



IT TAKES TWO

Barry Oliver presents a range of romantic Valentine's Day deals designed to win hearts

DECLARATIONS of love can take many forms. A candle-light cruise on the Seine in Paris seems a perfect time for a proposal but a French company will, for a price, go one better and project a giant photo of the magic moment on to the Eiffel Tower as the happy couple drifts by.

If that doesn't impress, you could try a romantic dinner with a difference: you return to your hotel room to find it has been taken over by 150 cute little teddy bears all dressed in personalised "I love you" T-shirts.

Or how about a joy flight over the French capital where a second plane appears alongside with your declaration of love emblazoned on its wings?

ApoteoSurprise offers 40 such

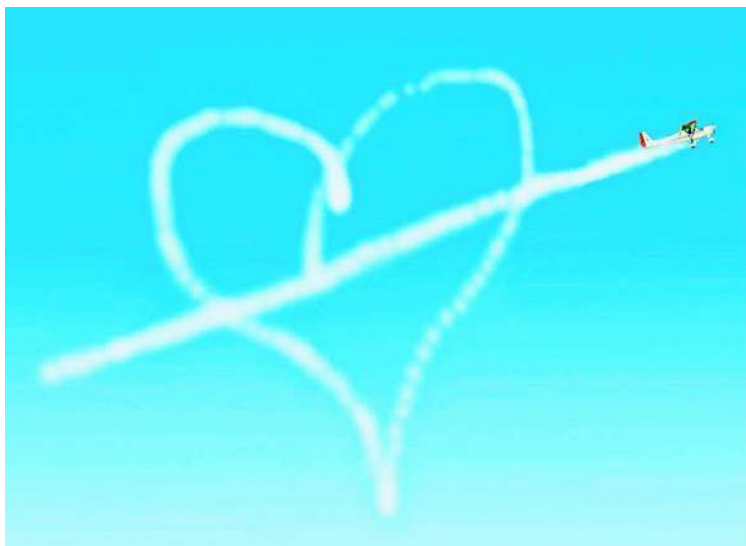
experiences designed with love in mind. www.apoteosurprise.com/indexEN.htm.

Fantasy land: The NSW Blue Mountains, west of Sydney, has romantic hideaways galore, all tailor-made for a Valentine's Day escape. The Carrington Hotel and Yindi Day Spa at Katoomba has a Chocolate Fantasy package for couples. It includes overnight accommodation in a premier-view spa room, breakfasts, cocoa and coconut milk spa with chocolate strawberries and organic honey and cocoa mud wrap with massage and moisturise. From \$600 midweek. The hotel is also running a February 14 Valentine's Day dinner under the vaulted ceilings of its classic dining room (in the company of two giant Ming vases) for \$65 a person. Includes a three-course menu

and glass of sparkling wine. www.thecarrington.com.au.

Great escape: Still in the Blue Mountains, the York Fairmont Resort at Leura has a Valentine's escape from \$495 midweek (\$916 weekends). The two-night weekend stay comes with breakfasts and dinner. Midweek, Sunday to Thursday, includes overnight accommodation, breakfasts and dinner. www.fairmontresort.com.au.

Love fest: Never mind the 14th, Metro Hotels has declared all of February the month of love, with romantic packages at a number of its properties. At Sydney's Metro Hotel on Pitt, a weekend overnight stay (from \$289) comes with a king spa room, break-





fasts, bottle of sparkling wine and chocolates on arrival, bath bombs and noon checkout. A stay in a one-bedroom apartment at the Metro Apartments in Melbourne is \$160 and includes a bottle of sparkling wine and chocolates on arrival and llam checkout. At Perth's Metro Hotel on Canning, an overnight package in a river-view room with dinner for two on a private balcony, a bottle of sparkling wine and chocolates on arrival, llam checkout and parking starts at \$175. The deal is valid until February 28. www.metrohotels.com.au.

Chocs and views: Sydney's Shangri-La Hotel's Valentine's Day package comes with harbour views, overnight accommodation for two, breakfasts, a bottle of Moët & Chandon champagne, strawberries and handmade chocolates on arrival, 4pm checkout and parking. The so-called Occasions Package, which starts at \$398, is valid to December 30. www.shangri-la.com/sydney.

Going up: Queensland's Wallaby Ridge Retreat near Tamborine Mountain has an overnight deal that includes a balloon flight with champagne breakfast, champagne and strawberries on arrival, roses and a romantic two-course dinner for \$635 a couple. www.takeabreak.com.au/Valentines-Day.

In the pink: Annesley House at the Bay in Queensland's Hervey Bay is offering strawberries, wine and pink chocolates on

**TOP GIFT IDEAS
INCLUDE A FLYING
LESSON, FIGHTER
JET FLIGHT, JET
BOAT RIDE
AND TANDEM
PARASAILING**

arrival and a three-course candlelit dinner. For added romance, even the bedsheets will be pink. Priced at \$880 for two from February 9 to 16. www.takeabreak.com.au/Valentines-Day.

Suite deal: Sydney's Urban St Leonards Hotel, part of the Accor group, has come up with a Suite Urban Love package for those looking to enjoy some Valentine's Day privacy. It includes accommodation for two with spa bath and water-view terrace, bottle of sparkling wine, slippers, an Aveda sensory pack, late checkout and parking. There's also a food and beverage discount book, valued at up to \$100, to use at the hotel. From \$249 a couple, the package is valid Friday and Saturday nights until the end of February. www.urbanstleonards.com.au.

Petal power: A bottle of champagne and rosepetals on the bed is the promise at Bellachara Boutique Hotel in the coastal NSW town of Gerringong, 90 minutes south of Sydney. A stay in a king garden room is \$250 a night with breakfast. An extra \$69 a person buys a three-course dinner with a red rose on arrival, cocktail, strawberries dipped in chocolate and live piano entertainment. The deal is avail-

able only on February 14. www.bellachara.com.au.

To the beach: Still on the NSW south coast, Wollongong's oceanfront Novotel Northbeach Hotel is also giving couples a reason to celebrate, with a lovers' package that includes overnight accommodation from \$209 a room with a bottle of sparkling wine and chocolates on arrival. Available only on February 14. www.novotelnorthbeach.com.au.

High life: Q1 Resort & Spa on the Gold Coast, in the world's tallest residential tower, is taking romance to new heights with a package that includes accommodation in a one-bedroom apartment, two tickets to its Q Deck observatory with a souvenir photo and a bottle of sparkling wine. Valid to March 30. www.Q1.com.au.

Port of call: Peppers Bale Resort in northern Queensland's Port Douglas, which offers freestanding pavilion-style accommodation with private pools, has a Valentine's Day package in a one-bedroom pavilion, breakfast and bottle of Moët & Chandon champagne with strawberries from \$795 a night. Be warned: to add to the mood



Love in strange places: From left, ApoteoSurprise specialises in unique Valentine's Day packages from messages in the sky above Paris to an image projected on the Eiffel Tower; the Carrington Hotel at Katoomba in the NSW Blue Mountains; Q1 luxury resort and spa on Queensland's Gold Coast

there's a romantic rose-petal decoration on arrival. Valid from February 7 to 21. www.peppers.com.au/Bale-Resort.

Hunter gatherer: Peppers Convent in the NSW Hunter Valley is celebrating the big day with a package that includes overnight accommodation, breakfast, pre-dinner drinks and canapes, dinner, champagne and a one-hour massage or facial for two. From \$836 a couple. www.peppers.com.au.

Wild side: For those with a taste for adventure, Phil James, founding director of www.adrenalin.com.au, has come up with his top Valentine's Day gifts for him or her. They include a flying trapeze lesson, fighter jet flight, jet boat ride and tandem parasailing. There are more than 400 adventures from which to choose. www.adrenalin.com.au.

Something different: Tired of roses, chocolates and romantic dinners? Karma Currency, Australia's first charity gift voucher, offers something different. Log on to its website, buy a voucher with a Valentine's message, and Karma Currency does the rest. Instead of getting roses, your nearest and dearest can choose to donate the value of the voucher to one of more than 100 charities. Choices range from buying a fruit tree for a poor family in Brazil to cooking utensils to feed the homeless in Melbourne. www.karmacurrency.com.au.

More Valentine's Day deals online:
www.theaustralian.com.au/travel/dd.