



My weekend *less* *ordinary*

Been sucked into a 'same old, same old' routine at the weekend? Here's some inspiration from women making the most of their me-time

PHOTOGRAPHS *Andrew Montgomery* WORDS *Liz Frost*



*'I'm a weekend
Bollywood dancer'*

Kate Schofield, 28, is a merchandiser who attends Bollywood dance classes

'Aside from the odd ballet class when I was little, I'd always been terrified of dance lessons. I wanted to try them, but was scared of embarrassing myself. Then, four years ago, my sister gave me a voucher for a month of Bollywood dance lessons. I didn't know whether to hug or hit her!

'For my first class, I wallflowered at the back, desperately trying to follow the rest of the class but failing miserably. By the end, though, I felt electric because I'd tried something new.

'Now, the intricate hand movements and regular hip-swishing has toned muscles I didn't know existed, and my waist has definitely shrunk. Last year at my cousin's wedding, the DJ put on a Bollywood tune and my family persuaded me to get on the dance floor. It was a fantastic feeling - especially when everyone else tried to join in. I still feel a rush when I tell someone what I do on Saturdays; I'm proud it's so unusual.' >

Visit www.danceworks.net



ADRIANNA PAPELL
DRESS, TK MAXX

***'I go clubbing -
with my toddler'***

Sharon Woodrow, 30, a stay-at-home mum, attends Baby Loves Disco with her two year-old son, Noah

'Six months ago, I saw an ad asking, "Does your baby love to dance?" Noah gives Justin Timberlake a run for his money, so I booked tickets. I arrived at a local club for the first afternoon disco with some trepidation, wary of being greeted by a giant Tweenie and the *Bob The Builder* theme tune. Instead, we found a cool young host and retro music.

'Noah squealed as he took in the multicoloured lights and bubble machine. There was also a chill-out area with inflatable chairs, toys strewn everywhere and a healthy organic buffet. Noah shrank behind my legs for the first hour but by 3pm, I couldn't drag him from the dance floor. And it was fun for me, too, as I got to catch up with the other parents over a glass of wine.

'I've been back to every disco since. I love watching Noah make new friends and develop his social skills.' >

www.babylovesdisco.co.uk

'I hang out with celebrities'

Minouche Kaftel, 40, is a weekend film and TV extra

"I'm so fed up of the irregular money I get as a singer," I moaned to a guitarist I was doing a gig with. He knew I'd acted before and came up with the idea for an unusual Saturday job: "Don't they hire people to be extras on film and TV sets?"

I contacted an agency who called me in for an interview then gave me my first job, on *EastEnders*. It felt truly surreal to find myself in Albert Square, lunching with Peggy Mitchell and Dot Cotton in the canteen.

'Being an extra is a rush, and the money - normally £100 a day - is handy. But it's not all glitz. Shoots go on forever, sometimes in

Arctic temperatures, and there are times I have to set my alarm for 6am on a Sunday. Also, it's not as if I can attempt to chat up Ashton Kutcher or befriend Scarlett Johansson, even though I have stood next to them on set. You have to maintain professional decorum, otherwise you won't get hired again.

'Being an extra is definitely not a passport to becoming a Hollywood WAG or BFF, but it's always a buzz. Next, I'm going to be playing a tourist in the new Harry Potter movie. Not many weekends compare with that.' > *Minouche is an extra with* www.guysanddollscasting.com

'I throw outrageous themed parties'

Ingrid Aagesen, 34, a sales and marketing manager, hosts lavish parties with her friends Anna and Louisa

'What would weekends be without parties? Unthinkable. I'm a New Zealander and throwing imaginative parties is a real part of our culture. So when I came to the UK in 2000, and moved in with Louisa and Anna, bringing that tradition here was first on the agenda.

'I bet the best parties you've been to have been themed; guests tend to leave their inhibitions at home when they're dressed as someone else. The thought of throwing a straight snacks 'n' drinks party with everyone wearing jeans makes me shudder.

'Over the last couple of years our parties have gained legendary status. We have dressed up in retro 60s gear and spent New Year's Eve with a Filthy Gorgeous theme - the brief was, "dress to the nines, with naughtiness in mind". Then there was the time we held an intimate champagne evening, serving an elegant meal to ballgown-clad guests dripping

with costume jewellery. Our Food and Drink party was an eye-opener - one guy turned up as the Naked Chef. And when we threw a Loved-up Glamour party, turning our flat into a boudoir for Valentine's Day, we did a letter and chocolate heart drop to warn neighbours about the noise. We've only ever had one complaint.

'Friends ask, "Aren't you scared we'll trash the house?" but we have precautions in place. We put down plywood to safeguard against spilt drinks, and the big, mean-looking guys we know are employed as bouncers in return for bottles of whisky. Guests bring their own drinks and friends are happy to DJ.

'I love the adrenaline rush as it ticks down to the weekend. I don't have to worry about expensive entry fees or elusive taxis. There's always a wobble where I fret, "what if no one turns up?" But it never happens. Every party is a great, glorious escape from reality.' □

Throwing parties with a difference is all in a weekend's work for, from left, Anna, Ingrid and Louisa

