

Bitter news for iconic store...



By **Steph Spyro**

LUXURY department store Fortnum & Mason has served up a choccy horror show with testers blasting its Piccadilly Christmas Advent calendar for its “chemical taste”.

The £22 item, which looks like the grocer’s iconic central London flagship store, was “the worst” sampled by consumer group Which?

The Hotel Chocolat Grand Advent Calendar, for £68, got the editor’s top choice for the variety and class of its chocolate. More than half of the

Fortnum & Mason’s Advent calendar fails the taste test

panel would consider buying it for their partner and would love to have it bought for themselves.

The more affordable £18 Butler’s Advent Calendar was rated highly for its stylish looks and the quality of the confectionary. The £25 Love

Cocoa by James Cadbury Luxury Chocolate Truffle Charity Advent Calendar got an editor’s choice award with 2021-themed decorations on each window of the calendar, featuring Captain Tom Moore, Joe Wicks and James Bond.

Of the five gin advent calendars Which? tested, the Master of Malt’s Drinks by the Dram Premium Gin Advent Calendar (£84.95) was top.

It had high praise for its packaging and variety – with gins from around the world and small niche distilleries. At £35 cheaper, researchers praised the That Boutique-y Gin Company Advent Calendar (£49.95) for its selection of UK bespoke distilleries and mix of sweet and dry gins.

In the children’s section the Playmobil Pirate Island Advent Calendar (£18.29), the Barbie Dreamtopia Advent Calendar (£19.99) and Lego City Advent Calendar (£19.99) took home the joint-top prize.

Ele Clark, Which? retail editor, said: “With warnings there could be shortages this Christmas, many are shopping for festive essentials early.

“It pays to do your homework when looking for an advent calendar, as the difference in quality and value between the best and worst examples in our tests was huge.”

Fortnum & Mason declined to comment about its calendar.

THE WHICH? WINNERS

EDITORS’ CHOICE: CHOCOLATE ADVENT CALENDARS:

The Hotel Chocolat Grand Advent Calendar (£68)

The Love Cocoa by James Cadbury Luxury Chocolate Truffle Charity Advent Calendar (£25)

Butler’s Advent Calendar (£18)

EDITORS’ CHOICE: GIN ADVENT CALENDARS

Master of Malt’s Dram Premium Gin Advent Calendar (2021 edition) (£84.95)

EDITORS’ CHOICE: CHILDREN’S ADVENT CALENDARS

Playmobil Pirate Island Advent Calendar (£18.29)

Barbie Dreamtopia Advent Calendar (£19.99)

Lego City Advent Calendar (£19.99)

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Picture: SOLENT



IS THIS ON CAMEROAR?

THIS LION cub practices his roar on a camera, after realising it isn’t a snack. The device in Kenya’s Maasai Mara National Reserve was mistaken for food by the playful cub. Photographer Priyanshi Nahata, 34, said the littl’un was “hungry, sleepy and irritable”.