

**ENGLAND &
SCOTLAND'S
EURO 2024
DRAW**

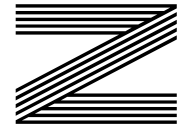
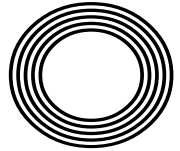
**PANTONE'S
COLOUR
OF THE YEAR
REVEALED**

MOCKTAIL RECIPES
to make in dry January

STYLE REFRESH
Time to declutter your wardrobe

Claudia
WINKLEMAN

Quirky presenter on her most popular TV series yet



FREE

Photo credit: BBC/Ray Burmiston

2024

COMING UP AT THE VICTORIA INN

Our 2024 calendar is already filling up with events. Here are some dates for your diary including the return of Rum and Reggae, our brilliant Hoe Down and, of course, PRIDE. Also new for 2024, a 3-day Sausage and Cider Festival with live music lots of cider and of course sausages.

JANUARY

Saturday 13th
Live Music with Miss Morgan
Friday 26th
Pay Day Party with DJ Dean Kayne
Saturday 27th
Live Music with Aaron Kelly

FEBRUARY

Thursday 1st
New Monthly Event
Thirsty Thursdays with DJ & lots of discounted drinks
Saturday 10th
Live Music with Miss Morgan
Friday 23rd
Pay Day Party
Saturday 24th
Live Music with Aaron Kelly

MARCH

Thursday 7th
Thirsty Thursday
Saturday 9th
Live Music with Miss Morgan
Sunday 17th
St Patricks Day celebrations with Live Music
Friday 29th
March Bank holiday special
Pay Day Party
Sunday March 31st
Live Music with Miss Morgan

APRIL

Monday 1st
The Victoria Inn Annual Dog Show
Thursday 4th
Thirsty Thursday
Saturday 20th
Live Music with Aaron Kelly
Friday 26th
Pay Day Party
Saturday 27th
Cockney Knees Up
Sunday 28th
Pool & Darts Tournament

MAY



Thursday 2nd
Thirsty Thursday
4th 5th and 6th
Sausage & Cider Festival with live music every day
Saturday 11th
Live Music with Aaron Kelly
Sunday 26th
Rum & Reggae festival Live music & DJ all day
Friday 31st
Pay Day Party

JUNE

Saturday 1st
Miss Morgan
Thursday 6th
Thirsty Thursday
Sunday 16th
Fathers Day – Live Music with Miss Morgan
Sunday 23rd June
Live Music Aaron Kelly
Friday 28th June
Pay Day Party

JULY

Thursday 4th
Thirsty Thursday
Sunday 7th
Miss Morgan
Saturday 13th
Pride with DJ all Day Drag Queen & ABBA Tribute
Saturday 20th
Summer Nights party
Sunday 21st
Aaron Kelly
Friday 26th
Pay Day Party
Saturday 27th
Hoe Down with Dolly Parton Tribute & DJ all day

 **14TH JUNE to 14TH JULY** 
We will be showing all the European Football Championship games on our big screen. We are the only pub in Burnham with six screens so join us if you don't want to miss any of the action.

2024

AUGUST

Thursday 1st
Thirsty Thursday
Sunday 4th
Miss Morgan
Sunday 18th
Aaron Kelly
Monday 26th
Quay Day – Pirates, fun games & DJ Pete Lacey
Friday 30th
Pay Day Party
Saturday 31st
Miss Morgan

SEPTEMBER

Thursday 5th
Thirsty Thursday
Saturday 7th
Aaron Kelly
Saturday 14th
Cockney Knees Up
Saturday 21st
Miss Morgan
Friday 27th
Pay Day Party 80's special
Saturday 28th
Carnival

OCTOBER

Thursday 3rd
Thirsty Thursday
Saturday 5th
SKA night with DJ PETE LACEY
Saturday 12th
Aaron Kelly
Saturday 19th
Miss Morgan
Saturday 26th
Spooktakular Halloween Event

NOVEMBER

Saturday 2nd
Miss Morgan
Thursday 7th
Thirsty Thursday
Saturday 16th
Aaron Kelly
Friday 29th
Pay Day Party


DECEMBER

Thursday 5th
Thirsty Thursday
Saturday 7th
Xmas Party Night with DJ
Saturday 14th
Xmas Party Night with Aaron Kelly
Saturday 21st
Xmas Party with Miss Morgan
Tuesday 24th
Xmas Eve Party
Tuesday 31st
New Years Eve Party



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Editor's notes...

JANUARY 2024



Nik Allen, Editor

Hello and welcome to this month's edition of **VISION** Maldon Burnham. I trust your Christmas was Fantastic. With my kids aged three and five, the holiday becomes truly magical. No one warns you about their rapid growth in this fast-paced world. It's a reminder to be present, and I strive to cherish these moments as much as possible.

I've recently been immersed in new documentaries about Ronnie O'Sullivan OBE, Robbie Williams and David Beckham OBE. Their expertise shines unmistakably and their charisma, dedication and work ethic are inspiring to see. Regardless of personal feelings, their mastery in their respective fields

is completely undeniable.

Success often intertwines with personal battles - demons, quirks and vices - which are the potential cost of fame. Yet I contend that these struggles serve as the catalyst to propel them forward. Through adversity, genuine potential surfaces.

As we begin the new year, let's channel our own challenges into the energy that creates success, rewriting the narrative of 2024. Here's to embracing hardships, finding strength, and crafting a triumphant story for you to be proud of. Happy New Year!

Nik Allen

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CONTRIBUTORS | Tabatha Fabray, Fiona Goble, Panayiota Demosthenous

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Photo credit: BBC Studios/Simon Partridge

Nice one NEVILLE

HOW GARY'S POST-PLAYING REINVENTION HAS WON HIM A SEAT IN THE DEN

When the worlds of the ex-footballer and business collide, the results are not always impressive. In the 1970s, a slew of former pros ploughed their retirement funds into the pub trade, with varying outcomes. Yet with the image of the modern game so much more polished, it follows that those who once acquired trophies and international caps are now looking to do the same in commerce.

The latest to chance his arm in the corporate space is Gary Neville, who this year is set to become the first ex-sportsman on the panel of *Dragons' Den*. The former England and Manchester United defender may only be lowering himself onto one of the prized five chairs as a temporary guest on the show, but in many ways, the 48 year old's televised reinvention from his usual work as a pundit on Sky Sports makes a lot of sense.

Despised by many an opposition supporter while playing, Neville these days gleans admiration and respect for his punditry – he offers clarity, honesty, intelligence and charisma as he surveys the game's issues, be they tactical events on the pitch, or political events off it.

An ability to conduct a broad sweep of issues, with an approach that displays succinctness and wit, is of course the perfect fuel for any business environment. Neville's starring role on the BBC's standout reality show is reward for an already impressive track record in business.

His first investment actually came as a 21 year old, when he put money into property development. Since then, his company, Relentless, has delved into hospitality, notably through two hotels – Hotel Football and the Stock Exchange Hotel – plus award-winning Leeds restaurant The Man Behind the Curtain.

“ YOU WILL NEVER REPLICATE THAT THRILL OF WALKING OUT OF THE TUNNEL ON A MATCHDAY ”

He also owns a production company, Buzz 16, and his time travelling around the world as a footballer provided the perfect insight by which his GG Hospitality brand now looks to take client and consumer excellence forward to the next level.

“People sometimes ask me if I am more excited by business these days than I was being a footballer, and I can only answer that by saying they are entirely different specialisms,” says Neville.

“You will never replicate that thrill of walking out of the tunnel on a matchday, and when I retired, I made the decision to try to get as close to it as I could, so here I am. The good part of being in business is you don't need to run around a pitch every day!”

The *Dragons' Den* experience sees Neville – and fellow newbie Emma Grede, who made her name in fashion – put prospective entrepreneurs through their paces alongside established heavyweights Peter Jones CBE, Deborah Meaden, Touker Suleyman, Sara Davies MBE and Steven Bartlett, with the 21st series rumoured to begin on January 4, 2024.

With filming now wrapped, Neville can return to another side project, the award-winning chat podcast *Stick to Football*. Does the devoted husband and father-of-two, who also part-owns League Two side Salford City, ever crave a day off?

“For me, the thought of doing nothing is terrifying,” he laughs. “I actually admire people who can sit around and enjoy their retirement, because they must have more mental strength than me.

“I have to keep on, and it helps that I love the work I do, so why would I not?”

SQUIRRELS:

DON'T YOU JUST LOVE THEM?

On January 21, people around the world will be celebrating all things squirrel because it's Squirrel Appreciation Day. But will you be joining in the celebrations?

In the UK, squirrels can divide opinion. And it's not all about digging up spring bulbs.

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

According to the nation's Wildlife Trusts, there are about 2.5 million grey squirrels in the UK. But there are only around 140,000 red squirrels. Red squirrels are native to the UK, while grey squirrels were introduced from America by the Victorians in the 1800s. The problem is that greys compete with reds for food. Grey squirrels also carry a virus known as squirrel pox. They're immune to it themselves, but it's lethal for their red cousins.

IS THAT ALL?

Grey squirrels also strip the bark off trees and raid bird feeders. Sometimes, they even raid birds' nests. And they can gnaw through plastic hosepipes and netting.

DO GREY SQUIRRELS HAVE REDEEMING FEATURES?

Both types of squirrel are intelligent and agile. Amazingly, they can leap 10 times their body length. Their eyesight is fantastic, and their double-jointed legs mean they can run up and down trees at incredible speed.

DO GREY SQUIRRELS DO ANYTHING USEFUL?

Grey squirrels help regenerate forests by collecting and burying seeds in both the US and the UK. But, on balance, grey squirrels certainly do more harm than good.

SO HOW CAN I HELP RED SQUIRRELS?

If you're lucky enough to have red squirrels visit your garden – and you don't have grey squirrels – here's how you can help them.

Leave out some hazelnuts in their shells, sweet chestnuts, sunflower seeds or pine nuts. You can also cultivate red squirrel-friendly plants such as brambles, dog roses, wild cherries and crab apples.



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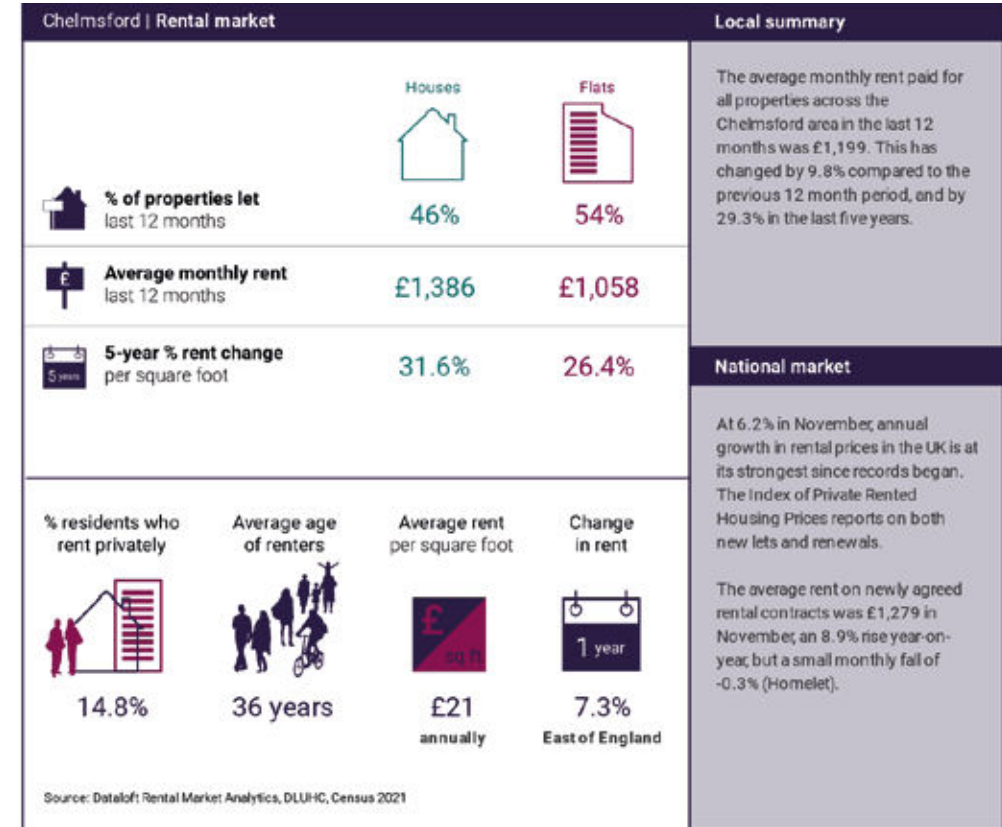
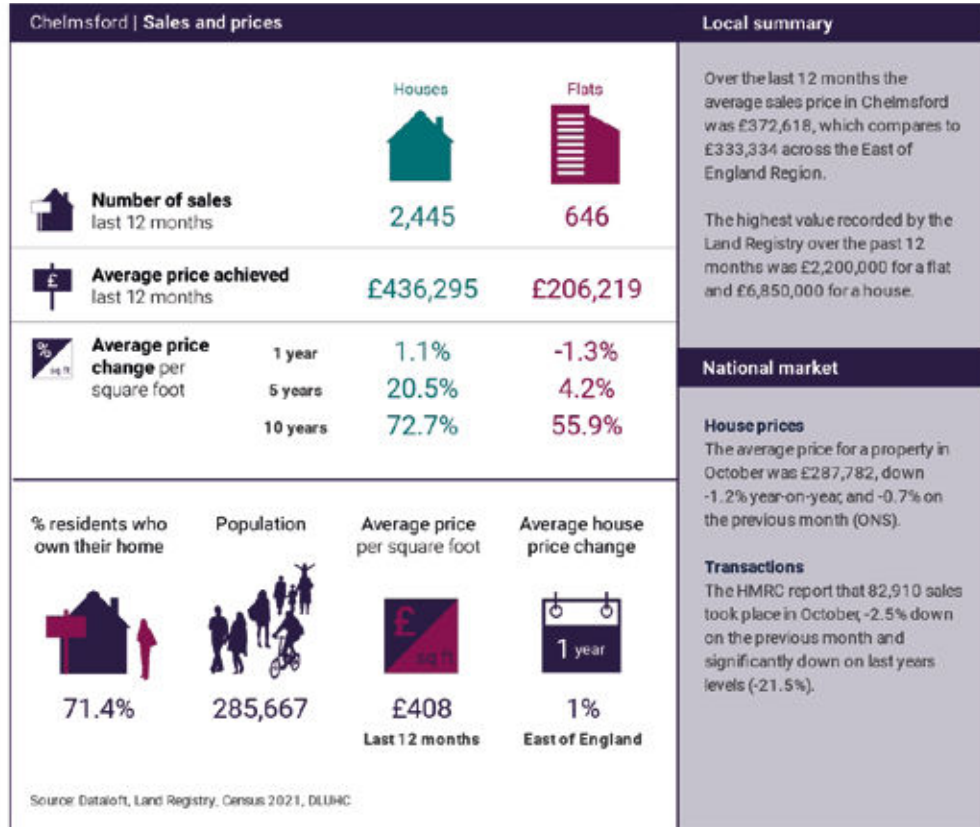


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DATA BASED ON STATISTICS
FROM DECEMBER 2023



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The wonders of WOOD



Would you like to add more wooden finishes to your home? Here's how to mix different wood shades that will make your interior the envy of all your family and friends.

USE COMPLEMENTING UNDERTONES

While it is completely fine to match different shades of wood in one space, if you want to stop a room from looking chaotic and badly thrown together, it can be a good idea to use complementing undertones. For example, you can use a lighter and darker shade of wood as long as they both have the same undertones, i.e. warm or cold.

ADD A BUFFER

If you are worried about mixing different shades of wood, then you may want to add a buffer item between each element. For example, if you have wooden flooring in one shade and a wooden table in another, try adding a rug in between the two as a visual barrier. Also, any white item or decorative feature will instantly help to break up multiple wood tones.

GO WITH THE GRAIN

If the different woods you would like to use all have a prominent grain, then try keeping the patterns similar so that the mood of the room is retained. For those who favour a larger or open grain, do not mix more than one of these together as it can feel like they are competing for attention.

DON'T GO TOO WILD

When it comes to mixing different shades of wood in your home, less is most definitely more. Try to focus your efforts on adding just a few different shades of wood to start and then repeat throughout the room. As a general rule, opt for two or three shades of wood per room at the most.





Pantone Colour of the Year 2024:

PEACH FUZZ

Every year, the design world waits with bated breath for Pantone to declare its colour of the year. For 2024, the 25th anniversary of this renowned announcement, the colour is the delicate Peach Fuzz.

What does Peach Fuzz look like?

Peach Fuzz is a soft peach tone that is nestled somewhere between pink and orange. Described as gentle, velvety and hardworking, this is a versatile shade that is guaranteed to dominate the catwalk and the world of interior design. As a tone that strikes the perfect balance between cool and warm, it can be used to either brighten a space or make it feel cosier. Pair with muted sage greens, soft blues and earthy tones for best results.

Why was this colour chosen for 2024?

This shade was selected as a direct response to the nation's need for nurturing and compassion during times of turmoil, as well as our desire for a more peaceful future. Pantone colour specialist Leatrice Eisman said: "It's a warm and cosy shade, and it's very tactile. We feel that at a time like this, tactility is really important – to touch other people and gather them into our homes."

How to incorporate Peach Fuzz into your home

Paint the ceiling: If you want to try this colour trend without committing to a complete room overhaul, why not paint your bedroom or living room ceiling in this soft shade? Keep the rest of the walls neutral to ensure balance.

Choose new soft furnishings: Arguably the simplest way to incorporate a new colour into a room in your home, look out for peach-coloured throws, scatter cushions and rugs.

Invest in a new statement piece of furniture: For those who want to go all out with this stunning shade, invest in a new piece of statement furniture such as a peach sofa, an armchair or a display cabinet.

Paint your kitchen cabinets: If you are on a budget and want to update your kitchen, then giving your cabinets a fresh coat of Peach Fuzz paint is definitely the way to go.



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HOME & DIY

Reduce, reuse and recycle: the three Rs that can help you clear your home of the vast quantities of leftover Christmas wrapping paper, while at the same time doing your bit to help the environment. Check out these four creative ways to make use of unwanted gift wrap.

1. Beautiful bunting or baubles

Whether you have traditional Christmas wrapping paper, kids' character paper or a metallic variety, you can easily create your own bunting using just a pair of scissors and some string, or get a bit more creative and make some DIY baubles (watch online videos for instructions). Perfect for New Year, a 2024 birthday party or even for simply jazzing up a coffee morning.

2. Cute confetti

How often have you had to make a last-minute dash to a card shop to buy confetti for a party? Why not make your own instead by simply shredding leftover wrapping paper or even

cutting out shapes using a cutter.

3. Perk up serving trays or drawers

Festive wrapping paper is perfect for injecting some life into an old, boring serving tray. Alternatively, bring some life into your cupboards and line your drawers with gift wrap and feel uplifted each time you open them.

4. Magical magnets

A great idea for kids: cut out a small circle of your chosen piece of wrapping paper, affix to the bottom of a flat marble, add a magnet and stick to your fridge for a festive feel all year round.

How to reuse your wrapping paper

If you are keen to reuse your Christmas wrapping paper, and your kids haven't destroyed it beyond repair, you can iron the paper before you use it to transform it back to its original glory. Make sure you set your iron to the lowest setting and cover the paper with a towel before applying any heat.

Photo credit: centsationalgirl, offbeatandinspired, heartorganizing, thoughtfullysimple, youaremyfave.com, instructables.com, momshavequestionstoo



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Exploring Langton's 18th-century splendour

Langtons House in Hornchurch offers the perfect combination of history and luxury, whether you're planning your next big event or an afternoon walk.

The wonderful thing about visiting manor houses is that they enable you to leave the stresses of the 21st century behind and escape to a simpler time. Langtons House is a perfect example of this, especially as it is nestled within six acres of stunning gardens and boasts its own ornamental lake.

A Grade II listed 18th-century structure, the property retains many of its original features, including Georgian windows, ornate fireplaces and decorative ceilings which preserve their original moulding. From the outside, it is impressive and imposing, while inside it still exudes luxury and decadence.

The residence was owned by the Massu family, who were Huguenot refugees originally from France. They had achieved prosperity as silk merchants in the City of London.

In 1929, the Massu

family generously donated the house to the Hornchurch Urban District Council. This gift came with the stipulation that the building be dedicated to council-related activities and that the six acres of land remain accessible to members of the general public.

Just shy of a century since the Massus passed on this magnificent property, Langtons House remains a favourite destination for both locals and those from further afield.

With four ceremony rooms – East Room, West Room, Langtons Hall and The Orangery – it is a fabulous destination for any big event.

More than that, though, it holds perfect echoes of a decorative past. With lottery grants allowing restoration to parts of the house such as The Orangery in recent years, the house you see today is just as magnificent as it would have been in days gone by – a building and estate locked in the traditions of the past, while looking ahead to an elegant future.

Photo credit: Shianne Mercier Photography




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LOCAL FEATURE

'The county has given me everything'

He is a pioneer of modern culture, launching 1,000 bands and singers, endowed with an encyclopaedic knowledge of music, and at the same time acting as a proud custodian of Essex. He is Steve Lamacq.

Many are surprised to find Steve Lamacq quite diminutive in height. Mostly because the DJ, who has pioneered

new music across BBC radio over the past three decades, possesses true giant status in the music industry.

Outside the cast of *The Only Way is Essex*, the now 59 year old is perhaps the proudest and most vocal advocate of his home county (notwithstanding the fact he was born in Hampshire!). Rarely one of his Radio 6 Music shows goes by without mention of the influence Harlow had on him, or growing up in Halstead, or the emotion attached to his beloved Colchester United.

It all began back in the Harlow Square music venue in 1978. Lamacq credits the band The Lurkers for inspiring him to pursue a career in music; something he furthered when studying journalism at the new town's college, before getting a job at the *West Essex Gazette*.

Pirate radio, Greater London Radio, *NME* magazine and even *Top of the Pops* followed (although on reflection Lamacq was perhaps much too alternative for the mainstream commerciality of the Top 40).

The radio star's talent comes through perseverance. Even now, as someone indelibly front-of-stage as one of the most approachable, knowledgeable and influential forces in a rapidly evolving record industry, his passion is as great as ever.

"For me, the elixir of music is seeing a band live," he says. "It could be in front of 10 people or 10,000 - it is an experience that always excites me."

Essex certainly needs to feel proud of one of its greatest exports.

Steve says: "The county has given me everything and I'm never held back in my admiration for it."

Nor us for you, Steve.



Photo credit: BBC/Ray Burmiston



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WHAT'S ON

WINTER ROBINS PAINT PARTY
Black Rabbit, 191-193 High Street,
Maldon, CM9 5BX
Monday, January 22, 7pm – 10pm



Photo credit: Express Yourself Paint Parties

Join the team at Black Rabbit for a relaxed and enjoyable evening of painting winter robins under the expert instruction of workshop leader Emily.

No experience is needed; you can either follow the instructions or express yourself by including your own personal touches. If you so wish, you can change the colours (maybe to fit in with home décor or a favourite colour), change the silhouettes or add extra details.

Tickets cost £25 from www.t.ly/SCdvg

JANUARY RESET WINTER WELLNESS RETREAT

The Canary Shed, Creeksea Place Farm,
Ferry Road, Burnham-on-Crouch, CM0 8PJ
Sunday, January 28, 11am – 4pm

The experienced individuals leading the sessions will create a calm and positive space for you to relax and unwind in throughout the day. Take part in yoga, meditation and more while socialising and meeting new people between sessions and over a vegan lunch.

Tickets cost £75 and can be purchased online via www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/january-reset-winter-wellness-retreat-tickets-743495363647

CIRDAN QUIZ

The Star Inn, 29-31 High Street,
Burnham-On-Crouch, CM00 8AG
Sunday, January 28, 7.30pm

Join the Cirdan Sailing Trust for a fun quiz evening and half-time raffle extravaganza. Take part in teams of four and play for the win, with all proceeds from the event

going to the Cirdan Sailing Trust's Voyage of Discovery Fund. The fund helps to support youth organisations working with disadvantaged young people to teach them about life at sea.

Tickets cost £10 per group and can be bought by calling The Star Inn on 01621 782010.

FRIARY WALLED GARDEN – OPEN DAY

Friary Walled Garden, White Horse Lane,
Maldon, CM9 5FW
Sunday, February 4, 10am

Explore an unexpected green oasis covering just one-fifth of an acre behind ancient red brick walls, with the entrance next to the town library. It's a delightful little refuge from the hurly burly activities of the town centre – and you can buy plants for sale to take a little bit of the magic home with you.

Entry is free, but donations are welcome. To find out more, head to www.visitmaldondistrict.co.uk/whats-on/friary-walled-garden-open-day-p1680701

DRAG MUSICAL BINGO

The Canary Shed, Creeksea Place Farm,
Ferry Road, Burnham-on-Crouch, CM0 8PJ
Friday, February 9, 7.30pm

Kickstart your weekend by joining the hilariously funny evening of musical bingo, belly laughs and cocktails with Saffron Slayter and Ruby Violet. The bar will be serving a variety of delicious cocktails, along with a comprehensive bar menu that includes a variety of tasty snacks.

Tickets cost £15 and can be purchased online from www.t.ly/G-9vu



Photo credit: Ruby Violet Facebook

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Photo credit: BBC Studios/Lambert Mark Mainz

Television's FAITHFUL FRIEND

Claudia WINKLEMAN...

Talented, attractive, charismatic and perfectly grounded – is Claudia Winkleman terrestrial television's elegantly-cloaked saviour?

Many of us may know someone who has ventured off for a murder-mystery weekend at a remote, windswept, crumbling castle. The concept is as old as, well, the castle itself, in some cases, but the BBC's decision to reinvent the challenge in the form of a reality show has not just done wonders for its tumbling ratings; it's also given the usually chatty Claudia Winkleman a whole new, almost silent persona.

The host of *The Traitors*, whose first-series success has led to the concept being brought back at the start of 2024, has revealed how the show's producers were insistent on her keeping quiet during tense moments, something that didn't come naturally to the perennially chatty host of *Strictly Come Dancing*, *The Piano* and *Best Home Cook*.

"As a presenter, I've always had to mould myself to new environments, situations and such, but I've always got through the discomfort by being outwardly vocal and chatty," the 51 year old admits.

"To be told I had to zip it was something quite new, and actually took a bit of getting used to, as I'm the sort of person who doesn't like nervous silences... yet the show is built around them!"

The first series of *The Traitors* worked itself into a spectacular crescendo almost a year ago, and the expectations are that its return will further revive the kind of entertainment across main channels that appeared to be at risk of running out of ideas.

Winkleman, to her credit, has been the glue that's prevented the terrestrial TV schedule from slipping into total oblivion. Her time on *Strictly* now totals a decade, and she has also hosted *The Great British Sewing Bee*, plus a host of one-off productions on both the Beeb and Channel 4. She also fronts the Saturday mid-morning show on Radio 2.

The star, who is the daughter of author and journalist Eve Pollard OBE gained her small-screen break when featuring on the likes of *Holiday* and *This Morning* in the early 1990s. She then progressed to the likes of *Fame Academy*, *Comic Relief*, *Eurovision* and a number of panel shows.

"I feel lucky to have had so many opportunities over the years, and I do feel we produce so much high-quality entertainment in this country. We are the envy of the world in that respect."

It helps, of course, to have presenters as charismatic and versatile as Winkleman, who with her journalist hat on has written for the likes of *The Sunday Times*, *The Independent*, *Metro*, *Cosmopolitan* and *Tatler*.

The mother-of-three, who has been married to producer Kris Thykier since 2000, has also been vocal when it comes to charitable and public health issues; not least in 2015 after her daughter Matilda was badly burned when a Halloween costume she was wearing caught fire. Winkleman's subsequent campaigning led to a change of the law.

"Career aims are great," she concludes, "but family has always been everything to me, and I would give up everything I have achieved, in a heartbeat, in order to protect them."

Perhaps the one 'traitorous' act we could forgive...





SAVE *the* DATE

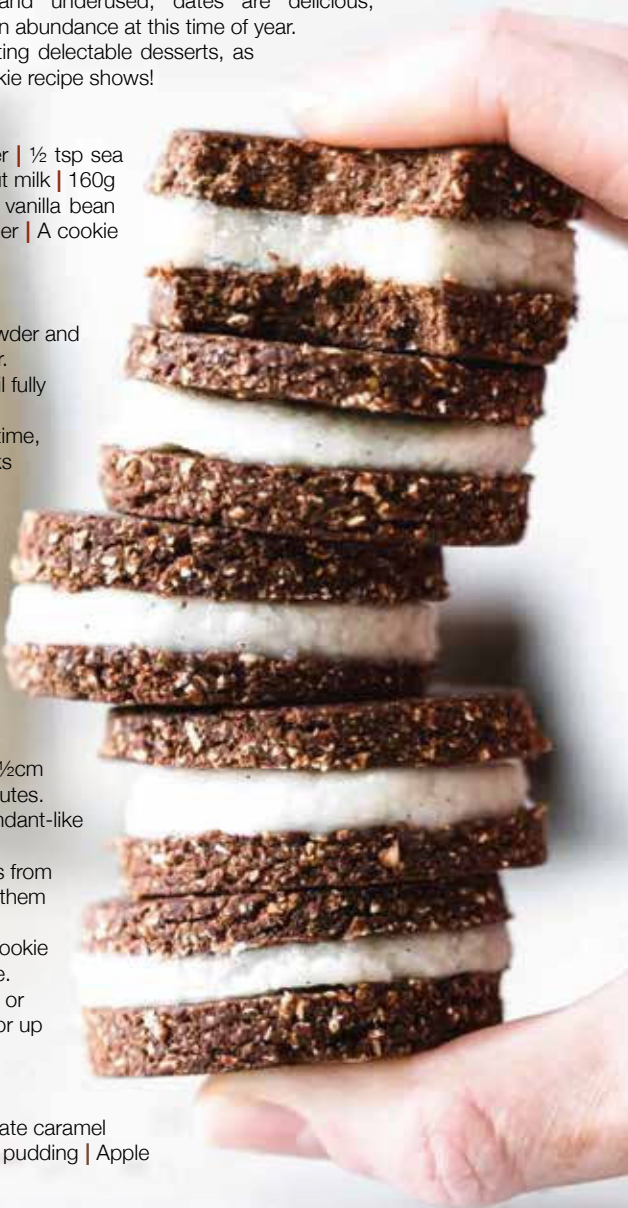
Massively underappreciated and underused, dates are delicious, nutrient-dense and available in abundance at this time of year. They're also perfect for creating delectable desserts, as this vegan, no-bake date stuffed cookie recipe shows!

YOU WILL NEED:

- 120g rolled oats | 40g cacao powder | ½ tsp sea salt | 10 pitted Medjool dates | 3 tbsp coconut milk | 160g creamed coconut or coconut butter | 1 tsp vanilla bean paste | 1½ tsp maple syrup | Parchment paper | A cookie cutter (5cm)

HOW TO MAKE:

- To make the base, add the oats, cacao powder and salt to a blender and blitz into a fine powder.
- Next, add the Medjool dates and blend until fully combined.
- Add the coconut milk one tablespoon at a time, combining until you have a dough that sticks together between your fingers.
- Roll out the dough between two sheets of parchment paper and cut out 24 shapes using the cookie cutter.
- For the filling, melt the creamed coconut over a pot of simmering water in a heat-resistant bowl.
- Stir in the maple syrup and vanilla bean paste and whisk to combine, then allow to cool.
- Place the mixture between two sheets of parchment paper, roll out to approximately ½cm in height and place in the freezer for 30 minutes. Once taken out, the filling should have a fondant-like consistency.
- Use the same cookie cutter to cut out discs from the creamed coconut and then carefully sit them on top of one of the cookies.
- Sandwich the cookies by placing another cookie disc on top of the creamed coconut mixture.
- Once made, these can be eaten right away or stored in an airtight container in the fridge for up to two weeks.



OTHER DATE DESSERT RECIPES TO TRY:

- Date brownies | Chocolate-covered dates | Date caramel sauce | Upside-down date cake | Sticky date pudding | Apple and date pie.

Photo credit: addictedtodates.com

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DRY JANUARY

mocktails

Take the dreariness out of dry January with these delectable, alcohol-free concoctions, guaranteed to please even the most discerning palates. These recipes each make one drink.

COOL FRUIT MOCKTAIL

You will need:

A thick slice of cucumber (chopped) | 4-5 mint leaves (chopped) | 200ml water | About 7 raspberries (frozen or fresh) | 120ml sparkling lemonade (clear) | Ice cubes

How to make:

Bring the water to the boil in a small saucepan and add the cucumber and mint | Turn off the heat and leave for 2 minutes | Add the raspberries and squash them slightly | Strain the mixture | Pour 40ml of the mixture into a tall glass | Add the ice cubes and top up with lemonade

NO-ALCOHOL NEGRONI

You will need:

¼ grapefruit and ½ orange (unpeeled) cut into small chunks | 100g caster sugar | 3 crushed cardamom pods | A pinch of coriander seeds | 150ml cold water | Ice cubes | 25ml white grape juice | Grapefruit and orange slices for garnish

How to make:

Put the grapefruit, orange, sugar, cardamom pods, coriander seeds and 125ml of the water into a saucepan | Bring to the boil and simmer for 5 minutes, then leave to cool | Strain the mixture and throw away the spices and fruit | Fill a tumbler with ice and the grapefruit and orange slices | Pour in 25ml of the syrup, the grape juice and the remaining water | Garnish with grapefruit and orange slices

TANGY FIZZ

You will need:

1 pear, peeled, cored and sliced | 4 dried apricots, quartered | 50g golden caster sugar | 3 tsp honey | A sprig of rosemary | 100ml water | 2 tsp apple cider vinegar | 100ml cold sparkling water

How to make:

Put the pear, apricots, sugar, honey, rosemary and water into a saucepan | Simmer for 10 minutes, then cool completely

Strain the syrup into a jug, add the apple cider vinegar and chill the mixture in the fridge for 30 minutes | Pour 25ml of the syrup into a champagne glass and top up with the sparkling water.



The Sleep Treat

How to maximise your children's (and, subsequently, your own) sleep time, no matter what their age

We know all too well the benefits of a good night's sleep, yet when parenthood comes along there is an acceptance that it's one of the first things to fall by the wayside, followed closely by the sports car and the social life. Yet maximising sleep as a parent isn't just good for mums and dads – it's brilliant for kids too. And having a household where there's not a single family member clawing for the coffee or at the lid of the sweet jar is something we can all achieve by following a few key steps.

1. Regular as clockwork

Scientists have proven that kids love regularity and repetition – it's good for them. And sleep should be the very first exemplar of that, with set bed times only altered by the occasional treat (perhaps an evening out or a movie night). Getting your kids into a routine means not disturbing your own.

2. You are what you eat

Consider what you feed your kids in the lead-up to

bed time. Anything with sugar in should be avoided, while fizzy drinks are a similar recipe for insomnia.

3. Little screen, big trouble

TVs, tablets, phones and games, just like sweet treats, are brain stimulators, so expecting your child to switch off after a bout of LCD exposure is optimistic to say the least.

4. (Don't) let there be light

Dim lights, draw curtains and soften the mood in the lead-up to the bed time hour, creating a sleepy environment for all.

5. Ignorance is bliss

While ignoring kids who won't settle feels cruel, if you're constantly on call to cries from the cot or bedroom then they'll know they've got your number. The chances are a moaning child who claims they can't sleep will only complain for a short while before drifting off into a perfect slumber, allowing you to follow suit.

Essex's newest Luxury Travel Agency opens on Witham High Street

A brand-new luxury travel agency offering a first-class complimentary planning service to help book the finest holidays and getaways around the world has opened in Essex.

Vaycay Luxury Travel, based on Witham High Street provides customers with an unrivalled experience from the minute you walk through the door, with a choice of drinks on arrival followed by a consultation with our expert advisors to discuss all your travel requirements.



From the sandy beaches of the Caribbean to falling in love with the Indian Ocean, our specialists bring their worldly knowledge and exceptional travel expertise to provide a once-in-a-lifetime holiday that'll surpass your wildest travel dreams.

Our extensive database of global getaways ensure you'll bring home a lifetime of memories to share with family and friends.

You could be jetting off for an exclusive stay with Elite Island Resorts at Hammock Cove, Antigua, sailing the world aboard a 6* Regent Seven Sea Cruise, skiing in the French and Swiss Alps or taking a luxury safari in the Kenyan Maasai Mara.



From knowing the best time to travel to suggesting hidden gems for a once-in-a-lifetime trip abroad, Vaycay Luxury Travel offers unbiased advice from the best travel companies, hotels, cruises and more, for the perfect holiday experience.

Vaycay Luxury Travel has been set up by husband-and-wife team Colin Pegler, who is the Chairman of the Caribbean Tourism Organisation UK & Europe and Paula Whitehead, formerly Head of Long Haul Purchasing for British Airways Holiday. Both are local Essex residents and business owners with extensive experience in the international travel market.

Christine Taylor-Higgs, Travel Consultant at Vaycay Luxury Travel, added: "I've spent many years working as a leading specialist tour operator focusing on weddings and honeymoons, and worked for two Caribbean tourist boards. Along with my highly experienced colleague Jo, we are so excited to help make our customers' travel dreams come true".

Vaycay Luxury Travel will officially open its high street doors on Thursday, January 4th, 2024, although Christine and Jo are already busy planning dream holidays and can be contacted by phone on 01245 207649, or email sales@vaycayholidays.com





OUT WITH THE OLD

January is a great time to engage in some post-holiday wardrobe organisation. If you received new clothes for Christmas or have stocked up on some sales bargains, now's the time to let go of those ill-fitting items and things you haven't worn for ages.

1 EMPTY your wardrobes, drawers and cupboards and pile all your clothes, shoes and accessories onto your bed. This will give you an idea of just how many clothes you have and help you think about what you actually need.

2 TRY everything on, even your underwear. If it doesn't fit well, isn't comfortable or you don't like it – it's time to let it go!

3 SORT all your clothes and accessories into three piles: 'yes', 'no' and 'maybe'.

4 PUT the 'yes' pile back in your wardrobe, drawers and cupboards. Treat yourself to some new coat hangers and group similar items together. Also, organise your drawers with dividers, making everything easier to find.

5 CATEGORISE the 'no' pile into three groups: sell, give away and recycle. Sell gently used items through local pre-loved clothing stores or online. Give away things to friends, family or a charity shop. And recycle items at clothing or shoe banks, which you can find at council recycling centres or in the car park of some big supermarkets.

6 PLACE 'maybe' items in a bag or box in a spare room or cupboard. Set a reminder for six months. After this period, if any items remain unworn, move them to a new 'no' pile for selling, donating or recycling. Things you wear can join your 'yes' collection.

A new year clothes declutter is therapeutic as well as rewarding. Best of all, you'll end up with a tidy and organised wardrobe filled with your favourite, well-fitting pieces that bring a sense of clarity to your daily routine.



TRAVEL TREND:

FLAT PACK HOTELS



When you hear the phrase 'flat pack', a certain Swedish furniture store might spring to mind. However, when it comes to flat-pack hotels, it is budget hotel group Habitas that is the brains behind the operation. Find out more about this green tourism trend below.

WHAT ARE FLAT-PACK HOTELS?

Although the concept may sound gimmicky, 3D-printed flat-pack hotels boast deep-seated eco-credentials and are based on the principles of modular housing and prefabricated architecture. The building parts are manufactured in a factory and then flat packed and shipped to a destination to be assembled on site.

WHEN DID FLAT-PACK HOTELS FIRST LAUNCH?

The hotel group Habitas opened its first flat-pack hotel in Tulum, Mexico, way back in 2017, with the aim of offering burnt-out city dwellers a stylish yet simple place to stay and recharge. This first-of-its-kind hotel boasts 32 rooms built on elevated platforms, a thatched roof and canvas walls.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF FLAT-PACK HOTELS?

- There are many benefits to flat-pack hotels for the traveller, the environment and the hotel itself. Some of the most notable benefits are:
 - o Quicker to construct than standard hotels
 - o More cost-effective owing to lower labour costs
 - o Lower carbon footprint owing to less waste and the use of sustainable materials

WHAT IS THE FUTURE FOR FLAT-PACK HOTELS?

Not just a passing trend, Habitas has built its own factory in Mexico which can manufacture hotel parts. The parts are then flat packed, shipped, assembled on site and opened for guests in less than 12 months. Since the first flat-pack hotel, more have opened in destinations such as Saudi Arabia, Costa Rica and Bhutan.



Photo credit: ourhabitas.com

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GARDENING

Plants to PLEASE YOUR PETS

If you have a dog or cat, you need to be mindful of the plants you grow in your garden as some can cause them harm. Discover the prettiest pet-friendly plants for your outside space below.

SNAPDRAGON: Snapdragon is recognisable by its tubular flowers that come in an array of bright colours. A short-lived perennial, all elements of this plant are safe for dogs and cats to consume.

BEE BALM: The flowers of bee balm plants are often compared to fireworks, with their unique appearance making them a popular choice for many UK gardens. A magnet for bees, butterflies and hummingbirds, bee balm is also safe for pets.

CRAPE MYRTLE: Providing colour all year round, crape myrtle is non-toxic to both cats and dogs and requires little attention once it is established. There are many varieties to choose from, with options to suit gardens of all sizes.

CORAL BELLS: Coral bells come in a variety of colours and shapes and are known for their high tolerance levels. Non-toxic to pets, these can be planted anywhere in your garden.

FUCHSIA: One of the most popular flowers for hanging baskets, fuchsia is completely safe for cats and dogs and is also a firm favourite of hummingbirds.

CAMELLIA: Camellia is a showy flower that guarantees to brighten up your garden, and all parts of this plant are harmless to pets if ingested. Use in foundation plantings, hedging and screening for best results.

SUNFLOWER: Annual sunflowers make a cheerful addition to any garden and, fortunately, they are non-toxic to both cats and dogs. In fact, some dogs enjoy the nutty taste of their seeds and cats are often attracted to their leaves.

PLANTS THAT CAN BE HARMFUL TO PETS:
Aloe vera | Carnations | Chrysanthemums | Dahlias
| Irises | Lily of the Valley | Peonies | Delphiniums |
Tulips | Tomato Leaves | Autumn Crocus.

EIFFEL TOWER

The Eiffel Tower is the most visited paid tourist attraction in the world. Every year, around seven million people visit and savour the glorious views over Paris. Not bad for a structure that was only ever meant to be temporary.

In 1889, Paris hosted the grand World's Fair to mark the 100th anniversary of the French Revolution. The competition to design a monument for the fair's entrance was won by a company run by architect and civil engineer Gustave Eiffel – who died 100 years ago last month at the age of 91.

While Gustave Eiffel gave the structure its name, the original design was the work of one of his engineers, Maurice Koechlin. But Eiffel didn't like Koechlin's initial plan and asked him to make it more elaborate.

The final design needed more than 18,000 pieces of iron held together by 2.5 million rivets. It took hundreds of workers two years to build the tower, which was almost 300 metres (nearly 1,000 feet) high. When it was finished, it was the tallest man-made structure in the world.

While many felt the Eiffel Tower was an architectural marvel, not all Parisians agreed. Some thought it was ugly, and others thought it wasn't safe.

The tower was almost dismantled in 1909. By then, however, city officials realised how popular it had become. They also realised it was a useful radiotelegraph station. So they decided to preserve it. This was just as well as the tower played a vital role in communications in both World Wars.

Today, the Eiffel Tower is one of the best-known structures in the world. It was renovated in 1986 and it now gets a fresh coat of paint every seven years, ensuring it remains in tip-top shape for visitors to the city of light – and love.



Budgeting is hard enough, but for people with an irregular income, it can seem almost impossible. Whether you are self-employed, working a zero-hours contract, or claiming Universal Credit, the below top tips will help you manage your money from one month to the next.

BUDGET FOR LOWER INCOME MONTHS

Although you may be tempted to set your budget based on the best-case scenario, this can leave you short. Instead, budget for your lowest income month as this will ensure you have all your essential costs covered. Then, if you have a good month, you can revise next month's budget or add to your savings.

MONITOR YOUR OUTGOINGS

You may not know exactly how much money you are going to have coming in each month, but you can work out how much needs to go out. By monitoring your outgoings, you can stay on top of your finances and identify areas where you can cut back. Make sure you include your bills,

food shopping and other essentials, such as travel costs.

PLAN AHEAD

If your income fluctuates at different times of the year – for example, you make more during the summer months or the run-up to Christmas is your busiest time – then make sure you put some of this income aside to help see you through during quieter periods. Also, don't forget to factor in times of the year when your outgoings are higher, such as when annual bills are due or in winter when your energy bills are higher.

HAVE AN EMERGENCY FUND

Rather than spend any spare income that you have during a good month, it is a much better idea to set up an emergency fund to get you through times when your income might be lower. Ideally, this should be enough to cover three months of essential outgoings. Set this up in a separate bank account, or you can save it in a money box.





BEAUTY

SWEET SMELL *of success*

Experts believe that smell is the most powerful of the body's five senses, so it's no wonder we've been creating ways to make ourselves smell sweeter since ancient times. It's big business, too. Today's global perfume industry is worth £4.7billion and is still growing*. But what's inside the perfume we buy – and how is it all put together?

INGREDIENTS

Traditionally, perfume was made from rose petals, jasmine, frankincense, myrrh, oakmoss, sandalwood, vanilla and citrus fruit, usually blended with oil.

Animal products were also used – especially musk, a glandular secretion from the musk deer, and ambergris, produced by the digestive system of sperm whales.

These days, most perfumes still contain some natural products, but synthetic ingredients now make up at least 70 per cent of most scents. Meanwhile, animal ingredients are becoming less acceptable to modern buyers – and hugely expensive.

Because manufacturers aren't obliged to give away trade secrets, labels usually just list the scents as 'fragrance' – even if it's a blend of hundreds of different ones.

HOW IS IT MADE?

There are a few stages involved in manufacturing perfume. First, the scents are extracted from the natural raw ingredients before being blended with the other ingredients. The mixture is then aged to improve the blending process.

WHAT ARE PERFUME NOTES?

The smell of perfume on your skin changes as time goes by. This is all to do with 'notes', which describe the mix of fragrances. Top notes are what you smell when you first apply the perfume, and these evaporate quite quickly. The middle and base notes are longer lasting.

WHO INVENTS THE SCENTS?

Specific scents are developed by perfumers, known as 'noses' because of their excellent sense of smell. There are only around 100 noses in the world, most of them in France and Switzerland. Most popular perfumes take several years to perfect.



*Verified Market Research, 2022

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GOOD FATS VS...

While fat used to have only negative connotations, we now know that not all fats are equal. Find out everything you need to know about dietary fats.

What are the different types of fat?

There are four main types of fat in our diets: monounsaturated fats, polyunsaturated fats, saturated fats, and trans fats. The first two are 'healthy fats' as they help to maintain healthy cholesterol levels. The latter are 'unhealthy fats' as they can raise the level of bad cholesterol in your blood. Too much bad cholesterol could potentially lead to a stroke, heart attack or vascular dementia.

Examples of foods containing these four fats include...

Monounsaturated fats: Peanut butter | Almonds | Cashews | Olive oil | Avocado oil

Polyunsaturated fats: Oily fish like mackerel and salmon | Rapeseed oil | Sunflower oil | Walnuts | Sunflower seeds

Saturated fats: Processed meat such as burgers, sausages and bacon | Hard cheeses | Whole milk | Butter | Suet

Trans fats: Fried foods | Some takeaway foods | Snacks such as biscuits and cakes | Pies | Hard margarines made with hydrogenated oil

How much fat should I eat?

Roughly one-third of your daily energy should come from fat, the majority of which should be unsaturated. This is approximately 70g per day for a woman and 90g per day for a man. Saturated fat intake should be no more than 10 per cent of total daily energy and trans fats no more than five per cent. Polyunsaturated fats should be limited to five to 10 per cent of your total calories and monounsaturated fats should make up 15 to 20 per cent.

You can find out the total amount of fat and the saturated fat content on the nutritional label on most foods. Trans fats can be labelled as 'hydrogenated fats' or 'hydrogenated vegetable oils' in the list of ingredients.

BAD FATS



UNDERWATER weightlifting

Are you looking to take a different twist to your weightlifting regime? Discover the fitness craze of underwater weightlifting.

What is underwater weightlifting?
As the name suggests, underwater weightlifting is a form of weightlifting that is carried out underwater. Marketed as the ultimate resistance training routine, underwater weightlifting combines the resistance of being in water with the additional strain of lifting weights.

- What are the benefits of underwater weightlifting?**
Some of the most notable effects that you may experience when regularly performing underwater weightlifting are:
- ➡ Increased core strength
 - ➡ Improved breathing techniques
 - ➡ Enhanced cardiovascular system
 - ➡ Better injury recovery
 - ➡ A mental health boost
 - ➡ Lower stress levels
 - ➡ Improved muscle strength

Are there any risks associated with underwater weightlifting?

As you might expect from an activity that involves being underwater while lifting heavy weights, there are certain risks involved. It is not recommended to try underwater weightlifting if you suffer with vertigo or have balance issues. Plus, if you have any heart or lung problems, then you need to consult your GP before trying this regime. If you are not a confident swimmer, then you should stick to lifting in shallow water rather than lifting while submerged.

How to get started with underwater weightlifting

If you have not tried underwater weightlifting before, it is advisable to seek out professional help or attend a class such as Speedo WTRX Water Xtreme, which is led by a knowledgeable trainer. You can contact your local leisure centre for further advice on this and any classes available in your area.
However, if you really want to practise this activity on your own and you have access to a private pool, start by lifting light weights in a part of the pool where you are able to touch the bottom with ease.

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SPORT



ENGLAND EXPECTS

With the group draw made, England are gearing up for potential success at Euro 2024, while Scotland also celebrate a return to the football elite.

Following the draw for the group stages of Germany 2024, England can now begin preparations for their European Championships campaign in earnest.

Their journey begins on June 16 in Gelsenkirchen, when Serbia are the opponents – the match representing a first meeting between the two countries.

Then, it's Denmark in Frankfurt – when the Danes will be looking to avenge their Euro 2020 semi-final defeat – before the group stage concludes in Cologne against Slovenia.

Three Lions manager, Gareth Southgate OBE, expressed mixed feelings about the draw, saying England will show absolute respect to their trio; yet also recognising the potential for tougher challenges that will surely follow in the knockout phase.

Their prospects post-group stage include possibly facing the third-placed team from Groups D, E or F in the last 16 – which could be Wales, should they negotiate a

route through a complicated playoff picture – then a potential quarter-final against Scotland.

The brief for England is pretty clear – win the thing. That may sound like a bold aim, but the Three Lions squad has never been laced with such talent, flair, resilience and mental strength – something tightened by impressive performances at the last three major tournaments.

The bookmakers make England pre-tournament favourites, followed by France, Germany (the hosts), Spain and Portugal. So the question is... is football finally coming home?

As for Scotland, they face a rigorous test of their credentials in Group A, beginning their campaign against host nation Germany on June 14.

Steve Clarke's men will also contend with an organised Switzerland outfit, and Hungary, who have reached the Euro finals for the third time in a row. The Scots have a history of starting big tournaments with a bang, reminiscent of their World Cup 1998 opener against Brazil.

For the Scots, their football regeneration means qualification is achievement enough, but don't rule out the Tartan Army upsetting the applecart along the way.

Photo credit: Colin Poulthney/ProSports/Shutterstock



Paint IT BLACK

Are you thinking of splashing out on a new set of wheels, but can't quite decide between a blue Beamer or a silver SUV? Well, studies suggest your choice of car colour says a lot more about your personality than you may think.

GREY/SILVER

Grey and silver gives off a light air of wealth, taste and prestige, while the neutrality of the colours and their ability to camouflage dirt points to a busy, work-heavy lifestyle. As of 2023, grey is the most common car colour in the UK, with more than 25 per cent of British road users opting for this cool colour.

GREEN

It's easy to assume that driving a green car hints at an environmentally friendly outlook, and whilst it is suggested that those in green will be less inclined to fill up their tank with toxic nasties, the real reason behind picking an emerald automobile is that it reflects a gentle and patient nature. Either that, or you've just purchased a vintage Jag in beautiful British Racing Green – the iconic motor racing colour commonly associated with the UK.

BLUE

Owning a blue car doesn't mean you're a downbeat person – instead, it signifies that you like to promote an optimistic and stable image to the world. You might not be flamboyant enough to

go for a red or orange roadster, for example, but you're willing to find common ground with your more outlandish automotive associates.

RED

This classic car colour is usually associated with boy racers and other speedy scoundrels – and perhaps rightly so. Driving a red car is said to show you have high energy and an outgoing personality. With that in mind, it's little wonder red has long been the colour of choice for vibrant Italian vehicles such as the Ferrari.

BLACK

Whether it's an LBD or tuxedo reception, black has long been synonymous with sophistication and luxury. And when it comes to car colour, it tends to suggest in its driver a dignified personality that eschews over-exuberant displays of wealth, whilst still wanting to signal authority to fellow motorists. And just like the *Men in Black*, you don't mind a bit of mystery in your life, either.

ORANGE

You don't see many orange cars, and that's exactly why a carrot-coloured four-wheeler is representative of a driver who does their best to stand out from the crowd. If you're artistic, eccentric, fun-loving or trendy, an orange car is sure to turn heads... which is maybe why it's more commonly seen adorning futuristic supercars such as Lotuses or Lamborghinis.



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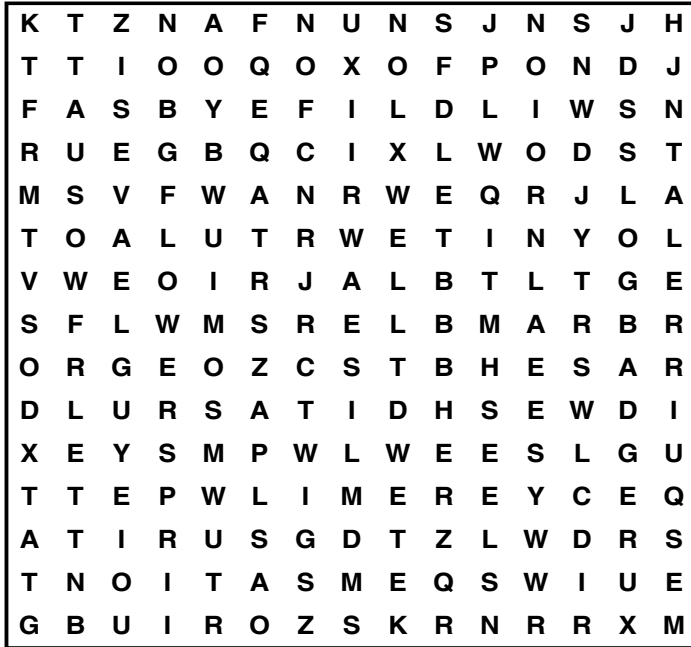


PUZZLES & TRIVIA

PUZZLES

Answers: see end of The VISION Listings

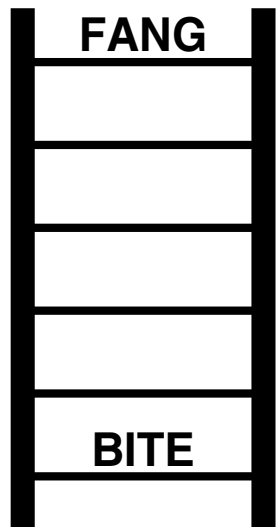
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DID YOU KNOW?

- ▶ Braille is a tactile code that enables blind and visually impaired people to read using raised dots and dashes set onto paper.
- ▶ Braille was created in 1824 by Louis Braille, a French educator who lost his sight at the age of three when he was playing in his father's workshop. The sharp tool he was holding slipped and struck him in the eye, leading to an infection that caused total blindness in both eyes.
- ▶ Louis was inspired by the system of night writing, a military code used by the French army in the 19th century to communicate at night without speaking.
- ▶ The Braille Challenge takes place in North America annually. Competitors are tested on skills such as spelling, speed and accuracy, and reading comprehension.

WORD LADDER



THE AIM: Change the word at the top of the ladder one letter at a time to make the word at the bottom.

HOW TO: Change one letter on each step to make a new word. By the time you reach the end, you should have created the new word.

DO NOT rearrange the order of the letters.

TIP: There is usually more than one way to solve this puzzle.

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Melanzane alla Parmigiana (VG) - Sliced aubergine baked with parmesan, mozzarella & tomato

Pate della Casa - Duck and pork pate with orange served with toast, salad and red onion chutney

Any pasta dish can be served as a starter or main course

For Mains (Secondi Piatti)

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