

The Northern Echo

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The lifestyle magazine
for the North-East

FEBRUARY 2005

FASHION
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the feminine

INTERIORS
The house
of mirrors

WIN
A Valentine's
pampering
for two

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Front page picture: broderie shirt £29.50, washed jeans, £35. From the Limited Collection at Marks & Spencer

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sharon griffiths

Would Brief Encounter have been so romantic if Celia Johnson and Trevor Howard had had a quick grope...

A DOZEN red roses or a pair of kippers? Pink champagne or a chainsaw? Luxury hotel or a walk in the rain? It all depends on what you mean by romance...

Youngsters haven't a clue. Ask them about romance and you'll get a blank stare. Lust, yes. Sex, yes. How to put a condom on a cucumber, definitely. But romance... That's a tricky one.

But with St Valentine's Day coming up, maybe we can do something to bring back the romance into our lives - and show the youngsters what they're missing.

We could start with cards. Valentine's Day cards used to be sweet, sentimental affairs. Then they got jokey, then rude and then finally downright obscene.

And so youngsters just don't bother to buy them at all. Instead of carefully choosing individual Valentine's cards, disguising their writing and leaving them anonymous - all nicely exciting in a low key sort of way - now they don't bother. Instead they send text messages. Click click click, 20 different people can all get the same message at the same time. Not the same at all.

Then there are the Valentine's Day gifts, which seem to range from the lustful - rude messages on scanty underwear - to the sick-making - twee teddy bears with bows and soppy messages. Not an original idea there, no thought of the individual who might receive such things.

And those red roses... Red roses are wonderful. They should have velvety petals and a scent that makes you dizzy. Instead, many of those in the shops this week will have been forced beyond their time to meet the mass demand. They will have no smell and are quite likely to wither in the bud before they've even had a chance to bloom.

Symbolic or what?

Maybe youngsters just know too much. They've been at school with the opposite sex since nursery. They've read the magazines with their diagrams and problem pages. There is no mystery left. They're into instant gratification. And grown-ups know that putting the waiting back into wanting is often a lot more effective.

Would Brief Encounter have been so romantic if Celia Johnson and Trevor Howard had had a quick grope instead of a cup of tea and a bun? Would Pride and Prejudice have been voted as the favourite novel of so many women if Elizabeth Bennett and Mr Darcy had

had an instant fumble in the shrubbery?

Even chick lit - brash bold, no-holds-barred chick lit - knows this, which is why the heroine always ends up with the unlikeliest hero. It's never the big bold chap with the big bold gestures, but the quiet guy who remembers her favourite film, who cooks her favourite food when she's miserable and who manages to remember what she really likes - not just jumping on the bandwagon of what is supposed to be romantic.

All together now - aaaaah...

And romance thrives on mystery and surprise.

A dozen red roses is all very well. But it's not exactly a big surprise on Valentine's Day is it? But a bunch of snowdrops picked fresh shows effort and imagination. Or a bouquet of favourite flowers - big bonus marks for knowing what they are.

When my brother-in-law had to go off and fight in Burma not long after he and my sister were married, he bought her a great big jumper to keep her warm when he couldn't. That's romantic.

And when he came back, she bought him some kippers - because he loves them and she hates them, and what's more, she even cooked them for him. That's love too.

And when my mother had their children for the weekend so they could go off and have a romantic break to themselves, they went off to stay in a smart hotel. But the best night was when they drove to the seaside place they'd gone when they first met - and walked on the front in the rain and had fish and chips in the little café that had once been their favourite when they were young and broke.

Oh yes. The chainsaw. A friend of mine was replanting her garden and needed to get rid of a load of shrubs and small trees. It was their wedding anniversary. Her husband could have bought her another ring, which would have been nice, but she already has more than she can wear. He could have bought her champagne and chocolates - but she was trying to lose weight before their daughter's wedding. He knew she wanted to get the garden right. He could have bought her a plant for the garden, but that would have been too easy. Instead, for their wedding anniversary, he bought her her heart's desire - a chainsaw. She was thrilled.

He did, of course, wrap it up and tie it with pink ribbon. When it comes to romance, you have to do the job properly.

NE window shopping

CHIPPY, CHIPPY SHAKE

NATIONAL Chip Week starts this year on Valentine's Day, so those of us who just love chips have an extra excuse to indulge. Home-made are always best but can be a little smelly and greasy so house proud chip-lovers will be relieved to know that the Morphy Richards Removable Bowl Fryer, £39.99, has a removable washable bowl and lid, which can be detached and washed in warm, soapy water so the smell of frying won't linger in the kitchen. A handy temperature guide on the front of the fryer indicates what temperature is needed for frying different foods, such as potatoes, meat or fish so you can adjust the variable thermostat to the heat required, and it has a generous



1.2kg food capacity. For stockist information please call 0870 0602614 or take a look on www.morphyrichards.com.

SMOOTHLY DOES IT

IF your detox programme is going a little awry, the new Kenwood Smoothie Concert (SB256) is ideal for whipping up healthy fruit smoothies, creating virgin cocktails or simply encouraging you to up your fruit intake. It has a stylish shiny chrome finish, a sleek and slimline design and a 1½-litre fully calibrated goblet with easy, mess-free pouring. An easy-grip stir stick ensures perfectly blended ingredients, while the powerful 500W motor is so efficient, it even crushes ice. The Smoothie Concert costs £39.99 from



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GABRIELLE FAGAN looks at the major trends coming to our homes this spring, what's in and what's out

THERE'S a sleek, sassy sophistication coming to rooms this year. If you want to take a Hollywood comparison think of 1950s star Grace Kelly and that band box perfection, rather than the contrived Boho look.

Homes should look properly dressed, well turned out with colour co-ordinated schemes, and graced with key design pieces. If you can afford something that has a designer label – like a Paul Smith rug, or Jasper Conran bedlinen, or an investment piece like a David Linley table – go for it. Not only will it look good, it will also impress.

Mary Norden, food and interior director of Red magazine, says: "This year will see what I call grown-up chic, with that current rather random, eclectic mix of styles fading. Rooms will look as though a lot more care and thought has gone into them. People will be prepared to spend generously on a key piece, maybe a stunning sofa, a beautifully made desk, or wonderful painting that makes a statement."

So it's time to take the shabby out of chic, and banish those painted floorboards, and faded loose covers. Similarly, if you've embraced cottage-style blowsy florals, be prepared to smartly trim them back, and turn them into sculptured, smaller-scale blooms.

Mary predicts: "There will be less looking to the past, with those heavy dark colours and over-stated so-called glamour. Although retro-designer pieces will still feature there will be a lighter, airier elegance about the whole rather than that hard minimalist approach."

Michelle Ogundehin, editor of Elle Decoration forecasts that interiors will benefit from people having a new-found confidence in their own taste and choices.

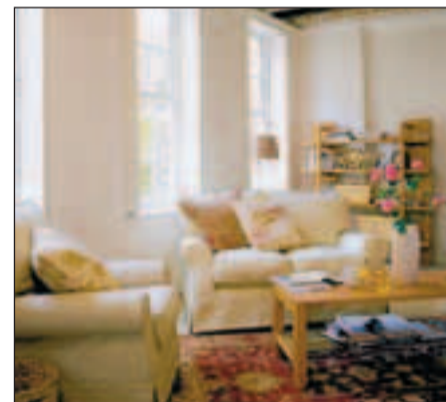
"Increasingly I think people are happy to say, 'this is what I like', and exhibit the knowledge and flair to make it work. They are much more design conscious, and uniformity and blandness and following a set 'look' is over. Instead the trend is for rooms that must be comfortable, but also sophisticated spaces where people can relax and entertain.

"So we will see people making a statement and investing in a sleek, modern piece

of furniture that commands attention or maybe using surprising combinations of textures such as luxurious silk, satins and velvets teamed with wools and suedes."

She advises that successful rooms will have personality by being enlivened with lots of individual touches such as art, or well-displayed personal collections such as china, antiques or collectibles.

Whatever your taste, rooms next year should be inspiring comfortable retreats, where the design delights.



Marks & Spencer Cathryn linen sofa

MARKS & SPENCER

SALLY Bendelow, head of home design, says: "The biggest trend takes a nostalgic look at all things typically English. Pretty floral patterns and fresh colour schemes will feature strongly. Fine china and fabric cushions, combined with leather and enamel accessories will be the key finishing touches."

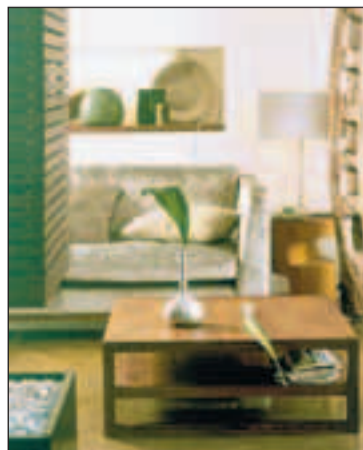
BARKER & STONEHOUSE

ONE of its strongest trends is continuing the popular French rural theme, but taking a step towards decadence – so the effect is more 'Chateau' than last season's 'Farmhouse'. With sumptuous fabrics in velvets, embroidered cottons and plenty of tassels this look uses lighter colours, creams and neutral hues rather than the usual deep, rich burgundies, greens and browns.

HOUSE OF FRASER

SUE McLoughlin, head of design, says: "Hedonism is one of the strongest trends going on in fashion and home and that's set to continue. People are looking for excellent design for the home and rooms that transcend the everyday – we call it luxurious, opulent minimalism."

Its nine new Linea home collections are being launched in April, and one of them, the Luxe, offers the perfect note of understated glamour. The collection is in different tones of green and features a velvet sofa and an oversized armchair.



Linea Luxe velvet sofa, £1,395, and square walnut table, £495. From House of Fraser






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WOOLWORTHS

HEAD of design Fionnuala Johnston says: "There are three themes within our Spring/Summer homes range. We've divided them into Mint, a fresh mix of aqua, blue and green; Maison, a 50s-inspired dining and kitchen story; and Retro Moda, a range of high design pieces in orange, brown and red.

"Accessories for the home combine geometric pattern, textural layering and iconic retro shapes. The key influences include furniture designs by Arne Jacobsen and Charles & Ray Eames, and defining Scandinavian designs from the 50s and 60s. Rich tones of amber and chocolate complement classic neutral shades, creating a modern and relaxing, but understated look."

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WHAT'S HOT AND WHAT'S NOT

OUT: Chandeliers, and rather melodramatic Victorian style colours such as heavy dark reds and deep browns. These are giving way to fresh 1930s style elegance.

OUT: White-painted French style furniture – instead those same pieces should blush with zingy colour and personality.

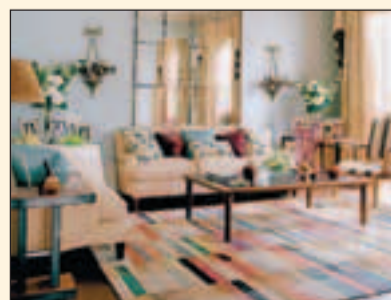
OUT: Rustic, folksy pine, and large patterned florals. The look is much more feminine rather than Little House on the Prairie.

IN: Look out for fresh colours such as mint green, aqua, peach and soft creams and hints of richness with touches of gold and silver. Colour co-ordination is essential. That needn't be slavish pattern matching, more picking out key shades and echoing and complementing them.

IN: Wallpaper and beautifully designed rugs.

IN: Personal possessions, well displayed, will be key whether photographs, art collections or quirky collectibles.

IN: Acrylic and perspex furniture and tiles – for floors and walls, especially glass and mosaic tiles.



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NE interiors



Mirror, mirror, on the wall...

JENNY NEEDHAM visits a house in the Yorkshire dales which reflects the hard work the owners have put into making it a practical and stylish family home



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IT WAS serendipity that led Josephine Maydon to her new home in Richmondshire. She had been to view a house some miles away and, quite by chance, on her return home spotted a man putting up a For Sale sign outside another house overlooking a broad village green.

The fact that it was damp, run-down and too small didn't deter her, and husband Will agreed. They could see the house and attached barn had acres of potential, and the beautiful views back and front over the village and open countryside clinched it.

The couple moved down from Newcastle – "we wanted to a bit closer to our parents who live down South" – and rented a house in Middleton Tyas while the work was being done. They haven't regretted the move. "Everyone in Yorkshire is so friendly, immediately popping round and inviting us for dinner," says Josephine.

The Maydons now have a nine-month-old daughter called Beatrice, and Josephine has another baby – a fledgling business selling mirrors, which is based in Richmond. She employs someone to make them and concentrates on sales and marketing, mostly from home.

The business is doing well but Josephine doesn't want it to get too big for two reasons. "Firstly, I want to have busloads of kids so I won't really be able to greatly expand the business for at least ten years or so," she explains. "Secondly, I want to continue to have the mirrors made locally, not abroad, so I can keep an eye on the quality."

Good quality is Josephine's watchword. "I had seen the leather mirrors out there in the shops and liked them, but the quality wasn't very good. It seemed a plausible



The mess of renovation

idea but I thought I could produce much better versions."

She put an advert in the local paper for a machinist and found a gem, mother-of-one Kelly Heron from Startforth, Barnard Castle, who she trained up from scratch – "though she was a skilled machinist already," says Josephine. "She only works in term time though so I am looking for someone to cover the holidays. I have a strong belief in family and work everything round that."

As well as leather, Josephine offers the mirrors with suede, cowhide, herringbone, tweed and gingham surrounds, and is thinking of expanding the business with ottomans and photograph frames covered in the same fabrics. Clients are varied – she to a nightclub.

Josephine's own house is a veritable showroom for her mirrors. Every room sports them in different shapes, sizes and colours: in the sitting room she has a fake fur picture surround, in the bedroom a full-length mirror in faux suede, and in Beatrice's pretty little nursery bedroom



there are matching blue and white gingham mirrors above the cot bed.

But it was a long haul from buying the house to accessorising it. The building was gutted – a new roof put on, walls added and knocked down, a big dining kitchen forged out of what used to be the old barn, more rooms added upstairs. Stripping the house bare, though, did give the couple the opportunity to add underfloor heating, which is not only practical but does away with ugly and intrusive radiators.

The couple used local craftsmen and women to build and furnish the house.” I prefer to have things made locally,” says Josephine.

Before she married Will, who she met on a blind date in Newcastle, Josephine worked for three years with Country Living and Home & Gardens magazines, so she’s not short of ideas when it comes to interiors. The house is decorated throughout in a neutral colour, with neutral carpets. The kitchen units are cream, the floor a very convincing wood laminate. The room sports an island unit on wheels, a Wedgwood Blue Aga, and masses of space, with light from windows back and front.

A stable door leads to a garden, mostly down to grass, with central steps down to a patio and lawn on another level.

“It used to be like a ski slope so we started trying to dig it out,” says Josephine. “But the ha-ha we’d imagined turned into a ten foot drop so we had to have structural work done and drainage put in, which all cost a lot.”

Where Josephine has cleverly saved the pennies is on the interior, where she has latched on to all the latest trends but gone to the cheaper outlets to buy them. All her curtain fabrics have a very luxurious feel to

them but were bought from the Blaydon factory shop in Newcastle, the carpets throughout are relatively inexpensive ones from Calverts; the mosaic tiles in the two bathrooms and shower look as if they’re from Fired Earth but are actually much cheaper floor tiles; the paints are from Glenwood Interiors and B&Q, the bed crown from OKA mail order catalogue. Furniture is a mixture of old and new, some designed and built by local craftsmen, some donated by generous parents.

Upstairs there are four bedrooms and two bathrooms – one en suite – and the views from all the upstairs rooms are stunning. The ceilings were ripped out when the house was gutted and when the Maydons discovered the beams above, they decided not to replace them which not only has the benefit of giving a feeling of space to the rooms, but also amplifies the dawn chorus: Josephine says she and Will can hear all the birds tweeting as they stretch out in their huge – “Will is 6ft 7ins,” – Emperor-size bed.

Down the corridor, Beatrice’s nursery room has a futon and doubles as a guest room when friends with children stay. Again a neutral palette has been used, warmed up with more pretty fabrics.

After all the hard work, the overall impression at the quaintly-named Standing Stone Cottage is one of calm, coupled with the warmth that every true family home needs. Everything seems to have its place, but there’s nothing too precious about it.

And reflecting – if they’ll excuse the pun – on what they’ve achieved in the eight months it took them to do the place up, the Maydons must feel very proud of themselves.

Continued on page 8



6 The house is a veritable showroom for her mirrors. Every room sports them in different sizes, shapes and colours

Left to right: Standing Stone Cottage; the beamed sitting room; Josephine with little Beatrice


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NE interiors



From top: the stone fireplace in the sitting room. Josephine made all the curtains; the free-standing island in the kitchen; the blue Aga and pale units give a fresh, country feel; the ha-ha Far right: a white furry picture frame by Josephine



Pictures: RICHARD DOUGHTY



Clockwise from above: the family bathroom; one of Josephine's mirrors in the en suite; the master bedroom with exposed beams and bed crown from OKA. The mirror is one of Josephine's designs



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Building works to whole house: Ellis Builders Ltd, Dalton, Richmond, (07801) 242499.
Underfloor Heating: F Peart & Co.Ltd (01429) 852100; sitting room fire (Jetmaster with canopy): Robert Aagaard & Co, Knaresborough (01423) 864805.
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Kitchen: unit carcasses only, Howdens Joinery, North Road Industrial Estate, Meynell Road, Darlington (01325) 486 723; kitchen unit doors: MDF, ready primed, Just Doors, mail order, from £10 a door (0870) 200 1010; kitchen island, OKA-style console table and bedside tables plus all built in cupboards and shelves: ALC Joinery, Scorton, Richmond (07976) 951768
Suede ottoman in sitting room: Josephine Maydon (01325) 718213. **Carpets:** Calvert Carpets, from the Natural Collection, £8.40 sq m, Richmond (01748) 823604. **Curtain material:** Factory Fabrics, Blaydon, Newcastle (0191) 4144515; curtains in kitchen, Ikea, Newcastle.
Upholstery of suede day bed and head board: Individual Interiors, Ann Barber, Hurworth, Darlington (01325) 721530.
Paint: Glenwood Paints, Yarm Road, Darlington.

Says Josephine:

"For my mirror designs, I mix contemporary tactile fabrics with more traditional styles, such as the leather mirrors (which are all hand polished). Our customer-supplied fabric service is ideal for anyone who wants to co-ordinate a mirror with other soft furnishings. You can view the collection at our showroom/workshop on Gallowfields Trading Estate, Richmond."

Josephine Maydon (01325) 718213, fax: (01325) 718782; info@josephinemaydon.co.uk; www.josephinemaydon.co.uk. Workshop: Josephine Maydon at Peacocks of Richmond, Mercury Road, Gallowfields Industrial Estate (01325) 718213. Viewing by appointment only.



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NE gardening

Gardening Correspondent BRIGID PRESS finds her appetite for home-grown fruit and veg whetted on a tour of a real kitchen garden



Colin enjoying a sunny spot in the garden






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Time spent in garden: Any spare moment, constant pottering
Favourite plants: fuchsias and clematis
Most used tool: Bare hands

EVERY garden is created for a different reason. Some gardens are purely aesthetic; stunningly beautiful, but can't be touched, picked or trampled upon. Some are quiet havens of peaceful, relaxing contemplation. Some are retreats from the urban squeeze for wild animals, birds and insects. Others are supporting acts for football pitches, trampolines and climbing frames. Colin and Pat Craggs's garden is used for self sufficient entertaining on a serious scale.

From the road, the house looks quite innocent and innocuous. The front garden is accessed by a simple wrought iron gate and a sensible, well maintained lavender border leads you up the front path. A mature Virginia creeper covers the warm terracotta coloured walls.

All seems normal so far. The signs are there though. A hint of the frivolity to come can be gleaned from the old (but freshly painted) bicycle planted in the middle of the lawn.

You have to go through the house to get to the garden, but it is one of those transitions that happen so gradually that you don't realise that you have crossed the boundary.

The kitchen is festooned with swathes of bay and lavender. Chillies hang in rows down from the beams and slices of dried orange swing from the ceiling. This room adjoins the conservatory which has a clear view of the sky (and the cat trying to cross the Perspex roof).

Climbers and tender plants fill every corner and bundle you out into a large utility room. A large basket filled with tomatoes indicates that it is sauce-making time. The wall to the right is crammed with recycled jars and bottles filled with jams,

chutneys and pickles. The piquant fragrance of vinegar lingers on the nostrils as you move into yet another conservatory room. The roof of this one is woven with the twisted tendrils of a vine. The crop of red grapes has just been harvested.

At last you reach the garden. The patio is dotted with pots, pans, old cisterns and water barrels full of plants. It is a colourful riot. To the left is a quiet secluded area, where the sun filters through the delicate veil of green climbers. The centrepiece here is a metal birdbath-cum-fountain which has a subtle and almost imperceptible trickle of water running through it. Bookcases and ladders provide height and lift for the kettles and saucepans that hold the flowers.

Across the patio is the bar. This magnificent piece of Mexican joinery was a birthday present from his wife. It lives under a roofed space along with a large wooden table and set of padded chairs. Up above, the trellis is covered with another vine. This time they are white grapes, and they dangle tantalisingly down from the timber framework. The shed on which this zone of entertainment is built on houses a collection of vintage vinyl, which is lovingly cracked out on the old record deck at every amicable gathering.

The jolly tones of Bert Kaempfert and his Swinging Safari drift away as I make my way down the garden path. I come across a series of greenhouses filled with fuchsias, most of them cuttings taken by Colin throughout the year. Tomato plants fill any spare tubs. A laburnum arch leads me on. There is a pear tree to my right and apples to my left. Figs are ripening on two medium-sized trees and raspberries peep out from under their verdant clothing.

Peaches had been harvested from the espaliered tree in the entrance of another series of greenhouses. The smell of warm ripe tomatoes entices me in. The plants are growing to giant proportions, with an array of traffic light-coloured fruit dripping off the vines.

The wood shed proves a short respite from the greenery, but through the other side I'm amazed to see yet another series of gardens stretching towards the horizon. A



In veggie heaven

large table and series of benches and chairs signal another staging post: this is where the serious gardeners meet and discuss the state of horticultural affairs over a home-made brew or two.

The majority of the provisions for the kitchen come from this distant potager, predominately made of vegetable beds in various shapes and sizes, but with the odd gladioli and dahlia thrown in for good measure (for cut flowers for the house, everything has a purpose here). Rows of runner beans dwarf the ping-pong ball-sized loganberries. A second crop of broad beans had been squeezed in, and leeks, shallots and onions pop out of any spare patch of soil going. Courgettes carpet the ground, interspersed with the stunning red

swirls of lollo rosso and maroon-veined beetroot tops.

The garden does eventually come to an end, with a large mound of brash built up ready for burning, but even here, bounty oozes out from the hedgerow in the form of a large stand of sweet wild plums.

I navigate my way back to the bar, where I spend an enjoyable evening tasting the garden produce. I am served freshly made tomato soup and Mediterranean runner beans with garlic followed by blackberry and apple pie. It is all home grown and all home made.

This is a very homely, earthy and loving garden, where the simple pleasures of the land bring great ethereal rewards and forge lasting bonds of friendship.



Clockwise from above: the stunning pathway in full flower; the bar area, a birthday present from Colin's wife Pat; Colin tending to the plants in the greenhouse

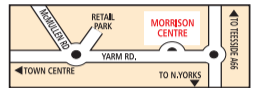
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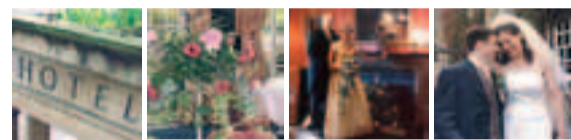
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me and my wardrobe



John Whitehead, 27, owns designer menswear and accessories shop Fourth Chamber in Darlington. He prefers the casual look and loves his trainers...

How would you describe your look?
I would say super casual. Most guys these days don't really grow out of their jeans and T-shirts, whereas in the past you used to see men going for a much smarter look as they got older. These days you're just as likely to see a 40-year-old man in his jeans and T-shirt walking down the street.

What's your favourite item of clothing?
I collect trainers and I have about 50 pairs. My favourite pairs are limited edition Nikes and I tend to get them through eBay or from Japan.

What's your worst buy?
I don't know about worst but I wore some pretty bad shirts when I was about 16 and 17. I had a really bad snakeskin one which I

thought was great at the time, but looking back it really wasn't.

What's the most you've ever spent on an item of clothing?
Probably my Nike Dunk Supreme Hi's which I got for £350.

What are your favourite shops?
Apart from my own, I like Hideout, Foot Patrol and A Busy Workshop, all in London.

Which celebrity's style do you admire and why?
Jude Law. Whether you see him walking down the street in Notting Hill wearing shorts and a T-shirt or on the red carpet, he always looks great.

● Fourth Chamber is at 21 Post House Wynd, Darlington (01325) 488448.

Clockwise from main picture:
Armani leather jackets and jeans by Gucci;
Carhartt T-shirt, G-Star jeans,
Nike trainers;
55DSL shirt and jeans, Nike trainers

“I collect trainers and have about 50 pairs. My favourites are limited edition Nikes

NE out on the town

NE Magazine's style experts scour the social honeypots of the region in search of style and individuality



MAX FREER

McCourt & McKay

THE Living Room opened its doors in Grey Street Newcastle at the end of last year. Housed on two levels, this Grade II listed building has a 270-capacity bar and a 120-cover restaurant. The restaurant offers a hearty, yet diverse menu with a high quality and slick delivery, and it won't break the bank. Our first visit was a Saturday evening and although it was packed with revellers and we were in central Geordieland, the ambience was one of unpretentious style. Our friendly barman Michael Wathen, below, indulged us with an impressive display of cocktail shaking and we enjoyed a couple of Bellinis. We were there again on the Thursday afternoon to see Daniel Bedingfield perform an impressive acoustic set for Century FM in the Basement Bar.



MARK SHIELDS

MARK Shields, 26, is the general manager. He looked very slick and professional in a brown suit by Hugo Boss, a shirt from Next and brown shoes from Office. He shops at Cruise for its great selection but prefers his shirts from Reiss and suits from the Boss range as they fit so well. Mark recommends a wash with Clinique soap followed by Clinique moisturiser.

MAX FREER

MAX, 33, has a very busy job as marketing controller for Century FM and was the main organiser of the Daniel Bedingfield gig. Not a single fluster in sight, she looked effortlessly chic in a French Connection suit, tights from Topshop and shoes from Russell and Bromley. New York is Max's favourite place to shop but she also loves it when she finds a unique item at car boot sales



DANIEL BEDINGFIELD

or charity shops. Max's skin looks radiant and glowing and although she does not need any make-up, she does indulge in the Clarins Purity Range. Her favourite product is Beauty Flash Balm.

TONY MYERS

TONY Myers is an executive of Polydor, Daniel Bedingfield's label. Looking relaxed and casual, Tony wore Jeans from Replay, a leather jacket from a vintage collection in Camden and a shirt by Ralph Lauren. His main grooming regime is keeping his naturally curly hair tamed with regular haircuts.

RACHEL ROBBINS

THE girl next to Tony is our friend Rachel Robbins, who came along for the ride and who is also now a converted Bedingfield fan. Rachel is a manager at Freedom Direct travel agents in Newcastle. She was wearing a jacket by French Connection, Diesel jeans and boots from House of Fraser. Rachel recommends packing in smoking, which she has just done, and Virgin Vie skin care.

The Living Room, Grey Street Newcastle, www.thelivingroom.co.uk

● Judie McCourt, of TV and radio fame, and make-up and hair artist Allison McKay, run AM Creative Productions, which specialises in creative event management and the production of photographic images for advertising

amcreativeproductions.com



TONY MYERS & RACHEL ROBBINS



JULIE JOHNSON



MIKE WALSH

MIKE WALSH

MIKE Walsh is 32 and head of music at Century FM. He has an air of effortless casual style. His scarf was from Rome, jeans by Carhartt, T-shirt by Fred Perry and glasses from Optical Express. As for shopping, Newcastle pretty much does it for him but now and again he will venture to Psyche in Middlesbrough. Mike believes everything in life is a balance and you can work and play hard as long as you eat healthily, drink lots of water and rest when your body tells you to.

JULIE JOHNSON

JULIE, 27, is a sales and marketing manager for Living Ventures and was here today checking all was fine for Mr Bedingfield. Julie's Kookai top really suited her slim figure and colouring. It was complemented by a classic pair of trousers, handbag by DKNY and boots by Dolce and Gabbana. Two beauty products Julie couldn't be without are Pink Lemonade lipgloss by Mac and Mac eyeshadow.



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When the float comes in

Had enough of faux fur, purple and green? SHEREEN LOW checks out new trends that are going to be big this year, and work out what can be chucked, and what should be kept

IT'S going to be another feminine year, with floral prints and floaty fabrics still quite popular. Laura Farrant, fashion writer for the iVillage website, says: "At the spring 2005 fashion runway shows, a strong 50s influence forecast that all things feminine reigned supreme. Hair and make-up is soft and girly, with dresses, fuller skirts and cropped trousers, making it another flattering season."

"Shorts are the hot item of the season and the practical alternative to skirts. They were introduced last summer but they can be difficult to sell, which is why designers like Miu Miu, Balenciaga and Clements Ribeiro have come up with several flattering varieties this time round."

And according to Elizabeth Coccozza, Eve's fashion director, the Granny of fabric - crochet - is back. "Crochet cardigans, skirts, dresses and even bikinis, were sent down the runway for spring. Wear with floaty 70s style separates for a blast of the past."

GOING TRIBAL

FORTUNATELY, it's not Tarzan and Jane-style fashion that's hot on the catwalks. Rather than walking around in fake grass skirts and coconut shell tops, African prints and tribal-inspired clothes will be in vogue.

Prints that you'll be hunting for include foliage (jungle, floral and fruity), wildlife especially butterflies, birds and spiders, and geometric block patterns in bright, bold hues of brown, yellow and orange.

And check out Morocco, Caribbean and India for their ethnic influences that are also making a mark. Just make sure you don't go overboard by teaming it up with some neutral items.

"Think Indian summer," explains Elizabeth. "Lots of brightly coloured fabrics, embellished with jewelled stones and embroidery. Team long skirts with flat thongs and bright cami tops with faded jeans."

HIGH STREET HAUNTS: Miss Selfridge, George, Principles, Wallis, Mango.

THE HIPPY TRAIL

SIENNA and Kate's boho lead has been followed, and it seems that hippy-influenced fashion will still be big next season.

Liven up your wardrobe with kaftans, tiered skirts and all things floaty, decorated with plenty of embellishment and sparkle. Marc Jacobs' runway showed off delicate chiffon tops and swirly full skirts and dresses, while Chloe's spring collection boasts soft chiffon bib-fronted blouses and washed silk skirts.

And though Little House On The Prairie isn't an obvious trendsetter, it's the inspiration behind one

of spring's freshest looks: the tiered skirt. If you think it all looks too girly, wear it bohemian-style over a pair of jeans.

"Broderie anglaise, chiffon and lace will make up your new vintage wardrobe. Dreamy and soft, mix bodices with gypsy skirts and lots of feminine jewellery," says Elizabeth.

HIGH STREET HAUNTS: Warehouse, Dorothy Perkins, New Look, River Island, Topshop.

FLORALLY SPEAKING

BEFORE you start cringing, floral prints aren't as frumpy as they used to be. The new young trend draws its inspiration from the 30s and 50s, so you can take your pick from the Liberty-type small all-over floral print, or the bigger and bolder English rose garden style.

Wear it on floaty dresses, flirty skirts and summery tops - just not head to foot, otherwise you might really end up looking like a rose garden, rather than an English rose.

HIGH STREET HAUNTS: Laura Ashley, Monsoon, Next, Oasis, Zara.

SENSATIONAL SHADES

THERE'S plenty of choice this spring, with accents of strong brights. The earthy shades like rusts and cream are still big, but in the pretty corner are baby pink, soft lemon, pale grey and grass green.

But the hottest colour for 2005 is blue.

"Blue looks ready to give last summer's top tone of green a run for its money. Other colours making notable appearances include hot pink, sunset orange and pastel lilac and rose," says Laura.

Broderie anglaise, chiffon and lace will make up your new vintage wardrobe. Dreamy and soft, mix bodices with gypsy skirts and lots of feminine jewellery





London Fashion Week Spring/Summer 2005 collection: clockwise from main picture – Jean Muir floral coat; sunset orange from Tristan Webber; floaty chiffon by Boyd; Eley Kishimoto's tribal theme

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THE North-East is experiencing a complete transformation. The last few years has seen this renaissance kick-started with the redevelopment of the Newcastle Quayside and Gateshead Quays and the opening of a number of iconic buildings, including BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Arts, the Gateshead Millennium Bridge and, of course, the recently opened Sage Gateshead. Further afield we have seen the opening of a new contemporary art gallery in Middlesbrough, the Winter Gardens development and the refurbishment of the Empire Theatre in Sunderland. There is a renewed sense of pride and achievement in the air with NewcastleGateshead fast gaining a reputation as one of the most exciting destinations in Europe, both for those visiting and those who decide they like it so much that they want to live and work here.

Culture has been one of the main catalysts for changing perceptions of the region and creating an area with the infrastructure and ambition to develop and deliver truly world-class events and activities for both visitors and local communities alike. Culture10, launched in 2003, has played a significant role in this development. A multi-million pound cultural programme running until 2010, culture10 will bring world-class events to the area, helping to position NewcastleGateshead and the surrounding region as a cultural force to be reckoned with and attracting millions of visitors from the rest of the UK and abroad. culture10 is supported by Gateshead Council, Newcastle City Council, One North East, Arts Council England, North East, Northern Rock Foundation and The Millennium Commission.

Within the last year alone, culture10 has had a real positive impact on this region and its people, whether by inspiring young people to follow their dreams as a result of a major fashion project with UK designer Scott Henshall or animating local buildings and public spaces with exciting and innovative projects such as Fashion At Belsay, Sunburst at Saltwell Park and Plantmania at the Sunderland Winter Gardens.

2005 is set to be our biggest culture10 year yet. 2005 Alive will bring four major festivals to the North-East – Music, Rivers & Seas, Sport and Visual Arts. This is a first – no other region in the UK has ever developed such a hugely ambitious programme over a single year. Each festival will encompass world class spectacles including the opening programme of The Sage Gateshead, the Tall Ships Race and the 25th anniversary of the Great North Run, which will attract visitors from far and wide and really put us on the map. Each festival will also offer a wide range of exciting and participatory community events which I hope will encourage local people to really get involved and enjoy what this fantastic region of ours has to offer.

I am delighted to be joining Newcastle Gateshead Initiative at such an exciting time and to be able to play a part in this amazing transformation. There is still much to do, but with the momentum created over the last few years, and with the continuing support of local people to make this region bigger and better than ever, I believe 2005 will set a new standard for years to come and will help to make this decade one we will look back on with great pride.

Tim Bartlett, Chief Executive, Newcastle Gateshead Initiative



INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF RIVERS AND THE SEA

BETWEEN June 25 and August 7, seven weekends of maritime magic are planned along the breadth of North-East coastline.

This wave of rivers and sea based fun begins with the "Festival of the Coast". Highlights include Sunderland Waterfront Festival with a spectacular pyrotechnic performance on the Wear by "Walk the Plank."

Other events include: the North-East Sand Sculpture festival, staged up and down the coast, and the North Sea Triangle Race – a new yacht race linking Norway and Denmark with the region's marinas.

The "Live Art Festival", July 2-3, sees Navigate, a consortium of regional arts organisations working with cutting-edge artists from all over the world to create an exciting festival which won't be seen anywhere else in the UK this year.

The "Mouth of the River Festival", July 9-10, brings music, theatre and dance performances on both sides of the mouth of the River Tyne culminating in a finale of lights and music by world renowned French group Aquatique.

On July 16-17, the mouth of the Tyne will host a "Water Sports Weekend" featuring Zapcats, a heat of the world's largest powerboat championships. Canoeing, sailing and jet skiing taster sessions will also be on offer and water sports clubs throughout Newcastle-Gateshead will also open their doors to the public.

July 23-28 sees Tall Ships Week. As the Tall Ships arrive on the 25th, small craft also play their part with the East Coast Regatta. On the evening of the 27th, there will be the must see spectacular of the Eve of Parade celebrations.

Another highlight will be an outstanding work "Ghost Ship" by renowned artist Chris



Zapcats will be racing on Water Sports Weekend. Above right and top: the Tall Ships Race

Burden which brings an unmanned, self-navigating boat travelling from Bergen to NewcastleGateshead broadcasting its entire voyage via the internet.

The Sage Gateshead will also stage concerts featuring local folk musicians and finalists from a sea shanty singing competition.

July 30-31 will be "Celebration Weekend" a series of events recognising many other reasons to visit the North-East following the departure of The Tall Ships. Events include Kielder Festival, Sunderland Air Show, Gateshead Flower Show and Northern Proms at Durham County Cricket Club.

August 6-7 brings Stockton Riverside Festival. 2005 sees an expansion of this popular festival to include a performance by Clippa, another of the world's best water-based theatre companies. Stockton Festival Fringe also boasts a selection of high profile and local rock and pop acts.

A supporting festival performance programme will also run throughout the seven weeks to coincide with the International Festival of Rivers and the Sea.

Highlights include the only opportunity in the UK to see performances by the Thang Long Water Puppet troupe of Hanoi, three new plays created to complement the Festival by Live Theatre and "Swim Like a Goldfish" a Dance City and Northern Stage collaboration.

There will also be a programme of maritime related exhibitions and events at museums across the region.

Mandy Kinnear, Grainger Trust plc, main sponsor of the Tall Ships Races and corporate members of NGI, said: "Now we have kicked off the New Year, Grainger Trust is starting to get very excited about the 2005 Alive activity fast approaching. As a company with its headquarters in the North-East we couldn't resist the opportunity to become part of the Tall Ships event as this is such an exciting event for this region."

"Just as thrilling are the spin-off events that are planned across the North-East as part of the River Festival. The festival and the Tall Ships' Race will provide a great window to showcase our region and the cultural di-



versity that lies at its heart to the rest of the world."

Councillor Mick Henry, Leader of Gateshead Council, said: "Tall Ships returning to the North-East are a fantastic opportunity for Gateshead and the region, both in terms of raising the area's profile and promoting tourism. The ships are a spectacular sight for visitors and the atmosphere on both sides of the Tyne during the race is exciting and unique. Gateshead Quays has undergone a dramatic transformation since the last race and I hope returning ships and visitors will be stunned by our spectacular new Quays vista."

"Not only will visitors be able to enjoy these world famous vessels moored to the banks of the Tyne, but I hope both local, national and international visitors will take the opportunity to experience some of our major cultural developments, from BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art and Gateshead Millennium Bridge to our world famous The Sage Gateshead, all of which sit alongside the Quays. I look forward to welcoming both sailors and visitors, new and old."



FESTIVAL OF MUSIC

AN exciting Festival of Music has been launched throughout the region bringing a year of world-class music to the North East. The launch event took place at the Performance Academy at Newcastle College and brought a range of musicians, key business people and the general public together giving them a taste of the exciting programme planned throughout 2005.

The Festival of Music will feature a range of spectacular regional events and community festivals, encompassing a wide range of musical styles and genres.

Throughout the whole of 2005, there will be plenty to see and hear, whether you have a taste for classical, folk, contemporary music, jazz, pop, dance or rock. Local, national and international musicians will be part of the exciting line-up and there will be many opportunities for local people to get involved. With something happening throughout the region almost every weekend of the year, there will never be a better time to visit the North-East than in 2005.

And here is just a taster of what is to come:

The Sage Gateshead Opening Programme

THE newly opened and stunning £70m Norman Foster building provides world class facilities for all kinds of music. Some of the performances from February to March 2005 include the following:

African Soul Rebels

Monday, February 21
Music Beyond Mainstream (MBM), presents a unique triple bill of some of the most innovative and provocative African music on the planet.



Twisted Folk - Hem, The Earlies, Martha Tilston

Wednesday, February 23
Twisted Folk is the banner under which some of the finest sounds around will be showcased nationally.

An Evening with David Crosby & Graham Nash

Thursday, February 24
As a duo, long-time creative partners David Crosby and Graham Nash, Rock and Roll Hall of Famers are legendary for their airtight and crystal-clear vocal harmonies. It is a sound that's one of the true touchstones of the rock 'n' roll era.

Nick Cave - solo performance

Sunday, February 27
A malevolent and beautiful musical force for over two decades, Nick Cave plays an exclusive solo concert. From his nihilistic early days in the Birthday Party, to becoming Kylie Minogue's favourite bad influence, Cave has always been uncompromising. This is a rare opportunity to see an intimate solo show.

Lemon Jelly

Monday, February 28
Fans will be wobbling with joy to know that Lemon Jelly will be bringing their delicious technicolour live show to The Sage Gateshead. Lemon Jelly is a delirious feel-good mix of chilled out sounds, meaty dance beats, scratches and quirky samples, recreated partially with live instruments.

Orange Evolution 05

Thursday 19 - Monday, May 30
This year Orange Evolution is set to become the biggest music festival ever seen in the North-East of England, with over 40 gigs and events taking place across NewcastleGateshead. Catering for tastes from the inspiring music of Blues and Roots right through to the experimental electronic dance music of the future, there will be something for everyone.

Orange Evolution's final weekend is when things will really go with a bang. Shindig will be returning to Baltic Square giving everyone a chance to Dance on the Tyne, while an expanded site on both Newcastle and Gateshead Quaysides will allow 25,000 people to gather to see the highest quality bill on outdoor stages ever assembled in the region.

Middlesbrough Music Live

Monday, May 30
Middlesbrough Music Live is a free all-day urban music festival, held in Middlesbrough Town Centre and over seven stages throughout the town. The 6th annual festival will present the best ever line-up of cool free bands - look out for tomorrow's stars today - coups have included The Darkness and Keane (2003) and in 2004 Kasabian, Razorlight and Goldie Lookin Chain.

Jumpin Hot Club

Throughout 2005, various venues across NewcastleGateshead
Jumpin Hot Club will bring the best in Roots music - Americana, Country, Blues, Soul and Reggae - from around the world to various venues across the region. 2005 is Jumpin Hot Club's 20th Anniversary year and there will be plenty of surprises and more shows than ever.



BOSS SOUNDS FESTIVAL

Throughout 2005, various venues
Boss Sounds is a series of reggae events taking place tracing the history of reggae, while attracting some of the biggest names in the field including The Abyssinians, pictured above, who are among the most respected of Jamaica's reggae bands and inventors of a roots variation of close harmony singing - their strong prayerful voices and conscientious lyrics will touch your heart, head and soul.

Avison Ensemble

Friday, May 20 Chillingham Castle, Northumberland
Saturday, May 21, Preston Hall, Stockton-on-Tees
Sunday, May 22, Assembly Rooms, Newcastle-upon-Tyne
The Avison Ensemble has successfully



Orange Evolution, left, and above, Durham Brass Festival and Crosby and Nash

created and produced classical music concerts for the past 17 years and comprises of some of Europe's leading baroque musicians and soloists. They will present Mr Handel's Mad Scenes with extended scenes from two of Handel's finest operas, Orlando and Alcina, focusing on the pivotal point of each opera where the lead character reaches breaking point in scenes of intense drama. The areas highlighted are some of the most challenging and most modern of Handel's music, stretching all musical boundaries. Wild, exciting, and off the wall!

Ex Cathedra

Friday, November 18, Durham Cathedral
Ex-Cathedra, one of the UK's finest choirs, is best known for its critically acclaimed performances of Early Music, and has a burgeoning reputation for Latin American Baroque. They will be performing a vibrant collection of choral music sung in Spanish, Latin and the languages of the Aztecs and Incas with potent seasoning from period instruments.

For more information on all of the events visit www.2005alive.com



The Legendary Shack Shakers

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Antony Gormley's Domain Field at BALTIC

FESTIVAL OF VISUAL ARTS

September – January 2006

ART and creativity are at the very heart of NewcastleGateshead and the North East. From Antony Gormley's world-famous Angel of the North in Gateshead, to thriving rural art galleries in Northumberland, visual art is inspired, created, explored and enjoyed on a daily basis throughout the region by local people and visitors alike.

In celebration of British art and the North-East's artistic vision and strengths, the fourth and final festival during 2005 Alive is the Festival of Visual Arts (September 2005 - January 2006).

The region will host a series of exciting events with something happening at every art gallery throughout the region, including BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art who will launch a very exciting exhibition later this year.

Art lovers, critics, media and cultural visitors from across the UK and beyond will be attracted to the region to enjoy the many innovative activities and events taking place during the Festival of Visual Arts.

Further events in development will showcase local and national talent in all areas of visual arts – including film and video and the rural art economy. VJing – one of the strongest growing art forms in the UK, which involves manipulating video very much like a DJ mixes music – will also feature in the programme.

Renowned for its dynamic, ambitious programme of public art, NewcastleGateshead has achieved national recognition and won

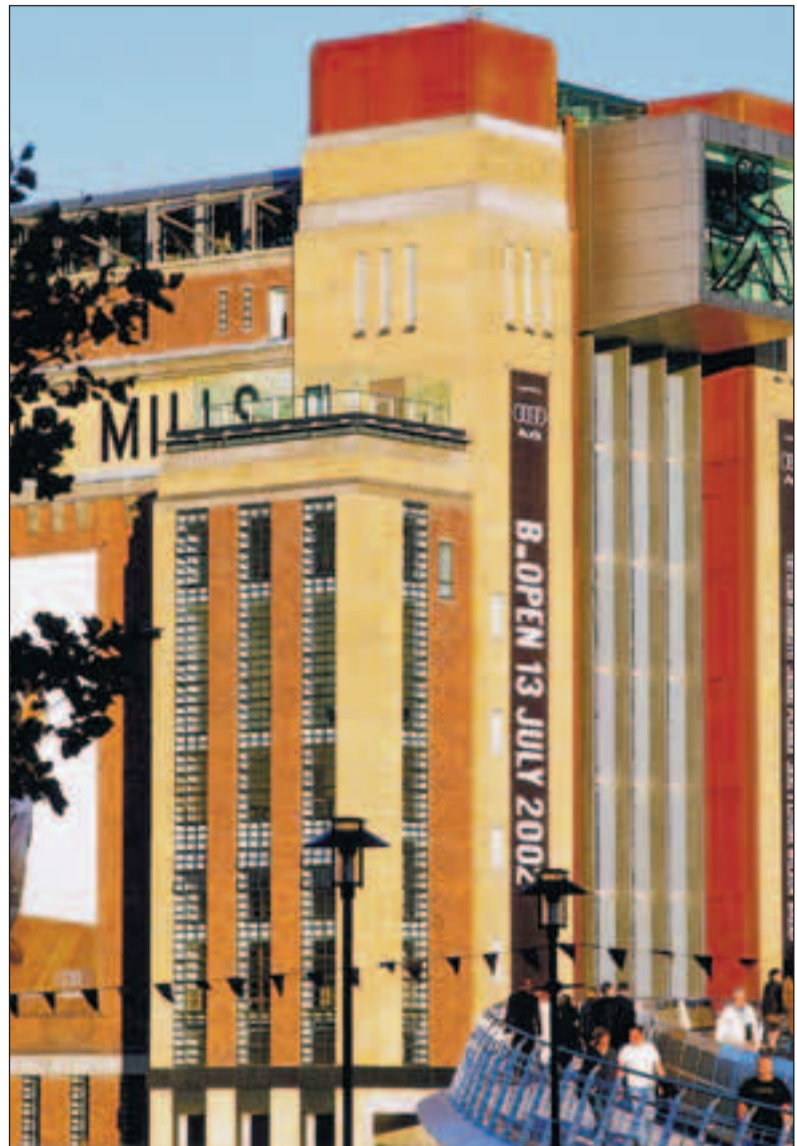
prestigious awards for its many art works in public sites – from Thomas Heatherwick's Blue Carpet in Newcastle city centre to Colin Rose's Rolling Moon on the Gateshead banks of the River Tyne. A celebration of public art will play a key role in the Festival of Visual Arts.

Some of the region's top arts venues, including the Laing Art Gallery and the Biscuit Factory, are also set to play a prominent part in the programme of events.

The diversity of the Festival of Visual Arts will provide the perfect platform for debate about the nature of British art today – and what better backdrop for this debate than the creative and forward-thinking North-East?

Andrew Dixon, Executive Director, Arts Council England, North-East, says: "This year's Festival of Visual Arts takes place 10 years after the launch of Visual Arts UK by Tony Blair in 1996. The visual arts have become a major strength in the North-East with a host of new galleries, the country's most ambitious programme of public art and a growing network of artist-led studios and projects.

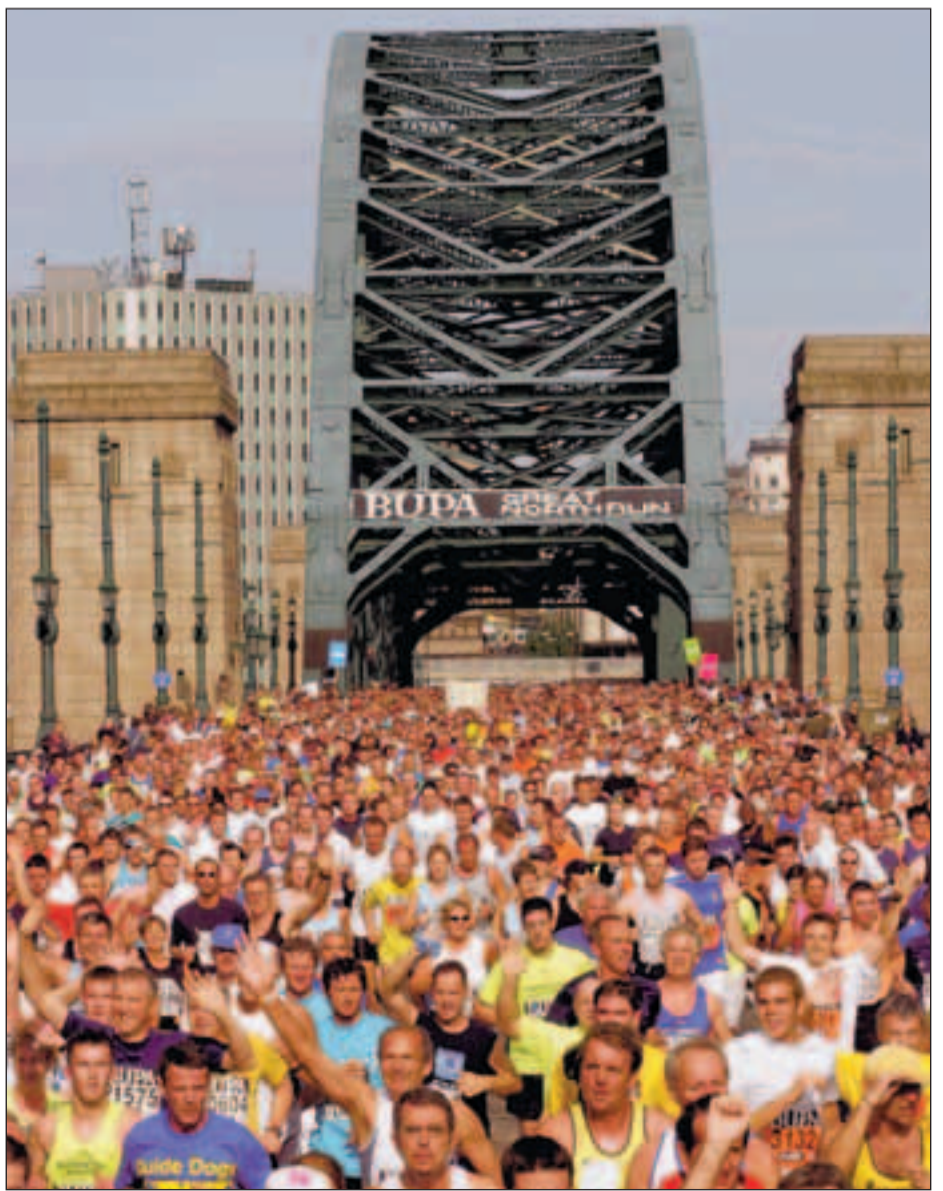
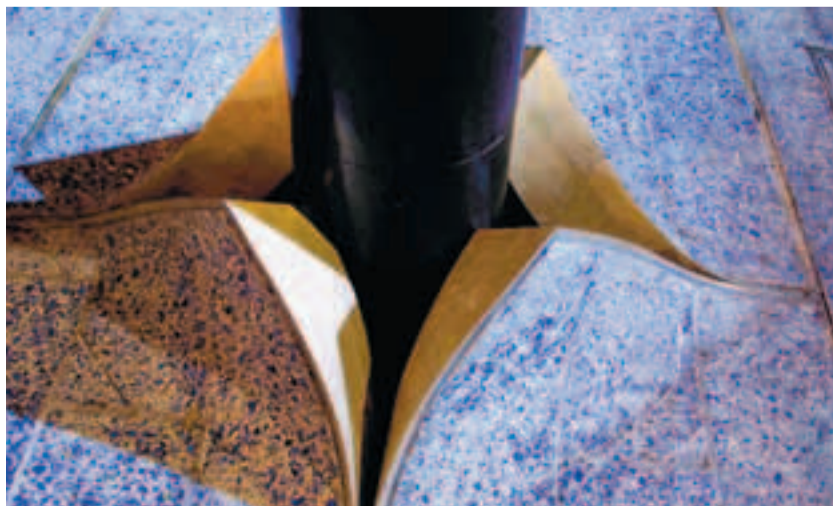
"The festival provides a platform for public debate of what is British Art. From arts and architecture at Kielder to sculpture in Durham, animation, VJing, live art and work in schools and communities, the programme will position international and local visual arts alongside the 'Best of British'. We are aiming to make the North-East the best place in the UK to live and work as an artist and the festival will open the door for even more artists to relocate to the region."



BALTIC – a huge success story



The Blue Carpet in the city centre





FESTIVAL OF SPORT

(August 31 - October)

SPORT is at the heart of North-East culture and has been a long worshipped tradition of those both young and old.

For many years people of the North-East have travelled far and wide to support their favourite team and have shown a loyalty and sense of pride which can rarely be found elsewhere. For people of the North-East, sport is a religion, not just a hobby, which encompasses a wide range of sporting activities including, football, rugby, athletics, basketball and ice hockey.

To add to this, the region also has fantastic sporting infrastructure. St James' Park, the home of Newcastle United Football Club, has played host to some of the world's biggest football teams as well as being the venue for last year's highly successful Newcastle-Gateshead Cup and Sky One's The Match. The Newcastle Falcons' multi-million pound stadium at Kingston Park has created bigger and better facilities for the Zurich Premiership Team and an increased capacity which now holds up to 10,000 fans. And the recently developed Gateshead International Stadium, the North-East's home of athletics, is the venue of the Norwich Union Grand Prix, a major event, and last year saw a world record broken in the women's pole vaulting and was used as a training ground for world-class athletes such as Jonathan Edwards, Steve Cram and Tanni Grey-Thompson. These fantastic sportsmen and women, alongside icons such as Alan Shearer and Jonny Wilkinson, have not only helped to shine a national spotlight on the region but have proved to be great am-

**Top: the British Surfing Championships is to be held at Tynemouth this year
Left: the Great North Run celebrates its 25th anniversary in 2005**

bassadors for the region in which they live and work.

To celebrate a decade of world-class sport, Newcastle Gateshead Initiative is launching a spectacular Festival of Sport to be held throughout the region between August and October. The festival is the third of four festivals planned as part of the ambitious £12m 2005 Alive programme and will feature a range of exciting events and a great sporting challenge for everyone in the region to enjoy.

2005 is tipped to be a big year for sport in the North-East with The 25th Great North Run, The Seve Trophy 2005 and The British Surfing Championships at Tynemouth already confirmed. These major events will be complimented by a series of community festivals and regional based activities all designed to get people of the North East moving.

The Great North Run will be at the centre of the festival with a record number of visitors expected to help celebrate its 25th anniversary. Last year saw around 49,000 people take part in Britain's most popular half marathon and 2005 is sure to be even bigger. With million of pounds spent on regeneration throughout the area, runners and visitors alike are sure to be thrilled by the region's spectacular backdrop.

Golfing fans are being given the unique opportunity to enjoy international golf at its very best with The Seve Trophy 2005. This exhilarating four day event sees the best of Great Britain and Ireland's golfers compete against continental Europe. Seve Ballesteros will captain the Continental side while Ryder Cup hero Colin Montgomerie will lead the Great Britain and Ireland team. The Wynyard Club in Tees Valley will host this top class tournament from September 22-25.

Throughout the sport campaign local people and communities will be encouraged to get active and enjoy sport as part of their everyday culture. The Festival of Sport has been designed to appeal to everyone whether they engage in sporting activity or not.

INVITE YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS

2005 Alive is going to be an amazing experience for everyone in the North-East, but don't keep it to yourself. This year is the perfect time for friends and family outside the region to make a visit.

Share your sense of pride in the region by telling everyone about this year's major international events such as The Tall Ships Races, the opening programme of The Sage Gateshead and the 25th Great North Run. All of these stunning experiences and more will be on your doorstep.

Following the successful launch of culture10, the ambitious cultural programme, more visitors than ever before have been heading to the North-East to sample the region's unique atmosphere. During 2005, things are going to get even more exciting. Four major festivals – Music, Rivers and Sea, Sport and Visual Art – have been created to delight you and yours.

The Music Festival is already underway following the launch of The Sage Gateshead's opening programme. Stars appearing during the 2005 festival include Lesley Garrett, Courtney Pine and the Vienna Philharmonic. The International Festival of Rivers and the Sea in June and July will feature seven magical weekends of maritime magic, the highlight of which will be the aforementioned Tall Ships Races.

Sport is the name of the game this autumn, ranging from walking to extreme sports. Events include the 25th anniversary of the Great North Run, aimed at getting the North-East moving.

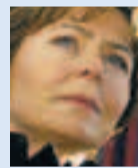
2005 Alive ends with a celebration of the visual arts. Every gallery and exhibition space in the North-East will be packed with fabulous art. With such a varied programme, there's something to suit every visitor – just spread the word.

Celebrities such as Robson Green and Jonathan Edwards are backing our campaign to encourage people to invite their friends and family to come and enjoy 2005 Alive. The BBC's Carol Malia promises to entice as many visitors as possible to the region this year. Carol said, "My social diary is going to be packed with visits from friends and family all year. There's so much that I want to show off to them. I love the North-East and I want the people who mean a lot to me, no matter where they live, to share in the unbeatable experiences on offer this year."

Carol's visitors may be coming from far afield, as 2005 Alive promises to have major appeal beyond the region and to attract visitors from around Britain, Europe and worldwide. Over the past few years, NewcastleGateshead has seen a steady increase in the number of new hotels being built, such as the Hilton Newcastle-Gateshead and the Tulip Inn on Team Valley in Gateshead. However, as audiences for highlights for the 2005 Alive programme could top one million, it is hoped that the North-East will live up to its famous reputation for hospitality and that – in addition to filling the region's hotels – local people will ask family and friends to stay with them.

Carol continued, "There's a real buzz about the region and we're right to be proud of everything that has been achieved. We all know people who have never visited the region before and are interested in exploring this 'new' North-East they have heard so much about, or people who are originally from the North-East and want to see for themselves the changes which have taken place. It's time to get your 2005 calendar booked up and give the spare room or the sofa bed a quick spring clean. You're about to become more popular than ever!"

www.2005alive.com



"I love the North-East and I want the people who mean a lot to me, no matter where they live, to share in the unbeatable experiences on offer this year..."

– Carol Malia

The festival will also highlight the range of sporting activities that are undertaken throughout the region. It will also focus on the importance that is placed on encouraging our young people to take part in sport and developing talent in world-class training facilities.

Tim Cantle-Jones, Chair of Sport England, North-East, said: "Sport is now increasingly being recognised as an important part of North East culture. This recognition is helping us to encourage more people to participate in a range of sporting activities, provide more world-class facilities and stage major events which in the past would never have been possible in the North-East.

"The 2005 Alive programme is bringing sport into communities through a festival which will hopefully make us as a region realise the many benefits that sport can bring to us as individuals and in terms of economic benefit. The North-East already has a huge national profile for mainstream sports, but there is so much more. Hopefully through the 2005 Alive programme and the ongoing work undertaken by Sport England, we can reflect the variety of activities enjoyed throughout the region and highlight our fantastic talents across a wide sporting spectrum."

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NE beauty



Elaine Stoddart tests the amount of collagen in Lindsay's skin using DermaScan

What lies beneath

The sun, bad diet, dehydration, cigarettes – they're all enemies of our skin, but is it possible to repair the damage? Women's Editor LINDSAY JENNINGS puts a new anti-ageing skincare range to the test

IF there is one family trait I am pleased to have inherited, it's my grandmother's skin. I may have picked up my mother's pear shaped hips from the gene pool, but at least my soft skin can usually be guaranteed to shave a couple of years from my age... or so I thought.

Arriving at Saks Hair & Beauty in Darlington to test a new anti-ageing skincare range called MACTIV, I discover that years of complacently smoking cigarettes (now stubbed out) and a fondness for red wine, late nights and chocolate are starting to take their toll.

Now I'm looking at the results. Elaine Stoddart, general manager of Dansk Apotek Ltd, which has produced MACTIV, has put my skin under the spotlight via a DermaScan. The machine picks up the echoes under the skin's surface to determine the level of collagen (the skin's protein) damage. It's the collagen fibres in our skin which reduce and cause us to look "aged".

"You can see irritations in the skin, cellular pimples, past acne scarring, but most importantly, you can tell the collagen situation. In good skin it should be like this," says Elaine, clasping her hands together, "but as you start to age it starts to break away."

Elaine begins by taking an image of the skin on my lower inner arm, the least likely place to have skin damage, to assess what kind of skin I have.

"You're very lucky," she says. "You were at the front of the queue when they were giving out epidermal DNA."

Then she takes an image just beside my eye and on the top lip.

"Ah," she says, somewhat surprised. "It's not bad, but there's no collagen at all here (by the eye) in parts. On the upper lip, the

epidermis is getting thinner. It's a bit of environmental damage and perhaps you're not looking after yourself inside?"

I've been caught out. Elaine prescribes the MACTIV Damaged Skin Renewal Cream; the Oil-Free Day Cream and the Anti-Ageing Eye Cream to test over the next six weeks. The MACTIV products include active ingredients, vitamins and natural plant and herb extracts which work deep under the skin. Its formula is designed to increase cell metabolism and rebuild the collagen fibres – reversing the signs of ageing.

Says Elaine: "It is the only range of its type available on the high street."

"The main ingredient is vitamin A which helps cell renewal and collagen synthesis. It improves visibly the signs of ageing by thickening the epidermis."

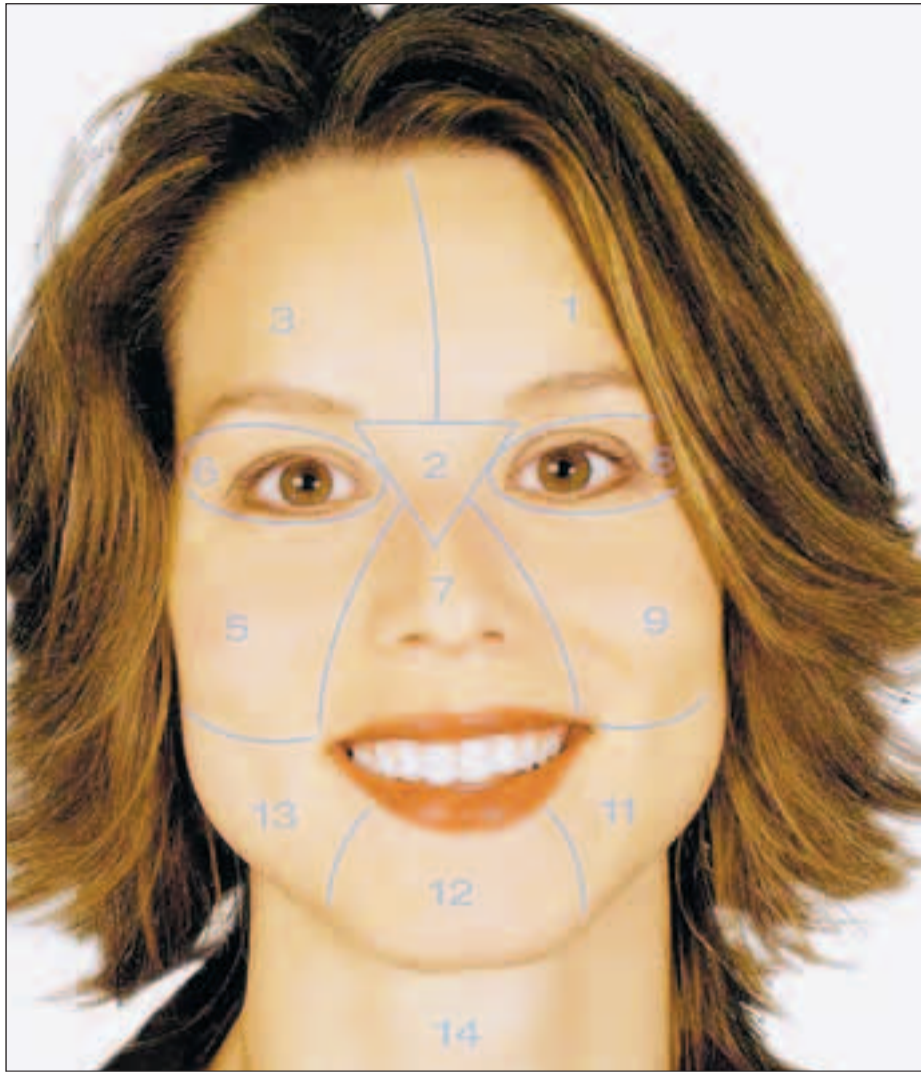
SIX WEEKS LATER...

AFTER six weeks of trying the products I return to Saks for a second DermaScan. The white line visible in the images of both lip and eye have become even with no breaks, signifying that the collagen fibres have strengthened. There are fewer "black holes" – areas where the collagen has broken down completely.

I tell her my skin seems to be glowing, the lines around my eyes appear finer and the dark shadows under my eyes have faded – much to my delight.

"The eye area is particularly good," says Elaine. "The epidermis is looking much thicker."

Now I just need to keep up the good work. ● **Until Spring 2005, MACTIV is available exclusively at Saks. Prices start at £39.50 for anti-cellulite gel. Contact 01325 380 333 for nearest salon stockist or to order direct. The next MACTIV clinic at Saks, Darlington is on February 23.**



Face map shows the way

CHRISTINE FIELDHOUSE has the problem areas on her face and body identified and treated by skin care experts

LIFE COACH

LOVE AND ROMANCE

IN the bleak days of winter, Valentine's Day is a fun thing to have. Yet it seems to produce so many mixed reactions from people. Some say it's commercial hype, others that every day presents opportunities to show love. In truth, they are all correct, but in our very rational world, is it really so bad to have one day dedicated to romance?



Yet romantic love, wonderful as it is, isn't really love. We all know the feeling of falling out of love sometimes as quickly as we fell into it, left wondering what we really saw in someone. But it's at the point of falling out of love that real love can begin... if we choose to. It's a choice we have to make.

Love is about giving even when we don't feel like it sometimes. In the words of Katharine Hepburn: "Love has nothing to do with what you are expecting to get, only with what you are expected to give... which is everything." So give all you've got to love. What do you have to lose?

www.juliettelee.co.uk or telephone Juliette on 01748 823010

DARK circles under my eyes, spots for the first time ever and that bloated post-Christmas feeling stretching well into the new year had me heading off for face and body mapping. Face mapping is based on the theory that zones on our faces represent our major organs and that once identified, we can take action and sort out our health problems. Likewise, body mapping can indicate problem areas – external conditions are often a sign that something internally isn't working at its optimum.

Face and body mapping has been introduced by skincare specialists Dermalogica, which bases beauty treatments on the theory that we're all different. Body and face mapping is carried out before a facial and massage to enable the therapist to customise the treatment for every client.

But beware – mapping isn't for the vain or those afraid of the truth. I went along to the Eden Skincare Advisory Centre in Harrogate, which specialises in Dermalogica treatments and products. And after completing a questionnaire about my lifestyle, every inch of my body was to be analysed.

The body map is divided into 14 areas and the therapist looks for fluid retention, cellulite, varicose veins, stretch marks and muscle tone. At the same time, she examines the skin looking for conditions such as acne, dermatitis, psoriasis and dermatitis.

For example, any swelling in the right leg could indicate mild fluid retention around the sock line and this may be a person who sits or stands for long periods without enough movement for efficient lymphatic drainage.

As my therapist Katie worked her way from the backs of my legs to my head and back down the front of my body, she identified problem areas. Central heating on full blast all day, along with red hot baths, has left most of my skin dry. She pointed out stress in my lower back from running and in my shoulders from sitting at a computer, along with toxins on my thighs, very kindly omitting the word cellulite. There was fluid retention around my stomach and there were veins behind my knees, which I have never even noticed. She also pointed out slight scratches, bruises and moles – and keeps a check on moles for regular clients.

But just when I was beginning to feel clapped-out and past it, my legs scored high in the muscle tone appraisal.

After the analysis, you're given a body scrub, then various masks are applied to the body to treat specific problems. A hydrating mask was put on my dry areas such as legs and arms while my stomach and thighs were treated to a concoction rich in enzymes to detoxify me. Then I was wrapped in a heated blanket and left to cook on a slow heat, while I had a very relaxing scalp massage.

As soon as the products were removed, I could already feel the masks had really penetrated my skin and there was a noticeable difference.

And so to face mapping... Katie started by cleansing, steaming and exfoliating my face, and then came the inch by inch analysis. The face is also divided into 14 zones, each correlating to a part of the body. The spot between the eyes represents the liver, while the area around the eyes is indicative of kidney and allergy health.

The forehead correlates to the bladder and digestion while the cheeks represent the sinuses and lungs. The ears are the kidneys, the chin is the stomach and small intestine and the nose represents the heart and reproduction. The neck reflects stress and the areas to each side of the chin represent the ovaries in women.

Most of my face was dry or dehydrated and it appeared that only my heart and reproduction system were working at their optimum. The rest of my organs were crying out for hydration to enable them to function better. Small white patches near the inside of my eyes indicated my digestion is sluggish. Then masks were applied and I relaxed while my feet were massaged.

I was sent away incredibly well moisturised, with a recommendation to drink lots more water, get more sleep and to continue exercising. I was also advised to exfoliate my skin and use a buffing cloth more. The whole treatment left my skin soft and radiant and was a good kickstart for a self-care regime.

● Eden can be found at 28 Mayfield Grove, Harrogate (01423) 858200 or visit www.edenskincare.co.uk. A 90-minute body mapping treatment costs £50.

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gadget man

Could home theatres already be old hat?

The advent of DVD has brought the concept of surround sound to the masses, but what if you can't afford a multi-speaker set up? NIGEL BURTON looks at the ways electronics companies are trying to kid us into hearing speakers that don't exist

● Don't miss Burton's Bytes - game reviews in The Northern Echo every Friday



The cumbersome home cinema: being superseded by new technology

DVD may offer fantastic picture quality, but for the authentic "at the movies" feel you just can't beat surround sound. I remember my first taste of multi-positional audio. It was at the Empire cinema in Leicester Square and the movie in question was Raiders of the Lost Ark.

As a ten year old I was knocked out by the way bullets seemed to whizz around my head and how sounds came from behind my head as well as both sides of the auditorium. I wasn't the only one. When the film ended and the familiar "Raiders" march boomed out of the speakers, people got to their feet and clapped. It remains the only movie I have ever watched that received a standing ovation.

Star Wars was the first movie to be released in Dolby surround sound. Before the space epic films were generally in stereo, although some producers had tried to produce something more ambitious (Tommy had a primitive quadrasonic track and Earthquake had an extra bass track dubbed Sensurround) all of them had come to nothing.

Dolby's surround sound showed Hollywood that movie-goers wanted more than just a decent picture. They wanted to be immersed in the film and the only way to do

it was to use sound to make them feel as though they were actually in the picture.

Today the authentic cinema experience is available via a DVD player and multi-speaker surround sound set up.

That's fine provided you have the space to mount up to six speakers in your room and have understanding neighbours who don't mind floorboard rumbling sound effects.

For many people a genuine multi-speaker set up is out of reach, but, thanks to the wonders of technology, there are alternatives. Dolby Laboratories has spent years working on "virtual" surround systems that work to kid your ears into hearing sounds from speakers that don't exist. This science is known as "Head-Related Transfer Functions".

This technology has now made the transition to headphones. Sony, Pioneer and Phillips all market surround sound cans that claim to reproduce the surround sound experiments in your head.

In my experience these headsets do work - but the effect is more limited than a genuine speaker-based system.

Now researchers at York University have come up with a new method that will cheaply and efficiently compute the way individuals hear things.



Harrogate Turkish Baths & Health Spa, Parliament Street, Harrogate. Tel: 01423 556746, web: www.harrogate.gov.uk/turkishbaths. Prices from £8.50 per session. Ring for details of prices and sessions

To bare or not to bare?

Busy mother CAROLINE TURNER has promised herself some 'me' time this year, and where better to take some of it than Harrogate's elegant Turkish Baths?

THERE'S a lot that impresses me about the Turkish Baths in Harrogate. There's the fact that they've been open continuously for 107 years. There are the wonderful Victorian surroundings. There's the sheer elegance of the original tile work and vaulted ceilings, and the attention to detail employed in the recent £1m-plus refurbishment.

I had been recommended to go there by a friend of mine, a Turkish Baths devotee. I was sceptical... not my sort of thing, I told her, women communing with each other with no clothes on. (Yes, really, during women-only sessions, bathing costumes are optional.)

But I have decided to try something new every month of 2005. Another resolution is to have one entire day a month to get away from it all, alone, to read or walk or shop or be pampered. So the Turkish Baths fits the bill twice over.

I pack my tankini and a copy of Vanity Fair (magazine reading is part of my plan) and head for Parliament Street in Harrogate (opposite end to Betty's, also part of my plan). The baths turn out to be housed in the most ostentatious Victorian sandstone buildings, with a modern reception and glassed-in courtyard. I am shown through to the entrance to the baths, and am confronted by mosaic floors, dark wood walls and soft white fluffy towels. I am to change in an original wooden changing booth, and my belongings go into a modern locker for safety. (I wonder if ladies pinched each other's petticoats on the sly in Victorian times?)

My guide for the morning is Christine. Herself a customer of the baths for 20 years, she is so obviously proud of them. She started working there on her retirement two years ago and her knowledge of the whole experience is second to none.

"I used to describe it to friends as an old lady," she says. "She's very beautiful but you have to overlook her wrinkles. But since the restoration it's like she's had a fantastic facelift."

Christine advises me of the optional costume policy, but modesty prevents me from removing the all-encompassing M&S shorts and vest suit I am wearing.

I am taken through the workings of a Turk-

ish Bath house - the plunge pool (temperature determined by the outside temperature, so in January and February, breathtakingly cold); the steam room ("stay in as long as you can, at least five minutes. You should look like a cooked lobster when you come out" says Christine. There's something to look forward to, then); three hot room chambers - tepidarium (warm), caldarium (hot) and laconium (hottest). Christine describes the last as "Tenerife twice, but without the sun" and indeed it's a sweltering 70 degrees celsius (about 158 degrees Fahrenheit).

It's not only very relaxing; it's great for skin renewal, aching joints and muscles, and sinus congestion. The whole process raises your blood pressure so a half hour relaxing in the frigidarium (coolest) room afterwards is strongly advised to lower the blood pressure again and prevent you from passing out or being sick once you hit the street again.

Next, it's into the new health spa for a quick tour. I get to try out the Dry Float Bed, like a flotation pool but without getting wet. For the few minutes I float there, the sensation of weightlessness is almost dream-like. Half an hour in the dry float bed realigns your spine; you can grow an inch while floating there.

And finally on to the Hot Stones Massage. For an hour and a half I am exfoliated, rubbed with warm essential oils, have large hot stones placed on my chakra points (a line up my stomach and back, on hands and feet, and a cold stone in the middle of my forehead). Then I am massaged with small, smooth hot stones. It's so good, I immediately book another once it's over.

I ask my therapist, Nicola, what treatments she'd recommend. Facials and pedicures, she says. And did I mention she has the most flawless skin I've ever seen, so she should know. If I'm going to look that good, I'm going back every month.

I emerge into the driving wind and rain feeling languorous and light. What a treat. My next day there is booked for March and I can hardly wait.

And who knows, I may even experience the "freedom and total experience" Christine told me about and leave the bathing costume at home. Just maybe.

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martha hill



ne is delighted to team up with Martha Hill, to offer every reader a free 50ml jar of Martha Hill's excellent Gardeners Cream (with seaweed Extract, Rosewater, Wheatgerm and Sweet Almond Oil, plus UVA/UVB protection), worth £7.30.

A rich, nourishing cream to prevent sore, chapped skin, smooth rough dry patches and protect. Not exclusively for keen gardeners, but anyone who enjoys an outdoor life will benefit from regular use. The cream can be used on both face and hands, and will prevent damage from the elements.

Special Offer - Great Savings on Skin Revivals

Skin Revivals is a new range created by Beauty Naturals. Skin Revivals is a revolutionary skin regime, the result of years of research and combining the best of nature's botanicals. Organically certified ingredients, no artificial colour or fragrance, no primary petro-chemicals and are cruelty free.

1st OFFER - 100mls Harmonising Cream Cleanser (with Aloe Vera & Rose Hip)

A gentle, water soluble cream with a light, silky texture to remove every trace of make-up, soothe minor irritations and leave skin smooth, supple and thoroughly cleansed.

Only £7.00 (normal price £10.50, saving £3.50) inc 1 muslin cleansing cloth

2nd OFFER - 100mls Harmonising Tonic (with White Tea & Bilberry)

An alcohol-free, mild soothing herbal toning lotion to clarify, normalise sebum production, maintain moisture balance and brighten the complexion, preparing skin for daily moisturising.

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3rd OFFER - 100mls Refining Serum (with Rose Hip & White Tea)

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A concentrated combination of rich emollients to strengthen the skin, restore vitality and re-balance. A high performance day cream or light, night-time nourishment.

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Readers ordering any of the discounted products will automatically receive the Gardeners Cream, with no SAE required. Applications for the gift only must include a 60p self addressed envelope. Applicants for the Special Offer products and free gift must include either a cheque or postal order made payable to Beauty Naturals. We can also accept the following card payments: Visa, MasterCard, Amex and Switch. Telephone orders (but not just for the free gift) or queries can be taken on 0800 980 6662. Closing date for the gift offer: 30th April 2005. Website: www.marthahill.com

HOW TO ORDER: To order, please complete the coupon below in BLOCK letters and send it, with a crossed cheque / postal order made payable to: Beauty Naturals Offer, The Old Vicarage, Laxton, Corby, NN17 3LL

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	PRICE	QTY	SUB TOTAL	Card	_____
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Second Offer - Tonic	£5.50			Signature.....	Issue No.....(Switch only)
Third Offer - Serum	£10.00			Title: Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms Initial.....	Surname.....
Fourth Offer - Balm	£7.00			Address.....	Postcode.....
Fifth Offer - Revitalising Cream	£8.50			Only one application per person and only original coupons will be accepted. This is only open to UK readers. All offers subject to availability. If any item is unavailable, we reserve the right to substitute with a comparable product of at least equivalent value. Please allow 28 days from receipt of order for delivery.	
Total Order Value			£		
Free Gift Only. I enclose a 60p SAE			<input type="checkbox"/>		

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NE motoring All eyes on Focus



The new Focus: should be a fly-away success for Ford

IAN LAMMING assesses the latest version of Ford's stalwart hatchback, the Focus, and discovers it's a real bird-beater

PERFECTLY camouflaged, they lie in wait, ready to spring the ambush and sacrifice their lives to a bird-brained cause. Apparently from nowhere they strike, half a dozen emerging suddenly from the undergrowth.

Cars swerve left and right to avoid carnage, tyres squealing, drivers shouting their protests. And as quickly as they appeared, they have gone, all still in one piece, not so much as a feather ruffled, another successful mission complete.

The car drivers are left bewildered, slewed to one side or another. Their older vehicles had performed poorly, the various components failing to keep everything in check during what could have so easily been an emergency situation.

The pheasant attack over, it is time to reflect on the test car – a brand new Ford Focus – a car built to cope with the unexpected even when the driver has failed to anticipate it.

Modern cars, and the Focus is no exception, are so good nowadays it's a wonder anyone has any accidents at all. The 1.6 Duratorq TDCi (that's the small diesel to you and me) boasts just about every safety device known to automotive man – or women. And the proof is in the driving.

Bumble along and you are not likely to notice much at all, the Focus just gets on with the job. It's only in extreme situations – such as a hail of pheasants – that the technology comes to the fore.

The situation required maximum braking to avoid car and carcass alike. But where the other vehicles lost their composure, the Focus simply stopped, in the shortest possible distance and the straightest possible line. That's because the brakes are powerful and come with electronic brakeforce distribution and anti-lock, and there is electronic stability control.

Without getting too technical, there is all manner of computers on board working out the various speeds and forces and sending all that information to the working parts of the car. The result is perfect control... and a whole brood of pheasant chicks that haven't become orphans.

If things had been worse and an impact had occurred, then a second tier of safety devices would have come into play – namely myriad airbags, reinforced, impact-absorb-

ing safety cages and fuel and ignition cut-offs.

Excellent suspension not only keeps the ride comfortable, it maximises grip and control when the forces of nature increase at speed or under braking. The steering is sharp and, coupled with the anti-lock brakes, allows the motorist to drive around an object while braking to the maximum, without spinning as you would have done once upon a time.

By the same token, some unsafe situations require a healthy amount of power to be on tap to accelerate away from the trouble. The diesel has power by the bucket load. It's not only a great cruiser on the motorway, being relaxed and long-legged, it will also whisk you past slow moving traffic with plenty of time to spare.

New Focus may look similar to its predecessor, the main difference being a more pronounced bonnet and steeply raked rear window. But under the skin and in its construction it has been honed considerably. It drives much better on the road; it feels much better built inside, with an air of quality way beyond its mainstream price tag.

There are three body shapes to choose from – three-door, five-door and an estate – six specifications, the choice of automatic or manual and five petrol variants and two diesels. Add in colour options and accessories and you could find yourself going woozy.

Focus has always been a crucial car to Ford and the latest model will have to fight its corner against considerable opposition. It certainly has all the abilities it needs to be a fly-away success for which Ford will be able to put another feather in its corporate cap – and it just won't be a pheasant's.



Inside, the Focus is well put together

NE connections

KEITH ALLAN and LYNNE GRAY have seen many changes take place at the Lake District's most famous hotel, the Sharrow Bay

The recently converted Garden Rooms, far right, and a dish in the Michelin-starred restaurant



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All change

IN 1952, when Brian Sack and Francis Coulson formed a partnership to run a small hotel on the shores of Lake Ullswater, they could never have predicted that over the next 50 years they would be responsible for creating one of the most famous hotels in the country.

Sack had only just stopped flying Spitfires when he met Coulson, the owner of Sharrow, which he had taken on three years earlier.

It was just after the war when everyone was short of money, food and petrol rationing was still operating and getting to the Lake District on tiny winding roads was quite an adventure. Coulson, a brilliant cook, never wanted to leave the kitchen and hated presenting his guests with a bill. Sack, on the other hand, was a chartered surveyor with a keen business brain and was more than happy to look after the money side of things. Between them they established the ground rules for running a successful country house hotel.

On our first visit to Sharrow, just after Coulson had died in 1999, Sack poured his heart out to us. He found it impossible to accept that his beloved Francis had gone. How could Sharrow go on without him, he asked? And there was a feeling that Sharrow might die too.

Some three years later, time had healed his wounded spirit and things were very different. At 79, Sack was in failing health, but he still did his party trick of taking delicious homemade bread round the tables at dinner and asking people to try the sultana and walnut because it was Francis's own recipe. There was a buzz about the place.

Sack told us about his manager and director Nigel Lightburn, who had done so much to hold everything together.

"He will take it on when I'm gone and I know he'll do a brilliant job. It's what Francis would have wanted," he told us, enthusiastically. Lightburn had been carefully groomed. Under his care Sharrow looked set for another 20 years at least.

Twenty-six cosy bedrooms with views of the lake and fells were filled with antique furniture, pictures, porcelain, books and board games, deep-pile carpets, chintz curtains and flowery bed covers. And every inch of re-

maining space was taken up by the endless flotsam and jetsam that Coulson and Sack had acquired over the years. It all made for a unique ambience.

In January 2002, Brian Sack died. Lightburn did indeed inherit everything but it wasn't long before Lightburn began to make his own mark. He had in mind some sweeping changes and got rid of a lot of the old furniture and with it the clutter that Sharrow had become noted for.

Understandably, some of the hotel's long time guests were not amused. However, they were in for an even greater shock when news broke that Sharrow had been sold and was now part of the von Essen hotel group, and that major changes were in the air.

A few months later Andrew Pratt, the new manager, was doing sterling work in holding Sharrow together. A likeable, young man, he trained at Sharrow under both Coulson and Sack, and Lightburn, too, of course. He toured the dining room at dinner in the manner of his old bosses, checking that everything was in order. During our stay it was evident that many of the old touches are still there – the style, the attention to detail. Andrew Pratt told us: "We have to move on, albeit as gently as possible without offending our loyal customers. Hopefully they will realise our intentions are good and stick with us."

During our stay, there was nothing to fault about the new Sharrow. And yet it did feel as though a little of its heart had been cut away. As we left, like all good managers Pratt was on hand to see us off and he talked hopefully about his plans for the hotel. Then, like a bolt out of the blue, he rang us a few weeks later to say that he was leaving Sharrow and a new manager would be starting almost immediately. Pratt was the last link to the original founders and such an upheaval is bound to cause yet more consternation among the staff and long time guests. However, the new man, Nick Hanson, told me over the phone he sees it as "evolution not revolution," and has vowed that the staff will give it their best shot, which would greatly please the two men who started their dream on a wing and prayer half a century ago.

Sharrow Bay Country House Hotel, Lake Ullswater, Penrith, Cumbria.

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WORD wise

The word may sound familiar, but do you know what it means?

AUGER

- (A)** A boring tool
- (B)** An omen of ill happening
- (C)** A person born in August

ANSWER

A: A boring tool

IMPOSSIBLE PUZZLE

Each letter in this sum stands for a different digit. What number is represented by DISHES?

S E E
 T H E R
 W A I T E S
 W A S H E S
 D I S H E S

SOLUTION

DISHES is 695715

WIN a Valentine's pampering for two

VALENTINE'S Day is fast approaching, a time for pampering your partner and being pampered in return. Flowers and chocs, those age-old stand-bys will be on the gift list, along with sappy cards bearing big, glittery hearts, but what about trying something different. The CACI Beauty Oasis is offering a Valentine's Special - just buy a voucher and you and your partner can be pampered side by side in the same room, with beauty and massage treatments. Couples can choose from a variety of different treatments, but all vouchers include a complimentary glass of wine and a goody bag to take home. A mini pedicure, mini manicure, mini facial and back and shoulder

massage cost £95 per couple; full body massage is £60 per couple; aromatherapy facial and scalp massage is £55 per couple and a Heavenly back treatments is £45 per couple. The offer is available from Feb 7 to 21 and a deposit is required at the time of booking.

HOW TO ENTER

The CACI Beauty Oasis has teamed up with The Northern Echo to offer one loving couple the chance to win the £95 Valentine's package of manicure, pedicure, facial and massage. Just tell us which film star Elizabeth Taylor married twice. Answers on a post-card or back of an envelope to CACI Valentine Competition,

Features, The Northern Echo, Priestgate, Darlington DL1 1NF. The closing date is Tuesday, February 15.
 ● CACI Beauty Oasis, Nrothumberland Street, Darlington (01325) 489970



Sarah Watkin at the CACI Beauty Oasis

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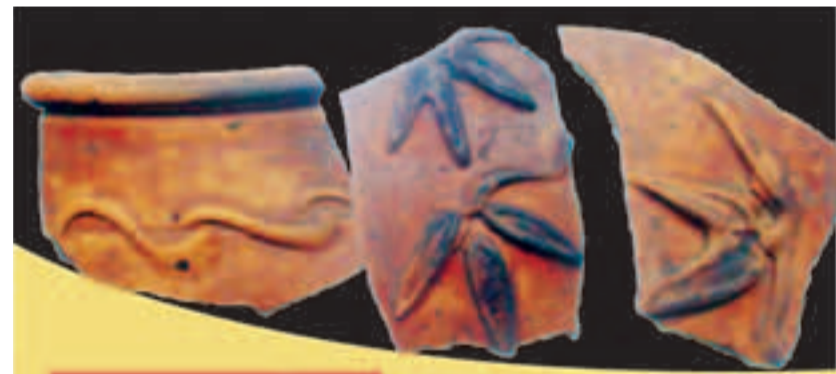
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