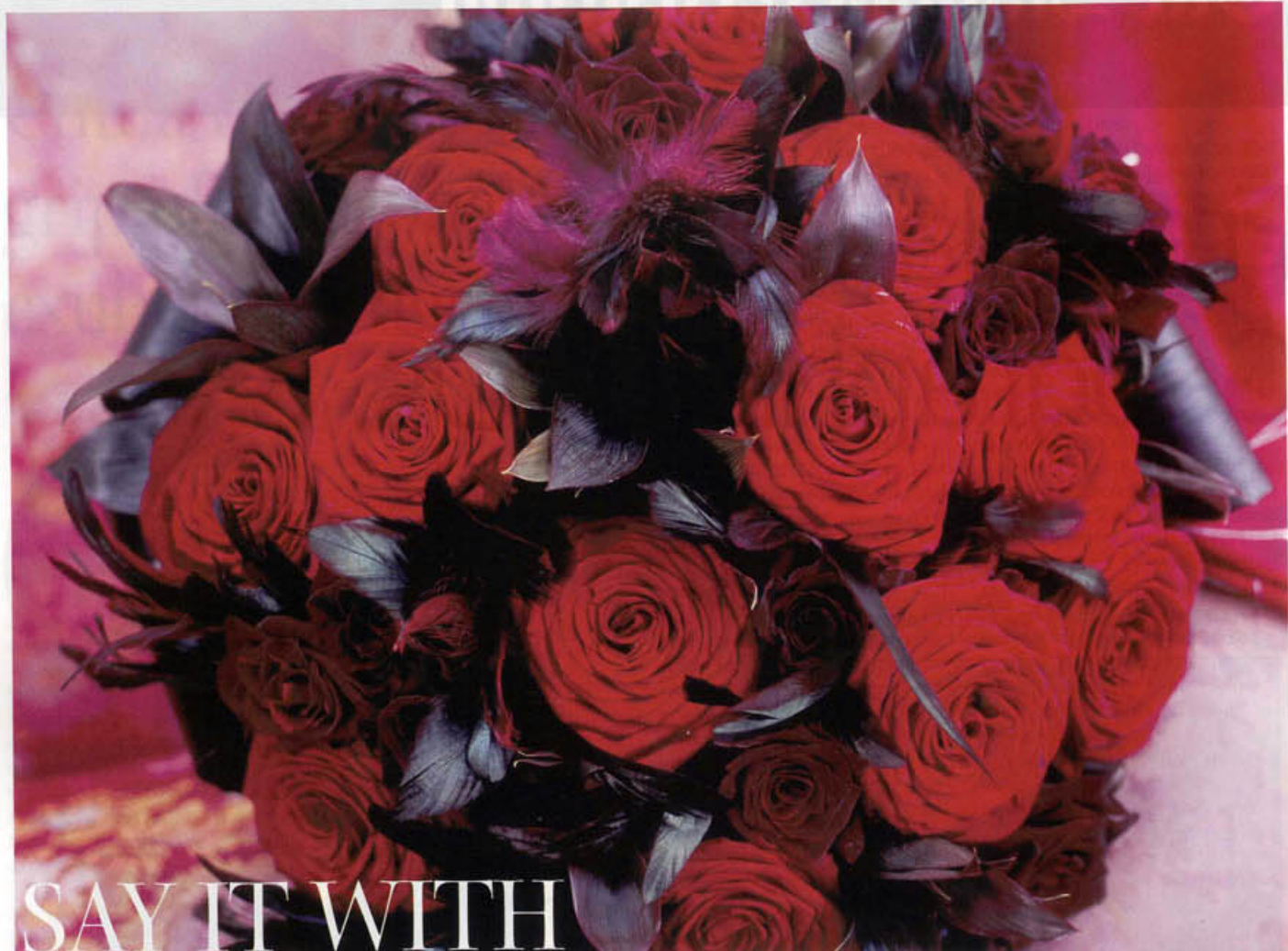


Indulgences



SAY IT WITH FLOWERS

Mere weeks after the New Year, it's already time to shake off the winter blues and treat your loved one to a Valentine's surprise

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FOR some it's the sorriest date on the calendar: an embarrassment of unwelcome cards, unlovely confectionery and disappointment. But a grown-up Valentine's Day is good excuse to splash out – and not just with the aftershave.

The 14th of the month is probably enjoyed as much in anticipation as in observation, so best blow the winter cobwebs and Christmas pudding out of the system by heading for the nearest pampering parlour.

A chemical-free detox at the Organic Pharmacy would serve as an invigorating start. Founded by Margot Marrone, a pharmacist turned homeopath, the chain forswears the harmful additives that can be associated with health and beauty. But even

if you're only there for the lip balm, you'll come out smelling of roses. Or jasmine.

For oriental serenity try the Gankin massage at Suqqu, a stylish Japanese beauty venue that opened last autumn in Selfridges, London. Finger pressure is applied to points of the face to improve skin condition and impart a youthful calm. Suqqu also sells cosmetics in fashionably bright but flattering colours, presented in virtuous looking packaging that will bring order where there is handbag chaos.

Meanwhile Wholeman's male grooming emporium in New Bond Street, London, will melt away metropolitan stress and grime with a Hot Rock Body Wrap. Your circulation is boosted with the treatment; after you get a heated mud mask to detox and hydrate the entire body – hopefully, leaving you supple and relaxed.



- ← Tallulah bouquet of two dozen red roses, Jane Packer Delivered, £99
- ↙ Large safety pin diamond brooch, 18-carat white gold, Vivienne Westwood, £587
- Lear jet, one of the services from Avolus
- ↘ Talisman rough and polished diamonds, white gold ring, earrings and pendant, De Beers, from £18,500
- ↓ Hot Rock Body Wrap, Wholeman, 75 minutes for £100

Wholeman is welcoming and informal, and suitable for spa novices. It also has a secret seduction weapon, a fragrance called Molecule 01, whose single ingredient, Iso E Super, has a subtle, velvety-wood note, at times scarcely discernible. More important, perhaps, are the claims for its pheromone-like effect.

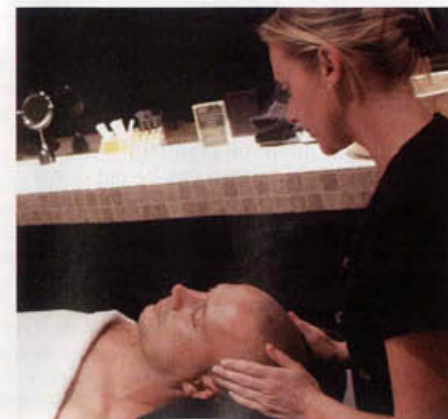
With the rites of early spring complete, it could be time for gems, flowers and champagne. When buying jewellery, consider designs that can be worn every day. For example, Cartier's understated Love collection has a circular motif made up of two semi-circles to symbolise partnership. The bracelet, in white gold bar on a black leather strap or in yellow gold on beige leather, is discreet.

Cool Diamonds, the online jeweller, has launched Hard Core Diamonds, a range by Vivienne Westwood which includes a safety pin brooch in white gold, which is adorned with diamonds. A long way from the influence of Punk, it can be worn every day or for evening and will not gather dust in the bank vault. Whether holding together your vintage Versace dress or the family tartan kilt, a safety pin is always useful in emergencies. The quality of a worthy lover.

Another online company, 77 Diamonds, sells a collection of stones combined with ebony, injecting some playfulness into precious jewellery by making the diamonds part of the piece instead of the reason for it. Threads of tiny diamonds light up the Clash range's dark ebony. Decorative but architectural, it could be worn anywhere.

But if anywhere is not your idea of a good night out, then your choice might be De Beers's fabulously expensive, head-turning Talisman collection. It's a stunning, limited edition, with designs using rough and polished diamonds, both white and coloured. When so much precious jewellery is contrived and overworked, it's a joy to see such organic, uneven forms showing off the stones to perfection. A jaw-dropping piece requiring the company of a security guard.

For a one-stop Valentine's gift, William & Son do a crystal Champagne flute with a precious white gold and diamond ring



encircling its stem. No need to break the glass: the ring is detachable and can be worn as a pendant. Fill it with Krug's highly drinkable rosé or Bollinger's special cuvée or grande année. The former is made to exacting standards, combining that year's harvest and the Bollinger reserves; the latter from exceptional harvests. For savouring the lasting memory of the champagne moment, Hine 1957 Grande Champagne cognac is perfect to warm the stoniest heart.

A lush bouquet is, of course, essential. Jane Packer's Lola is made up of a heart of pure white roses rimmed by dark ivy. The Tallulah is a deluxe two-dozen rose bouquet with burgundy foliage and what Packer describes as flirty feathers.

Finally, sweep your dream date off the ground by signing up to Avolus, a service that uses pre-paid credit to summon an array of luxurious transport from chauffeured limousine to Lear jet, yacht and helicopter. The downside is you may never see your loved one again.

- The Organic Pharmacy has branches in Chelsea, Kensington and Covent Garden, www.theorganicpharmacy.com
- Suqqu, www.suqqu.com
- Wholeman, www.wholeman.co.uk
- William & Son, www.williamandson.com
- 77 Diamonds, www.77diamonds.com
- Cool Diamonds, www.cooldiamonds.com
- Cartier, www.cartier.com
- De Beers, www.debeers.com
- Krug from Berry Bros & Rudd, www.bbr.com
- Hine from Fortnum & Mason, www.fortnumandmason.com
- Jane Packer, www.janepackerdelivered.com
- Avolus, www.avolus.com