Trend spot

This zesty Anya Hindmarch vanity case is for the woman who has everything and nothing to carry it in. £275, NET-A-PORTER.COM





BVIOUSLY, there were bad dates before Tinder. Dating contains an inherent risk that you will encounter one of society's accidents: an abrasive creep whose behaviour causes you to extricate yourself swiftly and shower – twice – when you get home. But this risk is far higher on Tinder. There is also something alchemically characteristic to the app itself – Tinder yields anecdotes like blind dates never do.

Sometimes, the anecdotes are awful in an anodyne way: boring sods boring on about boring topics. But sometimes, they're awful in a truly awful way. Like aristo singleton James Lumley-Savile's experience: one of his dates with Hungarian girl Ida Pap started at a farmer's market, involved a little MDMA and some wine, and ended with him clutching the knives at his £800,000 home in Fulham after Pap apparently made a series of disturbing revelations about her own history of violence. He was taken to court but cleard of knife and affray charges.

Trends

As one man ends up in serious hot water after a nightmare date, **Phoebe Luckhurst** hears London tales of terrible right swipes

Few have had an experience quite so unsettling – but the capital has played backdrop to some truly jarring meetups. London: these are your Tinder horror stories.

The most predominant theme is one party moving things "down to business" prematurely. One 29-year-old who works in finance went on a date with a guy who invited her - five minutes in to "sexy along to the bathroom – and I'll join you in a few minutes". She escaped via the loos. One 24-year-old masters student recounted: "There was this one that lasted all of 45 minutes. When I suggested getting a second drink, he suggested going back to mine. I said no, but that I was happy to have another beer – at which point he was bear at the same time.

suddenly 'really tired' and had to be 'up early for work'. He propositioned me again via the app three days later." She also encountered a "pervert photographer" who seemingly used the app to find models for his life photography.

Some daters – hitherto assumed to be functioning members of civilised society – reveal themselves to be in the grips of deviant obsessions. One girl – a twentysomething chemist – was asked mid-date to buy a chap a Build-A-Bear so he could hug it and think of her; the same guy also called - out of the blue after they'd met up once – to invite her to help him pleasure himself over the phone. It's not clear but eminently possible that he was hugging the

One Londoner was in Paris and decided to try and find a French fancy: she brought the chap back to her place after drinks. He went to the loo upon arrival and returned 10 minutes later, ashen-faced, to inform her that her bath was now "full of excrement". In other bodily stories, one chap cooked a girl a spicy curry - she'd said it was her favourite. It certainly did the trick as she ended up in his bedroom and things were going well until she realised he hadn't washed his hands after handling the spices. She ran off in search of medical attention and couldn't walk properly for days - his romantic gesture went unappreciated.

More pedestrian horrors include meeting people who look absolutely nothing like their picture, or realising they're tasteless losers. One twentysomething girl who works in headhunting went on a second date with a guy she'd previously met post-work; then he'd been dressed smartly in a suit but this time he was wearing dad jeans, a

Continued on Page 34

Festive five Party polishes



Feet first: a new coat of paint for Crimbo

Do you feel it in your fingers? Do you feel it in your toes? Christmas is all around you.... so get a mani/pedi quick before Santa comes a-calling

Barber & Parlour

No appointment? No problem. On the first floor of Redchurch Street's multitasking drop-in beauty joint you will find the Cheeky Parlour, where the signature Pick Me Up mani/pedi is super-quick and superb value for money. £37 for 45 minutes. urcheeky.com

Settle in for an hour of pampering at High Holborn's holistic beauty institute and choose between three focuses - stressfix, shampure for sensitive skin or their anti-ageing green science - for a truly tailored mani/pedi treat (£96). avedainstitute.co.uk

The Painted Lady

At this East End vintage boutique salon impeccably coiffed technicians will paint your toes and talons to perfection in 1hr 30 minutes (£38). Or if you're in a hurry, walk out with a shape and polish in just 40 minutes (£20).

thepaintedladylondon.com

Marian Newman at Atelier Beauté

Renowned nail expert Marian Newman is in residence at Josh Wood's all-singing, all-dancing Holland Park salon. Her exacting and prescriptive approach to nails provides perfect results every time. £110 for 105 minutes (POA with Marian). joshwoodcolour.com

Nails & Brows

Mayfair's specialist grooming boutique caters to all your nail needs. We recommend the Haute mani/pedi for a classic finish (£78 for 45 minutes) or indulge in the new combo by natural skincare brand Green & Spring (£114 for 1 hour). nailsandbrows.me

Emma McCarthy



WHO WILL BE THE NEW KING? **FRIDAY 26 DECEMBER SATURDAY 27 DECEMBER** EMPTON.CO.UK



black leather belt, big white trainers, a dress shirt with cufflinks and a signet ring. She realised she was embarrassed to be seen in public with him.

To offer my own banal nightmare – in which I played aggressor not victim – during my brief flirtation with Tinder, I stood someone up because I entirely forgot about the date. If you're reading: sorry, mate, I had a hangover.

Another girl – a 24-year old publishing assistant – endured an evening of Anglo-French diplomacy: "The worst was the French guy who hated London, hated that we had to sit outside all evening because the bar was too busy in fact hated anything but stilted conversation and French kissing."

One thirtysomething guy got an earful. He met up with a graphic designer: "interesting, loves her art galleries, seemingly very cool. We went on two chaste dates, then she told me she was getting back with her ex but wanted to keep in touch. I declined but over the next couple of weeks she was very persistent, culminating in her pushing for me to meet her so she could 'explain'. She admitted she made a huge mistake; I agreed to another date.

'Worst was the French guy who hated London, in fact hated anything but stilted chat and French kissing'

She declared she was besotted with me admittedly, I ignored alarm bells because of wine - and stayed over because it was late and we were discussing – in great depth – why I didn't reciprocate her strong feelings. However, I said I didn't want to have sex with her yet, so she kicked off at 3am, 'I can't believe we've been together a week and we still haven't slept together!!!

Other times, dates simply expose a shares a pizza?

Love – it's a losing game.

thundering difference in values: "I took a girl to a pizza place," says a twentysomething chap who works in music. "I was starving; she suggested we share a pizza. Politely I accepted, all the while cursing her under my breath." Who



A year of hot plates



opens Japanese/Peruvian Amaru also in Ivory House.

act to follow at Bethnal Green's Town Hall Hotel, but Lee Westcott in the same space now called Typing Room – real created his own fiefdom. As bosses, Tom instilled an intense work ethic but Westcott's complex culinary assemblies have the beguiling aura of effortlessness. Dishes unfold like well-told stories romances and cliffhangers. Modern niceties - scorching, ingredient infanticide, bread deprivation (for a impressively to the challenge Town Hall Hotel, Patriot Square, E2 (020 7871 0461, typingroom.com) £85

Ourrad, once leader of an Algerian rap band considered the trailblazer for North later waylaid him. Having studied and Wormwood in All Saints Road. Memories is special selection Manzanilla Pasada of the Maghreb infuse his chic cooking en Rama. Prepare to queue. in sly, subtle ways e.g. butternut squash confit with argan oil, citrus powder and homemade ras-el-hanout or lobster couscous, confit lemon and lobster bisque. Ideas are skittish, desserts playful and wines chosen by Christophe Cavaille have been described as cerebral. Wormwood is a happy discovery. 16 All Saints Road, W11 (020 7854 1808,

wormwoodrestaurant.com) £55

Barrafina

awarded four stars; Barrafina Adelaide Road merited the top score of five. I would like to give it six. Executive chef Nieves Barragán Mohacho confounded owners Sam and Eddie Hart when this branch of the Frith Street original opened with a menu that is largely different - and changes day to day. Sparklingly fresh fish and shellfish are obvious choices but lambs' brains and

10 Adelaide Street, WC2 (020 7440 1450, barrafina.co.uk) £60

Brasserie Gustave

food came from, by which I mean worked with Marc Meneau (a sort of a god) at L'Esperance in Vezelay, have 148 Clapham Manor Street, SW4 resumed a partnership forged a while (020 7720 4662, themanorclapham.

Top performers: (clockwise from left) dishes from Som Saa; Skye Gyngell of Spring; The Manor in Clapham and Wormwood in Notting Hill

Kensington, where French is the first language, plays to both their strengths. On gueridon table service Richard is as skilful with steak tartare as crepe Suzette while all the while recommending wines, and Laurence can perfect classics such as chilled vichyssoise and sautéed veal kidneys in a grain mustard cream sauce. Dieu

4 Sydney Street, SW3 (020 7352 1712, brasserie-gustave.com) £60

Spring

Spring has sprung for Skye Gyngell, who made her name in London at Richmond's Petersham Nurseries. There, a Michelin star vexed her as she felt it skewed the expectations of customers encountering dirt floors and rickety tables. Now at Somerset House all is refined – idiotically so in aspects like staff uniforms – but she hasn't deviated from treating pristine ingredients with the empathy and respect that is their due. She is a rare talent. Frank Embleton, formerly at Clove Club, has shaped the wine list. Spring just needs to loosen its stays presumably somewhere in place under those unflattering tent

Somerset House, Lancaster Place, WC2 (020 3011 0115, springrestaurant.co.

Som Saa **Smoking Goat**

Som Saa and Smoking Goat opened in November during the same week and the protagonists are pals. David Thompson of Nahm and Andy Ricker, who founded Pok Pok first in Portland, Oregon, then in Brooklyn, are, maybe unbeknownst to them, founding fathers. London Thai food, which had largely been mired in sweetness and batter, takes wing and flies.

In the rackety surroundings of the working coffee roastery in Climpson's Arch, Andy Oliver of Som Saa concentrates on northern and northeastern Thai traditions from the area known as Isaan. Seb Holmes at Smoking Goat perfects barbecue. Chicken wings became a legend overnight. Whole Cornish crab in freshly made coconut cream sauce with wilted curry leaves has left its mark on many a shirtfront.

Climpson & Sons, Arch 374, Helmsley Place, E8 (020 7254 7199, climpsonsarch.com) £37 7 Denmark Street, WC2 (@ SmokingGoatSoho) £38

The Manor First there was The Dairy, then last

month owners Robin and Sarah Gill installed "Keen Dean" Parker as head African hip hop. Literature and cooking kidneys treated to the Josper oven and chef of The Manor, two ventures items as candid and simple as pan con announcing cutting-edge culinary worked in Paris and London (at Sketch tomate are elevated to new heights. The credentials for Clapham. The and The Ledbury) he opened bohemian choreography of service is a delight – as atmosphere in both is the opposite of reverential and precious, with The Manor having more space to play in. Parker's resourceful dishes are the product of a fertile, fermenting imagination that stays in touch with the notions of good value and proper In the vear of scorched cucumber we nourishment. Pleasure is apportioned must not forget where restaurant fairly between eating up your greens and trying everything on a sundae France. Richard Weiss from Alsace created at a dessert bar occasionally and chef Laurence Glayzer, who clouded in a whoosh of liquid nitrogen.





Mulled wine truffles, £2 each, Paul A Young (paulayoung.com)

It's the one time of year that eating chocolate with wild abandon is almost obligatory. Here Victoria Stewart helps you choose



Organic chocolates, £12.25, The **Chocolate Revolution** (notonthehighstreet.com)



your festive treats



Signature thins, £15, Paxton Chocolate (paxtonchocolate.com)



Nikki Tibbles chocolate hamper, £165, Alexeeva & Jones (alexeevaiones.com



Dark honeycomb and sea salt bar, £5.99. Amelia Rope (ameliarope.com)



Personal selection box, price varies, Cocoa Runners Club (cocoarunners.com)



Salted caramels, £14.99, Artisan du Chocolat (artisanduchocolat.com)



Chocolate cigars, £25, William Curley (williamcurley.com)



were right down this year. Not much home-cooking is going on; all the Lactivity is eating out. Hot Dinners website lists 35 significant London restaurant openings in October, 31 in November and for this month it's 13 and counting – with plenty of launches scheduled for January and beyond.

The debut that easily attracted most notoriety this year was the gorgeous Chiltern Firehouse, where expectations of the unbearable lightness of a crab doughnut or who might be sitting next to you were almost certainly destined to disappoint. Watch out for a change in kitchen personnel next year.

From rich pickings in 2014 here are 10 ventures I particularly loved and rated highly – in the order in which they were reviewed. Prices are approximate for a meal with wine and service for one.

Compagnie des Vins Surnaturels

Maschler

RESTAURANTS

From Thai to tapas

and daring desserts

2014's finest flavours

T WOULDN'T surprise me if sales

of saucepans and wooden spoons

with sexy starters

take a taste of

OF THE YEAR

No great expectations for this new venture in Neal's Yard opened by The Experimental Group – also responsible for a bad-tempered speakeasy in Chinatown – but I was completely won over. It was thanks to Julia Oudill's innovative wine list – which champions independent producers and noble viniculture – animated, knowledgeable staff, a menu poised to suit single-minded drinking offering well-chosen charcuterie and cheeses but also ready to counteract the effects of that with Le Cassoulet and Posh Madame (croque with truffled ham and quail's egg) and decor that is softedged and seductive – the way restaurants once aimed to be. 8-10 Neal's Yard, WC2 (020 7734 7737,

vssevendials.com) £60

The Camberwell Arms

The Camberwell Arms has the virtues of and some connections with – Anchor & Hope in Waterloo and the Canton Arms in Stockwell. You could set your clock by the choice of ingredients, so responsive are the chefs to the seasons and what is at its peak and in abundance. This is not so much a kitchen as a hive of industry where charcuterie is cured, bread baked, preserves put up, spits turned, charcoal grills tended, large cuts of meat and dishes for sharing devised. It sounds almost medieval except that it is the **Typing Room** bonny face of what is happening right now in the most appealing restaurants. 65 Camberwell Church Street, SE5 (020 7358 4364, thecamberwellarms.

Bravas Tapas

co.uk) £42

St Katharine Docks near the Tower of London gastronomically binds visitors in chains (or worse) save for Bravas Tapas, which opened in the spring. American chef Victor Garvey has breezed – perhaps not the right word - through the kitchens of Mugaritz and Akelarre and also worked in Barcelona. while), smoking, foaming, razor slicing

His take on tapas is inventive without being absurd. Consider morcilla de Burgos sliders with green apple slaw and Idiazabal cheese. Wholesome rusticity in the decoration does not preclude comfort. Staff are clued up and enthusiastic about the food; clearly they eat it. On January 5, Garvey

Ivory House, St Katharine Docks, E1 (020 7481 1464, bravastapas.co.uk) £46

Nuno Mendes at Viajante was not an easy letters were once composed there – has Aikens and Jason Atherton doubtless

- are observed with fabulous results. Sommelier Miguel Gomez rises

Wormwood Few chefs' CVs can rival that of Rabah

Other restaurants listed here were back. Brasserie Gustave in South co.uk) £50