

# HIGH 50 LOVE

AGE HAS ITS BENEFITS

Beauty Culture Food Health Homes Life **Love** Money Sport

9 February 2015 by Chantal Borciani



## Left it a bit late? The best restaurants for Valentines, inspired gifts and £25 deals on weekends away

Stay in a boutique hotel for £25, dine with Michelin chefs or live out your 50 Shades of Grey fantasies. Unusual Valentine's ideas and the top romantic weekends away



Have a tipsy afternoon tea and naughty cocktails at Mr Foggs

Have a tipsy afternoon tea and naughty cocktails at Mr Foggs

Valentine's Day: the time of year when expectations are high and many restaurants merely turn on the schmaltz with unimaginative pink menus and icky background music.

Yet dining out doesn't have to be a crushingly predictable, candlelit affair. There are quirky alternatives, unusual gifts and a ream of new dining experiences with which to spoil your loved one.

**Hotels with availability and great deals for Valentines**



Push the boat out and no one will know you forgot! Book one of the new chef evenings at Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons

For the food lover in your relationship, reach for the stars and book in to one of Belmond Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons Diner des Protégés at Raymond Blanc's two Michelin Star Oxfordshire restaurant. Raymond Blanc will welcome back some of his most famous protégés as the restaurant celebrates 30 years.

Confirmed chefs taking part in Diner des Protégés include:

**Michael Caines MBE:** Wednesday 18 March

**Ollie Dabbous:** Wednesday 15 April

**Martin Burge:** Wednesday 27 May

**Paul Heathcote MBE:** Wednesday 24 June

The Diner des Protégés evenings will include a champagne Laurent-Perrier reception with canapés and a signature dinner with accompanying wines, coffee and petits fours. The evenings are priced at £225 per person.

### Love in the Highlands



Head to the highlands to this sanctuary of peace

"Lovelier and more romantic than anything I'd ever seen," was Queen Victoria's verdict on the streams and gnarled oak woods of the West Highlands, close to Inverloch Castle.

Nature is still virtually untouched here. But dining on Philip Carnegie's menu in the castle's baronial dining room (£67) is opulent in the extreme.

Make the visit more memorable by arriving in style on the overnight Caledonian Sleeper, where haggis, tatties and neeps are served at leather banquettes in the grand dining car.

### Stay at a Malmaison for £25



On a budget? Stay on Sunday at Malmaison hotels for £25

Stop over on Sunday 15 February from only £25 at any of the boutique Malmaison hotels when you both dine from the four-course [Malentine's menu](#).

What more reason to take Monday off and luxuriate with your partner? [Venues include Manchester, London, Reading, Edinburgh and Oxford](#)

### A weekend in London's 50 Shades of Grey room



The K West hotel is smart and located in a good location

Guests can check in to [K West Hotel](#) in Shepherd's Bush for the 50 Shades package and enjoy a sumptuously decorated 'Red Room' with red silk bed sheets, red candles and red rose petals.

Guests will also find luxurious 'F Boxes' filled with bondage toys to help guests explore fantasies. The package is priced at £699 per night and includes breakfast in bed, sensual bath oils, an indulgent Aphrodisiac Tasting Menu for two, and a pomegranate and prosecco cocktail on arrival. Book from 13 to 15 February 2015.

### **A Bristol weekend away for under £150**

The Bristol Hotel, a stylish boutique property in Bristol's bustling Harbourside, has created The Passion Package with romantic touches such as a bottle of champagne, chocolate-dipped fruit, breakfast in bed, late check out till 3pm and a rather topical 'Passion Kit' à la 50 Shades of Grey, which is valid throughout February.

Guests will also enjoy an automatic upgrade to a deluxe room overlooking Bristol's historic Harbourside, as well as complimentary parking, Wi-Fi and use of the residents only gym. Prices start at £150 per night per couple.

### **Give the gift of sleep (and a private balcony garden)**



The suite at the Marriott has a private balcony and enclosed deck within a water-feature garden.

The Sleep Well Experience at the Marriott Grosvenor Square is designed to lull you into a luxurious and soothing sleep.

Along with a four-poster bed, a private balcony garden with tinkling water feature and cosy lanterns, you receive sleep-inducing L'Occitane products, lavender pillow mist, The Sleep Book, and a 'sleep bracelet' by jeweller Philip Stein, designed to work with natural frequencies to help you sleep better (huh?!).

Guests can also dine at Gordon Ramsey's Maze restaurant, located in the hotel. The Sleep Menu at Ramsey's includes stunning fish courses and dishes straight from the open-plan sushi bar plus a show-stopping desert and is £60 each for six courses.

For those frazzled by February and in need of some rest and relaxation this is just the ticket. The Sleep experience costs from £499 a night.

## Top restaurants and great places for Valentine's night

### Valentine's tipsy afternoon tea at Mr Foggs



A touch of the unusual and quirky at Mr Foggs

Enter the quirky world of Mr Foggs and receive a welcome rose and chocolates on arrival.

The residence's finest pianist will be playing lovestruck melodies while guests choose between either perfectly pink Ruinart Rosé champagne cocktails, or an intriguing selection of Tanqueray alcoholic gin teas served in teapots, served alongside an array of delectable heart-shaped sandwiches, cakes, pastries and petit-fours.

Afternoon tea at Mr Foggs £35pp. Bottomless gin cocktail tea £60. Bottomless champagne cocktail tea £70

### A secret 1920s pop-up speakeasy with the band from Kate and Will's wedding



An exciting secret speakeasy with some of the best music in town

To add a bit of mystery to your relationship, try a 1920s-styled clandestine pop-up party in a secret Art Deco speakeasy space behind a public library. You won't know where until the day before the event.

Benoit Viellefon and his orchestra (who played at Wills and Kate's wedding) will provide swing jazz and ragtime rhythms for dancing in the palm tree-lined ballroom. There will be burlesque artists and a dance performance by the Gatsby Girls, plus Auntie Maureen playing vintage tunes.

Flapper dresses are de rigeur. Dinner will be cooked by a Michelin-starred chef, £35.

Couples dining at [The Corinthia Hotel](#) can book a handwriting analysis with graphologist Emma Bache, to reveal their personality secrets and see if they really click.

Then you can celebrate at the hotel's Northall restaurant, where chef Garry Holliehead focuses on seasonal produce and Cornish fish. Try his roast monkfish with raisin and caper puree.

### **Lick whisky from the body of a model**

Yes, this is a whisky-tasting with a difference: you get to lick the spirit off the bodies of performers, including a 50-year-old Hell's Angel. The [anatomical whisky tasting](#) event pairs whiskies with performers of the same age, so a 30-year-old spirit with a 30-year-old model. The tasting starts with a 25-year-old single malt, progressing upwards to a rare 50-year-old dram. The performers will each tell the compelling stories of their lives.

The event is at the [Ace Hotel Shoreditch](#) at 3pm and 7pm on 14 February, £48 per person.

### **A Kate Moss or Tracey Emin limited edition Valentine's hamper**



What about a limited edition Kate Moss hamper from The Mount Street Deli?

From 9 February at [The Mount Street Deli](#) you can pick up the ultimate his and hers hampers.

The luxury deli has ten 'his' hampers which include a rare Glenallachie 34 year old limited edition, Speyside Single Malt, bottled for 34 and signed by its label designer, famous artist Tracey Emin, plus decanter, whiskey tumblers and three Romeo y Julieta N°2 cigars.

There are 20 limited edition 'hers' hampers that boast two limited edition Kate Moss Coupes, modelled on the left breast of Kate and signed by her, plus assorted truffles, champagne and more.

### **Cookery classes with the best in London**

There are a huge number of classic cookery classes, from chocolate making to home cooked favourites available at the Little Portland Cookery School in London. But as a special date why not opt for a cookery class with your favourite restaurants. Choose from J Sheekey (wielding a fish knife with panache) and Daphne's (pasta-making like a pro). These classes run on 27 February and 27 March. [For more information click here.](#)

The Caprice classes are £150 and include a welcome with freshly baked pastries and coffee, the lesson including instruction, ingredients, equipment and a goody bag to take home and then lunch with matching wines.

## Spot the lovebirds in north Norfolk

Twitchers will revel in a chauffeur-driven visit to RSPB Bird Reserve, as part of a Valentine's stay at former Victorian farmhouse [Titchwell Manor](#) in north Norfolk, where chef Eric Snaith is renowned for his creative cooking. A five-course menu will include herbs grown in the manor's garden.

---

Chantal Borciani is assistant editor at High50.com. She has worked as features editor and chief sub-editor across leading consumer travel and luxury lifestyle titles, and was previously at IPC Media. She tweets [@ChantalBorch](#).

---