

# DINNER WITH

## Fiona Hamilton

forever.

FIONA HAMILTON owns Fifi & Ally, an award-winning fashion and lifestyle store in Glasgow's Princes Square, with her cousin, Alison Fielding. Their second venture in the city, which will focus on food and drink, opens this week at 80 Wellington Street (0141 204 7904).

### What's the best meal you've ever had?

For me, a good meal is more about the combination of good food and good company than the venue. However, one of my most recent memorable meals was in New York, at Thomas Keller's Per Se. I shared a magnificent five-hour lunch with a great chum and made a new friend of the restaurant's sommelier, who eventually escorted us to our taxi!

### What's the worst meal you've ever had?

It was many years ago, in France. I spotted my parents' favourite wine, Nuits St-Georges, on the menu at the bargain price of 35 francs. In my greed and delight at such a good deal we downed three bottles, only to discover when the bill arrived that the wine actually cost 3,500 francs a bottle – about £350. Being a poor student there was no way I could pay, but the restaurant manager wouldn't let us go until we came up with the money. Thank goodness for my parents' credit card!

### What's in your fridge?

It tends to vary, depending on the latest cookbook I'm into, but the staples are organic chicken, chillies, garlic, full-fat milk, unsalted butter, a failsafe steak pie from my local butcher (Douglas Blackwood, in Kilmacolm) and a selection of nail varnishes, as they're always best kept chilled.

### What's your hangover fix?

Sleep, more sleep, followed by sleep, and when finally awake, one of my partner Dougie's magnificent bacon butties.

### What's the most useful utensil in your kitchen?

My blender, referred to in the family as my Piff Paff Poof. My other favourite utensil is my old wooden lemon squeezer, which seems to have been around

### Do you have a guilty pleasure?

Breakfast in bed surrounded by the Sunday papers.

### What's your classic stand-by recipe?

Nigel Slater's 30-minute roast chicken – a great recipe which is very versatile and always delivers exactly what it promises.

### Who would you invite to your fantasy dinner party?

AA Gill, as I love the way he writes (and he's not too shabby); Antonio Carlos Jobim, one of the world's best Latin musicians; Robert Burns, another man of words, a great life observer and, of course, a true romantic; Alan Titchmarsh (I won't even start to explain this one!); and last but not least David Gandy, the model who features in Dolce & Gabbana's current Light Blue campaign. It is my fantasy dinner, after all...

### Which food says home to you?

Like many people, my comfort food relates to my childhood memories, so it would have to be mince and tatties or my mother's homemade ham-and-lentil soup.

### Have you ever been on a diet?

Yes – which woman hasn't? However, I tend to adopt the old favourite: see food and eat it.

