

# LOVE IS IN THE AIR



Put some extra thought into what you do for Valentine's this year, says **EMILY HOPE**

While many of us enjoy a good old fashioned gastronomic blow out at a restaurant to celebrate Valentine's Day, the time has now come where I for one, am beginning to think I'd like to try something a little different.

Perhaps it's that every night for the last year I've been slumped on the sofa next to my partner, not so much gazing into each others eyes adoringly but more staring blankly into our television screen in an addled daze. I'm hoping this is a temporary situation, attributed to the first year of our new born.

So for 2009 I've decided to spruce up our romantic celebrations by banishing the TV dinners and hastily bought flowers, and instead we are going to bond and revel in each other's company once again.

As with all bonding, closeness of bodies is of paramount importance and nakedness, or at least semi-nakedness plays a vital role. For this, a double massage ticks all the boxes. Now I know what you're thinking, surely with two masseurs in the room that makes it a foursome, but before you get carried away, this really is as romantic as it gets.

The beauty of Jurlique Spa in Chiswick is that you can get any treatment you like, but together. So if you love having a relaxing facial and manicure, but he has a phobia about being touched on the forehead and bites his nails, then he can opt for a back massage instead.

"We work on the couple together in a double room, but it can be any treatment of their choice," explains Lucy Muzley at the

Jurlique Spa. "People find it more intimate to have a treatment at the same time because you can still talk to each other and be in the same environment. It makes you feel like you are really sharing the experience. It brings you closer and is very sensual."

Jurlique also tailor their packages for

Having a treatment together brings you closer and is very sensual

Valentine's. "We do tend to put extra things in," continues Lucy. "A rose body oil massage makes a romantic connection and feels much more luxurious. We also have candles in the room to make it feel that extra bit special."

But if pampering isn't your style, perhaps something a little more active is. Dancing, is



a great way of getting up close and personal with your loved one.

Having watched Richard Gere give his marriage a new lease of life from tango classes in the chick-flick *Shall we Dance* many moons ago, I sought out Federico Mazandarani, who teaches tango classes at Chiswick Town Hall.

“We teach Argentine Tango, which is considered the most romantic dance all over the world,” he explains. “Far more than any other dance, you are in close physical contact with each other. It’s a very intimate embrace straight away, so even if you’re total strangers you are instantly put in a position of trust.”

It’s not just about the dancing, which takes quite a lot of skill and technique, it’s also about a dose of good old fashioned escapism.

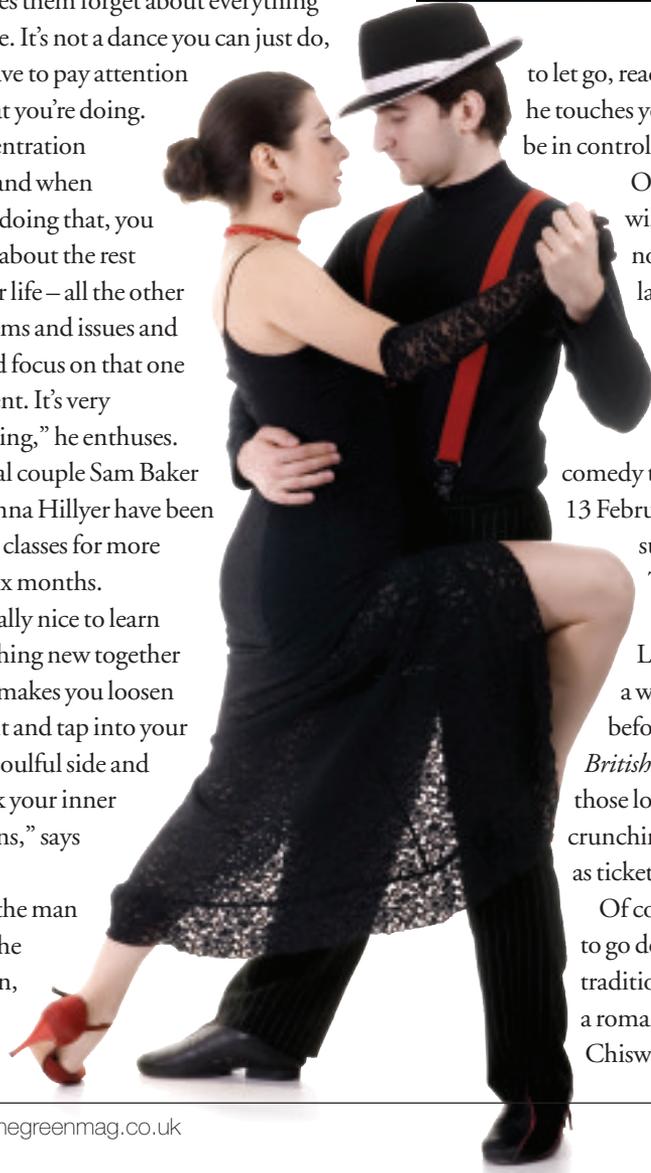
“People who come to the classes often say it makes them forget about everything outside. It’s not a dance you can just do, you have to pay attention to what you’re doing.

Concentration is key and when you’re doing that, you forget about the rest of your life – all the other problems and issues and instead focus on that one moment. It’s very liberating,” he enthuses.

Local couple Sam Baker and Anna Hillyer have been taking classes for more than six months.

“It’s really nice to learn something new together and it makes you loosen up a bit and tap into your more soulful side and unlock your inner passions,” says Anna.

“As the man leads the woman, you have



to let go, read his signals – how he touches you – and let him be in control.”

Other people, however, will argue there’s nothing sexier than laughter, so if you’re not touchy feely or particularly active, but are turned on by comedy there’s a real treat on 13 February in the intimate surrounds of the Tabard Theatre.

Al Murray, the Pub Landlord is doing a warm-up gig there before his *Beautiful British Tour*. It’s ideal for those looking for a credit crunchingly funny time as tickets are a bargain £5.

Of course, if you want to go down the more traditional route and have a romantic dinner out, Chiswick is blessed with

a plethora of great venues, from the Michelin-starred La Trompette to Sam’s Brasserie and Ramsay’s The Devonshire gastro pub.

Afterwards though, even if it’s cold, why not wrap up and go for a moonlit stroll together along the river, hold hands and have a kiss under the stars. Now that what I call romance. ●

### The Jurilique Day Spa and Sanctuary

300–302 Chiswick High Road, W4 1NP  
020 8995 2293, [www.jurilique.co.uk](http://www.jurilique.co.uk)

### Tango Federico

Chiswick Town Hall, Heathfield Terrace  
W4 4JN, 020 8291 4977  
[www.tango-federico.com](http://www.tango-federico.com)

### The Tabard Theatre

2 Bath Road, W4 1LW, 020 8995 6035  
[www.tabardtheatre.co.uk](http://www.tabardtheatre.co.uk)

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