

DAILY Mirror

NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR
Saturday, May 21, 2016 £1

OPEN Saira and husband Steve yesterday tell of their struggles



TV SAIRA & HUBBY
The TRUTH
about our
sexless
marriage

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PALACE SECURITY TERROR

BIG DEAL

Thomson Cruises' new ship TUI Discovery sets sail on its Mediterranean Secrets tour on July 2. It departs from Palma, Majorca, and calls at Elba, Marina Di Carrara and San Remo, Italy, Toulon, France, and Ibiza Town. Prices start at £774pp flying from Gatwick. Regional flights available. Book at thomson.co.uk/cruise or call 0871 230 2800.

Travel test

BY AARON FLANAGAN

What: Rollercoaster Restaurant at Alton Towers theme park, Staffs. altontowers.com

Where: Now open in the Forbidden Valley zone.

Performance: Gone is the need for waiters and waitresses, as you are given your own interactive tablet menu for sending your order to the kitchen. Your food and drinks arrive on the specially designed rollercoaster carts which do loop-the-loops on a track above your head and arrive at your table.

The food is high quality, with starters ranging from nachos to a ham terrine, while succulent steaks and juicy burgers are available for mains. If you have room for dessert, the 'ultimate ice cream' is definitely worth a try.

The food is on the pricey side, but you pay for the novelty which certainly does not wear off. Ordering a drink from the touch-screen menu before watching it twirl down to the table 30 seconds later remained enjoyable throughout the meal.

It becomes a self-service system when your meals on wheels arrive as you have to unload the food pots off the rollercoaster and plate it up yourself. The meals are quite filling, so it's best to resist the temptation to immediately go on the adjacent Galactica and Nemesis rides after eating.

Quibbles: As well as being slightly expensive (dinner starters £6 to £8, mains £12 to £30; the lunch range is a selection from the cheaper end of the dinner menu), it becomes a bit of a hassle when you're sat closest to the rollercoaster 'drop zone' as you have to pass everyone their food.

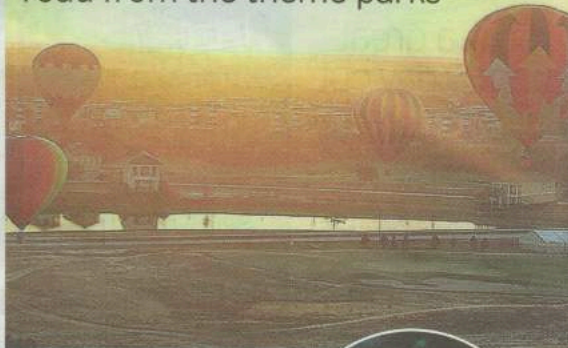
Plates don't always arrive at the same time because you process food orders individually.

Verdict: Keeps the family entertained. Interesting concept which could be a big success when everything is fine-tuned. **7/10**

TRAVEL

Kissimmee

Jake Murtagh discovers thrills and chills down the road from the theme parks



Orlando is justifiably the theme park capital of the world and tens of thousands of Brits head there every year. But there's much more to the Sunshine State's action-packed heartland than thrill rides and a certain mouse.

Only a stone's throw away lies the tranquillity of Kissimmee. As well as being within striking distance of the theme parks, this is also a prime location for visitors to explore Florida's great outdoors.

You could do no better than heading 30 minutes by car south-west of Kissimmee to take in the sights from the skies on a hot air balloon ride (orlandoballoonrides.com).

The one-hour trip takes you above the treetops to take in the stunning views of central Florida and while it is slightly pricey (from \$195 adult/\$99 child), it is a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

If flying in a basket a couple of thousand feet in the air isn't enough to get your pulses racing, a visit to Gatorland (gatorland.com \$26.99 adult/\$18.99 child) just north of Kissimmee is essential for any thrill-seeker.

The wildlife park is home to rare alligators, crocodiles, lizards and snakes, and adrenalin junkies can even ride high above the reptiles on the 1,200ft Screamin' Gator Zipline.

For those scared of heights, a leisurely paddle through Shingle Creek west of Kissimmee centre



GO WILD
Up close with reptiles at Gatorland

may be more your thing (paddlingcenter.com from \$26 for 2hrs). You can explore the natural beauty of the creek by kayak, canoe or paddle board, either on their own or on the guided tours available.

If more time on the water floats your airboat, then glide through the headwaters of the Everglades at Boggy Creek, 30 minutes south of Kissimmee (bcairboats.com from \$27.95 adult/\$21.95 child). You may be lucky enough to see an alligator or bald eagle on your ride.

Once you're back on dry land, a trip out to the Atlantic coast to tour the Kennedy Space Center (kennedyspacecenter.com from \$50 adult/\$40 child) is unmissable.

You can see the mighty Saturn V, the largest rocket ever flown, touch a moon rock, stand nose-to-nose with the shuttle



HISSESSS
Jake and a snake at Gatorland

BIG DEAL

Stay cool in sunny Cyprus next month with a week on half board at the chic five-star Almyra Hotel in central Paphos from £675 per person. Fly from Gatwick on June 17 or East Midlands departure on June 14, from £718 each. Book at onthebeach.co.uk or call 0871 474 3000.

Cruise news

WITH CAPTAIN GREYBEARD

While the UK welcomed the biggest cruise ship ever into Southampton this week, I've been travelling in the Med on Carnival Vista.

I also took a journey back in time, thanks to Carnival Cruise Line and the Fincantieri hipyard in Castellammare di Stabia. It was a return to an era when ships were not built in dry dock, but on a slipway - from which they were launched into the sea.

The yard, in the Bay of Naples, has neither a dry dock nor the facilities to build

ships the size of the 133,500-ton Vista. But to meet the commitments of a full order book, Fincantieri used Castellammare to build a section of the as-yet-unnamed Vista 2 as they did last year for Majestic Princess.

Even though it was not a whole ship, the launching ceremony was gloriously old style, and a reminder of how vessels such as Cunard's QE2 used to be launched on the Clyde, the Tyne and the Mersey.

I climbed a steep stairway to a viewing platform part way down the slip. Behind me were massive wooden blocks that had supported previous construction projects. In front of me was a section of Vista 2's hull.