



# Mumszone

Annie and Emily take like pros to rollerblading; Emily looks at gallery private memberships; and they indulge in some serious r&r in London's best hotel spas.



## Rollerblading

**Annie:** Never did I think that rollerblading could be such fun! I am completely hooked. Fantastic exercise, good for anyone who has 'running knees', I can see myself still skating at 70. However, we did learn from the best: Hugh from Skatefresh immediately understood what we wanted to get from our introductory session. One of their philosophies is that it is not necessary to learn to skate by falling over, which is good to know when you take up a sport over the age of 40. You'll see I have inline skates (easier to learn on) and Emily has the more traditional-looking rollerskates (more stable and it means she can go to roller discos). We were quick learners apparently, helped by our love of skiing. Like skiing what you do with your body is just as important as what you do with your feet, propelling yourself forward with just outstretched arms. Within 30 minutes, we were skating in between cones, doing 'lemons' (a great exercise for using the outside edge of your skates and toning inner thighs), ploughing (ie stopping) and turning almost as well as the pros.

Hire skates from [slickwillies.co.uk](http://slickwillies.co.uk) on Gloucester Road. Two-student lessons along the north side of the Serpentine from £45 [skatefresh.com](http://skatefresh.com)



## Stylish Saving

**StyleCard** is the brainchild of Kinvara Balfour (ex-Daily Candy) and works as a discount card on some great brands both for family shopping (Biscuiteers, Giddy Goat Toys, Daylesford) and for you (Cowshed, Josh Wood Atelier). [style-card.co.uk](http://style-card.co.uk)



## Taking a break from Christmas shopping



There is something very glamorous about going to a hotel in your home town. Nip into one of these spas after Christmas shopping to set you up for the evening. We have chosen them for their proximity to key shopping areas.

**Annie:** **BROWNS HOTEL** (for Piccadilly) This is a serious spa. You know you are in excellent hands with the uber professional (though not particularly friendly) staff. I chose their Signature Body massage, an

invigorating treatment with heavenly Spiezia's apricot and lemongrass oil. *Signature Massage* 60 mins £105 Browns Hotel, W1 ☎ 020 7518 4009 [roccofortehotels.com](http://roccofortehotels.com)

**Annie:** **HAM YARD HOTEL** (for Soho, Regent St and Covent Garden) My reflexology hour in this gorgeous bright spa was one of the most relaxing treatments ever. It correctly diagnosed a recent neck injury and unblocked a few stress channels. I felt a million dollars. 60-min treatment £130 Sobolistic Spa, Ham Yard Hotel W1 ☎ 020 3642 1035 [firmdalehotels.com](http://firmdalehotels.com)

## Mothers' Meeting

Emily and I are co-hosting a Parenting & Motherhood event with Hub Dot, which has been making its name introducing women at different stages of their career and life to each other through various themed gatherings. This event is being held in the newly opened Anthropologie store in Richmond. The format comprises two main speakers on the parenting/motherhood theme and then a handful of one-minute speakers, all of which aim to spark individual conversations among all those attending. There is always a lot of buzz; come on your own or with friends. Tickets: £12 Anthropologie 70 George St, Richmond 7pm [hubdot.com](http://hubdot.com)



## Gallery Membership

We have looked at three of the most popular in London: all offer free entry to exhibitions, provide magazines and the use of members' rooms.

### TATE

£62 (single), £94 (plus guest)

**What's On:** The permanent collections are free (and superb). Highlights of shows in London next year include Barbara Hepworth at Tate Britain and Pop Art at Tate Modern. The Tate's USP is that you get two for the price of one in London, plus St Ives and Liverpool. The Members' room at Tate Britain is round the rotunda while Tate Modern has fab Thames' views.

**Best for:** variety and range of shows

### THE ROYAL ACADEMY

£97 (standard), £140 (joint, ie + guest)

**What's On:** No permanent collection. Highlights of 2015 include Rubens, Al WeiWei and, of course, the Summer Exhibition, the previews of which are a good perk and the magazine is excellent. The highlight has to be the Keeper's House restaurant, cocktail bar, lounges and private garden. It opens to the public in the late afternoon but during the day it's all yours!

**Best for:** members' room

### V&A

£64 (individual), £84 (plus guest)

**What's On:** The permanent collections are free (and seem to go on for ever). Forthcoming exhibitions include Alexander McQueen. The double-height members' room is housed at the end of long galleries filled with glass and offers a hidden away space but is not a membership-clincher. The programme of events and activities, from gallery tours to talks is fab. The magazine comes with a handy pocket-sized diary of upcoming dates.

**Best for:** members' events

## Singalong

After 30 years of singing, travelling and collecting songs, Cerys Matthews still finds there's no better way to spend time than singing along in good company. What better time than Christmas to agree! A mix of traditional and contemporary, this book presents music and lyrics to songs you won't resist singing and playing along to. *Hook, Line and Singer* by Cerys Matthews £12.99 Penguin



## Culture Vulture

Continuing our arty theme, we love the new Culture Whisper site, which offers a bespoke edit of the London cultural scene. Tick what aspects of London life you are interested in (theatre, fashion, kids etc) and you get a tailor-made proposal for the months ahead. I have already been alerted to book for Tom Stoppard's new play next year. [culturewhisper.com](http://culturewhisper.com)



## Secret Jumper Sale

Save the Children is taking Christmas Jumper Day to new fashion heights with a Secret Christmas Jumper Sale with 30 one-off designer jumpers for sale. The hand-knitted sweaters have been customised by designers such as Jonathan Saunders, Lulu Guinness and Pringle of Scotland but you won't know who has designed the jumper until you receive it. [christmasjumperday.org](http://christmasjumperday.org) 3-10 December; proceeds to Save the Children



**Emily: THE BERKELEY** (for Knightsbridge) The top of the hotel is now the domain of Bamford and its Haybarn Spa. Bleached wood and white predominate. My signature body treatment was a combination of massage, reflexology and breathing, which was both energising and deeply relaxing. 85-min treatment £150 Berkeley Hotel, SW1 ☎ 020 7201 1699 [the-berkeley.co.uk](http://the-berkeley.co.uk)  
**Emily: THE DORSETT** (for Westfield) The new 4\* hotel is sleek and cool. Its

Pavilion Spa on the 8th floor has awesome floor-to-ceiling views over London and the staff are very friendly. I had a LING Energy Lift Body Wellness massage, using tourmaline (apparently the highest energy producing crystal in the world) to penetrate deeply into your muscles and release tension and clear toxins. 60-min treatment £85 Dorsett Shepherd's Bush Green, W12 ☎ 0203 262 1026 [dorsetthotels.com](http://dorsetthotels.com)