

INSIDER'S LONDON

Sophie Conran's capital favourites



WHAT DO YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT THE CAPITAL AT THIS TIME OF YEAR?

We have a family tradition of watching the firework display in the square outside our house. I also love visiting the Christmas fairs around town where I like to stock up on gifts, and I think London's ice-skating rinks are just fabulous, especially for the children. My favourite outdoor rinks are at the **Natural History Museum**, 020 7942 5000, nhm.ac.uk, and at **Somerset House**, 020 7845 4600, somersethouse.org.uk.

WHERE IS YOUR FAVOURITE PLACE TO EAT?

■ **The Cow** in Westbourne Grove, 89 Westbourne Park Road, W2 5QH, 020 7221 0021, thecowlondon.co.uk. It belongs to my brother Tom. While I was living in Australia, he phoned to say that he'd bought a pub and named it after me. I felt so chuffed - until he told me the name. It's a lovely restaurant and perfect for a crisp, wintry day as it serves warming, hearty British meals such as meat pies and a legendary sausage and mash.



HOW WOULD YOU SPEND AN IDEAL DAY IN LONDON?

I live just beside Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens, so it would involve a long walk with the kids around the Serpentine lake and on to the **Serpentine Gallery** (left), 020 7402 6075, serpentinegallery.org, to look at the free exhibitions. We'd then move on to the **Orangery in Kensington Palace**, 0844 482 7777, hrp.org.uk; for tea, walking past the Round Pond and admiring the sailing boats.

WHICH ARE YOUR TOP THREE PLACES TO SHOP?

- **Mint**, 70 Wigmore Street, W1U 2SF, 020 7224 4406, mintshop.co.uk. Great interior design store with original pieces.
- **Portobello Road**, W11, portobelloroad.co.uk. There's always so much to see here and the atmosphere is fantastic.
- **Harrods Food Hall**, 87/135 Brompton Road, SW1X 7XL, 020 7730 1234, harrods.com. It's like a fabulous temple to food.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE LONDON LANDMARK?

I am very fond of the majestic lions in **Trafalgar Square**. We used to climb on them when I was little, and I can clearly remember paddling in the fountains with my brother.

Sophie Conran, sophieconran.com, is a designer and cookery writer. She has recently designed a wallpaper range, Arthouse, £24.98 for a 10m roll, available at B&Q, diy.com, and has a new book *Sophie Conran's Soups & Stews* (HarperCollins, £14.99). ▶

