

SPRING 2021

SHOW PONY
The Goring's
latest resident

**SEEDS OF
CHANGE**
The blossoming
of the RHS

PLUSH PUBS
Sally Abe, chef at
The Blue Boar

Victoria

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Spring

COVER: Lady Chapel ceiling,
Westminster Abbey. Image
courtesy of Dean and Chapter of
Westminster

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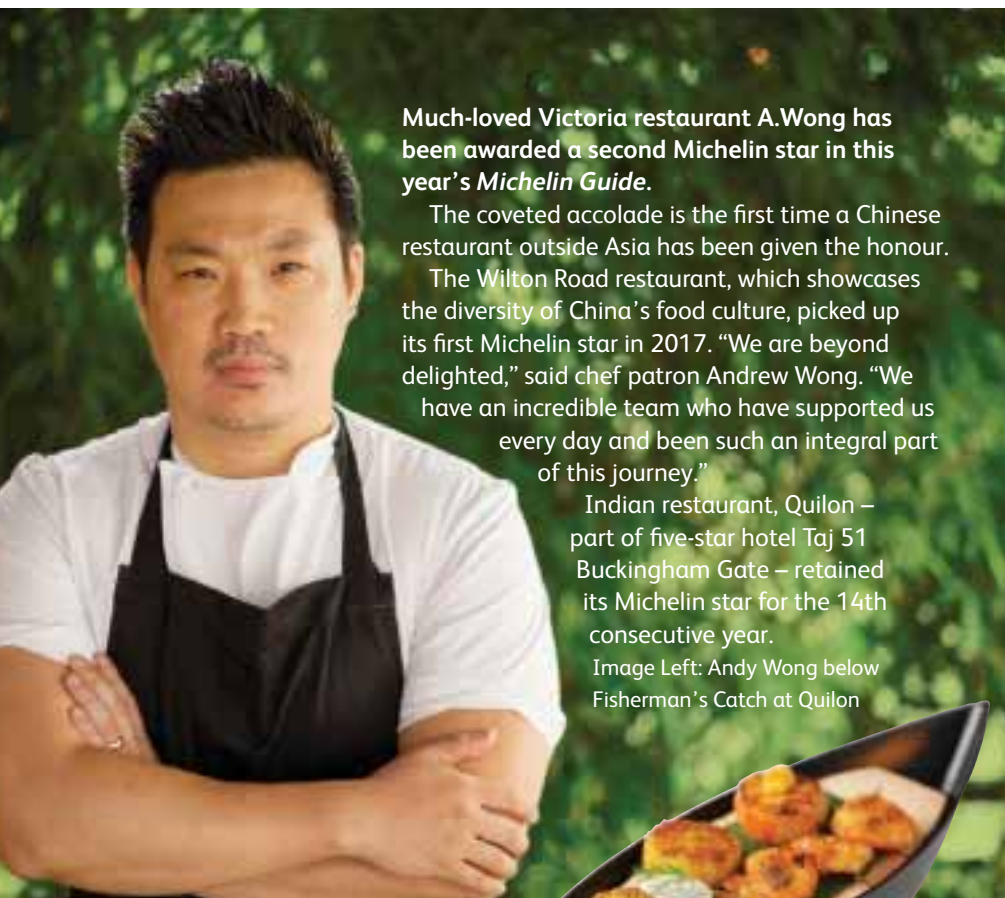
Robots serving champagne and a Shetland pony are the latest attractions to the area, which now also boasts the first two-Michelin starred Chinese restaurant outside Asia



Robots have invaded Victoria but, mercifully, they have come to serve champagne!

The futuristic friends made a brief debut at M Victoria in Victoria Street and M Threadneedle Street in early December, before tighter Covid-19 restrictions came into force.

They are far from a fleeting appearance though; 'Marion' will make a welcome return once M reopens, celebrating the occasion by serving glasses of Veuve.



Much-loved Victoria restaurant A.Wong has been awarded a second Michelin star in this year's *Michelin Guide*.

The coveted accolade is the first time a Chinese restaurant outside Asia has been given the honour.

The Wilton Road restaurant, which showcases the diversity of China's food culture, picked up its first Michelin star in 2017. "We are beyond delighted," said chef patron Andrew Wong. "We have an incredible team who have supported us every day and been such an integral part of this journey."

Indian restaurant, Quilon – part of five-star hotel Taj 51 Buckingham Gate – retained its Michelin star for the 14th consecutive year.

Image Left: Andy Wong below Fisherman's Catch at Quilon



An app developed by the Victoria and Victoria Westminster BIDs with YUDU Sentinel has been awarded 'CIR Business Continuity Award for Best Contribution to Continuity and Resilience.'

The accolade by trade magazine, *CIR* (Continuity Insurance & Risk) recognises the BIDs' Victoria Emergency Notification System (VENS), a platform used to keep Victoria and Westminster's thousands of visitors, commuters and workers informed in the event of a major incident. For more information or to sign up your business to receive security alerts on the VENS, email safeandsecure@victoriabid.co.uk



▶ **Great Scotland Yard Hotel will launch No.1 The Townhouse, a standalone private residence, this spring.**

The Grade II-listed Westminster address will include a 10-seater dining room, two en suite bedrooms with roll-top copper bathrooms and amenities from perfumery, Floris.

A short access corridor will provide access to the five-star hotel facilities, with the townhouse set to launch on April 19.

For reservations, email info@greatscotlandyard.com



▼ **A cookbook featuring lockdown recipes from 54 of the country's much-loved chefs will be released this month in aid of charity, Hospitality Action.**

Proceeds from *Chefs at Home*, featuring the likes of Andrew Wong and Jason Atherton, will go towards a fund launched by the charity to assist those most in need across the sector. *The book will be released on March 18, the one-year anniversary of the first lockdown, priced £26.*



▲ **A furry friend is set to stirrup one of the area's most prestigious hotels.**

Hot-to-trot Shetland pony, Teddy, will take up residency in the garden of The Goring this summer.

He brings with him a colt following with an Instagram faithful of 156,000, interests that include 'modelling' and a reputation for being something of an international heartbreaker.

[@teddytheshetland](https://www.instagram.com/teddytheshetland)

Are you eligible to receive free broadband to help with home schooling?

Westminster City Council is encouraging people to get in touch as they work with Community Fibre and Hyperoptic to provide free broadband to residents having difficulty accessing school work at home.

To be eligible you must have school aged children learning from home, don't have access to reliable broadband at home (slower than 50Mbps) and live in a Community Fibre connected building. Visit [Westminster.gov.uk](https://www.westminster.gov.uk)



IMMERSIVE ART AT TATE

Tate Britain's 300 feet-long neo-classical Duveen Galleries, in the heart of the iconic building, will once again be transformed into a large-scale immersive artwork.

This year's commissioned artist is Heather Phillipson, who primarily explores digital mediums and installation. Her intriguing recent commission for Trafalgar Square's Fourth Plinth features a live feed of viewers from a drone camera. Until October 10.

Millbank

Spring events

There are plenty of outdoor activities to look forward to as well as getting creative at home

SUNDAYS IN THE SQUARE



Eccleston Yards' outdoor Sunday market is getting up and running again, with lots of outdoor events planned, including yoga, al fresco dining and more. Restarting on April 18 from 11am to 5pm every Sunday, visitors should follow Grosvenor's social channels for updates, or for current info check mayfairandbelgravia.com/belgravia

VIRTUAL CLASSES

The South Westminster BIDs' virtual event series is continuing with classes to help people maintain their mental and physical health and creativity from the comfort of their own home.

March 11 sees Frame host a barre class; True and Naive is holding a hand-cut Easter cards masterclasses on March 23; and creative studio MasterPeace will hold its Paint Mindfully at Home session on March 26.



Zena El Farra, founder of MasterPeace

A different perspective

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Abbey secrets

From a dazzling window by David Hockney to a sombre memorial for Nelson Mandela, Scott Craddock, head of visitor experience, picks out his defining images of Westminster Abbey

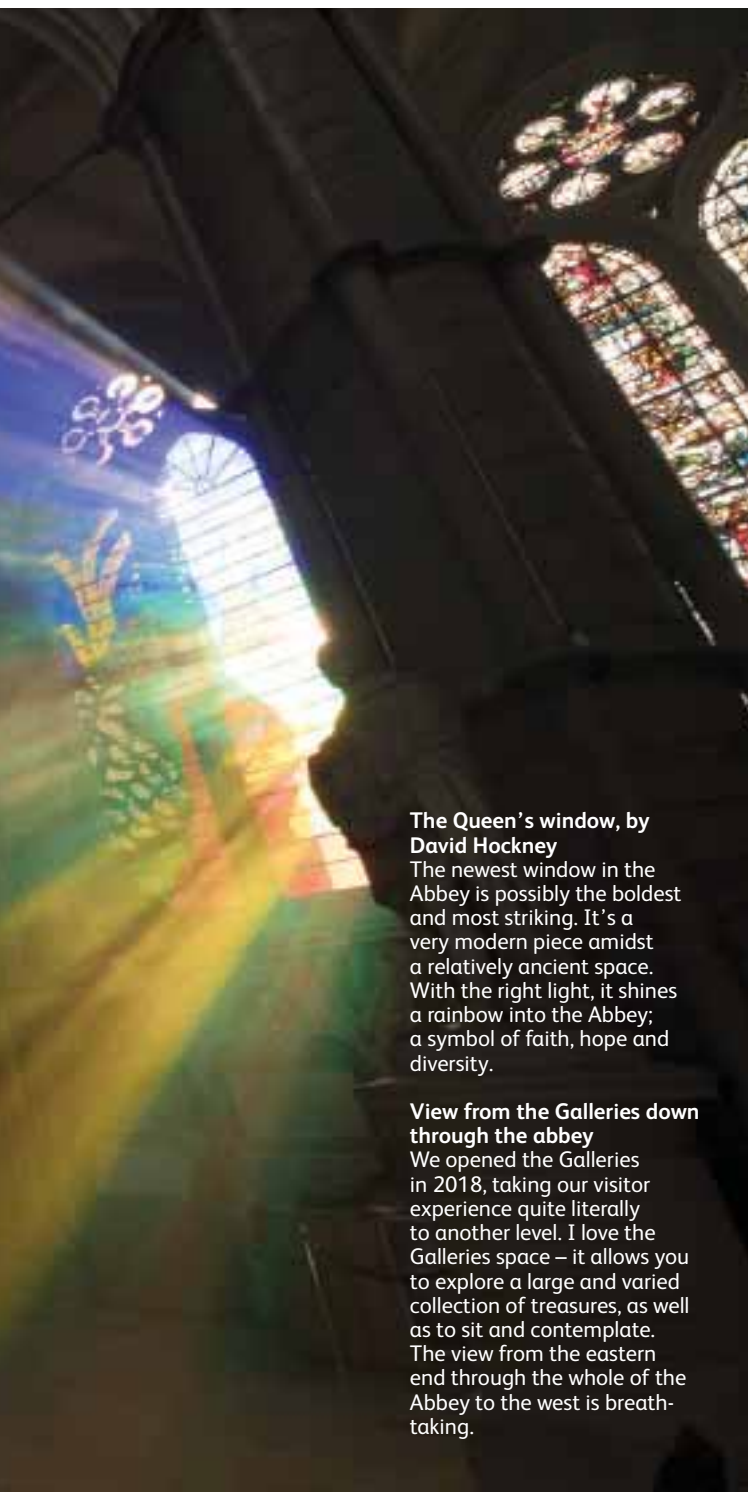


Nelson Mandela

The memorial service for Nelson Mandela at the Abbey in 2014 was my first service here. Having lived in Cape Town for

some time, I found it especially poignant, stirred by the sound of the Soweto Gospel Choir and the moving address by Archbishop Desmond Tutu. His memorial stone, laid in the nave in 2018, is a permanent reminder of the change that Mandela helped bring.





The Queen's window, by David Hockney

The newest window in the Abbey is possibly the boldest and most striking. It's a very modern piece amidst a relatively ancient space. With the right light, it shines a rainbow into the Abbey; a symbol of faith, hope and diversity.

View from the Galleries down through the abbey

We opened the Galleries in 2018, taking our visitor experience quite literally to another level. I love the Galleries space – it allows you to explore a large and varied collection of treasures, as well as to sit and contemplate. The view from the eastern end through the whole of the Abbey to the west is breathtaking.



Britain's oldest door

It's fascinating to have a door that dates back to the reign of Edward the Confessor, the monarch responsible for the first Abbey, built in 1065. The door has survived subsequent rebuilds all around it and the wood itself is even older! It is so simple but a big talking point for everyone who sees it.

A grave in the cloisters to a plumber, Philip Clark

Philip Clark's grave is a fitting reminder of all those who have worked at the Abbey, celebrating lives of people who made an important contribution to the work of the Abbey. There is a strong sense of community here and seeing memorials to former staff members makes me think of the work they undertook and the challenges they faced.



Lady Chapel ceiling

Stunning! The chapel is crammed full of incredible imagery and architecture. The words of a former dean sum it up nicely – 'perpendicular gothic at its most exuberant'.

Grave of the Unknown Warrior

There is something incredibly moving about an unknown member of our armed forces buried amidst an Abbey full of monarchs and famous names. The only grave that is never walked on and one that represents those who were lost in conflicts, our loved ones who have no grave of their own.



Life's a bind



Bookbinding is having its moment in the sun. Whether you are a beginner or looking to a full City & Guilds apprenticeship, Shepherd's is the place to learn the craft

BY ALEX BRIAND

An unexpected side of the world grinding to a halt has been rediscovering the simple joy of craft. Time at home for many has meant trying a new skill, or getting around to that project they always wanted to do. It's a part of the reason that Shepherd's Bookbinders, a local mecca to an impossibly intricate heritage industry, is thriving.

At its bookbinding atelier on Rochester Row, Shepherd's binds and restores volumes of massive historical (and emotional) import. Projects have ranged from the restoration of Medieval incunabula to a handmade box to house the first ever Beatles' contract (signed by two Beatles and two Beatle parents, due to their age). William Blake's own proof copy

Strachan. "But it's worth something to them. We'll embrace anything."

As well as the bookbinder on Rochester Row, Shepherd's also sells supplies from its Gillingham Street shop, which has sadly remained shut for much of the past year. But, says Strachan, "mail-order has gone stratospheric." Clients can choose from 700 shelves containing 3,000 different kinds of paper, as well as bookbinding materials, handmade stationery, notebooks and boxes. The shop attracts everyone from fine artists to hobbyists, and design students to office workers. It produces a handmade diary every year, with designs and layouts all created in-house, covered in robust Japanese chiyogami paper that'll withstand the year's use.



of his poems – with handwritten corrections – and a collection of Darwin's personal books have also passed through its doors.

More personal undertakings are often done as gifts – a leather-bound collection of meaningful letters or emails, for example, or the embossing of a family Bible. "People come in and say, 'It's not worth anything, but...'," says bindery manager Ali

"People love physical things, more and more these days," says Strachan. "They appreciate that when something's handmade, it takes more time and it costs more than something you buy off the shelf. But it's completely unique."

The shop and workshop don't have any one kind of customer or job. "We never know what to expect. I couldn't really say that we have one core business at all. It's pretty eclectic, but we never lower our standards."

Student work, for example, can be very labour-intensive but has to remain at a lower price point. "They often have very, very complex requirements but don't want to spend much money, as you can understand. But we always say yes."

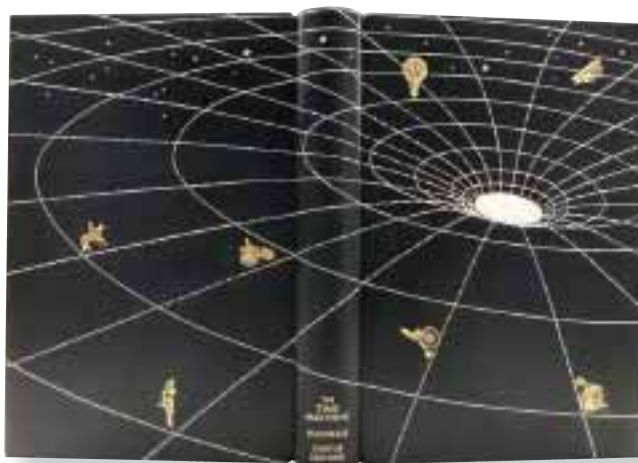
Rob Shepherd opened his shop on Rochester Row in 1988 and, for a while, it was a specialised atelier. In 1998, it acquired luxury house Asprey's

in-house bookbinder, Sangorski and Sutcliffe, as well as specialist Zaehnsdorf's – founded in 1901 and 1842 respectively. (Sangorski and Sutcliffe's heritage includes jewelled bindings, the most famous of which – with more than 1,000 jewels – went down with the Titanic).

The team almost tripled in size, and much of the work moved to premises just around the corner from where the Tate Modern would soon appear. In 2003, it also took on paper retailer Falkiner Fine Papers.

Asprey continued to use Shepherd's for a time – Strachan particularly recalls an exquisite set of gilt, hand-tooled miniature bindings – but when its book department shut, Shepherd's left its South Bank workshop in 2008.

These days, the outfit comprises the Rochester



Row city atelier, the Gillingham Street shop, and a peaceful workshop set in a thatched barn in Wiltshire, where spines are sewn, and historic tomes are painstakingly restored. "We don't have machines apart from a guillotine and a leather-splitting machine, the same as they did in the 18th century," says Strachan.

Shepherd's runs workshops both in London and at the Wiltshire barn, which have seen a swell in popularity in recent years – from beginners' bookbinding, paper marbling or box-making all the way to a full City & Guilds apprenticeship.

"Good things take time, and we're passionate about what we do. It's such a nice place to work because we all are very interested in the quality of what we're doing. That's a very lucky place to be."

Bookbinding.co.uk

The skills

Bookbinding is traditionally split into divisions, with 36 distinct operations carried out on a finely-bound book. Each one is its own skill, and a full apprenticeship takes five years. Multiple craftspeople work on any one project.

SEWING

Pages are gathered, folded, collated and sewn together.

FORWARDING

The forwarders bring the book forward: cutting the materials, attaching the end papers and rounding the spines.

FINISHING

This includes leather onlays, gold finishing and gold tooling in 24-carat leaf – a speciality of Shepherd's. It is very skilled work – and extremely high stakes. "If you're doing the finishing, lettering and decoration on a leather-bound book, and you do it badly, then the whole thing's ruined and you have to start again," says Strachan.

RESTORATION

To bring an antique book back to its original glory, its original materials are kept as much as possible, but new covers are crafted if they can't be saved. Pages may be repaired, washed and restored with Japanese tissue.

PAPER CONSERVATION

Cleaning and repairing flat works of art, including watercolours, sketches and book plates.



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To receive your free Victoria Privilege Card, or to provide promotional offers through your business, visit
www.victoriaprivilegeccard.co.uk

New Look

This sweater, £15.99, and jogger, £15.99, combo will see you through the change of the season.

VICTORIA PLACE SHOPPING CENTRE

Keep fit, look fitter



Barbour

This Barbour International Veith Quilt coat, £239, is a luxurious cocoa colour, giving off sporty yet feminine vibes.

**HOUSE OF FRASER,
101 VICTORIA STREET**

Put a spring in your step with these stylish and sporty pieces – new for this season

BY SOPHIA CHARALAMBOUS

Vionic

Maya, £80, in French Rose, not only pull off the athleisure look, they also have an EVA cushioned insole for extra comfort

**JONES BOOTMAKER,
84 VICTORIA STREET**



Run & Become

The Polar Vantage V Pro Multisport Watch, £479, with running GPS and heart rate monitor is as sleek as it is efficient.

4A ECCLESTON STREET



Zara

The combat trouser, £19.99, is bang on-trend, and so is pink, so these pants hit both briefs in one.

82 VICTORIA STREET



M&S

The Rubberised Rolltop Backpack, £45, is waterproof so makes for a useful work bag as well as for outdoor excursions.

726-732 VICTORIA STREET

Burton Menswear

The Black Cut and Sew panel top £18, has the sporty zip cycle neck, but with a trendy country houndstooth strip across the chest.

VICTORIA PLACE SHOPPING CENTRE, 115 BUCKINGHAM PALACE ROAD



BOSS

If there is a perfect example of blending sporty with smart it's this blazer, £419, T-shirt, £119, and trouser £170 combo.

78 VICTORIA STREET



Lacoste

This Graduate trainer, £75, is a classic silhouette from the brand, and a seamless blending of sportswear and catwalk fashion.

HOUSE OF FRASER 101 VICTORIA STREET

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Ruth Duston OBE OC, chief executive of the Victoria and Victoria Westminster BIDs, on the importance of being nimble and how our capital can be even stronger

The past year has tested us all. Notwithstanding the appalling human tragedy of the Covid-19 pandemic, the last 12 months have forced us to rethink how we work and how we interact with each other – indeed, how we live our lives. For many months last year, it seemed impossible to see an end and we were in a perpetual state of crisis management. Certainly for the BID, we ceased our ‘business as usual’ activities and created a series of bespoke projects and programmes to respond to where the need was in our community. Funds that would have been invested in physical events and programmes were diverted to create a virtual events series for South Westminster, working with our sister BID in Victoria Westminster and neighbouring BID at Northbank. This series proved to be incredibly popular and has provided support, advice and skill development to over 3,000 attendees. Our security team also added an overnight patrol to assist businesses with vacant units during national restrictions and provide local law enforcement with additional support on the ground.

It’s been hard but rewarding work and, I think, demonstrates what a BID can do best: being nimble and able to respond to changing needs, tailoring activity that delivers the most results.

This approach will stand us in good stead now as we look ahead to the gradual easing of restrictions with genuine confidence, thanks to the success of the vaccine roll-out.

While we cannot expect the recovery to be easy, we must be ready to reinvigorate our city with energy and optimism. There are significant opportunities before us. A unique opportunity to reframe our relationship with the city around us and retain some of the unintended positive impacts of the last year. Mental health and wellbeing, for example, at one time peripheral issues in the workplace, will undoubtedly now be front and centre. Also, taking a more considered view about

London will rise again



the role of the office, and how the workplace needs to inspire and bring colleagues together, presents opportunities to create office spaces with productivity designed in rather than something we simply hope to achieve.

We must not squander these opportunities. London needs to be on top of its game in the coming years, competing not only with other global cities, but spearheading the UK's economic resurgence too where the ripples will be felt far beyond the M25.

The role of the private sector is going to be vital and it's essential that businesses pull together to achieve the biggest impact. Our role at Victoria BID, defining shared goals and opportunities and then galvanising local businesses and wider partners, has never been more essential. This country has shown great resilience in handling the pandemic, with different sectors working together and overcoming obstacles – this spirit of collaboration must continue during our recovery.

I think right now, as we stand on the brink of this nation's next big challenge, we must be resolute in how we approach the task. We are not complacent about the scale of the challenge, or that there won't be difficult days ahead, but we must look to the future with confidence and ambition. Let's work together to create a shared vision of the sort of city we all want to see – seizing the opportunities to do things better. To work harder, play harder and embrace our capital in new and more rewarding ways.

We may not go back to coming into Zone 1 to work five days a week, but let's make the days we are here matter more. If we place this sentiment at the heart of our recovery approach, we will make good decisions. We will make our environment cleaner and more attractive, we will design inspirational and innovative workspaces, we will create irreplaceable experiences in our retail and hospitality, and, importantly, we will remember the compassion and care we



“Let's work together to create a shared vision of the sort of city we all want to see – seizing the opportunities to do things better”

have demonstrated as a nation and seek ways to incorporate this more into our day-to-day lives. We will achieve all of these things by each playing our part, sharing new ideas and being bold in how we deliver them.

I see this recovery as heralding a new era of partnership – not only between the public and private sectors, but with local communities, other cities here in the UK and around the world, and businesses collaborating more than ever. The Victoria BID has been your local champion for more than 10 years, listening to you, advocating for you and proudly being part of the renaissance of the area over the last decade. We're ready for the next challenge – are you?





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Kids for Kids is real sustainable development in action. We provide goats to families in Darfur, living in unimaginable hardship, who pass on their kids to other families.

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Oliver Bonas

The Turtle Trinket Pot is a perfect dressing table addition to store any bits and bobs that don't yet have a home.

Unit 49, Victoria
Station, Victoria
Street, £16.50

MUM'S THE WORD

This year – more than ever – is a time to appreciate our mums. Here are a few small treats that will make them smile

BY SOPHIA CHARALAMBOUS



Hotel Chocolat

The Mother's Day Pocket Selection of the most popular chocolates for the special woman or women in your life will always go down a treat.

133 Victoria Street, £8

Four Pillars

One for the gin collectors, the Bloody Shiraz has become something of a global phenomenon. A blend of rare dry gin with Victorian shiraz grapes grown in Australia's Yarra Valley. M&S 726-732 Victoria Street, £35



Vicki Sarge

The Preen by Thornton Bregazzi x VICKISARGE necklace features faux pearl and beads, with the centrepiece being an eye-catching piece of smashed china. 38 Elizabeth Street, £495



Zarko

A complete olfactory revelation, Cloud Collection No.1 EDP is the world's first perfume that reacts to its environment, the weather and personal aura of its wearer. The Perfume Shop, Victoria Place Shopping Centre, £185 for 100ml



Five Forget Mother's Day

This witty book, by Bruno Vincent, is part of the Enid Blyton for grown-ups series – they're about to discover being an adult is even more complicated than their childhood adventures. Waterstones, 88 Victoria Street, £7.99



Lush

This Deep Sleep set, containing three soothing bath bombs will relax mum in no time. Victoria Place Shopping Centre, £16



Pimlico Flowers

Let Susie sort out your mum's flowers this year; the spring bouquet with season florals is ideal. 72 Eccleston Square, £40



Next

For the mum who has everything except the ability to get off her phone, there's the Novelty Bathroom Wordsearch Wall Art. Unit 1, Victoria Plaza, 111 Buckingham Palace Road, £12



Omorovicza

The new and potent Midnight Renewal serum uses an innovative form of retinol to reduce fine lines and wrinkles, stimulate collagen and resurface skin.

Space NK, 4 Cardinal Place, £140



Royal Collection

The Confectionery Hamper contains everything you would need for your loved one to indulge this Mother's Day, including sweets, chocolates, fudge, marzipan fruits and toffees.

7 Buckingham Palace Road, £99





Occupational therapy

Matthew Flood, head of occupier markets at Landsec – responsible for Victoria’s Nova development – on how it plans to revitalise the area in the wake of the pandemic

BY REYHAAN DAY

What challenges has Landsec faced during the pandemic?

It has been a huge challenge for all businesses. Firstly, we’ve been tackling how we look after our people and buildings in the short term; and then also trying to understand how it might shift longer-term behaviours and how people use spaces.

While the pandemic has been challenging, we’re hoping to emerge from it in a really positive way. We’re optimistic about the opportunities it will present once we’re through the lockdown phase. Hopefully, we can regain some traction.

How does Landsec plan to generate footfall in the area post-lockdown?

Victoria is a huge passion and focus of our

business. We relocated there ourselves, so we’re living and breathing our own schemes.

Our absolute priority is making sure that all our buildings and spaces are safe and that people feel confident using them. That means signage, cleaning regimes and guidance. We manage all our own spaces, so our operations team is immersed in making sure we’re delivering that. It’s also about helping businesses with their own spaces too – sharing our expertise to help them bring their workers and staff back into the office buildings safely.

We’re thinking about how we start to drive footfall and get people to engage and become excited about these urban environments again – how we can work with our retailers and brand partners at ground floor to make sure that there are exciting

things for visitors to experience. We've got a roof garden that forms part of the Cardinal Place estate; we're looking at creating a space there which is safe and where we can roll out a programme of events from May. That could include speakers, health and wellbeing initiatives like yoga and meditation, or it could be where business organisations can host a private event in a largely outdoor space.

Trends for health and wellbeing have really come to the forefront of people's thinking – what the role of the office and the retail spaces they occupy is, and how they can have a positive effect on your health by being inspirational, healthy spaces.

How have spaces like Nova changed the landscape of Victoria?

Nova is one I'm particularly passionate about, having been involved from the beginning. We've seen it become a reality,

and a new focal point of Victoria.

The area has seen a lot of development and it has changed a lot – but Nova really gave it that critical mass of both public realm and outdoor spaces where people can congregate. The choice of restaurants, cafés and leisure, where people can come and decide what they want to do, has been important. It was about trying to address all those different kinds of social events that people have throughout their day – during the week and on the weekend as well.

We're delighted with Nova and the impact it has had. It has genuinely transformed people's perceptions of the area. It's become a much more vibrant and permeable place, in terms of how you can move between the buildings and around the spaces, engaging with the artwork, and the choice and calibre of its food and beverage offering.

We remain wedded to Victoria and look

“We're thinking about how we start to drive footfall and get people to engage and become excited about these urban environments again”

forward to adding to our estate in due course, making sure that we deliver spaces that attract great businesses to Victoria, but also offer something to the broader residential community with our retail and amenity spaces.

Have you been able to work together with the BID to come through this challenging year?

The Victoria BID, as well as lots of other organisations, have done a fantastic job in being the flag-bearers for the district. They've done a huge amount of fantastic work for the community and making sure all the stakeholders come together in a collaborative way, which was crucial.

It was important when we were looking to generate Victoria and shape what it could be that we brought everybody on that journey, and the BID were great partners in helping us do that. Now, as we emerge from this pandemic, it's just as vital, to make these spaces animated again, populated again and engaging people. It's a collective effort – no-one can do it on their own.

Matthew Flood



Jiva Spa

Europe's first Jiva Spa at the Taj, has a range of special fusion therapies – combining Indian wellness principles with luxury British innovation. With such an array to choose from – there are body rituals, facials, ayurveda – it's hard to know where to start. However, it's probably true that you and your partner will be in need of some down time right now. Soma is the couples-only therapy that involves an Indian aromatherapy massage, a rose petal bath and a bottle of sparkling wine.

51 Buckingham Gate, 120 mins for £300



Christchurch Gardens

The 13th century Christchurch Gardens, at the junction of Victoria Street and Broadway, has been given a new lease of life by the Victoria BID and Westminster City Council. A much-needed space in the heart of Victoria, residents and workers alike can enjoy the newly-regenerated seating areas for lunch or after-work meet-ups, while nature enthusiasts will be able to admire the new bird and bat boxes, planting palette as well as a jasmine climber wall. There's even a new drinking fountain to refill your water bottles.

Bubblicious

Whether in your bubble or with friends when restrictions allow, here are six experiences to enjoy in Victoria and Westminster this spring

BY SOPHIA CHARALAMBOUS

Studio Pottery

While it's probably not suitable to recreate the pottery scene from *Ghost* in your first group session at Studio Pottery, there are always one-to-one tuition classes with your partner. The group classes will teach you how to wedge (prepare the clay), centre (secure the clay) and throw the clay while pulling up into a cylinder – incredibly therapeutic. The pots are glazed and sent to the kiln in the rear of the studio, which completes the satisfying process.

29 Eccleston Place, beginners start at £130





Flight Club

Reinventing darts for the 21st Century, Flight Club has developed fast multiplayer games for groups of friends to compete against each other. Whether you're a novice or a pro, it really doesn't matter as the game is not meant to be played like the World Championships. The boards are spaced out around a large venue room and bespoke cocktails and sharing boards are served to you at your booth while you play.

6 Sir Simon Milton Square, £40/hour peak or £20/hour off peak. Up to 12 players subject to Covid guidelines

Please follow the latest government guidelines relating to Covid-19. Visit gov.uk/coronavirus

Masterpeace

For all those people who thought art wasn't for them, there's Masterpeace. An innovative space where a professional artist is able to help transform one of your photos into a painting, using a lightbox to trace out the image, then acrylic paint to bring the masterpiece to life in 90 minutes. With drinks and nibbles complimentary, this is an ingenious activity to do with friends – especially after having spent so long apart.

12 Ecclestone Yards, from £33

Queen's Gallery

Old Master paintings usually displayed in the State Rooms at Buckingham Palace are brought together for the first time in a landmark gallery exhibition, *Masterpieces from Buckingham Palace*. Highlights among the 65 treasured paintings include works by Titian, Rembrandt, Rubens, Vermeer, Van Dyck and Canaletto. Enjoy these iconic works with a couple of art buff friends to make the experience even more memorable.

Buckingham Palace, Birdcage Walk, Monday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday & Sunday, Adults £16



W

hen Ian Mill QC was first called to the bar and was dining out in the early 1980s, his perception that “wine was simply something to accompany the food” meant he probably encountered his fair share of the ubiquitous “cooking claret” or “Chateau Thames Embankment” that so regularly disappointed Rumpole of the Bailey.

But then there came what he now refers to as his “epiphany” — a 1982 Bâtard-Montrachet from Domaine Leflaive, to be exact. In that first taste, an oenophile was born.

Pimlico resident Ian set to work nurturing a grand passion for superlative white burgundies. “My whole life changed. I recognised, at the time, that there had been a shift in my existence because I now had to find out everything about great wine and find opportunities to enjoy it more often, so I started spending time reading up and interrogating sommeliers, just generally making a nuisance of myself in order to find out what I should be buying, what I should be drinking, where I should be getting it from and what it cost, all the things that people who are interested in wine do.”

And so, 35 odd years later, it was a triumphant Ian who sold around 7,000 bottles of his 10,000-bottle collection at the Manhattan auction of ‘the Collection of Ian Mill, QC’ to the tune of a cool £8 million. The New York auction was held by Zachys, a family-owned wine trading business founded in 1944, and billed as a sale of “one of the most important collections of fine wine, and particularly fine burgundy, that has come to market in the past decade. One could even say century.”

Ian, a father of three sons — “the true wonders of my life”, met his wife in Pimlico in the Eighties and they have enjoyed living in the area ever since. He has forged a successful career practising commercial, intellectual property and sport law from Blackstone Chambers, representing clients including Wayne Rooney and David Beckham to Bob Geldof and George Michael, Radiohead and Robert Smith of The Cure.

A lot of bottle





Lawyer to David Beckham and Wayne Rooney, Ian Mill QC tells us about his passion for wine, more wine and performing arts

BY CORRIE BOND-FRENCH

Ian also has a stake in French restaurant, Cabotte, in the City. "It's all about Pinot Noir and Chardonnay and we have Californian wines on the list there. It's an amazing restaurant and I've absolutely loved my involvement in it."

Ian likes to keep busy and, in addition to wine, is passionate about the performing arts. "One of the other things I do is contribute funds into productions and to arts bodies in order to help them make ends meet," he says.

"It's a very important thing to do, and that's given me a huge amount of pleasure, and for my wife as well, but rather more for me because I'm really a bit of an actor manqué as many barristers are!"

Ian has trodden the boards in the West End in *War Horse*, *Wonderland* at the National and recently, just before lockdown, he played Father Alexander in *Mamma Mia!* "As long as it reopens, I'm due to appear in *Phantom*. These for me really are extraordinary and [give me] exquisite enjoyment.

"The auction was obviously a one-off and the culmination of many years of hard work as well as pleasure, so one liked to enjoy the culmination of it, but I think in terms of sheer exhilaration, standing up on a West End stage and going for it in front of an audience is unbeatable."

So, what will Ian do next? It seems the lure of Californian wines is inspiring his next move. "After having been at the bar for 40 years, I want to move into something else. I don't want to be a judge – if I wanted to be a judge, I'd be a judge now, very boring and a rather lonely existence.

"My wife, who is British but grew up in California, is getting a Green Card, and we are going to split our time between London and California in the years to come.

"My intention is to open or at least be involved in either a restaurant or wine bar where I can offer great burgundy or pinot noir or chardonnay from California. You're only here once so you make the most of it!"

Ian's favourite local haunts...

Restaurants

A. WONG

Stunning Chinese food with a modern twist.

OLIVO

I have been patronising Mauro Sanna's four restaurants since he opened Olivo 30 years ago: delicious Sardinian food with good Italian wine lists.

Shop

VOLPE

A hidden gem on Denbigh Street – fine Italian clothes and tailoring, overseen by that splendid character, Adrian Holdworth.

In the aftermath of the Budget, the country has a way ahead – or at least a flight path from which we can start to survey the economic wreckage caused by months of lockdown.

The extension to the business rates holiday is welcome and something I have long campaigned for. In Westminster, we have 39,000 businesses, and many have been clinging on by their fingertips. They need breathing space to clamber back up.

Throughout the pandemic, the council has concentrated on looking after the most vulnerable among our 250,000

West End is an engine of the UK economy – one in 10 London jobs is generated by the West End – but that engine is faltering. Footfall is 92 per cent down and tube travel by a similar figure. That bleak picture is compounded by well-known retailers cutting their high street presence with some decamping to the internet.

But I'm confident we can rebuild our city. For example, our Oxford Street District improvement plan, recently announced, is a visionary scheme to overhaul one of our iconic locations, generating jobs for local people and creating more open space.

Back to life

How the council hopes to do its bit to get the cogs whirring for residents and businesses again

residents while doing what we can to help businesses.

Hospitality is one of our biggest industries – employing around 80,000 people – and we were the first council in the UK to put in place temporary outdoor dining areas to keep the tables turning. In the colder months we brought out the umbrellas and heaters so our residents and visitors could at least pretend it was still summer. Hundreds of restaurants have benefited from around 60 new al fresco dining areas and we will build on the success of this scheme.

Lifting central London out of economic lockdown is the new pillar of *City for All*, the council's 10-year corporate vision. The

BY LEADER OF
WESTMINSTER CITY COUNCIL,
RACHAEL ROBATHAN



There's no business like show business and, sadly, there's been

no business for months for theatres and galleries. But get ready for Inside Out, a major outdoor art show which launches later in the year involving the most famous names in art and theatre. It will be a powerful curtain raiser to remind everyone why millions come from across the world to enjoy our portraits and performers.

Our residents and businesses have shown incredible resolve throughout lockdown, and we owe it to them to give them their city back. As Samuel Johnson famously said: *'When a man is tired of London he is tired of life.'* And life is what Westminster council is determined to restore.



Glass Door hostel guests like Freddie stay in individual rooms.

“

Because of Glass Door, I have a roof over my head. They saved my life.

- “Freddie”, a former British Army Captain who lost his job and wife during the pandemic, is now staying in a Glass Door hostel.

Covid-19 has made it clear how important it is to have a safe home. Chelsea-based homeless charity Glass Door has stayed open throughout the pandemic so that people who are homeless can find emergency rooms, hot meals and support.

Glass Door has helped over 300 people into safe and secure accommodation since the outbreak of the pandemic. We have also partnered with local churches and community groups to provide hot meals every evening to those in need. Our specialist caseworkers are on hand to provide vital advice and support to help people find routes out of homelessness.

To help someone like Freddie move beyond homelessness, please make a donation. Together we can provide shelter, food and hope in these uncertain times. [Find out more at GLASSDOOR.ORG.UK.](https://www.glassdoor.org.uk)

GLASSDOOR

A route out of homelessness



Glass Door is a registered charity
(no. 1083203) in England and Wales

Aww Chucs

Toast the weekend in style with new 'cocktail and cicchetti' boxes from Chucs.

Order by noon on a Wednesday and by Friday, in time for aperitivo hour, you can enjoy a box with four classic cocktails, plus a selection of cicchetti from truffle arancini to calamari fritti.

The Italian restaurant brand, which has its flagship in Ecclestone Street, has launched a variety of ways to enjoy their dishes at home.

Feast of the week sees Chucs choose one of its favourite dishes, served with sides, dessert and wine, to be cooked at home (£60 for two people).

Alternatively, try its DIY pizza, pasta and burger kits for two people, plus a bottle of wine or two bottles of beer, for £25. Collection or home delivery available from chucsrestaurants.com



Regal touch

Designed to coincide with the *George IV: Art & Spectacle* at The Queen's Gallery, Buckingham Palace, this colourful George IV tea towel features a watercolour image of the Green Drawing Room at Windsor Castle – the most spectacular of George IV's reception rooms.

£9.95, Royal Collection Shop, 7 Buckingham Palace Road



Chestnut replaces Cronut

Za'atar and gruyere croissant? Sourdough par excellence? Or perhaps a simple, perfectly-baked baguette? A new bakery in Victoria will offer all of this and a whole lot more.

Chestnut Bakery will soon open in Elizabeth Street, in the same space previously occupied by 'Cronut king' Dominique Ansel, which closed last year in the wake of the pandemic.

The bakery says it aims to "revive the community baker and bring neighbourhoods together via the freshest baked treats and local produce".

It's not the only bakery opening in the area; popular London brand Gail's is soon to open on Buckingham Palace Road.

Creative cuisine

Along with some exciting new openings, art and food are intertwined, with an interactive mural at A.Wong

BY JONATHAN WHILEY

Sage advice

Supplies from small artisan producers will form the heart of produce on offer at new fresh food store, Bayley & Sage.

The shop, now open at the former NatWest bank site at 141 Ebury Street, will sell a wide range of products including fresh fruit, vegetables, cheeses, breads, charcuterie and wine.

Much of the produce will come from small artisan producers and some from their own kitchens.



Interactive installation

A cutting-edge interactive art installation has been installed at two Michelin-starred restaurant A.Wong.

The public artwork is a vinyl mural wrapped around the restaurant's newly-installed terrace on Wilton Road.

The artwork is a collaboration between chef patron Andrew Wong and multi-media artist, Gordon Cheung, in partnership with Rémy Martin.

It can be enjoyed further through the 'Year of the Ox' app, accessed via a QR code located on the work. It brings the art to life in digital animation; beautiful flowers will grow and the mural transforms.



Rail House rocks

Transport yourself to the sun-dappled shores of Barbados with an extravagant culinary feast with a Caribbean twist.

Brasserie favourite The Riding House Café, which includes the popular Rail House Café in Victoria, has launched a 'Soul Ride Weekender Box'.

The bonanza includes the likes of salt cod fritters, Bajan pepper sauce, curry mutton, barbecue jerk beans, a sourdough loaf, 32-day aged cote de bouef and drinks such as a house-made Bloody Mary and Allpress coffee.

Priced £120, it serves two very generously, railhouse.cafe

74 Victoria Street

Called to the bar

A modern take on the traditional pub is what these two new additions to the area will be offering once they open for business

BY REYHAAN DAY

THE BLUE BOAR

FORMERLY HEAD CHEF AT The Harwood Arms, London's only Michelin-starred pub, Sally Abe is reinvigorating the food and drink offering at Conrad London St James. The first part to open will be The Blue Boar – a plush take on the British pub. “The Blue Boar has had a pub on that site for about 100 years, so we’re trying to reflect the history of British pubs through food.

“The interior is quite modern, it’s got a glam gold bar and gantry, so it’s certainly not a traditional pub; but with the food, we’ll be doing things like coronation chicken scotch egg; bar

snacks like pork scratchings and whitebait; and a menu featuring super-seasonal British produce, with classics like shepherd’s pie and fish and chips, all cooked to a really good standard.”

Though the pandemic has caused understandable delays to the project, Sally hopes she can soon announce the rest of the upcoming food offerings in more detail. “The restaurant will be refined, modern British. That will be more similar to what I’ve done at The Harwood, but another level up. Then we’ll be doing an afternoon tea later in the year, which is exciting as I’ve always wanted to do that.”

THE GANYMEDE

IT'S NOT THE BEST TIME for pub operators to be planning new openings; but The Lunar Pub Company has found itself doing just that. The Hunter's Moon opened six months before the pandemic hit; and it is hard at work getting things ready for a new opening on the site of the old Ebury Wine Bar. "With The Hunter's Moon, we were busy enough and had a good enough reception that we've survived the lockdowns and will continue to do so," says Hubert Beatson-Hird, the company's owner-director.

"With The Ganymede, it is frustrating that we can't open it as early as we like – but it's also nice not to be rushed on a build.

informal, relaxed bar area reserved for walk-ins, which will be "light, warm and welcoming", and a dining room, which features "deep, dark, plush leather banquettes and booths". Wood and brass furnishings will run throughout, with subtle nods to the lunar theme (Ganymede is the largest moon of Jupiter).

Chef and Beatson-Hird's business partner Oliver Marlowe, who has worked at Le Gavroche, Chez Bruce and The Ledbury, will cook up elevated pub classics – with dishes such as slow-cooked featherblade of beef rubbing shoulders with quality burgers and Sunday roasts.

While there will be a considered, premium beer offering including a good selection of British ales, The Ganymede will



Above:
Hubert
Beatson-
Hird and
Oliver
Marlowe

Left:
Sally Abe

"The build might have taken six weeks; but we're extending it to eight or nine, just so we can make those finishing touches a little bit more perfect, a little bit more in keeping with exactly what we want."

Beatson-Hird says that The Ganymede will be a place to suit all needs. "Our places cater to you if you want to come and have a coffee and read the papers; they cater for you if you are wanting to have a light lunch with some friends and a spritzer, or if you want to discuss property in the afternoon over several jars of beer; and they cater for you if you want to take a significant other out for a fantastic, top-end, three-course meal to celebrate a special occasion."

The new pub boasts two spaces: a more

be wine-led – with a list curated by Liberty Wines and Beatson-Hird.

"Being on the old site of the Ebury Wine Bar, we really want to give a nod to the legacy of the building. We'll be offering over 100 wines, utilising Coravin so we can serve high-end wines by the glass."

For Beatson-Hird, Belgravia was a no-brainer when it came to opening the new site. "This is where I like to hang out. It's where my friends are, and we know the area well. We feel that the people who live, work and commute around Belgravia like a relaxed British pub, but also expect that attention to detail and quality that we look to deliver."

139 Ebury Street



Ben Kelliher,
executive chef at
The English Grill
at Rubens at the
Palace, shares
his recipe for the
ultimate Beef
Wellington

Best of British

Ingredients

- 2 x 400g beef fillets
- English mustard
- Olive oil, for frying
- 500g mixture of wild mushrooms, cleaned
- 1 thyme sprig, leaves only
- 500g puff pastry
- 8 pancakes - (100g plain flour, 2 large eggs, 300ml milk and 1tbsp truffle oil)
- 2 egg yolks, beaten with 1tbsp water and a pinch of salt
- Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

Method

Wrap each piece of beef tightly in a triple layer of cling film to set its shape, then chill overnight.

Remove the cling film, then quickly sear the beef fillets in a hot pan with a little olive oil for 30-60 seconds until browned all over and rare in the middle. Remove from the pan and leave to cool.

Once cool, brush the beef fillet all over lightly with English mustard.

Finely chop the mushrooms and fry in a hot pan with a little olive oil, the thyme leaves, and some seasoning. When the mushrooms begin to release their juices, continue to cook over a high heat for about 10 minutes until all the excess moisture has evaporated and you are left with a mushroom paste (known as a duxelle). Remove the duxelle from the pan and leave to cool.

Cut the pastry in half, place on a lightly-floured surface and roll each piece into a rectangle large enough to envelop one of the beef fillets. Chill in the refrigerator.

Lay a large sheet of cling film on a work surface and place four pancakes in the middle, overlapping them slightly, to create a square. Spread half the duxelle evenly over the pancakes.

Season the beef fillets, then place them on top of the mushroom cover. Using the



cling film, roll the pancakes over the beef, then roll and tie the cling film to get a nice, evenly thick log. Repeat this step with the other beef fillet, then chill for at least 30 minutes.

Brush the pastry with the egg wash. Remove the cling film from the beef, then wrap the pastry around each wrapped fillet. Trim the pastry and brush all over with the egg wash. Cover with cling film and chill for at least 30 minutes.

When you are ready to cook the wellingtons, score the pastry lightly and brush with the egg wash again, then bake at 200°C/Gas 6 for 15-20 minutes until the pastry is golden brown and cooked. Rest for 10 minutes before carving.

*39 Buckingham Palace Road,
rubenshotel.com*

Eat & drink Directory out & in



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If you are looking for a relaxing yet luxury ambience to indulge yourself, this is the perfect place for you when we reopen at the end of May. For reservations, please contact 020 7963 8373 or email booksjc.london@tajhotels.com

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54 Buckingham Gate, London SW1E 6AF
Telephone: 020 7834 6655



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Rosa's Thai Cafe is born out of our founder Saiphin's passion for authentic Thai food served in a no-frill and relaxed atmosphere. We put genuine hospitality and great recipes at the heart of everything that we do and are proud to have been born in Thailand and raised in England. Rosa's Victoria is situated in the middle of the ever-busy Pimlico neighbourhood. We offer delivery and takeaway 7 days a week, bringing a modern twist on authentic Thai cuisine to the hungry fans of Thai food in the area.

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To order delivery or click n' collect, please visit:
www.rosasthaicafe.com/locations/victoria





The comforting **Curry Room at The Rubens** at The Palace is one of the best Indian restaurants in the area, serving elevated, regionally-inspired curry house dishes and thali that evoke the rich culinary traditions of the sub-continent, with a backdrop of Rajasthani-inspired decor.

While you could choose one excellent curry served with basmati rice, a vegetable side dish and

roti, it's best to go for chef Arun Kumar's selection of three dishes served together on a thali platter – featuring the likes of Bengal fish curry, Keralan prawn curry, spicy beef vindaloo or butter chicken – to really get the full flavour. Well-picked old and new world wines, alongside your usual Indian beers, are the libations of choice.

39 Buckingham Palace Road

Fire Roasted Aubergine, Pacific Tiger Prawns, Watermelon Salad and Byron Bhel Puri.
Photo: Leyla Kazim



Located on Sir Simon Milton Square, **Timmy Green** from the Daisy Green collection of restaurants features a green-laden indoor/outdoor space with a big terrace – perfect for distanced dining. The antipodean vibe is complemented by dishes strongly inspired by Melbourne and Sydney café culture, with brunch plates including smashed avocado or chilli and maple celeriac toast with poached eggs, tomatoes and greens; and lunch dishes like spicy tuna tostada, sashimi-grade tuna steak, fresh Asian-inspired salads, and plenty of vegan and vegetarian options.

11 Sir Simon Milton Square

The world on a plate

With travel still off the agenda, we pick five of our favourite local restaurants that will transport your taste buds across the globe.

BY REYHAAN DAY



Somewhat of a rarity in London are restaurants putting the spotlight on traditional Sri Lankan cuisine. Thankfully, the highly-commended **Dammika's** is bringing a taste of the island's culinary culture to Victoria. Unpretentious but refined flavours dominate here, with dishes made using seasonal British produce; classics like egg and string hoppers, massive dosas and hearty mutton and fresh fish curries have guests leaving satiated and happy – particularly after a few Lion beers, a Sri Lankan staple.

3 Lower Grosvenor Place



Small but perfectly-formed, **Morinoya** arrived in Victoria at the end of 2019, specialising in top-quality sushi, gyoza, fresh pumpkin croquettes, and warming katsu curries. Perfect for post-work nibbles or comforting teriyaki plates to heat up long, cold days, guests can choose from a thoughtfully-curated selection of sakes, as well as a small choice of wines.

1 Gillingham Street



Located in the Zig Zag building, **Ibérica Victoria** is set over a striking two-floor space designed by architect Lázaro Rosa Violán. But that isn't why fans of this stylish spot come here. The bar area is the perfect space for after-work drinks, with refreshing cocktails, fortified wines and beers pairing with pintxos to enjoy before settling into a meal in the upstairs dining room. Opt for a range of artisan cheeses and meats alongside plates of croquetas, gambas, tortilla and larger dishes of Ibérico pork or sharing plates of paella. Finish on a sweet note with churros and melted chocolate or the warming caramelised Spanish rice pudding.

68 Victoria Street

We have spent more time in them than ever before; now is the time to transform your kitchen with a few select pieces this spring

BY CORRIE BOND-FRENCH



ROYAL DOULTON 1815 BRIGHT COLOURS SET OF 8 SQUARE TRAYS

Perfect for sharing those tapas dishes al fresco, these summer-hued trays in the 1815 pattern range (designed to commemorate the year John Doulton founded his now world-famous pottery) will mix and match effortlessly with the rest of the range.

£95, House of Fraser, 101 Victoria Street

What's cooking



MILLEFLEURS BOWL

A bowl full of floral bounty; pansies, roses, geraniums, camellias and cornflowers in full bloom give this exquisite bowl a taste of summer.

£89, Joanna Wood, 57 Elizabeth Street

ROUND TOP MARINI BAR STOOL

An uber-stylish homage to 20th century abstract and cubist sculptors. Shown here in polished bronze with a generous round leather button.

£6,600, Cox London, 194 Ebury Street



POST OFFICE SHELVING

Beautiful utility with a twist of nostalgia, this substantial Post Office shelving is constructed from European oak, comprising a series of 15 solid oak boxes sitting on sculpted, and subtly contrasting ash support rails.

£11,600, Pinch, 200 Ebury Street

CAMILA GREEN & GOLD CERAMIC & BAMBOO TEAPOT

With subtle metallic accents on a turquoise base, take your tea in style with this angular teapot, complete with bamboo handle. Partially glazed with a geometric oval line design on the pot, spout and lid, something to admire as you enjoy that restful cuppa.

£34, Oliver Bonas, Unit 49, Victoria Station



HOGLA EXTRA LARGE HOUSEHOLD BASKET

When storage is both beautiful and practical; this basket, made from hogla seagrass, is spacious enough to store a mini-library of books or magazines, or perhaps linens or houseplants – the possibilities are endless.

£255, Summerill & Bishop, 58 Elizabeth Street



Manfredi Conforzi of Officine Gullo, a luxury Italian kitchen company that recently arrived in Victoria, on how kitchens have become more important than ever in our Covid world

Lockdown has drastically changed the perception of the kitchen as it has become the pivot point of the daily routine. What was once the main space for cooking and clearing up, as well as kitchen meals, has had to be versatile, to be transformed into an office, dining room, conference call room, play area for children and even perhaps for some, a place to exercise!

Kitchen storage has simply adapted to the more intense attention and use of the kitchen. I think that with people spending more time at home, cooking from home and perhaps widening their variety of ingredients, the demand for pantries and larders

has certainly increased. A larger cupboard can also double up as a breakfast bar, which is popular.

Every kitchen space deserves its own vision which is drastically altered by each homeowner. For me though, the dream would be to have an open-plan kitchen with lots of space, connecting with the sitting room and the outdoors, creating a light, bright and extensive living area. I consider the key elements to be the cooking ranges, the functionality. While we all want a kitchen to be beautiful, they need to work too.

12 Francis Street, officiengullo.com



RESTART COLLECTION

Inspired by the design and décor of old Florentine villas, the Restart collection, shown above, continues to be crafted near Florence in the heart of the Tuscan countryside, encompassing high-performance appliances finished in solid brass, burnished copper, antique-effect steel and cast iron.

£POA, Officine Gullo, 12 Francis Street

A walk on the wild side

Celebrated jewellery designer Vicki Sarge on hitchhiking in a riot, the wild days of New York's Studio 54 and her Big Apple neighbour, Truman Capote

BY JONATHAN WHILEY

What is your earliest travel memory?

I'm from Detroit originally and my friend Keith and I, when we were about 17 or 18, hitchhiked to Nova Scotia. I didn't tell my parents! That was my first big trip. I remember going through Montreal and it being so exotic and French.

I've always been one for adventure and a bit of danger. When I was young, I used to hitchhike all over; we even hitchhiked through downtown Detroit during the Detroit Riot [1967] to see Frank Zappa and we got chased around a little bit.

Did music form a big part of your life in Detroit?

Iggy and the Stooges played at our high school dances. I grew up with really good music in Detroit and we used to hitchhike everywhere to see the bands. I've always liked Motown and the rock 'n' roll in Detroit at that time was amazing; Alice Cooper, Bob Seger. You also had Aretha Franklin; it was really great stuff.

You lived in New York from 1975 to 1985. What are your memories of [legendary nightclub] Studio 54?

There is never going to be a place like that. People didn't travel with security or anything, so I saw Bianca Jagger on the white horse, Cher, Truman Capote. He [Capote] lived on the street I lived on and was very alcoholic. I lived at the end of the street, I lived on 49th Street for a while and he lived in, I think it was the same place that Johnny Carson lived on – it was a big, modern apartment building at the United Nations. There was a gay bar on 53rd Street that Capote would go to and one time I saw him literally crawling on the streets to get back home.

What is the most dangerous place you have been?

I did some teaching in Afghanistan. That was in 2008/2009. That was with Turquoise Mountain [a non-profit organisation restoring historic buildings and training artisans in communities at risk]. I went to help set up the jewellery programme and my foot was hurting and I ended up going to an Afghan hospital. I was really quite scared and a bit nervous, but the doctors couldn't have been nicer. I remember hearing the bombs going off.



Iggy Pop



Truman Capote





Afghan children

What is the most memorable meal on your travels?

When I was in Afghanistan and feeling slightly homesick, the cook there made me stuffed cabbages. I'm from a Polish background and grew up on stuffed cabbages and it's something I made with my mum's recipe during lockdown.

Amalfi Coast

What is your favourite meal ever?

That was at Nobu in Park Lane. My ex-husband was friends with Nobu and we had 12 or 13 courses and it's definitely the best meal I've had in my lifetime.

Which locations have inspired your work?

Certain time periods are inspirational to me. I like that 70s' Capri look. Marrakech is always an inspiration. I like that boho hippy style too.

Ole & Steen

What is your favourite place to visit?

I really love Italy and the Amalfi Coast. I have a friend who has a house there and we usually go to Naples and see my friend Thomas Dane, who has a gallery there.

Where do you go to eat and drink in Victoria?

Ole & Steen for hot chocolate. There is a cheap and delicious Korean restaurant, Lime Orange, near the station. There is a fantastic, very authentic Sri Lanka restaurant, Dammikas, and I can't not mention Oliveto. I love their crab pizza and crab pasta.

What is the first place you are going to when restrictions allow?

We were supposed to go to Hawaii at Christmas. It's where I'm dreaming of right now and as soon as we're able, we are definitely going to be doing that.

38 Elizabeth Street, vickisarge.com





Hardy perennial

Vincent Square has been home to the
Royal Horticultural Society for more than a century.
So why do thousands of people beat a path
to this part of Victoria every year?

BY SUE BRADLEY

The handsome head office of the Royal Horticultural Society has been a landmark within Vincent Square since the beginning of the 20th century.

This imposing Arts and Crafts-style building serves as the administrative centre for the UK's leading gardening charity, which has more than 520,000 members, looks after five acclaimed gardens, provides highly-respected training and organises prestigious events such as the Chelsea Flower Show.

It is also home to the Lindley Library, widely regarded as the finest collection of horticultural literature in the world, and visited by more than 5,000 people every year.

Close by in Elverson Street is the Lindley Hall, built to host botanic art exhibitions and opened in 1904 by King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra. This large open space, uninterrupted by columns, with its dramatic glass-vaulted ceiling that allows light to flood in, was designed by the architect Edwin Stubbs. A choral concert by the Bach Choir was the first public event held at the hall and, nowadays, this versatile venue is used for prestigious events such as London Fashion Week and can be hired for various public and private functions, such as weddings and examinations. It still hosts horticulture-related events such as the annual RHS John MacLeod lectures and many associate it with the popular plant shows held in early spring and the autumn, some of which have now been absorbed by the RHS gardens to attract larger audiences.

Across the road from the Lindley Hall is the

Lawrence Hall, previously known as 'the New Hall', which was built in 1928 and originally served as a secondary venue for the RHS. This Art Deco-style building, based on a Swedish design by Easton and Robertson, was awarded by the Royal Institution of British Architects for its dramatic architecture, which some have described as 'somewhat brutalist'. The lease for this building was sold to Westminster School in 2011, with a mutually beneficial agreement, allowing the RHS to continue using it for its shows while providing funds to invest in the future of horticulture. Both the Lindley and Lawrence Halls are Grade II-listed.

The roots of the RHS lie in correspondence between John Wedgwood and Sir Joseph Banks, with the inaugural meeting of the 'Horticultural Society' being held at Hatchard's Bookshop in Piccadilly in 1804. Queen Victoria's consort Prince Albert was its president between 1858 and 1861, the year that the word 'Royal' was added to its name.

Historically the RHS has been in Victoria since 1888, occupying temporary offices at 111 Victoria Street after abandoning its Kensington garden home.

The drive to set up a more permanent base came in 1902, shortly before the society's centenary, when Baron Henry Schröder, an RHS council member, privately arranged a 999-year lease from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners at £690 per year.

"At this time council members were divided as to whether they should be seeking a site

in London for a new garden or for a meeting hall,” explains the RHS’s head of Libraries and Exhibitions Fiona Davison, who believes Victoria’s very good transport connections had much to do with the choice of the site. “Schröder was in favour of a hall for the RHS meetings, exhibitions and displays and offices for work aligned with the upcoming centenary of the RHS.

“His decisive step ensured the site was not lost and sealed the deal. As it turned out in August of that year, Wisley was gifted to the RHS, which satisfied both sides.”

Building costs for the offices, Lindley Library and first hall were met by a combination of members’ fees, individual donations and fundraising. J.P. Morgan and Lord Rothschild, both RHS members and keen horticulturalists,



The
RHS has
been in
Victoria
since
1888

made significant contributions, although the largest private sum of £5,000 came from Baron Schröder.

Both the Vincent Square building and the Lindley Hall were extensively refurbished between 1999 and 2001, but care was taken to retain many of their original Arts and Crafts features, including the mosaic floor in the main entrance hall showing the society’s apple tree device and the heraldic flowers of the UK.

Nowadays, the RHS offices in Vincent Square serve as a base for 150 employees who work alongside their colleagues based at the charity’s gardens in Wisley in Surrey, Hyde Hall, Essex; Rosemoor, Devon and Harlow Carr, Yorkshire, along with its Bridgewater site near Manchester that’s due to open in May.

The charity has an active community outreach team, which helps support schools and community gardening projects across the UK, including in London, and runs a variety of campaigns aimed at inspiring and expanding the nation’s interest in horticulture.

rhs.org.uk

The Lindley Library

The collection of books, maps, plans, magazines, journals, letters, botanical art and various other gardening-related ephemera at the Lindley Library is regarded as both nationally and internationally significant.

This is the place to examine accounts belonging to the celebrated 18th century landscape architect Lancelot ‘Capability’ Brown from 1759 and one of Humphry Repton’s ‘Red Books’ setting out his ideas to transform the grounds of a gentleman’s estate in 1792.

The oldest printed book in the collection is a copy of Pliny’s *Historia Naturalis* of 1514, while its prints and original botanical art dates from the 16th century and includes the work of Pierre-Joseph Redouté, William Hooker, Lilian Snelling and Deborah Lambkin.

Among the most frequently-requested items are Victorian horticultural journals, which cover a vast array of social history events and scientific discoveries such as the rise of public parks and the development of the Cavendish banana, today sold in supermarkets throughout the UK.

The Lindley Library holds ‘Designated Status’, which means it has been assessed by The Arts Council as being of national and international significance.



A visitor reading in the Upper Reading Room of the RHS Lindley Library

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Silent witness

St Margaret's Church is a much-loved local gem that has played a pivotal role in the history of power and politics

BY CORRIE BOND-FRENCH

Amid the grandiose architecture of Parliament Square, under the stony gaze of Westminster Abbey's saints and gargoyles, St Margaret's Church has, perhaps, been overlooked by many a visitor to the capital. Yet this medieval gem has borne silent witness and played its own role in the high drama and history that has played out in this enclave of power and politics.

The great, the good and the notorious have featured in the church's register of hatches, matches and dispatches. Marriages include recent Prime Ministers Winston Churchill and Harold Macmillan and literary greats

to Margaret's Church, and there spied Martin, and home with her..." And again on August 25, 1667: "...and to the parish church, thinking to see Betty Michell; and did stay an hour in the crowd, thinking, by the end of a nose that I saw, that it had been her; but at last the head turned towards me, and it was her mother, which vexed me, and so I back to my boat..."

Printer William Caxton and engraver Wenceslaus Hollar are buried here. Sir Walter Raleigh's body was buried here following his execution by beheading in Old Palace Yard. His head, however, was given to his widow Bess of Throckmorton, who reputedly had it embalmed and carried it around in a velvet bag.

The good the bad and the ugly: Ignatius Sancho, Samuel Pepys and Oliver Cromwell

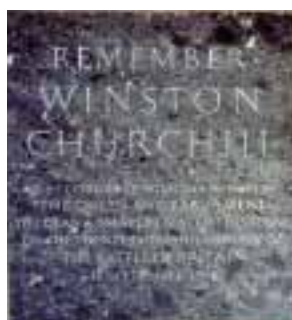


including John Milton and abolitionist Ignatius Sancho. Poet John Keats bore witness to his brother's marriage, while diarist Samuel Pepys married and indulged in extra-marital activity in St Margaret's pews.

Pepys noted that it was at "The parish church" where he first heard common prayer. An entry from June 3, 1666 states: "I to St. Margaret's, Westminster, and there saw at church my pretty Betty Michell, and thence to the Abbey, and so to Mrs. Martin, and there did what 'je voudrais avec her..."

Then on August 5, 1666: "Thence walked to the Parish Church to have one look upon Betty Michell". On April 14, 1667: "...

When Charles II restored the monarchy after the civil war and interregnum, he took posthumous revenge on his father's enemies; the bodies of a dozen or so of Oliver Cromwell's associates (some 59 MPs had signed Charles I's death warrant) were disinterred, burned and buried in the churchyard. Oliver Cromwell's body, with those of John Bradshaw and Henry Ireton (Cromwell's son-in-law and parliamentary army general) were removed from Westminster Abbey, their corpses were tried for high treason and symbolically beheaded on 30 January, 1661 – the date of Charles I's execution 12 years previously. The bodies were then thrown into a pit, or common grave, in St Margaret's churchyard while



their heads remained on a 20-foot spike at Westminster Hall until a storm in 1685.

Originally constructed in the 12th Century – possibly earlier- by the Benedictine monks of what was then St

Peter's Abbey, St Margaret's fell into disrepair and was rebuilt from 1486 at the behest of Henry VII, the first Tudor monarch, whose gimlet eye also had grand designs on the neighbouring Abbey.



Just don't ask her to show you what's in her handbag... Bess of Throckmorton and Sir Walter Raleigh



By 1560 Elizabeth I ensured that St Margaret's became a royal peculiar – a church directly responsible to the sovereign,

alongside Westminster Abbey. In 1614, St Margaret's became the parish church of the Palace of Westminster when parliament's puritans eschewed the Abbey's more liturgical form of worship. In time, an additional chapel of ease and burial site was used as an extension of the parish on the site of Christchurch Gardens in Victoria Street – where the exact site of Ignatius Sancho's burial is marked.

With a history that inspired at least two former curates to write historical accounts, St Margaret's served as a parish church for the locality through tumultuous times, and many more humble parishioners feature in its records.



Sir Walter Raleigh's body was buried here following his execution by beheading in Old Palace Yard

Work was eventually completed in Henry VIII's reign, and the church, named after St Margaret of Antioch, was consecrated on 9 April, 1523 over a decade before the birth of Elizabeth I, the break with Rome and the dissolution of the monasteries. At around the time that the Tudor boy-king Edward VI succeeded his dread sire in 1548, his uncle, Edward Seymour, 1st Duke of Somerset, took it upon himself to recycle the very fabric of the church building to construct his new palace, Somerset House, in The Strand.

But the Duke hadn't reckoned on the fierce resistance of the church's parishioners, who, in an early example of church-hugging environmental protest, took up arms to defend their church from an act of selfish vandalism – and won.

There is Cornelius Vandun, a soldier who fought alongside Henry VIII at Tournai who then went on to be a Yeoman of the Guard for Edward VI, Mary I and Elizabeth I, dying in 1577 at the grand old age of 94. And Joane Barnett, 82, buried in 1674, used to sell oatmeal cakes by the church doors and left money for the widows of the parish. A large oatmeal pudding was thereafter stood at 'the feast' in her honour.

More recently, the church hit headlines last year when it was announced that, owing to the Abbey's depleted funds, there would no longer be Sunday services, and that the congregation and the choir would now integrate into Westminster Abbey's services. This provoked uproar. St Margaret's is no longer, technically, a Parish church, but clearly it remains a beloved local one.



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MEMORIAL FOREST



Richard Marshall, owner and founder of Pall Mall Barbers, a historic gentlemen's barbers originally founded in 1896 as the 'Pall Mall Toilet Saloon' off Trafalgar Square, picks his favourite places in Victoria and Westminster

BY JONATHAN WHILEY



How long have you been in Victoria?

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Have you met anyone famous in the area?

Yes, at Regency Café [17-19 Regency Street]. It is a great celebrity-spotting place, and it

has the best English breakfast in town.

Where would you recommend for coffee?

Iris & June; it has a fantastic selection of delicious food and tasty, aromatic coffee which is prepared by the kitchen team fresh, on site, every day.

What is your favourite pub?

Fuller's Kitchen Ale & Pie pub [33 Tothill Street]. You won't find a better place in Westminster for an expertly-crafted pie and pint – they are famous for their fantastic homemade pies. The pub and [Sanctuary House] hotel has a lot of history behind

it; it was once a railway gazette, a book-publishing house and even home to the London Municipal Society in the early 20th century.

Where is the best place for a cocktail?

B Bar [43 Buckingham Palace Road]. This fun, South African-inspired bar is praised by all who visit for its cocktails. There are classics, or you can venture into more exotic territory with South African drinks. It's a classy place to chat and chill after work or have a meeting with clients.

Where would you recommend for a blow-out dinner?

The Dining Room at The Goring – if you fancy a Michelin-starred dinner, then this is the place. It has a rich history and, if you are lucky, you might see a royal or two. Don't miss out on the eggs drumkilbo – they were a favourite of the Queen Mother.



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