

THE PERFECT RENDEZVOUS

With its infinite variety – 66 Michelin star restaurants, 230 theatres, hundreds of galleries and museums and thousands of licensed establishments – choosing where to go out in London can be pretty daunting. So we ask Danny Andrea, author and Chocolate Retail Mistress, where she would choose to go for an ideal date.

What are your favourite things about London?

Everything. For me London is THE best city in the world. In the hope of not sounding too boring I love being able to go to the supermarket at 2am when I can't sleep and I'm desperate for some milk for a cuppa!.

Your favourite aspects of London's culture?

This is the fab thing about London, there is so much culture and so many cultures. I love being able to find elements of all cultures literally on my doorstep – especially when it comes to food; I can practically travel the culinary world within a half an hour radius of my house.

What's the best part of its nightlife?

It has to be the hidden gems like Evans and Peel in Earl's Court or for a more lively one, the Rum Kitchen in Portobello.

Is London romantic enough for an ideal date?

Absolutely! (she says remembering the last time she went on a date in London ending up in a blues bar in Soho and drinking far too many whiskey and cokes!) Anywhere is romantic if you're both wanting it to be. I've had some of my most romantic dates in the most boring of venues, a gym included! If you're both feeling it, it will be.

Have you ever been sent flowers before a date?

Not enough recently. Chaps, feel free to send some to my office!

Your favourite flower of choice?

I'm a traditionalist, I love roses.

What would be the main event – art, theatre, dance, music?

None of the above! It would be food. Some of the best bonds can be made over a good meal – and seeing if they let me steal their food when I get food envy. If I can't share we aren't going anywhere!

Best of these you have seen recently.

Theatre wise, I recently went to the opening night of the new Cirque du Soleil – Ovo. It was phenomenal!



What would you have in mind if the date was tonight?

If the date was tonight, I'd pick Roka in Charlotte Street. One of my favourites



Where would you go for an early tipple?

I would definitely just recommend to go straight there, they do the most fabulous cocktails and we all know cocktails are the perfect way to make everyone a lot more at ease.

Anywhere you haven't been yet that you'd like to try?

I would love to go to Sakagura, which I know has been open for ages but I haven't had a chance to go. So if a man would like to book a table, I'm sure I'll make time.

What's your favourite aperitif?

It has to be a glass (or a bottle) of champagne. Nothing else. Simplicity is best.

Do you have any favourites amongst all the new boutique spirits that are jostling for shelf-space in London's trendiest bars?

I like to stick to the classics although there are some amazing Japanese whiskeys out at the moment. They are really revolutionising the whiskey world.

Eat before or after the main event? Or is the eating the main event?

Oh come on, do you need to ask? Based on the above, it is definitely the main event.

Would you choose an old favourite, new favourite or try somewhere new?

I like to see where my date comes up with. Where he suggests says a lot about a man, plus we wouldn't go anywhere if I had to decide, I am so indecisive.

Favourite wine with dinner:

White in summer, red in winter. Sancerre in summer and a good Cab Sav in winter... or a chianti... or an Amarone. I'm not fussy, I love red wine.

Tobacco. Pleasure, poison or both?

Please in limited amounts when I'm enjoying a glass or two.

Favourite after dinner club.

To be honest I am one of those annoying people that sit and talk the night away drinking wine in the restaurant; one of those you have to kick out. After dinner club would a. depend on whether I wanted to spend any more time with the date, and b. if I wasn't too full from dinner to not look 8 months pregnant at a club!

What do you think about the latest developments in the War on Tobacco (blank packaging covered in disease porn)

not too fussed about it to be honest. People will smoke if they want to, I'm not sure a change in packaging will do very much.

Favourite cigar.
I just smoke what I'm given when it comes to cigars as I rarely buy them! I wouldn't know where to start.

Do you like to discuss Realpolitik over dinner or prefer to keep it light?
Always keep it light!

Favourite conversation topics over dinner

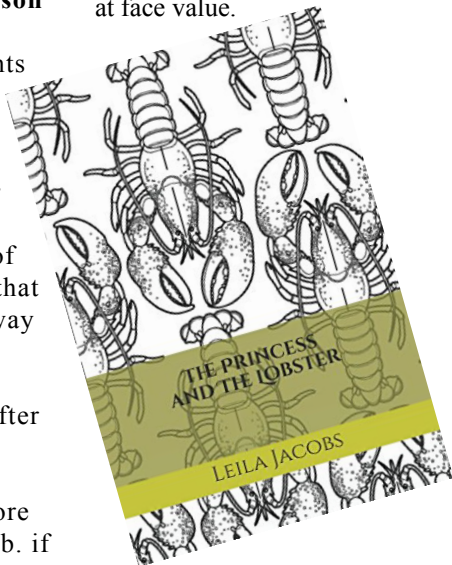
Normally my book comes up in conversations and a little joke warning to the date about how the next one might be about them! Which in hindsight is probably why I never get any further than a first date!

What are your main sources of information on the net?

I am an Instagram addict and probably take far too much from there. I also read Sky news on my phone, so there is some balance.

Have the recent political shakeups and increasing dis/misinformation made you want to pay more or less attention to current affairs?

Not really. I find it all interesting, and it makes it more so when you are constantly having to question what you are reading. It encourages you to engage and really evaluate what you see, hear and read and how that affects your own belief system rather than taking everything you are told at face value.



The poet George Herbert insisted that 'Living well is the best revenge'. What do you think he meant by that and do you concur?

One million percent! If you are happy, prosperous, and doing well, looking well and generally having a good life, those that did you wrong will come crawling back... they always do. And the best revenge is saying you no longer want them back. Trust me, I know, I've lived it and I've written about it!