



Androulla and Rosario say it with balloons. Photo by Diana Cormack

A global first for 2 Destino

By Diana Cormack

At a time when local traders may need cheering up, Androulla Costi and Rosario Castro-Garcia of the High Road gift and flower shop 2 Destino feel they have a unique product which will raise a smile or two.

Philip Lang, of Lyttleton Road, has developed a helium balloon on which pictures and text can be printed to suit any occasion. It proved very popular when he showed it recently at the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham, particularly with one young man who used it as a method of proposing to his girlfriend. Whatever your message, it can be used in this novel way.

Androulla and Rosario told THE ARCHER that they are the first outlet in the world to stock something they hope will bring people to East Finchley, not only to shop with them but also at other local businesses.

Visit www.magic41.com or pop into the shop at 128 High Road, where the balloons are on sale at a special introductory offer of £14.99.

From Alexandra to Bruce

By Ann Bronkhorst

Nearly 100 people gathered in front of the TV Tower at Alexandra Palace on 8 March. It was a bright Sunday morning, ideal weather for starting a five-mile walk across the old parish of Tottenham.

The organisers, Tottenham Civic Society (TCS), had planned a route taking in nine parks and seven conservation areas, all now in Haringey and many cared for by very proactive Friends' groups or residents' associations.

We crossed several invisible brooks and rivers, now culverted underground, and saw how neglected green spaces had been regenerated and new woodlands planted. Ducks, toadspawn, and swathes of crocuses; adventure playgrounds; boating lakes: there was so much to enjoy.

As well as parks and recreation grounds we walked through some historically interesting residential areas, such as the Noel Park and Lordship Lane estates. Pretty Regency cottages called Prospect Place, and slightly later ones called Peabody Cottages, are linked by name to buildings in East Finchley but look very different.

Just as the skies opened we reached journey's end at Bruce Castle Park and Museum, the latter described as 'the jewel in Haringey's crown'. It is a listed building, as are many of the buildings we had passed: a surprisingly rich heritage in this outer London borough.

Haringey's website provides details of all their parks, conservation areas and listed buildings. For information about other free TCS events, including explorations of an old railway line and of the proposed Spurs development, see www.tottenhamcivicsociety.org.uk or phone 020 8347 7684.

Designs on new business

By Helen Drake

In these challenging economic times it might seem unwise to be starting a new business venture, but for East Finchley interior designer Amanda Neilson, the timing couldn't be more perfect.

Launching Amanda Neilson Interiors with friends, clients and local businesses at a party held on 5 March at Monkey Face Bar and Restaurant, Amanda said: "There are many people choosing to stay put and upgrade their homes instead of moving. I can help clients take the risk out of choosing new furniture or decoration and make sure they don't make costly mistakes with, for example, badly matched wallpapers and curtains."

Natural move

With a previous career in fashion buying, Amanda moved into the interior design business as a natural step as it combined her knowledge of colour and fabrics with her skills and experience in sourcing products from lampshades to armchairs.

Most recently she has worked as a successful interior designer for Laura Ashley, building a solid client base locally in North West London and further afield.



Amanda Neilson Photo by Neil Mackenzie.

In her new business she will work with individual clients to design a scheme, however large or small, to suit their requirements. For some clients it may be as simple as upholstering existing furniture or sourcing new cushions to change the look of a room.

With bookings already coming in, it appears that there is a strong demand for Aman-

da's services. Lauren Mogan from Haven Estate Agents, who attended Amanda's launch party, said: "I found it useful as we are often called upon to advise our clients on the decoration of their properties."

If you are considering a new project and would like Amanda to help, please e-mail her on amanda@amandaneilsoninteriors.com

KALASHNIKOV KULTUR

By Ricky Savage, the voice of social irresponsibility

Cook up some recession chic

Ever since man learnt to cook there have been celebrity chefs. There were celebrity chefs back when all they did was chuck a piece of dead animal on a fire and come back just before it turned black and caught fire, a tradition that is the basis of modern Australian cuisine. As soon as man discovered reading, chefs discovered that there was market for cookbooks and they haven't stopped since, each new generation reflecting changing tastes.

Once upon a time, Mrs Beeton told the busy housewife how to beat eggs, cream, carpets, children and servants. Nowadays Nigella just sticks to the eggs and cream. So, as the nation goes to hell in a handcart, what we need is the right cuisine from the right people. We need the revolutionary recessionary cookbook, a survival guide for enterprising chefs that doesn't involve Japanese beef costing a couple of hundred pounds a kilo.

Let's start with the meat. There is a surplus of rats in Yorkshire, so we need a recipe for roast rat and Yorkshire pudding. Fed up with tasteless battery farmed chicken? Try free range city pigeon. A bird that is widespread, tasteless and free. You could serve it in a cream sauce, a pie or maybe as a curry. But why stop there? Why not get historical and eat rabbits? I don't mean some flabby bunny from the pet shop either, but proper wild bunnies, fresh from Watership Down.

When it comes to eating wildlife there is so much to choose from. The deer weren't put in our Royal parks for decoration, they were put there for hunting, and if Wills and Harry are too busy getting drunk then it's our loyal duty to revive the ancient tradition of poaching and do it for them. Just think how much better it will taste when you know you caught it yourself.

We need to get real and that means Heston Blumenthal is going to have to economise, so how about slug porridge? You just know it makes sense.

Sizzling salsa

By Betti Blatman

Professional dancer and choreographer Ronnie Raul is offering a great way to get ready for summer with his sizzling salsa lessons.

Ronnie, originally from Puerto Rico, organised the first World Salsa Championships in London last year and is ready to pass on his passion for dance to anyone willing to learn. Lessons happen on Mondays at 7.30pm for beginners and 8.30pm for advanced dancers at East Finchley Methodist Church, High Road. Contact Ronnie on 07958 605773 or ronnieraul@rockemail.com



Dance teacher Ronnie Raul

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