

# the briefing

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london  
new york  
barbados

## Talk of the Town



Britain's most talented chef, Gordon Ramsay (left), has at last found a setting to match his considerable gifts

considerable gifts. The art deco restaurant at Claridge's Hotel, Mayfair, has been given the Cinderella treatment by Thierry Despont, interior designer to Bill Gates and Hubert de Givenchy, among others. Meanwhile Ramsay maintains his original three-star restaurant in Chelsea as well as his spin-off Pétrus (named after the Pomérol wine) in St James's. In July 2001, Pétrus dished up the most expensive restaurant meal ever – £44,000 for a party of six, thanks largely to the volume of Pétrus drunk.

*Gordon Ramsay at Claridge's, Brook Street, W1; tel 020 7499 0099.*

Which brings us to **Linda Gray**, who played Sue Ellen Ewing, alcoholic wife of JR Ewing, in the American soap *Dallas*. She's currently putting burns on seats in the West End playing the

alcoholic temptress Mrs Robinson in *The Graduate*. Much of this production's appeal rests on the on-stage disrobing of Mrs Robinson, which has already afforded theatre-goers a fleeting, dimmed glimpse of a naked Kathleen Turner, Jerry Hall, Amanda Donohoe and Anne Archer. Gray, 60, is so far the oldest incumbent. Coincidentally, Gray contributed to the 1967 film *The*



The Graduate

*Graduate*: her stockinged legs appeared on the movie posters.

*Until 2 February at The Gielgud Theatre, Shaftesbury Avenue, W1; tel 020 7494 5065.*

If you want that perfect pied-à-terre or palace in London but lack the attention span and time to track it down, you could try ringing Alexander Associates Property Search, run by **David Alexander**, a young, dynamic financier who will remove the bored, glazed look with which your present estate agent is probably all too familiar. The company will take exhaustive details of requirements (such as, "I don't want to walk uphill on my way home"), sift properties and email you a shortlist. Hands are held right through to completion, including the arrangement of surveyors, solicitors, mortgages, removals and designers if needed. Offshore? No problem. Not resident in the UK? Easy-peasy. Want to build up a property portfolio? It's a doddle.

*AAPS, 18 Exeter Street, Covent Garden, WC2; tel 020 7420 6904; email enquiries@aag.co.uk.*

Ex-Warburg's banker **Chris Bodker** and partner **Marian Scrutton** have unveiled London's quirkiest hotel-restaurant venture. West Street is surely Europe's most exclusive hotel, having just three rooms. It tops a six-

storey complex adjacent to The Ivy restaurant comprising basement bar, ground-floor restaurant, first-floor 'smart' restaurant and aforementioned micro-hotel.

*West Street, 13-15 West Street, WC2; tel 020 7010 8600.*

**Tessa Kennedy**, who has cornered and titivated a niche in grand English house design, has resurrected the Rivoli Bar at the Ritz Hotel. Gone are the tired Pringle boutiques that marred the Ritz's arcaded frontage, replaced by an updated version of the original art deco Rivoli Bar. There's fiberoptic lighting, a domed gold-leaf ceiling, an Italian-marble bar, golden bamboo flooring and walls veneered in rare camphor wood with inset Lalique panels. Drinks and nibbles are served from noon to 11.30pm, with a brasserie-style menu. If your date proves insufficiently riveting company, there's a Fujitsu plasma television screen to goggle at.

*The Ritz, Piccadilly, W1; tel 020 7493 8181. RR*



West Street



Rivoli Bar