

The Good Life

Am I an old git for loving gardening? asks **Alice B-B**



HOW THE HELL DOES IT HAPPEN? One minute my bank holiday weekends are a haze of Ibiza delights. The next, my three-day break is a sharp-focus love affair with the garden.

All of a bloody sudden I'm asking for a chainsaw for my birthday, Monty Don is my fantasy friend and I go to bed with Jinny Blom (ahem... her excellent new book *The Thoughtful Gardener*).

Maybe it's because Mr Love and I (sadly) don't have children or a dog (yet) and that in our Cotswolds garden we have Constance Spry roses and bleeding heart that need nurturing. Or it's the more esoteric thing that old folk get – that putting your fingers in the earth releases serotonin. And making things grow feels good. And putting yourself in the centre of all that green, confronting arachnophobia or stumbling

upon a wren's nest are all a perfect contrast with busy city lives. And despite being physical – toiling, weeding and hoeing – the mind is calm. It's a meditation. And a lesson in letting go, because ultimately, however hard you try to corral those

pretty plants – nature and her naughty army of weeds, gets her way.

Anyway, bottom line; I love gardening. But I also love dancing on a beach at sunrise... and I'll make sure there's room in my life for both.

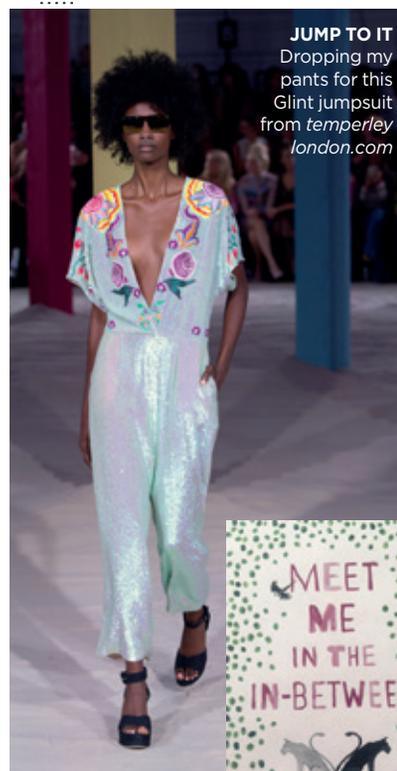
I'M NOT MARRIED BECAUSE I LIKE BEING MR LOVE'S GIRLFRIEND. But, I love other people's weddings. I find them so romantic; tears, petals, some randy old uncle who wants to spin you round the dance floor. But there's one thing I find a bore; all the dressing up. I'm not a dress girl. Man, do I envy boys. Given the chance, I would spend my days in trousers (or a bikini). I feel strong and powerful in fancy pants. But until the day when I have my very own uniform – a rainbow of sur-mesure Savile Row suits and a handful of vintage YSL Le Smoking – I shall be scouring the best of British designers; Emilia Wickstead, Erdem, Roland Mouret, Alice Temperley for their best dresses. Or maybe a jumpsuit.

HEALTHY LIVING CAN BE SUCH A BORE. Yes I go boxing, sip green juice and give gluten a wide berth. But given the chance, my dream day would go: Cadbury's Creme eggs for breakfast, Hula Hoops for lunch and for supper a river of Negronis and islands of bar snacks. Removing all temptation at excellent Yeotown in Devon is a brilliant way to reset, with its cosy cabins, delicious vegan food, hikes along the beautiful coast, incredible yoga and a massage every night. After five days you feel brand new. But what happens when you get home? How not to slip into cocktails, cheese and chocolate? Thankfully, Yeotown is opening a café on Chiltern Street this month, so there's no excuse for not maintaining Yeotown owners Mercedes and Simon Sieff's approach to a clean life. And for a mental reset hop into one of the meditation pods. It's not quite hiking the Jurassic Coast, but it's a brief time out of toxic city life.

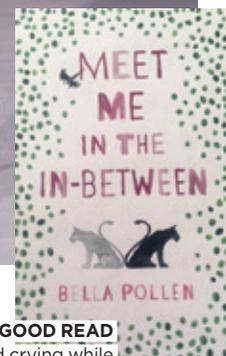
THIS MONTH I'LL BE...

- 1 Sweating in the Yoga and Ride classes at new Heartcore in Notting Hill (heartcore.co.uk).
- 2 First in line for boho deluxe at the new Talitha store just off Ledbury Road (talithacollection.com).
- 3 Thrilled that Dinings, my favourite Japanese, opens a new Chelsea outpost this month (dinings.co.uk).

LUXURY & NECESSITY



JUMP TO IT
Dropping my pants for this Glint jumpsuit from temperleylondon.com



A GOOD READ
Laughing and crying while reading Bella Pollen's latest book (bellapollen.com)



FEELING SHADY
Getting my GlowMo on thanks to charlotte.tilbury.com



GREEN FINGERS
Inspired by dream gardener jinnyblom.com



RESET THE BUTTON
Hike your way to health at yeotown.com