HOTEL DATES... Run away for a night

The Portobello Hotel *was voted Sexiest beds by Harpers and Queen* ☎ *7727 2777 info@portobellohotel.com*

The Zetter *cool and hip hotel. What will sweep someone off their feet quicker than a rooftop dinner for two on your own private terrace? With their newly opened fabulous chef Bruno Loubet.* ☎ *7324 4444 info@thezetter.com*

Milky Moments *Foreplay lessons for ladies who love men* 💻 *milkymoments.co.uk*

> *"Start a Sex jar. Each write down 10 things you'd like to try, fold them and put them in the jar. Pick out one a week to try"*

even the RSPB, then maybe the problem was mine.

So I thought I should learn a skill. I enrolled with a friend (I got one to come this time) and we set off to a workshop at Sh, the all-women shop, in Hoxton, which is reassuringly clean and pink. The other girls on this one and a half hour course looked fun. And then there were a couple of smart middle-aged women who had come to polish up on their acts. Interesting. There was no sleaziness – my friend whispered that she felt perfectly at home and that the girls could just as well be talking about antiques it was all so cosy. Then we got down to business and talking technique. We were slightly immature I admit and did giggle a bit too much but we came away a bit better qualified and a few gadgets in our pocket. 💻 *sh-womenstore.com* angels & urchins' readers get a 10% discount from March to June. For online orders quote e419b7.

When I told my friends that I was writing this a few of them told me to check out Coco de Mer. It's the designer end of the private shop world. Even if you are slightly put off by the equipment, at least the website looks stylish and the racy films have people wearing nice clothes – if only for a bit. I'm not on the same page as these people. 💻 *coco-de-mer.com*

💻 *Trashy.com* is on the other end of the spectrum – a cool LA shop but ships all over the world. Caters to all tastes. Check out the strait-jacket.

But, it is all very well walking the walk, but I need to do more than just lie there in my straight jacket. I needed to talk the talk, as well. I needed fresh ideas.

Tracey Cox has lots of these ideas. She has spent a lot of time around marriages that need a boost and I needed to start somewhere. ……"Start a Sex jar. Each write down 10 things you'd like to try, fold them and put them in the jar. Pick out one a week to try." Sounds great. Mine would be – nice film and a cup of tea. "Send saucy texts". Forget it. "Wrap yourself up as a present". Given I'm slightly obsessive about re-using and recycling wrapping paper, I think this might tip me over the edge. "Have a bed picnic".* Now we are talking.

In the end I contacted a brilliant therapist Gil Sanders who gave me this bit of advice.' Forget about sex. Concentrate on talking to one another and find something to do that you can do together. A date. Once a week. Cinema, theatre, football or plan a project together. Make sure you plan one evening a week ... get yourself (each of you) into shape where you feel better about yourself. The gym, exercise or yoga. Raise your own self-esteem. And help the other by appreciation and acceptance. Don't sweat about the small stuff. Is the laundry on the floor so important? The spark will come back if it was there in the first place. I think that is the most sensible advice I've heard yet. ☎ *020 7924 1243. help@gillsanders.com*

So armed with that, I decide to polish up my act, and take my husband out on a date. I thought for old times sake we should go back to a place we used to love, in a time when we didn't need to check for texts from our babysitter to the Champagne bar at Quaglino's. It still feels like a massive movie set, with the customers and waiters playing out some sort of food fantasy. It's the right place to drink too much Champagne. Champagne is, without doubt, the world's greatest aphrodisiac. Napoleon swore by it. "I can't live without Champagne," he said. "When I win, I deserve it. When I lose, I need it." My husband started to develop a becoming appreciation of my conversation. And our ripples of laughter rose with the bubbles. In other words, we got beautifully drunk. We both seemed to coruscate. Nothing else seemed to matter. The evening was, unreservedly, a success. We combined Champagne with oysters. Casanova ate 50 oysters every morning. My husband joked that oysters make him feel like honouring 10 women. Carpe noctem, if you get my drift. As long as he has a Rennie afterwards for his acid stomach. I suddenly looked at my funny gorgeous husband who was making me really laugh and started to fall in love with him all over again. I'd forgotten what it was like to be just us.

Quaglino's, 16 Bury Street, London SW1.

MUSIC TO GET YOU IN THE MOOD

Serge Gainsbourg – *Je T'Aime.* **Donna Summer** – *I Feel Love.* **Marvin Gaye** – *Let's Get It On.* **Tom Jones** – *Sex Bomb (for a laugh).* **Color me Badd** – *I Wanna Sex You Up. And You Can leave Your Hat On (and, while you're there, you can leave the rest of your clothes on as well)*

**Ideas taken from Supersex Your Life by Tracey Cox*