

New York with Matt in January

After September 11th, we had considered cancelling our foursomes trip to New York in January with Mala and Matt. As an inexplicable compromise, we decided, in the end, that the men would go without the women (as Sumi put it, "with your life assurance, you are worth more dead than alive!")



And so it was that David and Matt embarked on a mad weekend of excess walking (lost 4 pounds in weight!) and excess shopping.

We also took in a good deal of the sights, including the Norman Rockwell exhibition at the Guggenheim and the Empire State Building. The visit to pay our respects at Ground Zero was a highlight. Why? Well, it was good to see the American spirit undiminished by events; they had already set up a system to charge for admission and street hawkers were selling pictures of the plane impact.

The hotel we stayed in – "the W" – was far too comfortable by far and was right opposite the famous bull & bear bar at the Waldorf Astoria, dating back to prohibition days. Good beers had by all!

Cyprus in May

We hadn't been able to attend Demos' wedding in November 2001 as a family (just David), so we had promised to make an early trip to Cyprus together to meet up and spend some time.



With Demos in charge of a hotel Group with an excellent 5* hotel only yards from his apartment, it seemed rude not to stay at the Amathus.

And it was a lovely hotel for the kids. With two smashing pools and the beach only yards away, we had a great time just lounging around.

We enjoyed a couple of good meals out with Demos and Maria, plus a fun day trip, where we visited the Crusader fort at Kolossi and the ancient Roman Ruins at Kourrion. We ended the day at Pissouri beach. Smashing.

Lauren and James enjoyed the kids club (as you can see from this amusing picture, where an appropriately positioned background palm bush gives a red-indian tinge to James' outfit). Sophia (in charge of the club) took to calling our number one son "James Bond"; something I think he enjoyed rather too much!

It is early days, but it seems already that James is developing a certain knack with the women. Watch out world!

France in July

Come July, we made a trip out to Seillans – a lovely village in Var Provence (previously a favourite of Princesses Diana and Fergie). Saras joined us for the first week and Matt's niece for the second.



We really went for it, with trips to the gorgeous Gorges du Verdon, shopping in St. Tropez, Fragonard for the parfum, the Picasso museum in Cannes and (of course) the obligatory zoo trip (Frejus).

Perhaps most fun, though, were the simple things: David's morning walk up to the village with Lauren to get the bread and ham; lazy days on the local lake (pedalos) and messing about with water pistols in the villa pool.

France is always a great place for a holiday – so full of history and wonderful things to see and do. The format was very successful too

(was great to get away with the family). This was definitely something we will simply have to do again!

Archie's First Birthday Party

Throughout 2002, the occasional notes (enclosing pictures) from Becky kept us up to date on Archie's progress. There were, of course, times of great concern (when you are born too soon at 27 weeks, the early months are always a rollercoaster). However, as time went by (with mum and baby in increasingly good health), the only real issue on everyone's mind was 'when are we finally going to be able to see and hold him?'

Before the party in August, the closest we had come to Archie was five minutes of making silly faces at him through the bay window of Becky's parents' house. So, imagine the excitement when the moment came for Archie's first birthday party at the church hall in Bradford-on-Tone...



The little lad did not let us down! With a gaggle of Vineys peering and poking at him, he still managed to maintain a knowing smile and happy disposition!

And what a party! There was enough food there to feed the five thousand and the doggy bag alone kept us in food for a week afterwards!

We made a long weekend of it, staying at a local guest house (so were able to make the odd trip out with the kids). All in all, a very memorable trip.

The best of the rest

Only one wedding in 2002 (after our record six in 2001): Mulumba and Neelam tied the knot at Blenheim Palace – a very special setting for a very special couple. The theme was an extravagant mix of the Asian and African. I doubt anyone else could have carried it off quite as well.

Lauren's tap show and James' nativity play. Who would have thought such talent could be present in the Viney kids?

Finally getting around to doing up the house after nearly two years in situ: a new kitchen and re-decoration throughout (with David and Sumi even chipping in with some rare DIY!)

Life changing events

- Lauren starts reading and proves to be quite a star at it (getting a year ahead of her reading age within six months).. and six months ahead of her age in maths by December. Everyone begins to claim their genes are at work (from Great-Grandad Victor to Grandads Stephen & Sam). But we all know the provenance, eh?
- Grandad Victor comes down very ill at the Great Wall of China and fears are raised, only for an all-clear for the doctors in November and great sighs of relief all round.

Highs of the year

- Sumi saying "no-one will bother dressing up" for Tom's 40th Birthday 80s theme night (when David was putting on his school uniform) then finding (when we got there) that she was the only one who hadn't bothered to dress up!
- England setting a world record for home wins at Twickenham (and David was there!) A clean sweep of victories against Southern Hemisphere sides to boot!

2001 Predictions: How did we do?

- James starts Collis nursery & Sumi goes part time (2 days a week)
Well, actually James managed to start Collis Nersery and then the Mall Reception Class all in one year! And already gathering a little happy band of mischief doers around himself, by all accounts. Sumi did indeed start part-time with a post-production company in the West End, so overall not a bad prediction!
- England lose to Argentina / Germany / Sweden on penalties.
Oh ye of little faith! England actually stuffed Argentina with Beckham (of all people) scoring from the penalty spot. Ultimately, it was almost disappointing when England lost to Brazil, but all in all not bad (roll on 2006).
- David gives up smoking again and.....?
Nope! Never mind, there is always next year...

Predictions & big events for 2002

- Lauren shows the first signs of hitting teenage – at seven! Yes, posters of pop stars on the wall and running strops with her parents (gee, I can hardly wait!)
- England win the Rugby World Cup, with Johnny Wilkinson amassing a World Record points haul that stands for the next 20 years (I'm never one to sit on the fence).
- James takes up mini-Rugby with his dad and (to everyone's surprise) actually sticks at it and turns out to be rather good (especially with the hand off!)