

Valentine's advice from Nancy Stevens



Now that all the Christmas choirs have trilled their last carol, the decorations are put away for another year and those naughty E-bayers have flogged their last unwanted Christmas gifts. We can start to panic about another "festival" that may have started in the following ways: Some experts' state it originated from Saint Valentine, A Roman who was martyred for refusing to give up Christianity. He died on February, 14th 269 A.D the same day that had been devoted to love lotteries. There are other theories but this isn't a history lesson but gradually February, 14th became the date for exchanging love messages and St Valentine became the patron saint of lovers. The dates was marked by sending poems and simple gifts such as flowers.

It has now become a massive exercise in commercial exploitation where we all feel under extreme pressure to send cards, hugely expensive bouquets of flowers, remortgage our homes for a costly dinner where we are patronized by rude waiters, wear itchy and inappropriate underwear and be nice to our other halves should we fortunate enough to have one. For those of you who are unattached, you wait in feverish anticipation for the postman/florist to pay you a visit on this day and if he doesn't, you are will spend the evening in your comfy pj's crying into your wine like Bridget Jones. Why, Why, Why, Why? Just because some wag thought it was a good idea some 1700 years ago.

Now, at the risk of sounding all bah humbug, I think that we should have an Anti Valentine's Day and divert our energy into something a bit more useful.

Firstly, boycott all restaurants which seem to be charging extra for that so-called special meal, do something outrageous and daring, face your fears and if you hate heights like I do, I booked a ride on the Big Wheel. I was paralyzed with fear but didn't want to lose face with my eleven year old son, Henry, so I resisted the temptation to start blubbing and concentrated very hard on the view. By the 3rd rotation I was starting to enjoy myself. Try the Airkix or tobogganing for something exhilarating.

If you are a singleton (sad or not), invite a bunch of girlfriends round for a fab chick flick, like "In her shoes" and what I liked about this movie is that Cameron Diaz's character ends up man less but gets her fulfillment by becoming a personal shopper (the best job in the world). Or experience the sing-along version of Mamma Mia! The ultimate feel-good movie. Or hold a "Swishing" party which is the latest trend to cross over the pond from our American cousins and this entails swapping all those lovely unworn clothes sitting in the depths of your wardrobe. I have a long list of clients booked in for these and I am there to stop you buying any more tat!

If you are coupled up, have a dinner party with friends, staying in is the new going out apparently! Have a James Bond evening, where the men must wear tuxes and the women, posh frocks and diamonds (we can fantasize that our better halves look like Daniel Craig, too). Murder Mystery evenings are also brilliant fun.

All these are simply ideas because there is far too much pressure to have a perfect night and it's a bit like New Year's Eve, usually horribly anticlimactic.

Anyway, whatever you decide to do, keep it light hearted and fun and for those of you who are die-hard romantics, your man may serenade you, rose between clenched buttocks, hand clutching a small but costly piece of jewellery, but don't hold your breath....

*Nancyx
Oh the chic of it!*

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