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SPECIAL  
EDITION  
COVERS

# THE LONDON STANDARD



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**LABOUR ISN'T  
WORKING**  
Revolution  
is in the air

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## THE 100 SEXIEST LONDONERS

Paul Mescal, Simone Ashley, Mick Jagger, Central Cee, Lila Moss, Helen Mirren

ISSUE 47 **EBERECHI EZE + MACCA'S ARCHIVE + GET READY TO MICROCHIP YOUR BRAIN**



**CLIFF-HANGER**

Marmara Beach near Loutro; below, traditional Greek dolmades — stuffed vine leaves

**SEE THE WOOD FOR THE TREES**

Fairmont Taghazout Bay on the Moroccan coast

**TOP PICK**

**Le Jardin des Douars** is a mountain paradise nestled amid the lush landscapes near the coastal town of Essaouira in Morocco. Relax in magnificent infinity pools while soaking up the stunning scenery and basking in the sunshine. From £160 a night, [jardinesdouars.com](http://jardinesdouars.com)

**A TEEN AND HIS PARENT WALK INTO A HOTEL SPA...**

## Fairmont Taghazout Bay

**T**eens are a tough crowd. Especially when it comes to holidays. And even more so when, like myself, you're a solo parent to an only child. Now my son is 16, agreeing to travel for a chunk of the summer break means being torn away from his friends. So this year, we tried something different: a swift 48-hour Moroccan wellness break to Fairmont Taghazout Bay hotel and spa in the hope of restoring harmony after a fretful period of GCSE stress.

Once unthinkable for a mother to take her adolescent son to a spa, thanks to Gen Z's obsession with wellness, many of today's teens are as comfortable on the massage table as they are eating avocados, smoking vapes or drinking BuzzBallz (what can I say? They have a conflicted relationship with wellness).

A mere four-hour flight from London, Agadir is a convenient yet vibrant option for a mini break with near-guaranteed sunshine. Less convenient, though, is getting up at 4am for the 7.30am flight; a brutally early start that left

us tired and snippy. Fortunately, on landing we were swiftly transferred into the luxurious hands of the five-star Fairmont Taghazout Bay. I hear the kids' club is outstanding, but these days we have to make our own entertainment.

We started by lounging on the four-poster beds dotted around the adult pool. And what came next — a 5pm private breathwork session — completely obliterated any lingering memory of our tense early start.

Initially it was met with resistance. But after explaining that it might leave us feeling a little, well, stoned, reticence vanished. My son ended up following instructions so diligently that he conked out. With such a restorative session under our belts, a chilled evening followed and conversation flowed. A major win for day one.

The following morning — after a spectacular Gen Z-friendly breakfast of unlimited coffee, avocado and bircher muesli — our wellness itinerary began in earnest with a personal training session. There may have been some grumbling about this not being any sane person's definition of relaxation, but we were won over by our instructors' expertise. Mine presented me with an array of dumbbells so delicate, they didn't look worth the effort. After 60-minutes, though, I was begging for mercy.

In contrast, my son was, from the off, bench-pressing and sweating like Nadal a few games into a match. An hour later, he had nothing but praise for his coach, and as we tottered out of the fitness centre on shaky legs, he started asking about PT sessions back home.

Next up: the Fairmont's 2,200 square metres of soothing orange-blossom and rose-scented spa. It was at this point he said, "All this relaxing is hard work." And I get it. He wanted

to be a free agent. I began questioning whether my family wellness idea would backfire. And yet he took to that white waffle robe like a duck to bath-warm water.

We started proceedings with a classic hammam. Steamed, soaped, scrubbed, massaged and bathed in cleansing cascades of water, we were coddled like newborn infants. Perhaps this ancestral bathing ceremony tapped into a shared subconscious memory of me caring for my son as a baby, because by the end, it felt like we were reconnecting.

The signature Fairmont massage that followed was also rejuvenating. An inventive medley of traditional Moroccan massage, hot stone and shockingly cold rose quartz, it was impossible not to succumb to that floppy blissed-out feeling. As we returned to our senses over detox tea, dates and almonds, the boy who thought he'd rather slouch around the pool spent the rest of his day exploring the Fairmont's kasbah-style warren of steam rooms, Jacuzzis and magnesium pools.

That night, we ate at the hotel's Paper Moon restaurant. After all that Zen, an unhurried, phone-free meal (fritto misto, generous dollops of burrata and a delectable aubergine salad) meant our chats turned meaningful.

For the first time in a long time, I got an insight — albeit fleeting — into my very independent son's life. And given the inevitable distance that grows between parents and their teens, that was the ultimate goal. I came away thinking a mother-teen spa break is worth every penny. **Helen Down**

Room prices start at £460 a night for two adults; [fairmont.com](http://fairmont.com)

swimmers, my Bremont watch, and a hat. If I am walking or climbing then I usually wear a pair of La Sportiva approach shoes.

**Your dress code for the destination?**

Shorts! I spent the majority of time wearing shorts and put a shirt on for eating.

**Have you ever had an emergency incident there?**

We once came to the rescue of a man who had fallen and gashed his head open. He was out on the street and tripped over. Luckily, I carry a medical kit and patched him up as there isn't really a hospital nearby.

**Do you have a top wellness tip for the area?**

There's no need to go to a gym or spa. I spend almost every waking hour outside: swimming, climbing, diving or walking. It's not just good for your body, it's great for your mind and soul.

**Do you exercise when travelling?**

I always exercise when I travel. There's a small pull-up bar in the chapel that I use.

**Song that reminds you of the place?**

The Corries, Will Ye Go Lassie Go because in the summer, the mountains there are covered in wild mountain thyme and the song has a lyric about it. There is always that smell on the wind.

**The Wild Ones** with Aldo Kane is now available to stream on Apple TV+

**COUNTRY PUB OF THE WEEK**

## The Bell Inn, Langford, Oxfordshire

It is the done thing, sometimes, to characterise the Cotswolds as a Stepford mess of villages bound by furious arguments over walled gardens and flower arranging. But it has its quirks, too: the wonky Bell is one. The building looks like it's had a drink, appearing as if it might stumble into the road nearby. Inside, it is



tight with small windows and low ceilings, with a hard stone floor and blackboards everywhere. But the food — crickey, it is good. Peter Creed and Tom Noest do buttermilk fried chicken to travel for — Londoners can but dream — one hell of a cheeseburger and beautiful devilled kidneys on toast. Wheels are not being reinvented or reshaped, but the execution is undeniable. Have the sticky toffee pudding, ask for sherry on the ice cream, and leave cheerful, glad the old place is still just about upright. **David Ellis** [thebelllangford.com](http://thebelllangford.com)