

The Chosen Few

THE ULTIMATE LINE-UP



SAVOURY CHOCOLATE BARS

Shane Hughes, head chef at Great Fosters Hotel (greatfosters.co.uk), on top chocolate

- 1. Zotter Bacon Bits Bar, £3.95; amazon.co.uk** "The definitive luxe bacon bar – subtler than you'd expect. The filling – 16 per cent hazelnut and 7 per cent bacon crackling combined into nougat – is creamy with a slight crunch."
- 2. Amelia Rope Dark Hazelnut & Sea Salt Edition, £6.25; liberty.co.uk** "A bar that is stocked in the poshest of delis. This savoury combination of Maldon sea salt and chopped, roasted Turkish hazelnuts – mixed into dark, 73 per cent Ecuadorian chocolate – is a triumph."
- 3. Madre Pink Peppercorn & Smoked Salt, £5.95; chocolatiers.co.uk** "Pink peppercorns used to be banned in the US – some believe their intoxicating effects are similar to those of poison ivy. Their explosive, fruity, spicy flavour makes for an unforgettable experience."



STYLISH DOWN JACKETS

Nick Bain, of blog bainser.com, on what to wear while necking your glühwein in Gstaad

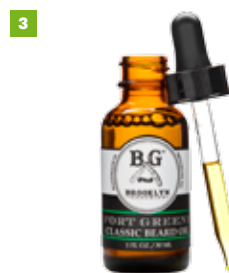
- 1. Chucs Down-Filled Jacket, £475; chucs.com** "This modern version of the brand's 1922 original is a stylish, 800-fill tribute."
- 2. Moncler Gaston, £675; harveynichols.com** "Filled with 80 per cent down and 20 per cent feather, its turtleneck and hemline ward off Arctic blasts."
- 3. Dolce & Gabbana Down-Filled Coat, £535; mrporter.com** "Fitted with Recco technology – a tiny reflector to help rescuers locate the wearer in an avalanche."



ANDROID GAMING CONSOLES

Jason Bradbury, of *The Gadget Show*, on new kit ahead of *Gadget Show Live* (1-3 Nov)

- 1. Nvidia Shield, £360; mobility.co.uk** "This Android-based handheld, with a 5in 'retina quality' multi-touch display, is arguably the most powerful of its kind on the market. If you want raw power, the Shield is the handheld for you."
- 2. Ouya, £99; game.co.uk** "A sub-£100, highly innovative, indie gaming console with wireless HDMI connectivity to your TV. Games include staples such as *Sonic*, plus the meme-inspired *Nyan Cat*. Ergonomically and aesthetically interesting."
- 3. Gamestick, £80; game.co.uk** "Released 29 October, the Android-based Gamestick is a very simple, unashamedly cheap, entry-level games console. It consists of a wireless controller and a small USB key that plugs into the TV. Comes with two games pre-installed and a free case."



AMERICAN HIPSTER BEARD CARE

Ken Picton, hair salon owner (kenpicton.com), on handmade US beard-softening products

- 1. Wild Man Beard Conditioner, £14.50; amazon.co.uk** "Grapeseed oil mimics your skin's natural moisturisers, absorbs quickly and strengthens hair."
- 2. Beard Buddy Beard Wash, £15; beardbuddy.bigcartel.com** "This new organic aloe product is tailored to cleanse your beard – and, just as importantly, the sensitive skin that lives beneath."
- 3. Brooklyn Grooming Fort Greene Classic Beard Oil, £19; brooklyngrooming.com** "A sesame and hempseed oil that redresses the damage done to a beard by exposure to the elements, smoke and washing."



HD DOCU CAMERAS

Joseph Hedges, digital imagery technician at Invent Pictures, on documentary cameras

- 1. Sony HDR-CX220, £180; johnlewis.com** "Lightweight, compact, and starts up in a matter of seconds with no delay on the record function. All recordings are native for DVD and Blu-ray, making disc-creation a breeze, too."
- 2. Canon EOS 5D, £2,975; currys.co.uk** "This DSLR snapper doubles up as a full-frame HD-video recorder. Commonly used by TV crews as a back-up camera, the features allow inexperienced documentary-makers to produce beautiful-looking films."
- 3. JVC Everio GZ-E15, £135; 24studio.co.uk** "Features full-HD, automatic time-lapse control to add a professional look to your documentary. Much like the Sony CX series, the Everio also has a quick-start feature."



HOME RECIPE DELIVERY KITS

Angus Martin, head chef at The Varsity Hotel (thevarsityhotel.co.uk), on recipe delivery services

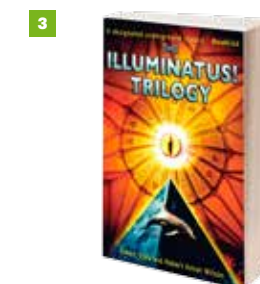
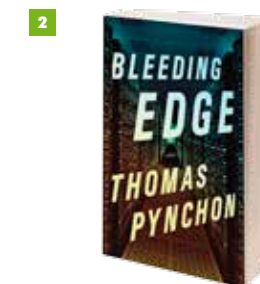
- 1. The Recipe Kit, from £39 per weekly delivery; therecipekit.co.uk** "Choose from nine dishes a week, each one designed by an ex-Ottolenghi chef."
- 2. Simply Cook, £10 for a monthly delivery; simplycook.com** "There's less cooking involved here – the idea is that you can assemble a restaurant-quality dish in 20 minutes or less."
- 3. Housebites, from £29 per weekly delivery; housebites.com** "A healthy option with each meal between 500 and 700 calories; completed in 30 minutes."



WINTER HONEY BEERS

Steve Livens, expert and spokesperson for Let There Be Beer, selects warming honey beer

- 1. Wolf Brewery Lavender Honey, £2.29; beersofeurope.co.uk** "Lower alcohol strength and subtle notes of lavender create a refreshingly delicate beer."
- 2. Arkell's Bee's Organic Ale, £2.25; vintageroots.co.uk** "A fantastic, light golden ale with a delicate, herbal fruity flavour, gentle honey taste and floral aroma."
- 3. Fuller's Organic Honey Dew Golden Beer, £1.99; sainsburys.co.uk** "A light, zesty, refreshing award-winner, with a subtle, sweet lingering flavour from the honey."
- 4. Wells & Young's Waggle Dance, £1.89; beersofeurope.co.uk** "Bitter and fruity hops provide balance to the sweetness for this distinctive beer."



CULT THRILLERS

Laurence O'Bryan, author of *The Manhattan Puzzle*, picks conspiracy thrillers

- 1. The Alchemist's Secret by Scott Mariani, £6.99** "Mariani's under-appreciated 2009 thriller has the elixir of life, an ex-SAS hero and – of course – Nazis. What more could you want from this genre?"
- 2. Bleeding Edge by Thomas Pynchon, £20** "The love-him-or-hate-him US novelist's latest rollercoaster ride. Packed with New York slang, 9/11 theories and code monkeys."
- 3. The Illuminatus! Trilogy by Robert Shea and Robert Anton Wilson, £10.99** "A classic Sixties detective novel released in 1998 – mashed up with time travel, violence, and the 'real' reason why there's a pyramid on the dollar bill."