

The Lady

22 MARCH 2011 £2

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY
URSULA ADDRESS**
by Barry Norman

JAMMY BOY
New prince
of preserves

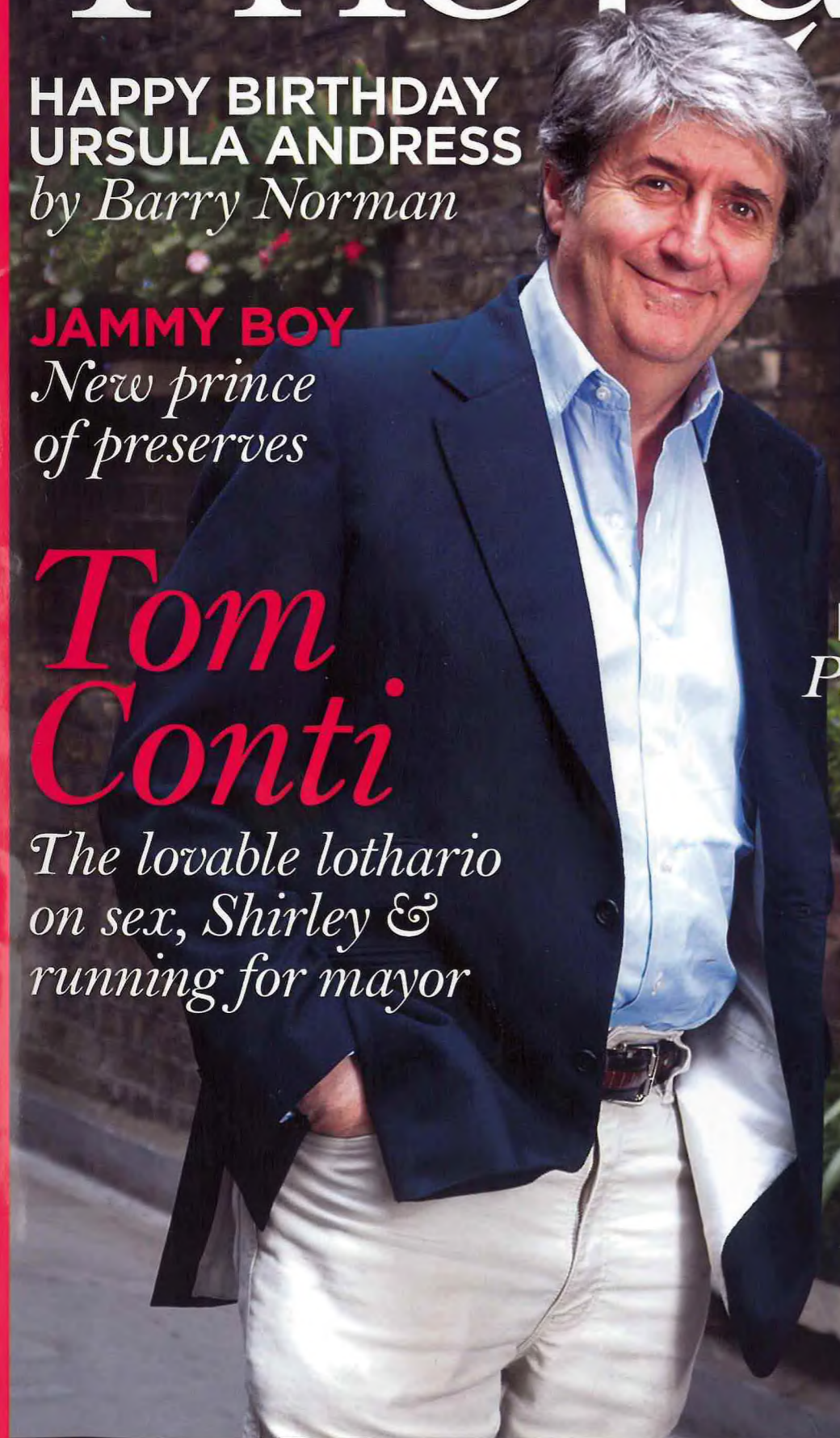
**Tom
Conti**

The lovable lothario
on sex, Shirley &
running for mayor

S.O.S
SAVE OUR
SQUIRRELS

RUFF GUIDE
Pets on holiday

Whatever
happened to
**BLAIR'S
BABES?**



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GARDENING LETTERS



MARTINE DAVIS,
owner of the
Balcombe Street
Window Box
Company in
London, answers
your questions.

Send your questions for our
panel of gardening experts to:
Garden Questions, *The Lady*,
39-40 Bedford Street,
London WC2E 9ER or
email letters@lady.co.uk

WINDOW DRESSING

I have just bought my first house and, sadly, it doesn't have a garden. I'd like to add some window boxes – I am on a budget – but I'm not sure how to go about attaching them to the house. Please can you give me advice and planting suggestions?

Max Smith, by email

MD It might not be necessary to attach your window boxes to the house. If the ledges are wide enough, the boxes should be able to sit there quite safely – the weight of the planted container is usually adequate.

However, if your window ledges are not wide enough, you will need to attach 'L'-shaped brackets – the box sits on one half of the 'L' and the other half fits in front of it, preventing the box from toppling over. You will need to drill the brackets into the window ledge, which you should be able to do yourself.

If you are on a limited budget, it would probably be best to buy plastic window boxes, as the container is not the main feature of your display. Choose plants that are in season, as they tend to be less expensive than evergreens. For the most dramatic display, I would



Delicate white osteospermum offset purple petunias

always try to limit the scheme to just one or two colours. When you come to the planting, position the taller flowers at the back of the box to give height, and place the shorter or trailing varieties at the front.

your hand at some slightly more demanding varieties, such as peppers. You need to bear in mind that when growing vegetables, many will prefer soil 20-30cm deep.

The number one choice for containers is the tomato

'In a window box place tall plants at the back and trailing ones in front'

VEG ON A LEDGE

I'd like to grow vegetables this summer in my window boxes. Is this possible and what would you suggest?

Jane Dow, Somerset

MD A wide range of vegetables can be grown successfully in window boxes and pots. Courgettes and certain salad vegetables are fairly easy to grow in containers. Or you could try

and there are special varieties available. If your window faces south, you could also grow peppers and aubergines alongside your tomatoes, but they both need plenty of sun. For a less sunny aspect, it might be better to grow cucumbers, loose-head lettuces and radishes. You will need to water and feed them regularly – slow-release fertilisers are good for this.

MARTINE DAVIS has been running her Balcombe Street Window Box Company for six years, originally inspired by her own empty window ledge. She specialises in window boxes, entrance pots, hanging baskets and planters for balconies, terraces and patios. For individually designed, ready-filled containers delivered to the door, and on-site planting, call 020-7586 2614, or visit www.window-box.co.uk

Coco's corner

Dear Readers,

I went to stay with my friend Ginkgo at the weekend as Mr Dawnay and the editor were in Wales, at a three-day conference. It was for an outfit called Editorial Intelligence and the conference was all about individuality in a mass age. At first I thought she said 'massage' instead of 'mass age' but apparently not. It was all about how to deepen community values and reach new audiences – ie, it was a one-stop talking shop.

But she loved it. She loved it so much that she appeared to forget all about me until Sunday night, when she was returning on a coach on the M6 and M1 and had seven hours to recall that she had a dog. So she sent Fiona a text from where the coaches were disgorging the chatterati, somewhere in north London, finally asking how I was and whether they were in so she could pick me up in Bayswater en route to W11.

I, of course, had been on hunger strike all weekend. She mustn't think that she can just take off and leave me for days on end. But instead of texting back that I was neither eating nor drinking, which was almost true, Fiona said, 'Hunger finally averted with special dripping additive to lunch.'

So when she swung by in a cab, not much fuss was made, and when Fiona asked her what her contribution was, she admitted it was a five-minute presentation on media values at 8.20 on Sunday morning – though she did vouchsafe that she was alongside the head of Channel Four among others. Mr Dawnay was heard muttering that she knows precious little about 'media values', but when it comes to 'me-dia values' and herself she is an acknowledged expert. Till next week

COCO
Office Dog

