

GoShopping

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Gift ideas for your Valentine



MUG FOR LOVE
Marks & Spencer, Parc Florestfach: heart stacking mugs, £12.



KISSES FOR ME? Matalan, Swansea: kisses socks, £2.



HEART ATTACK
River Island, Parc Trostre: £29.99.



BEJEWELLED
River Island, Parc Florestfach: £7.99

GO SHORTY Morrisons, Swansea: Valentine shortbread, £1.99.



SOAP STAR
Lush, Swansea: love soap, £2.50 for 75g.



TOASTY
Poundland, Swansea: toast stamp, £1.



ON MESSAGE
Next, Neath and Swansea: Valentine's card, £2.



SWEET
Laura Ashley, Swansea and Parc Trostre: scented hearts, £8.

Will you spice things up with a bargain meal?



LOVE IS IN THE AIR A couple embrace during a romantic dinner.

by Peter Slee

You can't put a price on love — but if you could, £10 sounds like a pretty good deal! The day that lies emblazoned on the heart of many a woman — and scorched into the diary of many a man, next to the words "Do not forget", in thick red pen — is almost upon us.

February 14, Valentine's Day. More important than any anniversary or birthday. Well, until said anniversary or birthday pops up on the calendar anyway.

You know the routine by now. Champagne. Flowers. Chocolates. Chocolates shaped like flowers. Flowers that look like chocolate. Actually, no, scratch that last one.

But what if you want to go beyond the standard, beyond the familiar drill of a card with a puppy on the front and a few words scrawled before he/she wakes up?

What if you want to push the proverbial boat out but don't have the cash to splash especially when your bank balance is still reeling after Christmas?

Well, the supermarkets know we've all got used to thrifty ways these days and are pulling out the stops to help.

Some of this week's special "meal deals" mean

you don't have to spend more than a tenner on eating in, £15 at the most.

So what do you get for your money? We've tested some of the best food and drink buys around and found that love on a budget doesn't have to mean cutting back on style...

Meal deals:

Tesco, all main branches: Finest* Valentine's Day Meal for two — £15.

There were five main courses to choose from, we went for the Prosciutto wrapped chicken breasts in a cheese sauce accompanied by horseradish mash and green vegetable selection. The chicken looked a little too shop-bought to fool anyone into thinking otherwise, but it tasted good, as did the mash. We followed it up with a Belgian chocolate torte, a bottle of burgundy and some Thorntons chocolates: pretty much all you would need for a satisfying and romantic belly-busting blowout.

Sainsbury's, Swansea,



SO NICE
So Cocoa, Mumbles: Heart chocolate box, from £10.

Wine and Dine for £10. There were 20 or so different products to choose from. We decided on the Taste the Difference Seabass fillets with roasted fennel and orange butter followed by a mixed berry Panna Cotta for dessert, all served with a First Cape sparkling Pinot Grigio.

It all looked good on the plate and very restaurant-like.

With bits and pieces, our bill topped £15, meaning we were also entitled to a two-for-one cinema voucher at the Odeon to see the new Valentine's Day film with

Jessica Alba and Jamie Foxx.

Chocolates:

Thornton's, Swansea and Llanelli, red continental heart, £11.99.

Okay admittedly not the cheapest we found, but certainly our favourites: these really looked the part. They were classy looking and very more-ish. These looked special and indeed, were.

Morrisons, Parc Morfa: Lindt Lindor heart gift box, £4.99.

These all looked and tasted the same, even so, delicious. This is a

box of chocs that won't disappoint! **So Cocoa, Mumbles: From £10.**

A heart shaped box complete with ribbon that didn't disappoint. These were yummy. You really will savour each and every one.

Flowers:

There is a lot of competition out there for your money on February 14 as nothing says it quite like a bunch of blooms. It means there are bargains to be had, if you know where to look! **Aldi, all branches,**

a dozen red roses, £4.99. We picked our way through a bucket of flowers containing one of two indifferent bunches to find a bunch that looked their very best and certainly much more impressive than their price tag indicated. **Sainsbury's, Swansea. A dozen Fairtrade roses, £4.99.**

Good value even if nothing out of the ordinary. **Lidl, all branches.** At £16.99 for a dozen Equadorian large red roses, at first glance, these seemed on the expensive side.

But they were absolutely beautiful and, we decided, still worth every penny.

Tesco, all branches: Eight small roses, £2.

These were a bargain buy. They were only half as long-stemmed as some rivals, but were all wonderfully fresh and looked as though they would last for a week or more.

Drinks:

NO February 14 is complete without a glass or two of pink fizz. **JASON EVANS** picks some tasty sparkling roses that won't break the bank. **Codorniu 2007 Vintage Rose Cava, Tesco, £5.99** down from

TASTY Thorntons Red Continental Heart chocolates.

RIGHT Marks and Spencer, Prosecco is a delight.

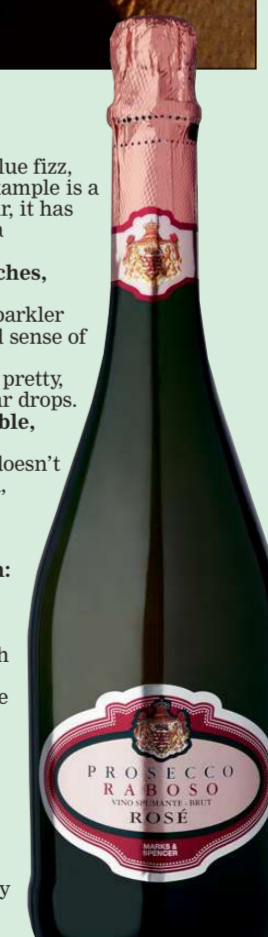
£11.99. Cava is often a good value fizz, and for six quid this vintage example is a good buy — vivid pink in colour, it has aromas of summer fruits, and a strawberries and cream palate. **M&S Prosecco rose, all branches, £6.99.**

You've got to like this Italian sparkler prosecco, with its lightness and sense of fun. This M&S bottle is fresh and pretty, with flavours of cherry and pear drops. **Lindauer rose, widely available, around £8.99.**

I'm yet to meet anyone who doesn't like this fizz from New Zealand, with its masses of sherberty, strawberry fruit. A real Kiwi crowd pleaser. **Asda, Llanelli and Morriston: Mas Miralda Rosado Brut, £3.31.**

There was a lot of fizz in this impressive-looking bottle which came in at a decent price. But taste wise, it didn't quite hit the mark and wasn't one we would go out of our way for. **Morrisons, Parc Morfa and Neath: Marques Monistrol Rose Brut, £5.99.**

This was probably our favourite both in terms of taste and looks. The rose pink contents of the bottle had plenty of sparkly fizz and came with a subtle hint of raspberry.



This week the Post's Mystery Shopper stops off at the Ann Summers store in Whitewalls, Swansea



THINK PINK Ann Summers store, Whitewalls, Swansea. GM050210H_001

Fronting up for female sexuality

First impressions

LOCATED opposite Primark in the city centre, Ann Summers is part lingerie store, part sex shop: but not in a sleazy brown paper bag, back street kind of way.

The exterior is similar to other branches of the store, with a purple and pink sign and mannequins in the widows modelling negligees and underwear sets geared towards shoppers looking for a Valentine's present.

The front of the store is dedicated to a mixture of cutesy and sexy lingerie, with pretty Knickerbox negligees displayed alongside racier briefs, bras and suspender belts.

There is also the odd set of furry handcuffs and massage lotion thrown in to warm you up for the naughtier section at the back of the shop.

Designed with two distinct sections, the store reminded me of the school bus: at the front you will find the obedient youngsters testing each other on their French homework, while the back would be home to kids wearing wonky ties and selling fags.

The stigma makes sense given the stigma still attached to going into a sex shop and I suspect if it was reversed, many potential customers would be scared off the wipe-clean bondage gear.

Were we being served? Within around two minutes of browsing, a member of staff welcomed me with a smile and asked if I needed any help. I declined the offer but it made me feel more comfortable as I inspected an array of phallic-shaped pasta, straws, sweets, ice cube trays and egg

fryers. And, remember those watches made out of little sweets? Well you can now get those in the form of an edible thong. They really have thought of everything. There is a friendly atmosphere and you actually feel that you can walk around and have a nose at the products without feeling like you're being watched.

Did we buy?

The shop was neatly divided into sections, including a range of men's boxer shorts plastered in mottos such as 'trust me I'm a doctor' and 'charm my snake'. Another section delved into sexy fancy dress, with nurse, fireman, policeman and catwoman costumes on sale. The back of the store is home to several models of the company's best-selling product — the Rampant Rabbit. They also stock books filled with sex tips and risqué jokes as well as erotic fiction. I tried on a couple of bras which were comfortable as well as cleavage-enhancing but eventually left the shop empty-handed.

Verdict

There will always be people who will look down their nose at sex shops but in this day and age people, particularly women, are becoming less afraid of expressing their sexuality, which is surely a step forward. Whether you're after some sexy lingerie or something stronger, such as a whips and chains, Ann Summers is a handy part of call.