun!' she enthused. Really? Traversing rough, muddy terrain in the rain didn't sound like fun to me.

After I'd panted through at least three time zones – I think at one stage I passed Finland – I finally collapsed, gasping, at the finishing line. People thought I'd won... until they realised that I was actually finishing last week's race.

The trouble is, you have to be fit to be fit. And training is so time-consuming. As your biceps turn to flint, your brain turns to flab. And surely a strong mental muscle is just as important? Which is why I'm now confining my exercise regime to heavy lifting – lying supine on a comfy couch, reading hefty hardbacks.

✦ *Best Laid Plans* by Kathy Lette (£16.99, Bantam Press) is out now. @kathylette

'I can't go for a walk if my hair is looking awful'

There comes a time in the year, sometime after Christmas, when you realise you can't live in your duvet coat and three layers of jumper forever. You'll have to emerge into the world like a chrysalis and turn into a butterfly – or at least someone who could wear a dress and maybe shed a cardigan.

I'm always very reluctant to do any of this, but there was once a time when I went to two keep-fit classes (Popmobility), one jazz dance class (which I loved), and a yoga session (I was very bendy back then), every single week. Then, with a new dog, I used to roam the hills, thinking up stories and sorting out plot problems every day after I'd taken the children to school.

But these days when I get up from the sofa, there's a strange ripping noise, like Velcro, and the dogs get overexcited. I know full well I have to do some sort of exercise – yet there are so many reasons for me not to. For a start, I can't go for a walk if it's raining, if it means I have to change my shoes, if my hair is looking awful, if it's looking OK, if I don't have make-up on, if anyone was likely to see me (ie, if it wasn't in the middle of the night) and, of course, I can't go out in the dark.

I like a walk if someone has driven me to a beauty spot and I can admire the wonderful views that surround me, but that's not going to happen every day.

So I've found a solution. You find a TV programme you really want to watch – cookery with an element of competition and 'hurry up' music is best. Put it on and march up and down while you watch it. I add grapevine moves and other things I've learnt at the million aerobics classes I've been to over the years, and work up a sweat. What this method avoids is boredom, which, let's face it, is the biggest reason we all give up our good intentions regarding exercise.

Because keeping fit is rarely fun, but in my view it's much better if you don't have to actually leave the house...

✦ *A Springtime Affair* by Katie Fforde (£14.99, Century) is out now. @katiefforde



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