



Edited by **LISA MINOT**

travel

Then he Mumbles: I love you...

INDULGENT ... tasty food at El Pescador



SIPPING PRETTY ... at Gin & Juice Bar in Mumbles



RELAXING ... room at Morgans hotel



LOVEBIRDS ... Brittany and husband Nick



FLAMES from the crackling fire reflect in my gin glass, giving the clear tonic inside a golden glow.

This is the perfect setting for a date with my husband Nick – a cosy seat next to a fireplace for warming our cold hands after a long day of rambling along the coast.

We're in Swansea on the southern edge of Wales – a city that seems to have just as much to offer couples as the capital of love, Paris.

Here at the family-owned Gin & Juice bar in Mumbles Bay (ginandjuice.com/mumbles), there are plenty of cosy nooks to snuggle down in on a blustery Sunday, while admiring views of the bay and castle below.

The aesthetic is funky but it's the menu people come for, with seven, double-sided pages of as many gins you can think of and around 400 drinks to pick from.

This broad selection of tipples is perhaps wasted on my husband and I (both teetotalers), but the staff can easily whip up all sorts of non-alcoholic drinks, so we too can enjoy the huge gin glasses stuffed full of fruit, "fairy floss" or even fire. Outside of

the gin bar, Mumbles Bay is a great spot for walkers. We'd spent the whole afternoon strolling the wind-swept coast, spying Devon across the water on the clear-sky day and checking out the little beaches from the cliffside path.

There are plenty of spots for refuelling along the way too such as The Lighthouse bar and kitchen which has sweeping views of the Mumbles lighthouse and Bracelet Bay below.

The bagels here, priced from £9, are just as good as those views, from classics like smoked salmon and cream cheese to buttermilk-fried chicken with peppers and paprika mayo. If you're not a keen Rambler,

take a gentle wander around the streets of Mumbles Bay which is dotted with tiny galleries and boutiques filled with local souvenirs.

Romance is very much alive at the Lovespoons Gallery (welshlovespoon.com) too. The carved wooden spoons on display were 15th-century gifts given by Welsh men as a declaration of their adoration.

These generous gestures are still kept alive in the gallery today and visitors can get in on the 15th-

century flirting by picking out their own lovespoon for partners.

Sunset walk

The intricately designed souvenirs are handmade, all with secret meanings and promises to your belle such as three balls, a promise of three children, or chain links, a sign of loyalty and faithfulness.

We'd decided to purchase a joint spoon as a souvenir with two little hearts intertwined in sandalwood.

We were staying a ten-minute drive away from Mumbles Bay at Morgans Hotel.

Bang in the centre of Swansea, there's plenty to do here if you're

travelling without a car. Take a sunset walk along the beach to catch the sun's orange rays extending across the sand.

Or venture to Glynn Vivian Art Gallery, brimming with culture and cool artwork created by locals. And for all those His Dark Materials fans, the gallery currently has an impressive collection of props and costumes from the popular TV series filmed in Wales.

Feeling a little peckish? Spanish restaurant El Pescador (elpescador.co.uk) is the place to be for dinner.

With fish a speciality, each meal is melt-in-your mouth delicious, while the music gets everyone in a good mood. Expect indulgent dishes like chorizo sea bass drizzled in a tomato sauce or prawns thermidor smothered in cheese.

Thanks to our waiter Iri who exclaims "calories don't count here" as he delivers each course, we also feast on a sweet and creamy cheese-cake – I can honestly say I've never had better.

Between the sea views, stunning sunsets and delicious grub, lovers are pretty much guaranteed to have a Wales of a time in Swansea.

BRITTANY VONOW

GO: SWANSEA

STAYING THERE: Morgans hotel has room-only doubles from £112.50, based on two people sharing. See morganshotel.co.uk.

OUT & ABOUT: The Glynn Vivian art gallery is open Tuesdays to Sundays from 10am until 5pm and admission is free. See glynnvivian.co.uk.

For more information, head over to visitswanseabay.com.

SWANSEA SO GOOD FOR ROMANCE YOU'LL WANT TO SPOON

TOP VIEWS . . .
Mumbles Point
Lighthouse and,
inset, lovespoon

