

SUMMER 2021

TRAVEL TALES
Atul Kochhar's
Antarctic antics

LOCAL HEROES
The kings and
queens of Covid

FOOD
Peggy Porschen's
hearts of happiness

Victoria

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Hamilton return to the stage

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SUMMER

COVER: Wicked's Alistair Brammer (Fiyero) and Laura Pick (Elphaba). Photo by Matt Crockett

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Publishing Business
3 Princes Street London W1B 2LD
020 7259 1050 www.pubbiz.com

Editor Jonathan Whiley
020 7259 1057
jonathan@pubbiz.com

Writers Corrie Bond-French,
Alex Briand, Alice Cairns,
Sophia Charalambous, Reyhaan Day

Sub-editor Selma Day

Designer Andy Lowe

Circulation manager
Julie Ward

Advertisement managers
Bridget Rodricks
bridget@pubbiz.com 07769 331 599

Richard Taylor
richard@pubbiz.com 07724 992 410

Publisher Adrian Day
day@pubbiz.com 020 7259 1053

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020 3004 0786
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From a Lewis Hamilton-backed burger joint to a Virtual Reality arcade, there's plenty to keep the family entertained over the summer



▲ Inspired by their location and the return of the West End's biggest shows, the Conrad London St. James has launched a new 'Family Stay on London's Broadway' experience.

The five-star hotel at 22-28 Broadway in Westminster has arranged a host of Broadway-themed activities in and around the hotel. Children will be greeted at reception with a VIP sticker and special wristband that allows them complimentary milkshakes or ice cream from the hotel's Blue Boar Pub during their stay.

There is a new children's Broadway afternoon tea, a themed gift and costumes in the family-room wardrobe. Families will be hosted in one of 12 interconnecting/family rooms with overnight stays from £311.

hilton.com/en/hotels/loncoci-conrad-london-st-james/

Two leading fashion brands have recently opened their doors in Elizabeth Street.

RIXO's latest boutique can be found at 75 Elizabeth Street and is dedicated to bridalwear, with prices starting from £275.

Fashion rental platform, My Wardrobe HQ, recently opened its doors at number 30, allowing you to rent designer items at a fraction of their recommended retail price.

Pieces include bridal, menswear, womenswear and accessories, and rental is from four to 14 days.



A musical theatre trilogy has been created in collaboration with The Other Palace theatre to 'spark hope' in the wake of the Covid-19 crisis.

On Hope: a digital song cycle is curated by Matt Powell and Victoria Saxton in partnership with the Palace Street theatre. It features pre-recorded and live performances of songs written by more than 60 international composers with a cast of more than 100 performers while in isolation.

Each part runs for 90 minutes and is available to watch on The Other Palace YouTube channel.

A plant-based burger joint and a South-East Asian fusion restaurant are set to open on Victoria's Buckingham Palace Road.

Lewis Hamilton-backed Neat Burger, known for its ethical, vegan-friendly fast food, will open at number 14, while Ellen Chew's Shan Shui – inspired by 1920s' Shanghai – can be found at number 36.

They will join artisan bakery brand, Gail's, which opened its latest outpost at 22-24 recently.



Simon Stocker has retired from Westminster Kingsway College after a teaching career that spanned more than 27 years. During his time at the college at 76 Vincent Square, Simon trained hundreds of aspiring chefs, including a young Jamie Oliver.

He met the Prince of Wales at the college's centenary celebrations in 2010, led a successful team at the Culinary Olympics in Germany, and won the Craft Guild of Chefs Education Chef of the Year Award in 2009. Retiring at the age of 55, he plans to move to Hampshire with his wife and two children.



Westminster clinic EGO Dental recently won two prizes at the 2020 Dental Awards. Organised in collaboration with The Probe Magazine, these industry awards recognise the very best in UK dentistry.

EGO Dental was awarded 'Practice of the Year – South', as well as the night's most highly prized accolade, 'Practice of the Year 2020'. This is just the latest in a series of award wins from Dr Charlie Attariani and the EGO team, which also scooped 'Best New Practice' at the 2018 Private Dentistry Awards, and 'Best Private Dental Clinic – Central London' at the 2019 Oral Health and Dentistry Awards.
13 Strutton Ground

Planning permission has been secured for a new restaurant and hotel at 111 & 113 Ebury Street.

The project, by Grosvenor, will be highly sustainable with extensive greening and biodiversity with green roofs and insect hotels.

Work will begin in autumn this year, with the hotel ready to open by early 2023.

Summer events



The Cadet and His Sister 1988. Private collection © Paula Rego

REGO RETROSPECTIVE

Tate Britain's retrospective of London-based figurative artist Paula Rego's work runs from July 7 to October 24, telling the story of the artist's life and her influences.

The exhibition will feature over 100 works including collage, paintings, large-scale pastels, ink and pencil drawings, etchings and sculpture – including early pieces from the 1950s through to her layered, staged scenes explored post-millennium.

Millbank

From art and wellbeing to comedy and sport, it's time to enjoy the great outdoors

LIVING ON THE EDGE

Artist-run pop-up Citizen Art Market is arriving at Ebury Edge this month, with new artists showcasing their works in the surroundings of the new development.

The Ebury Edge art market will also see a series of events in the public space, with live music, participatory arts activities for the local community and more for visitors to enjoy – all for free. It runs until September.

43 Ebury Bridge Road



IT'S THE HAPPENING PLACE



Landsec is introducing a number of events at Cardinal Place to help you make the most of the summer in Victoria.

There will be screenings of Wimbledon from June 28 on the roof terrace; these are free of charge and some seating will be provided. The Landsec Experience also launches this month, with a programme of events aimed at the company's office clients. Guests can enjoy comedy nights, wine tastings, wellbeing talks and fitness sessions.



YARDS OF FUN

There's plenty of activity at the creative and wellbeing hub Eccleston Yards this summer. A summer of sport is being screened in the courtyard oasis, with Wimbledon matches and the Olympics taking centre stage. In August, the yard will be hosting a wellness festival – details to be announced nearer the time.

Eccleston Yards

PAINTINGS IN THE PALACE

The Queen's Gallery is currently hosting an exhibition of works from the Royal Collection that are usually on display in Buckingham Palace's Picture Gallery, which was designed by architect John Nash for George IV.

The masterpieces from the Buckingham Palace exhibition feature works by Dutch, Flemish and Italian old master painters including Rembrandt, Vermeer and Jan Steen among other luminaries of the age. The exhibition, which runs until January 31, coincides with a 10-year refurbishment of the palace.

The Queen's Gallery, Buckingham Palace



Bewitched

This September, hit musical *Wicked* returns to celebrate its 15th anniversary at the Apollo Victoria Theatre. Executive producer Michael McCabe takes us behind the scenes

BY ALICE CAIRNS



Back in 2006, the Apollo Victoria Theatre underwent a colourful transformation. Its original green carpets were lovingly restored, and its frontage was illuminated in shimmering emerald. Behind the Art Deco doors, spot-lit on the stage, a green-skinned woman clutched her broomstick and belted out the opening bars of *Defying Gravity*. *Wicked* the musical had arrived in Victoria – and 15 years later, it looks as though it’s here to stay.

When I speak to executive producer Michael McCabe, he tells me that he never doubted that *Wicked* would be a hit in the UK.

“When I heard about this American musical that was a smash-hit on Broadway, I felt very strongly that it would connect with British audiences too,” he says. “It’s not just a feel-good musical – it’s a feel-**everything** musical. It deals with big, universal themes: friendship, power, and the concept of good and evil. I knew that audiences in London – and all over the world – would be able to relate to that.”

Michael was right. Since its arrival in the UK, *Wicked* has gone from strength-to-strength, with tens of thousands of visitors every week falling under its green-tinted spell. From young theatre-goers enjoying their first ever musical, to enthusiasts eager to witness every cast change, watching *Wicked* has become something of a rite of passage. Michael doesn’t see that changing any time soon.

“*Wicked* just keeps getting more relevant. The notion that our leaders may not be telling us the truth – that they may, in fact, be deliberately *distracting* us from the truth –

that’s at the heart of *Wicked*, and it’s an idea that has only become more potent with time. Even now, 15 years later, it’s still important to me to stand at the back of the theatre and watch people react to *Wicked* for the first time.”

It’s true that standing at the back of the Apollo Victoria can be a breathtaking experience – even when the 2,328 seats are empty. Anyone who’s visited the theatre knows that its sheer size is enough to dwarf a smaller show – but it has proved to be just



**“Wicked just keeps getting more relevant!
The notion that our leaders may not be
telling us the truth...”**

the right size to contain the glittering world of *Wicked*.

“I’m so glad that the show has found its home in Victoria,” says Michael. “It’s a neighbourhood that I love very much. Victoria is its own community, but it’s also incredibly well connected internationally, with links to Gatwick and down to the south coast. I think that’s such a wonderful fit for *Wicked*, which is a musical with a huge international profile.”

Not only that, but *Wicked* has become an

integral part of the local community in ways that Michael had never imagined. “During *Wicked*’s 15 years in Victoria, I’ve seen how local businesses form a kind of ecosystem. Restaurants, hotels and theatres all support each other, keeping the night-time economy ticking. I’m proud to say that *Wicked* contributes to that, bringing 16,000 people to Victoria every week.”

Of course, the pandemic recently put enormous pressure on that delicate



ecosystem. The Apollo Victoria closed its doors, and venues everywhere entered into an uneasy hibernation.

“It was an exceptionally difficult time. The urge to get back up and to support the local economy was huge,” says Michael. The only silver lining, in his opinion, is that lockdown gave audiences a new appreciation for the peculiarly cathartic power of theatre – and of musical theatre in particular.

“At times when people long for escapism, they want to see a musical. Whether it’s a couple of hours away from your daily worries, or a memory shared with friends or family, musicals give us a burst of escapism and elation. I think there’s an enormous, pent-up demand to get back out there, and to experience that once again.”

And really, what better way to spend your evening of escapism than in the company of the wicked witch of the West End?

Wicked returns from September 15. It marks its 15th anniversary in London with a special celebratory performance on September 28. For tickets, visit wickedthemusical.co.uk

Star quality

We caught up with London’s own Elphaba, Laura Pick

Have you always wanted to play Elphaba?
Ever since I was given the Broadway soundtrack at 14 years old, it was THE role. I fell in love with the music, and knew that one day I had to play Elphaba.

What’s the hardest thing about the role?
Probably the vocal and physical stamina it requires – but also not to let it consume you. It’s incredibly important to be well-rested and ready to take on the role every night, but it’s important to find a balance and make some time to see friends and family.

How did you cope with theatre closures during the pandemic?
It’s not been great. I’m not sure that many people anticipated how long we would actually be away from the jobs that we love. I worried for our industry, but showbusiness is a strong mistress. She won’t be defeated easily!

Last but not least – how do you take off all that green makeup?
Haha, not easily! A Very. Long. Shower. Before the time away, I think I was always just a little bit green. I might think I’ve done a really thorough job of taking it off, and then someone on the train will ask me why I’m green.

Follow Laura on Instagram @laurapick191



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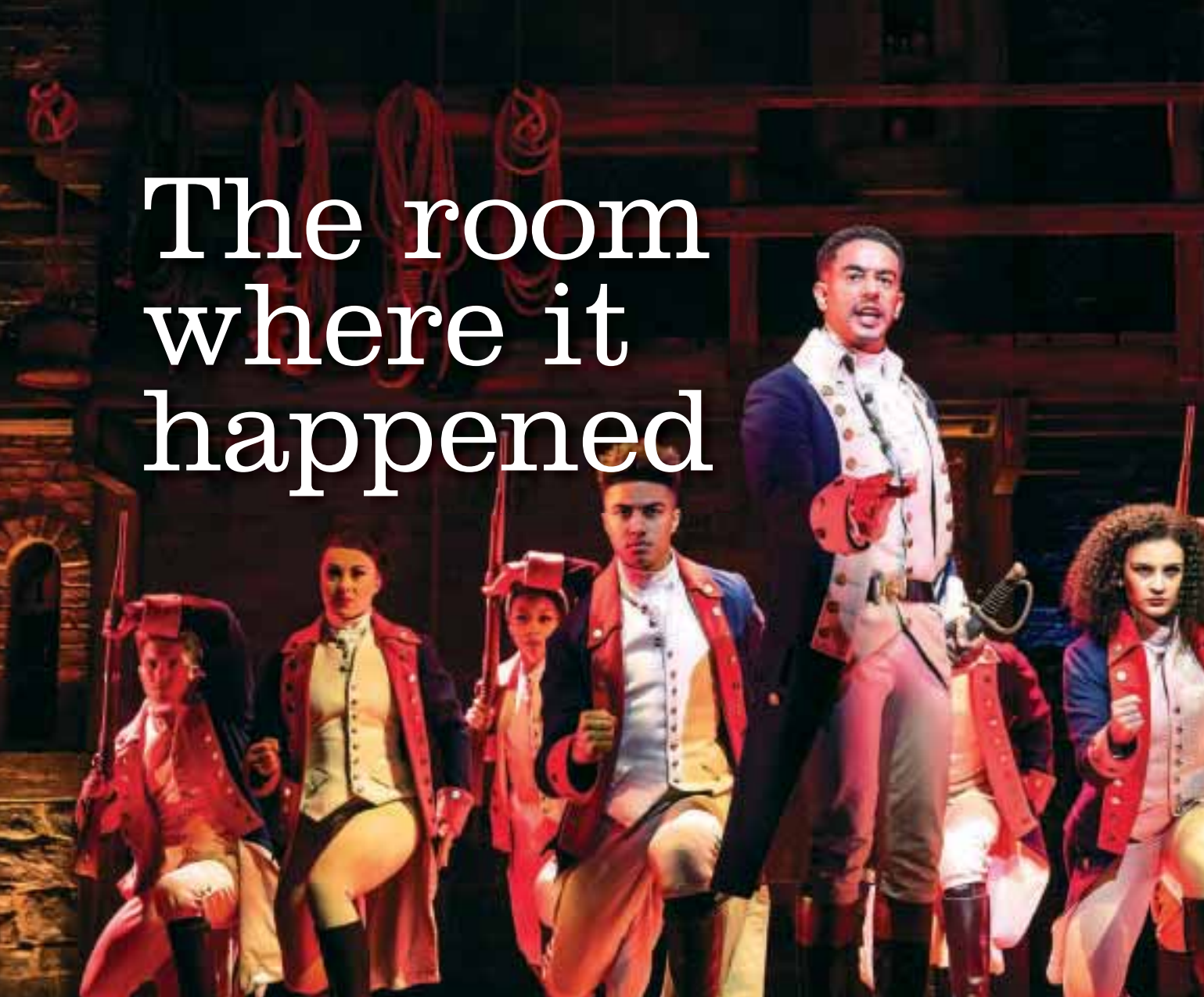
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www.victoriaprivilegecard.co.uk

The room where it happened



When audiences spill out onto the streets and beats and strains of *Hamilton* tunes skitter across rooftops surrounding the Victoria Palace Theatre this August, it will, perhaps, feel slightly bittersweet. After an enforced slumber from which theatres will collectively – fingers crossed – roar back to life, such is the *Hamilton* clout that Sir Cameron Macintosh’s announcement of the musical’s reopening headlined across national news.

Such is its impact that Giles Terera, the multi-talented Shakespearean actor and musician who played Alexander Hamilton’s nemesis Aaron Burr in the 2017 debut run, was encouraged to publish the entire work journal he kept from pre-audition to opening night. He is one of few people who understand the frisson of an eagerly-anticipated *Hamilton* opening night at the Victoria Palace.

Completed in lockdown, *Hamilton and Me; An Actor’s Journal*, is a rollercoaster ride; a thrilling, fascinating insight into Giles’s journey to the Olivier Awards, where the show amassed no fewer than

seven gongs, including the Best Actor in a Musical award for Giles.

The journal captures over a year’s raw intensity, revealing both the commitment, work ethic and sheer courage required to take on what Giles describes as “the role of a lifetime”.

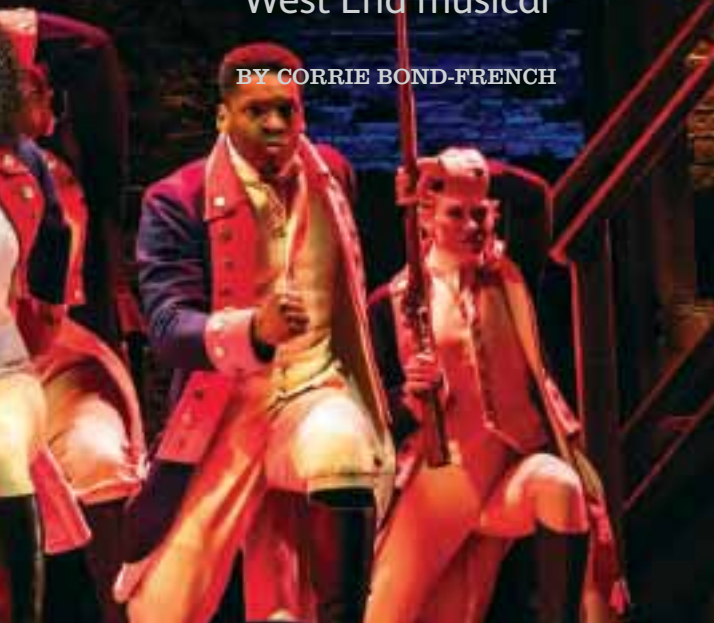
Giles had initially intended to write a guide book for actors, but his agent saw the *Hamilton* journal as a standalone project: “At first I wasn’t sure because I didn’t write it with it being published in mind, so I was a bit hesitant about whether it would actually make sense to anyone who wasn’t in the process,” says Giles. “I showed it to friends, a couple who were in the company and then a couple who weren’t and they all said, ‘you should do it’.”

One such friend was *Hamilton* creator, Lin-Manuel Miranda, who was so impressed he offered to write the foreword.

It does feel as if the role of Aaron Burr was always written in Giles’s stars. “When I was in that rehearsal process, I was able to draw on something from

What is it like to star in one of the biggest stage shows on the planet? As *Hamilton* returns to the Victoria Palace Theatre this summer, actor Giles Terera's new book offers a glimpse of life as Aaron Burr in the hit West End musical

BY CORRIE BOND-FRENCH



Karl Queensborough and the West End cast of *Hamilton*
Photo: Matt Murphy

almost every situation that I'd been in in my career thus far; I'd often think I could use that thought, or that image, or that thing that I learned or heard or saw from 10 or 15 years ago."

Giles experienced the *Hamilton* magic himself, before he auditioned in New York: "It is interesting that it has a very different energy and power to it, somehow, in the way it affects people. When I auditioned for the show in New York I had been listening to the cast recordings maybe a month before that, so I felt I knew it fairly well, but then when I sat down and saw it on Broadway, it just blew me away, as if I'd never heard of it or seen it.

"There's just something about the show which is

very, very powerful, and I don't know what that thing is! I just tried to be open to it and do the best I possibly can."

Giles is also fascinated by the history. "Before *Hamilton* I was working on a play at the Bristol Old Vic and The National which was set at exactly the same time as *Hamilton*, in England in 1781, about the Zong massacre, when the owners of the ship threw overboard and killed 132 of the enslaved Africans in order to claim insurance. That was George III's time, in fact, many of the same people are spoken about in *Hamilton*. I'm interested in relooking at history in terms of what our equivalents are, so it's not just something you learned in history lessons but is actually something you can link to our way of life today. I think *Hamilton* definitely does that."

Giles concedes that the role of Aaron Burr has been his career favourite, and that there is a period of adjustment when a role ends. "Especially coming off the back of *Hamilton*, you have to have a focus and a structure otherwise you get swamped by everything and often when we as actors finish a show, finish a play, and then we go back to that 'Oh no what am I



"It is interesting that it has a very different energy and power to it"

doing now?' That's when we struggle, well it's when I struggle."

Lockdown hasn't helped and the cultural sector has been hit hard. "There wasn't a huge amount of help there to begin with," he says. "I think it's safe to say that the attitude towards the performing arts is a lot different from what people might have thought within the industry."

Giles is looking forward to being busy again and he will soon be formally presented with his MBE, which will take pride of place alongside his Olivier. What's next? Aaron Burr, sir?

Hamilton and Me: An Actor's Journal, Nick Hern Books, £16.99, is out on July 1. *Hamilton* returns from August 19, Hamilton.com



Pages of summer

Julia Zarychta

Bookseller,
Waterstones Victoria

***A Theatre for Dreamers* by Polly Samson**

Set on the Greek island of Hydra in the 1960s, this is a mesmerising coming-of-age story, full of musings on art and literature. A light, escapist read seeping of summer on each and every page.



***Nightingale* by Marina Kemp**

A beautiful and melancholic story of a young live-in nurse who leaves Paris for a rural French village, full of secrets and intrigue. A wonderfully-engaging read that will sweep you away.



***The Glass Hotel* by Emily St John Mandel**

A remote island hotel, a Ponzi scheme, a disappearance. This unique book is atmospheric, haunting and a bit magical – you won't let it go until the final page.



88
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Already dreaming of long lunches and a good book by the beach? We asked two local booksellers to share their recommendations

BY JONATHAN WHILEY

Andy Barr

Manager, Belgravia Books

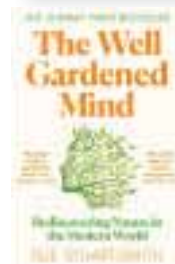
***Agent Sonya* by Ben Macintyre**

The exhilarating, fast-paced tale of Ursula Kuczynski Burton: secret agent, spymaster, saboteur and bomb-maker, and at the centre of some of the most dangerous espionage operations of the 20th century. Ben Macintyre is the undisputed master of the genre.



***The Well-Gardened Mind* by Sue Stuart-Smith**

If you have found the restrictions of lockdown tough going this is the read for you. Written by psychiatrist/psychotherapist and keen gardener, Sue Stuart-Smith details the many benefits of time spent outdoors, both physically and mentally.



***Bear* by Marian Engel**

A shy librarian moves to a remote island in summer and, in the process of rediscovering herself, forms a very unexpected relationship. A short, strident, offbeat and bold cult classic from Canada.



***A Hundred Million Years and a Day* by Jean-Baptiste Andrea**

When he hears a story about a huge dinosaur fossil locked deep inside an Alpine glacier, university professor Stan finds a childhood dream reignited. Obsession, a hazardous quest and bonds forged and tested – this is a breathless epic-in-miniature.



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Art of the Blitz is the subject of a new exhibition in the Churchill War Rooms – the first time any works of art have ever been shown in these historic surroundings

BY CORRIE BOND-FRENCH

Westminster at war



It's difficult to truly imagine the sights, sounds and smells of London 80 years ago, as fires blazed and smoke billowed across the capital from Blitz bombardment. Londoners carried on, side-stepping rubble and destruction, many seeking nocturnal safety and shelter in the underground as parachute bombs descended ominously. It seems remarkable that, amid the chaos, huge efforts to ensure that war art could tell a story then and now were being made by the War Artists Association Committee.

While the past can't be preserved in aspic, the addition of the first ever art exhibition to the carefully-conserved Churchill War Rooms (Clive Steps, King Charles Street) will offer visitors an additional, poignant insight from within the secret underground where history was made. It was here, after all, where Churchill and Britain's leaders directed the course of the Second World War and the Allied route to victory.

Wartime London: Art of the Blitz features 12 carefully-curated gems from the Imperial War Museum's vast war art collection, including three recently-acquired Henry Moore drawings and work by Eric Ravilious and Leila Faithfull. The art

trail will explore and illuminate the themes of the threat and experience of war, set against the unique historic backdrop of the secret subterranean headquarters.

"It's very interesting placing these paintings and drawings in these historic rooms," says IWM curator, Claire Brenard. "They were made at the same time as the rooms were in operation, so it's an interesting juxtaposition to have the artwork in them – they really talk to each other and make you think how people saw things at that time."

"It's a very exciting project. For example, we have a Ravilious drawing of a teleprinter and we've put that in a room with an actual teleprinter machine in the CWR. The one Ravilious drew wasn't the same one but it was one in Whitehall. This technology would have been absolutely state-of-the-art at the time."

Other artworks include a depiction of a parachute bomb descending above the Thames by William Matvyn Wright, Leila Faithfull's oil depiction of jubilant VE Day celebrations, an Evelyn Gibbs oil scene of a clothing exchange run by members of the Women's Voluntary Service and works by Ernest Boye Uden, who was also a



Clockwise from left: Henry Moore – Two Women with a Child in a Shelter, 1940-41; Evelyn Gibbs – WV's Clothing Exchange, 1943; W Matvyn Wright – A Parachute Bomb, 1941; and Eric Ravilious – The Teleprinter Room, 1941

member of the auxiliary Fireman Artist's Group.

Art was both commissioned and purchased during the Second World War by the War Artists Association Committee, led by Kenneth Clarke. Contemporaneous exhibitions toured the country, giving everyone a chance to see how war was affecting all corners of the UK, and an exhibition toured America prior to the US joining the war.

The three Henry Moore drawings were a recent acquisition for the IWM from private hands through the Acceptance in Lieu of Tax scheme. "We were very lucky to get these," says Claire. "They were so successful at the time that Henry Moore was selling many privately. It's very difficult for museums to acquire – there's no money to acquire anything now so that was a bit of a coup.

"These are wonderful examples of his work. They're not obviously optimistic, some of them are pretty bleak, but some of them have a timeless, noble quality. It really struck him, this terrible toll that the war was taking on the most vulnerable in society, but he also managed to make the work more of a universal theme of humanity's struggles and suffering.

"They were actually a turning point in his career because he couldn't really sculpt at the time, so he drew. It was the first time he had to draw fabric – he was concentrating on nudes before and he was interested in the folds of fabric and how they lay over knees and things, then that found its way into his later sculptures. They're just so important in terms of his career as well. It's unusual for war art to penetrate through into the history of modern art, and he's obviously one of the most important artists of the time. We're really chuffed to have them and to be able to put them on show.

"For Londoners, it's a great time to visit because it will be quiet and you will be able to really take your time. It's unique, because we've never shown works of art in this space before."

Wartime London: Art of the Blitz, until September 12. Free event with general admission, Churchill War Rooms. Visit iwm.org.uk/visits/Churchill-war-rooms



"It's unique, because we've never shown works of art in this space before."



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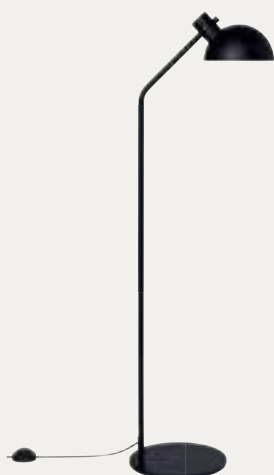
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BY REYHAAN DAY



Aces in the pack

This summer, the Victoria, Victoria Westminster, Whitehall and Northbank Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) are putting the spotlight on those who continually support the local community, but went above and beyond to help others during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Kings & Queens campaign will put these everyday heroes front and centre as part of outdoor installations including a playing card bench, walkway tunnel and activities including garden games - as well as posters celebrating individuals who strived to make a difference.

Those celebrated include Claudette Dawkins, primary services manager and 21-year head chef at homeless charity The Passage, who oversaw the delivery of 61,637 meals to those in need; Carl Konadu, CEO of social enterprise 2-3 Degrees, which equips young people with personal development skills they need for the future, particularly across Westminster, where their flagship Mastering My Future programme has taken place; Mary Doogan, cluster general manager of DoubleTree by Hilton Victoria, who opened the hotel's doors to first responders during the pandemic; Sarah Nicholls, youth worker at St Andrew's Club, who ran online activities for members, offered phone check-ins and regular food deliveries for families and PC Leo

Chapman at Victoria Business Team, who conducted patrols across the district with his team, dealing with antisocial behaviour and working in partnership with social care services to assist vulnerable people.

Visitors will be able to read the stories of these heroes and others, via in situ QR codes; those living, working and visiting the area can also get involved by honouring their own local kings and queens through the #everydaykingsandqueens competition on social media.

The BIDs are also announcing special offers from local businesses as part of the campaign, including themed cocktails, complimentary drinks, discounted food, souvenirs and hotel stays. Look out for 'Hidden Gems' discounts at Rippon Cheese (26 Upper Tachbrook Street), M Restaurant (74 Victoria Street), Pall Mall Barbers (11 Palmer Street), St James' Court London Taj Hotel (54 Buckingham Gate), The Guardsman Hotel (1 Vandon Street), Aster (150 Victoria Street), Iberica (68 Victoria Street), Royal Quarter Food Hall (72 Buckingham Gate), The Ivy Victoria (66 Victoria Street), The Rubens at the Palace (39 Buckingham Palace Road), 1Rebel Victoria (Nova South, 5 Allington Street), DoubleTree by Hilton London Victoria (2 Bridge Place) and more. For more information, visit victoriabid.co.uk/hidden-gems.

Keep an eye out for more activities this summer, as there is plenty more fun yet to be announced.





Top left:
Playing card
bench

Left: Just a
few of those
recognised for
going beyond
the call of
duty during
the Covid-19
pandemic



**CLAUDETTE DAWKINS,
PRIMARY SERVICES
MANAGER AND HEAD
CHEF,
THE PASSAGE**

Claudette Dawkins has been one of the Victoria community's shining lights for over 20 years, as head chef and primary services manager at The Passage – but she actually fell into the world of community work. "I started at the end of May in 1999. I was previously working at Langan's Brasserie, and one of the other chefs there had a friend who had a connection to The Passage. Word got around and I went for an interview in the morning, and they offered me the job in the afternoon. I hadn't heard of The Passage until I got here. It's been 22 years and I've never looked back."

Throughout this pandemic, Claudette strove to implement a plan to keep the organisation's clients fed and rested. "It was really important to continue supporting our clients. Even though we're dealing with homeless people, they still need to be looked after. They still need a safe place to stay. They need to be fed."

"Our work changed a lot. I set about creating a food hub where we were preparing food en masse, making sure it was properly cooked and delivered safely and hot to our clients. It was a good challenge." She and her team served nearly 62,000 meals across lockdown. Now Claudette is being recognised by her community – as part of the Victoria BID's Everyday Kings and Queens campaign.

How does she feel being in the spotlight? "It was weird! I was just coming in as usual, doing what I do... But it's nice to have that acknowledgement."

PAULA NADAL

Paula Nadal is a designer who founded her eponymous label in 2018 with the objective of creating an ethical high-end wardrobe with craftsmanship and quality, with a strong focus on tailoring. Born and raised in the Catalan city of Girona, she now resides in Westminster and her label is stocked in 50M in Eccleston Yards.

"My training was at IED Barcelona where I graduated in womenswear fashion design. Fashion design was a decision at the last minute – I was not on time to enter the fine arts university and it was already September.

All I always wanted was to create with my hands, study my persona and be part of a positive change. Then fashion was a last-minute decision but it actually was the perfect one. My work is very personal – mainly I design for myself and my muses. Saying that, I understand the female body better – for me, it is just easier to read, yet my clothes are also for men. My male muse is something that, hopefully, we will start seeing more and more.

Tailored clothing is key in everyone's life, it is power, strength and courage, comfort and also functionality. I also believe that having your clothes tailored is more ethical and beautiful.

Your body is your home and your clothing your choice, then, having tailored pieces in your wardrobe is the best acquisition you can have, because everyone is unique and irreplaceable. And yes, clothes speak for you.

I love Westminster, I am an outsider – living that close to Big Ben is quite a strange situation. I feel like I'm living in a movie set everyday. I would recommend to visit Iris & June for a delicious morning coffee and then sit down in one of the benches looking at the Thames, perhaps a bike ride though St James's to Hyde Park and pop by Eccleston Yards, I will end the day having some dinner around Belgravia. A perfect day."



A cut above

We meet three local tailors who are taking stylish dressing to a whole new level

BY SOPHIA CHARALAMBOUS

REDWOOD & FELLER

Eddie Rowland has been at the helm of Redwood & Feller since 1974.

Over the last 47 years, the no-nonsense tailor has made a name for himself – suiting six prime ministers, most Cabinets and rock stars. The list includes Baroness Thatcher’s husband Sir Denis Thatcher, who Eddie, 72, suited for 31 years.

“Two weeks after she was called ‘The Iron Lady’, she came in to pick his annual suit out and they had an argument inside the shop, and he turned round to her said, ‘Margaret, you might be called The Iron Lady outside this



marriage but inside this marriage, you’re not so shut up and leave me alone’,” Eddie regales.

“Anyway I started laughing, he laughed, and then there was a twinkle in her eye and we stood there roaring with laughter – the three of us.”

The Rochester Row shop was up for sale for seven years before Eddie bought it.

Being born and bred in Lambeth Walk, Eddie was aware that Rochester Row links the City of London to Belgravia, knowing that anyone with money would drive past the shop.

“I turned it into a Savile Row shop,” he says.

“I could’ve opened a shop in Savile Row years

ago but I’m not bothered – it doesn’t worry me – you can get a perfectly good living here – Pimlico and Victoria is an amazing area, very historical and I love it.

“I sacked all the staff when I first moved here because the work wasn’t good enough!”

In 1986, he received a Royal Warrant from Her Majesty The Queen. Eddie wasn’t particularly fussed about applying for a Royal Warrant. Then one day, Sir John Miller asked Eddie to visit him at his residence in the Royal Mews. “He took me across the courtyard and I walked into a room and there was The Queen and the Duke – she was sitting behind a coffee table.

“She said, ‘Mr Rowland, how are you?’ and I said, ‘Your Majesty, I’m somewhat surprised

“I said, ‘Your Majesty, next time, make an appointment because like you I’m a very busy person. I walked out the room and she roared with laughter”

to see you’. Then she said, ‘would you like a coffee?’ I sat beside her and she poured it out. I was there for about 20 minutes cracking jokes.

“I knew it was time to go when she said, ‘it was really nice to see you’, and I said, ‘Your Majesty, next time, make an appointment because like you I’m a very busy person.

“I walked out the room and she roared with laughter – they both were.”

Everything is made by hand in the workshop at the back of the shop and Eddie’s son Elliot has also joined the family business. At 18 years old, he asked his dad out of the blue to join the business; it was a shock as Eddie thought his son would go into the performing arts. Now Eddie’s daughter has been talking about joining.

Eddie’s just signed another 15-year lease, so it seems like this business is going nowhere any time soon.

89 Rochester Row

VOLPE SARTORIALE

Volpe Sartoriale is the brainchild of Adrian Holdsworth and has been based on Denbigh Street in Pimlico for over 17 years, working with artisan workshops in Italy to create products designed for the modern man. Each garment is made in limited quantities and making-to-measure allows for each individual to obtain a unique piece of clothing.

"For as long as I can remember I always had a passion for clothes. As a management trainee at Harrods I specialised in fashion and when I was given the chance to train at the Ermenegildo Zegna workshop in Novara in Italy, I couldn't resist the opportunity to combine so many of my passions, all at once.

Tailored clothing offers a better fit, better quality, individuality, a way to express your personality, rather than disappearing into homogeneity.

Volpe is Italian for fox, Sartoriale intimates, style. One of my favourite shops was Volpone, ('sly fox') a shoe shop in Florence. Mario, the owner, lived up to his namesake as a bit of a rogue. Clearly, I would never use that expression to describe myself.

I wanted to offer that same sense of diversity within a neighbourhood that you find in Italy. Pimlico has been my home for over 30 years and still retains that village feel. Although tucked away in a residential street, we have still managed to acquire friends in 123 countries.

The best part about being a tailor is indulging my passion for clothes, curating a wardrobe, scratching your sartorial itches, developing your style, and making new friends. Tailoring offers you your suit of armour, in whatever sense you need one. Not a single piece, it's a wardrobe and confidence, developed over time with your tailor."



TAILOR MADE

Offering a unique contactless 3D body scan experience to take your body measurements and body configuration

in ten seconds, Tailor Made understands that every body is different and your wardrobe needs to reflect this. The main benefit is you do not have to compromise, which is often the case with off-the-rack items. Tailor Made also strongly believes it's important consumers stop buying into fast fashion brands, as it's much more sustainable to have garments made on-demand.

15d Eccleston Place



LUXURY ALTERATIONS

With over 20 years' experience in providing skilled fitters, stylists and seamstresses to attend to bridal, evening, formalwear and men's clothes, Luxury Alterations works closely with you to make sure your vision transpires in your final fitting. It ensures a completely couture experience and can even tailor and customise your favourite suit or tuxedo.

17 Churton Street

MOSS BROS

Design online and have your custom-made suit ready in six weeks. You can choose from a range of fabric swatches, and the service includes everything from buttons to lapel width, pick stitching and contrast button holes. If you want to see the fabrics and suits in the flesh, it is handy to have the store in the area to suss everything out before creating your bespoke design.

165 Victoria Street



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Vionic

A classic toepost sandal that can be worn as easily with jeans as shorts, Tide, £60, will become your go-to shoe for all events.

JONES BOOTMAKER, 84
VICTORIA STREET

Look cool in the heat

Clarks

The new Wallabee Cup, £120, is sure to become an Originals classic. The lilac is a great shade for the season.

149 VICTORIA
STREET

Why not brighten up
your wardrobe and stand
out from the crowd this
summer?

BY SOPHIA CHARALAMBOUS





Izipizi

These reading, £40, or sun frames, £45, with 100% UV protection in hot pink will brighten up anyone's day.

TATE BRITAIN, MILLBANK



Mango
Light in both material and colour, this utility jacket, £69.99, can be thrown on when the wind starts to pick up.
76 VICTORIA STREET



Paula Nadal

A Paula Nadal Collection T-shirt, £70, will transition you through the seasons seamlessly.

50M 14-15

ECCLESTON YARDS



Zara

It doesn't get more smart and summery than this short-sleeved, relaxed summer shirt, £59.99, with an elegant floral print.

82 VICTORIA STREET



M&S
These hot pink shorts, £12.50, will make a bold statement at any, long-awaited, pool party.
726-732 VICTORIA STREET

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www.angiewoodart.com

email: angiwood@btinternet.com

telephone: 07939 526132

SNAZZY METAL

The Kena Hammered metal watering can, £29.50, is the ideal gift for any green-fingered dads. It'll also look pretty snazzy on the shelf, too.

OLIVER BONAS

Unit 49, Victoria Station

PINK FIZZ

Celebrate in style with this Billecart-Salmon Cuvée Elisabeth Rosé 2008, £180, – a much-anticipated release this year that will be sure to excite any champagne or wine buff.

JEROBOAMS

50-52 Elizabeth Street

Dad's day!

Great gift ideas for Father's Day which is coming up – on June 20

BY JONATHAN WHILEY

MILITARY STYLE

The Queen's Own Yeomanry Socks, £16, are made by luxury sock and knitwear brand Corgi and inspired by the Queen's armoured reconnaissance regiment of the British Territorial army.

ROYAL COLLECTION

7 Buckingham Palace Road

THE SCENT OF SUMMER

The new and cooler counterpart of the 2017 Viking is this aromatic fougère – Viking Cologne, £175 for 50ml. A blend of citrus, herbs and woods makes for a perfect summer scent.

CREED

Les Senteurs,
71 Elizabeth Street

CHOCOLATE TREAT

The Velvetiser, Charcoal Edition, £99.95, is for the chocoholic dad. The machine creates barista-grade hot chocolates with grated chocolate flakes and any milk of your choice in 2.5 minutes.

HOTEL

CHOCOLAT
133 Victoria Street

PERFECT PAMPERING

The ultimate shower lover gift is this Stop! Shower Time!, £60, box of bombs, body lotions, soap, shampoo bars and shower gels of some of the most loved Lush products.

LUSH, 14 Buckingham Palace Road



Countless are the days, stretching back over the centuries, when sunlight has filtered through soaring stained glass to illuminate stone and spectacle within Westminster Abbey.

An evocative time capsule, the Abbey still has many secrets to reveal. Innumerable weddings, baptisms and burials have taken place; gentle reflection and fire and brimstone sermons have been preached; sanctuary has been sought – even by a Plantagenet Queen who gave birth to a future King at the Abbot’s medieval house of Cheyne-gates.

Unlike his parents, Edward V would never be crowned in his Abbey birthplace. He and his brother – the tragic Princes in the Tower, may be buried there, but that too is a mystery that the Abbey holds some answers to. From such high-profile mysteries to the more mundane minutiae of Abbey life, the magnificently-titled Keeper of the Muniments is the researcher’s first port of call.

Effectively the archivist responsible for the preservation, care and unravelling of ancient documents and tantalising snippets of information, Matthew Payne’s work is a labour of love.

“It is wonderful – every day you walk through the cloisters to work and you think ‘this is great’. It’s an extraordinary thing really, every day at work to get that sort of feeling, it’s wonderful and gratifying,” says Matthew.

“A lot of work has been done on the Abbey archives over the last 50 years or so but there’s masses more to be done, which is also gratifying; you’re not just sitting there making sure that no one pinches things, there’s much more to be done, including new techniques we can bring to bear and look at things in a different light.”

Researchers and historians can book a slot in the Reading Room to look at items under Matthew’s care, and he is responsive to requests about a range of things where the Abbey might have had any involvement; the history, the estates, coronations, weddings, funerals and its monuments and statues.

Matthew has his favourites, one of which is now

Matthew Payne holds the key to many of the secrets within the walls of Westminster Abbey. Here he unveils some of its hidden treasures

BY CORRIE BOND-FRENCH

A man and his



displayed in the Diamond Jubilee Gallery. “The most interesting object within my curatorial care which I was able to display was the Islip Roll. It’s in a display case on its own, a long parchment roll depicting the funeral of the last great Abbott before

dissolution. This one is particularly fancy – it’s probably either a presentation copy or a draft of some sort, and it’s just got the drawings, which would have gone at the top, and they’re the only drawings of the inside of the Abbey before the dissolution.

“It’s a wonderful thing. Hardly anyone had actually seen it because it was kept in the muniment room and was rarely brought out. It is incredibly beautiful and incredibly important historically for showing us


 A man with glasses, wearing a dark sweater over a white shirt, stands in a church. He is holding a large, open manuscript with a prominent diamond-shaped pattern on its cover. The background shows the stone architecture of the church, including columns and arches.

muniments

Main picture:
Matthew
Payne
Below left:
The *Litlington
Missal*
manuscript
Below: The
Muniment
Room

Pictures: Dean
and Chapter



what the actual Abbey looked like inside.”

Matthew’s own research is ongoing. He recently unearthed evidence to confirm that the tiny chapel of Our Lady of the Pew – a four-foot square chapel closed to crowds to protect the medieval paintings on its walls – was correctly named and identified after some experts previously denied its existence. Matthew also discovered it was where Henry VII’s pious mother Margaret Beaufort – who died at the

Abbey five days after seeing her grandson Henry VIII crowned there – would hear mass.

He also came across literary treasure – a handwritten manuscript of *The Courtier’s Library* by poet John Donne, hidden among other papers. “In the corner of the muniment room there were boxes of fragments which hadn’t been matched up with other bits of the document it had come from, or were water damaged, mostly little bits of pieces I’m gradually looking at and trying to make sense of, and this one was a much bigger fragment.

“It’s the oldest manuscript known of this and it was just in this trunk, so that was a good day at work!”

Matthew has never had any supernatural experiences. “People say that in certain areas you get a frisson down the spine, or they see a figure but I’ve never encountered anything.

“It’s wonderful out of hours. The muniments that I look after are stored in a 17th-century gallery inside the Abbey looking down on Poets’ Corner, so I can stand up there, when the lights go out, and have the place to myself, and that’s extraordinary.”



Cream of Cornish

Much-loved chef Rick Stein is set to host a culinary pop-up at The Goring this month. The seafood extravaganza will run at the Beeston Place hotel from June 14 to 20 and guests can enjoy his signature dishes on the veranda, including whole Dover sole meunière with noisette butter.

Rick's sons, Jack and Charlie, will host an intimate demo during the pop-up and there will be a meet and greet with Rick himself later in the week.

To book, email reservations@thegoring.com

Dining with a difference

M Victoria Street is doing things a little differently with its innovative new dining experiences. Step back into the roaring Twenties with a Great Gatsby dinner (June 25, £95 per person), an immersive evening of theatre and live performance that comes with themed cocktails and a magnificent four-course menu. Or if you'd like to add a little drama to your next dinner, spin the steak roulette wheel and be in with the chance of winning a cut of highly-prized Japanese Kobe beef.

74 Victoria Street



Pure magic

If you're a regular at Pure in Victoria Station, you may want to check out its exciting new click & collect platform, Pure +more. Signing up to become a Pure +more member guarantees you 20 per cent off all click & collect orders, as well as access to exclusive deals and regular rewards. By placing your order in-app or online, you can pick up your favourite food and drink without waiting in any pesky queues. The first month of your membership is completely free, and subsequent months cost £4.99.

24 Victoria Station

Eating out..

A Rick Stein pop-up, a Gatsby-style dinner and a British pub are all on the menu this month

BY ALICE CAIRNS

Pub grub

Renowned chef Sally Abé has opened a new pub in the heart of Westminster. Located in the Conrad St James hotel, the revamped Blue Boar promises a contemporary take on traditional pub favourites. Expect quintessentially British food made with local, seasonal ingredients, served in a newly-revamped space inspired by local landmarks. Don't miss the Sunday roast, which Sally reportedly spent months perfecting. Veggie options include a meat-free shepherd's pie and a vegan BLT.

45 Tothill Street





A taste of India

An exciting new Indian restaurant has opened in Grosvenor Gardens. Pataka is designed around the concept of community, with plenty of sharing options and a central bread bar where you can sample multiple kinds of Indian breads. Don't miss the pickle library, a collection of thousands of tasty pickles curated by an in-house 'picklemellier'. The menu is designed to be deliverable, and all packaging used in the delivery process is environmentally sensitive, recyclable and compostable.

43 Grosvenor Gardens

. is back in

Full of beans

Coffee-lovers, rejoice! Wild by Tart in Ecclestone Yards has opened a new coffee kiosk. Customers can choose from a tasty range of hot and cold drinks, as well as a daily-changing menu of freshly-baked pastries and cakes. The kiosk is located in The Wild Store, which stocks an irresistible selection of Tart's own homewares, cutlery, glassware and napkins. Stop by for a browse after you've had your caffeine fix.

15a Ecclestone Place





The flavour of France

POILÂNE

Ever since 1932, Poilâne Bakery has been known for producing some of the best bread in Paris. Lucky Londoners can sample those world-famous loaves by visiting the Elizabeth Street branch – the only Poilâne this side of the Channel.

Each Poilâne loaf is made using stone-ground local grains and slow fermentation processes, before being cooked to a crisp golden-brown in a traditional wood-fired oven. The bakery also produces authentic French pastries to coincide with the seasons, from hazelnut-filled Kings Cakes in January, to Yule logs dusted with icing sugar at Christmas.

Signature bake: Punitons – small, sugar cookies with scalloped edges. Perfect with coffee.

46 Elizabeth Street



The sourdough specialist

CHESTNUT BAKERY

This new community bakery is set to become a destination for sourdough connoisseurs.

Masterminded by Kevan Roberts, an artisan baker who has published a book on bread-making, Chestnut ferments its sourdough for up to 72 hours. The result is a loaf with a delicious, rounded flavour, a firm crust and an airy crumb.

But what's even more impressive than the sourdough bread is Chestnut's commitment to the community. It regularly spearheads local initiatives: donating loaves to nearby schools, hosting free masterclasses on Instagram and gifting boxes of baked goodies to deserving neighbours. What's not to love?

Signature bake: Sourdough baguette
17-21 Elizabeth Street

Ready, steady, bake!

Is there anything nicer than a freshly-baked loaf or a crisp, buttery pastry? We round up a selection of the best across Victoria and Westminster

BY ALICE CAIRNS



The brunch spot

GAIL'S

If you're looking for a seasonal selection of fresh bread, pastries and cakes, Gail's, which recently opened on Buckingham Palace Road, is a good place to start. The much-loved brand's cinnamon buns are particularly good (delicately spiced with a crunchy coating of sugar), while there is house-blend coffee served alongside savoury offerings such as fresh soup and brunch to showcase its delicious bread.

With eco-credentials in its packing and donations of surplus food among its many charitable ventures, there is much to admire as you enjoy a pain au raisin. Signature bake: The cinnamon bun
22-24 Buckingham Palace Road

The patisserie expert

BONNE BOUCHE

This family bakery has been producing high-quality baked goods for more than 50 years. As well as creating tasty loaves, quiches and pastries, Bonne Bouche is known for its delicious gateaux – dreamy flights of fancy topped with swirls of cream, shards of chocolate and glazed fruits. It's no wonder that Bonne Bouche patisserie is supplied to a range of prestigious venues, including Harrods, the Royal Opera House and The Ivy.

Signature bake: Nougat twist, developed by master baker and owner, Rolf Biller.
6 Strutton Ground



All you knead

Three more bakeries to sink your teeth into...

Royal Artisan Bakery

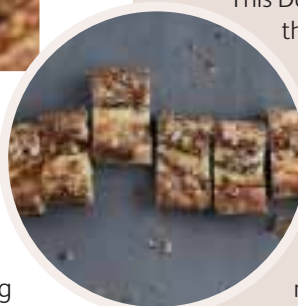
Excellent coffee and a range of sweet pastries; from swirls of chocolate, cinnamon, vanilla and berries. If you drop by at breakfast time, be sure to try one of the croissants, with buttery shards of flaky pastry.
84-86 Petty France



Ole & Steen

This Danish bakery embraces the concept of 'hygge', offering a cosy oasis from the hustle and bustle of London life. Baked goods include traditional Danish pastries – including the much-loved cinnamon social – alongside lavish cream cakes and deeply savoury rye bread.

1 Sir Simon Milton Square and
31 Eccleston Place



Little Bread Pedlar

The founders of Little Bread Pedlar met at a roller disco party under the arches of London Bridge, and made a wild promise to open a café together. They fulfilled it and now offer freshly-baked loaves, herby focaccia, pastries and cakes, as well as locally-sourced jam and honey to slather on your bread.

34 Moreton Street



Peggy Porschen's Vegan Jam Heart Cookies

INGREDIENTS MAKES 15 COOKIES

- 200g (7oz/¾ cup plus 2 tbsp) sunflower margarine, cold
- 300g (10½oz/2¼ cups) plain (all-purpose) flour, sifted, plus extra for dusting
- 100g (3½oz/½ cup) caster sugar
- pinch of salt
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 75g (2½oz/5 tbsp) redcurrant or raspberry jelly
- round pastry cutter, about 6cm (2½in) diameter
- small heart-shaped cutter, about 2.5cm (1in) diameter



Hearts of happiness

Elevating a childhood favourite, these cookies are easy to make and have a satisfying crunch

TO MAKE THE COOKIES

Dice the cold margarine and place it in a large bowl.

Mix the flour with the sugar and salt and sprinkle it over the cold margarine.

Rub the flour mix into the margarine with your fingertips until the texture looks evenly crumbly.

Add the vanilla extract and knead the mixture to a dough.

Wrap the dough in cling film, flatten it and chill for at least 1 hour, or until the dough feels cold and firm.

Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 175°C fan/375°F Gas 5 and line 2 baking trays with baking parchment.

Lightly dust a smooth cool work surface with flour and roll the dough out to a thickness of about 3mm.

Using the round cookie cutter, stamp out about 30 rounds and place them onto the prepared baking trays.

Using the small heart-shaped cutter,

stamp a heart centre out of half of the cookies.

Chill the cookies again for 15 minutes until cool and set.

Bake in the preheated oven for 6–8 minutes until golden brown. Turn your trays halfway through baking to ensure an even colouration. Once cooked, allow to cool completely on the trays.

TO FILL THE COOKIES

Heat the jelly in a small saucepan or in the microwave – it should be smooth and hot. Spread 1 tsp of the jelly into the middle of each whole round cookie using a teaspoon. Place a cookie with a heart cutout on top while the jelly is still hot and allow it to set.

From Peggy Porschen: A Year in Cake (Quadrille, £22), is out now.

©Paul Plews

116 Ebury Street

Eat & drink Directory out & in



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www.rosasthaicafe.com/locations/victoria



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15A Elizabeth Street

THE COURTYARD

St. James' Courtyard is a hidden gem amid the hustle and bustle of central London. This tranquil place is surrounded by a unique turn-of-the-century red brick frieze, depicting scenes from Shakespeare's Sylvan plays, overlooking a cherub-adorned Victorian fountain. In this idyllic courtyard, guests can experience an outdoor selection of plates and an innovative collection of creative cocktails while celebrating the good times ahead.

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

St. James' Court, A Taj Hotel
54 Buckingham Gate, London SW1E 6AF
Telephone: 020 7834 6655



They say that often, the right profession chooses you. For Robert Michieli, who has been operating the Royal Guild of Toastmasters in Westminster's Millbank Court for over 30 years, a favour for a friend made the decision for him.

Born in Jersey to hotelier parents, he sat his hotel management exams and prepared for a life in hospitality. But one night, he got a call. "I knew the banqueting manager from the Hotel de France in Jersey and he said: 'Our toastmaster's on his last legs – can you go and help him?' It was an event for the Institute of Bankers. I was helping this old chap out and we had all the timings and names written down on cards. He announced the top table and we said grace, then he went yellow."

A nervous Michieli stepped up, following the cards – announcing speakers, overseeing proceedings – and the night was a success. When the existing toastmaster passed away a few weeks later, all eyes fell on Michieli to replace him.

The term "toastmaster" goes back to medieval times, when experts would be appointed to test and blend the wine for large banquets. They would toast a piece of bread over a flame and use it to stir in various herbs and spices. By the 17th and 18th centuries, the 'Master of the Toast' took on the duties of a house steward or

Voice artist

Robert Michieli has run the Royal Guild of Toastmasters for over 30 years, and is still shouting from the rooftops

BY ALEX BRIAND

butler, and among responsibilities would formally introduce guests arriving for dinner. The first professional toastmaster as we know them today is thought to have been James Toole in the 1840s.

Their roles vary but centre around keeping an event structured, elegant and moving. That can range from letting people know to move from the open bar to the main ceremony (no mean feat at the Publican Awards, says Michieli) to introducing the main speakers with a flourish and much more besides.

Once he had made a name on Jersey, Michieli looked to make it official. "I thought I'd better go find out what's what," he says, and found that there was just one place to learn the trade – the Ivor Spencer International School for Butlers and Toastmasters. He shadowed Spencer for three months and attended events of all stripes: award ceremonies, diplomatic functions and weddings from Indian to Jewish and everything in between, picking up all the nuances of the professional master of ceremonies. (Spencer, a legend of the art and royal officiator, is listed in the *Guinness Book of Records* for having introduced more than 45,000 speakers.)

On graduating, Michieli settled in to an office in Millbank





Court, around the corner from the Tate Britain, and typed out over 65 letters to the banqueting managers of the West End. After a successful trial at the Hilton, he was invited back and was soon regularly compèring four events a week. On March 20 2007, he was the toastmaster for the biggest sit-down dinner ceremony ever held – 2,800 people, at the Grosvenor House hotel.

At a wedding, he says, the role of the toastmaster can really make the big day. “He will quietly invite the bride and groom up to cut the cake, position the bride’s left hand over his hand so you can see the big sparkling engagement ring, and invite the photographer over. Once they’re in position, then the toastmaster says: ‘Ladies and gentlemen, the bride and bridegroom will now have great pleasure in cutting the wedding cake.’ You avoid people asking, what shall we do now?” From ushering guests to circulating the guest book, the toastmaster is there to make sure the wedding party can sit back and enjoy the day.

In the past year, naturally, events have ground to a halt. Michieli typically presides over functions of a minimum of 1-200 people and with such events mixed, it has been some time since he has donned his natty red tailcoat and crisp white collar. But, as and when they do return, he is raring to go, and there is still very much demand. “I’ll be there again, to serve. To host,” he says.

96 Millbank Court, royalguildoftoastmasters.co.uk

“You avoid people asking, what shall we do now?”

It is totally understandable if lockdown for you has meant a little bit more time out than time in the gym. But as the world adapts to the “new normal” and fitness centres begin opening up, you might find that your going out clothes are a little bit more snug than you’d like.

All it will take is a little bit of discipline and the right guidance to shed those extra pounds.

Olga Allon, CEO of the Light Centre, Ecclestone Street, wanted to set up a centre where the best of holistic wellness through therapy, yoga, Pilates and Barre come together under one roof.

Talking about how to lose the extra weight, Olga says: “What you may need could be a Barre or Vinyasa yoga class to get you moving, or a session with a lymphatic drainage expert – maybe a massage or a dietician.

“But first, a class with a motivating teacher is a great place to start. Once you come to just one class, you will feel the benefits and it will entice you back.”

At the Light Centre, it is as much about the mind as it is the body.

The extensive range of holistic and traditional medical therapies include physiotherapy, sports massage, osteopathy, dietician, counselling, life

coaching and acupuncture.

Olga adds: “We all need to take care of ourselves and we can all benefit from therapy – the type of therapy may change in the course of our lives but the Light Centre covers it all and will help anyone on a wellness journey.”

City Athletic, founded in 2012 by Ben Claypole and Shaun Stafford, has quickly become a premier performance training centre.

The Palace Street location offers a mix of classes from yoga to TRX and rig classes – high-intensity training using the state-of-the-art T2 Octagon apparatus.

Offering her insight into how to lose those lockdown pounds, Rachel Greer, personal trainer at City Athletic, says: “Don’t overcomplicate it; start with two to three full-body sessions a week focusing on the basics.

“Be consistent with this routine to make it a habit - if you don’t want to exercise alone, try a class to give you a boost of motivation.

“As for nutrition, it’s not about eating as little calories as possible – try getting four portions of lean protein a day, add veg to every meal and create one easy-to-follow rule eg. no snacking after your last meal.”

Losing those lockdown pounds

The experts tell us how to get back in shape post-lockdown

BY SOPHIA CHARALAMBOUS

A yoga class at The Light Centre could be just the thing to get those joints moving again

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When it comes to local issues, young people often go unheard – as the ‘grown-ups’ decide how places should exist.

With the pandemic encouraging everyone to pay more attention to their community, and recognising the importance of listening to all voices, the borough of Westminster is increasingly looking to the youth to highlight challenges faced by the younger generation, while presenting opportunities for this demographic to impact the development of the places in which they live.

Clayton Aaron Bytyci is the deputy youth MP for the City of Westminster. A Westminster resident and a student at Pimlico Academy, he was recently elected to represent the interests of those living or going to school in the area.

“The Westminster Youth Council is an official platform for young people – not just a forum. It means we can actually speak with councillors and officially give our feedback,” he says.

The manifesto of youth MP Civan Terbas, who



Listening to the voice of youth

Clayton deputises for, highlights issues of knife crime and mental health in young people – a particular problem with the isolation felt by many across the numerous lockdowns.

“In regards to knife crime, we work closely with the police. We are part of an advisory group, working alongside chief superintendent Helen Harper. For mental health, a lot of our focus has been with Mind and other organisations like Health Watch.”

Ironically, the move to virtual meetings throughout the pandemic has actually helped the youth council, according to Clayton “because it can be quite difficult to go into a meeting with councillors; but now we’re able to be forwarded links to these meetings and so on. We have a bit more presence and access”.

The Westminster Youth Council is an example of how young people in the area are being increasingly listened to – and being provided with opportunities to bolster their skill set and experience. “You get out what you put in,” says Clayton. “Our platform is completely open – there’s no interview, no requirements to join; but you get access to loads of

Young people in Westminster are finally having a say in the running of their neighbourhoods

BY REYHAAN DAY

opportunities. You can make your voice heard and you can gain a lot – it could be good for your CV, or you can get experiences with the council that you otherwise wouldn’t be able to get.”

Similarly, young people can benefit from access to opportunities not otherwise presented to them through the Young Westminster Foundation, which offers information-sharing, networking opportunities, training and grants to young people in Westminster, partnering with local organisations including Landsec and Taj Group.

Currently running in Grosvenor’s Mayfair office is the Mayfair Youth Forum, with around 20 young



Mayfair Youth Forum
© Thomas Graham



people who live or study in Westminster attending sessions every three weeks, run by facilitator 2-3 Degrees. These sessions look to inspire and teach young people skills required to succeed. A session might feature a panel discussion; activities that help attendees share ideas and advice; tips on public speaking; conversations about employability; and learning to be self-aware and confident for future opportunities.

Nicola Wood, Grosvenor's community engagement manager, says that initiatives like this are about bringing young people into the conversation about the future of our neighbourhoods. "It's important to make sure we're hearing from young people. It's something we've struggled with to be honest – we hear from the same people time and time again, and that's not young people. We didn't really have a regular group that could involve young people in our decision-making – so this is what this forum is for.

"They've created a Manifesto for Mayfair – and we're now using that to guide some decision-making and test it with other members of the community." The manifesto focuses on the environment; more things to do for younger people, such as community events, educational activities, sport and volunteering;

activities, spaces and shops that make young people feel welcome; more bike lanes and less traffic; and accessibility and safety.

Structuring the conversation is a free toolkit titled Voice. Opportunity. Power, which has been produced by Grosvenor alongside ZCD Architects, Sport England and the Town and Country Planning Association and backed by developers, councils, designers and youth organisations, to help professionals meaningfully engage young people in the

making and managing of their neighbourhoods.

These sessions have been such a success that Grosvenor is considering more like it across other districts. In a world changed by a global pandemic, with bleak job prospects and a level of unemployment for young people in Westminster double that of adults aged 25 to 49 – plus the yet-to-be-comprehended effect on mental health – initiatives like this are more important than ever.

As one Mayfair Youth Forum member says: "Who better to support the cause of the youth, but the youth?"

Glazed brick walls, Portland stone, and more than a hint of the English Baroque: Westminster Fire Station has been a familiar feature of Greycoat Place ever since it was built in 1906. Today, the decommissioned station has been granted a new lease of life by Alchemi Group, which has transformed the building into a boutique residential space complete with an on-site restaurant.

"I love to work with unusual buildings," says Charlie Baxter, managing director of the group.

"Tearing down a building causes a huge amount of energy loss. Converting an existing building is a much more sustainable practice, and it creates properties with real soul. I grew up in Pimlico and came to know the area very well during the '70s, '80s and '90s. It was full of great buildings, places with character, that were just waiting for someone to breathe new life into them."

And Westminster Fire Station certainly has character. Within its walls you'll find everything from an immaculately-preserved fireman's pole to the original Watch Room, where firefighters whiled away long nights listening out for the call of duty. Their job was a daunting one: to stand guard over some of London's most iconic landmarks.

"For over a century, that fire station protected parts of our culture," says Charlie. "Eighty years ago, when the Luftwaffe bombed Westminster Abbey, Westminster Fire Station was the first brigade on the scene. For many years, it was also the closest fire station to Parliament. Very few places are as integral to the democracy and heritage of Great Britain as the Houses of Parliament and Westminster Abbey, and this fire station kept them safe. For that reason, I really do believe that it's a very important part of the heritage of the area, and of the country."

Of course, taking on a chunk of the capital's history was a daunting challenge. Charlie was determined to honour the station's place in its community, and his first move was to discuss the project with local residents.

"I spoke to many people who had fond memories of that building, or who used to play there when they were kids. It was clear to me that this place was part of its community, and I wanted to do everything I possibly could to preserve that. I made the decision that the ground-floor space should be open to the public – I wanted it to be somewhere that local people would visit."

And a solution came along in the form of





After more than 100 years of service, Westminster Fire Station is at the centre of an exciting redevelopment scheme with sustainability at its heart

BY ALICE CAIRNS

Hot property

Michelin-starred chef Atul Kochhar, who had fallen in love with Westminster Fire Station.

“Atul saw the soul and character in the building straight away. He took one look at the incredibly-high ceilings, the retro brick, the fireman’s pole, and he decided he wanted to open a restaurant here.”

The result is Mathura, a 180-cover restaurant that takes inspiration from that famous Westminster haunt, The Cinnamon Club. Charlie has high hopes for this new dining destination.

“I believe that Mathura has the potential to put the fire station right back into the heart of the community. It will be a place where people can

meet, from prime ministers and politicians to local residents. That’s an idea that I just get so much pleasure out of – I really do.”

Another priority that Charlie brought to the project was a strong focus on sustainability. Repurposing an existing building is a kind of architectural recycling, and Charlie wanted to ensure that every element of the fire station project was as eco-friendly as possible.

“There is a massive shift towards sustainability in architecture, and that’s something that is very close to my heart. I’ve been on Westminster City Council’s Climate Emergency Committee for the past six months, and I bring those concerns to every project I work on. Every single decision we

make, from bricks to furniture, from wallpaper to fabrics, is made with sustainable values in mind. I wouldn't, for any amount of money, be involved in any project that would compromise those values."

And, luckily, the team behind the Westminster Fire Station project have succeeded in pulling off a delicate balancing act: delivering a truly eco-friendly build without compromising the property's Grade II-listed status. Thanks to the use of locally-sourced materials, renewable energy and sustainable building services, the project achieved 60 per cent carbon reduction, exceeding the target of 35 per cent set out by the Greater London Authority and City of Westminster.

"I'm really proud of what we've achieved here," says Charlie. "A development that preserves London's heritage without harming the planet – I find that so exciting."

westminsterfirestation.com



"A development that preserves London's heritage without harming the planet"

*Charlie Baxter,
managing director of
Alchemi Group*

Watch this space: 3 new developments on the horizon



n2

n2, which is due for completion in 2023, is the next step in the

exciting development plan that began with Nova. Based in the heart of Victoria, n2 will provide 161,000 square feet of office space across 16 floors. Every one of those floors will have a terrace, opening up the public realm and connecting Nova to nearby Cardinal Place.

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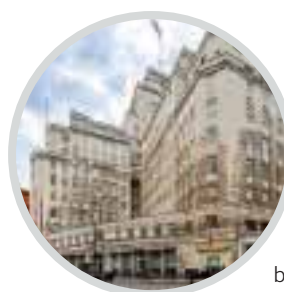


Old War Office

Once used by Churchill and his ministers during the Second

World War, the Grade II-listed Old War Office in Whitehall has been bought by the Raffles Group, and is being transformed into a luxury hotel. Once completed, the OWO will boast 85 private residences, 125 guest rooms and a ballroom big enough for 750 people.

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Spice of life

Atul Kochhar, the first Indian chef to win a Michelin star, on the beauty of British produce, coping with seasickness in Antarctica and his new restaurant in Westminster

BY ALEX BRIAND

What are your earliest memories of growing up in the east of India?

My grandfather was a baker and my dad had a catering business, so I was made to work at home, which was fantastic. I learnt a lot. Jamshedpur was an industrial town and the best part of growing up there was that everyone came from a different part of the country, I had friends from Gujarat, from Kashmir, from Uttar Pradesh... it gave me flavours at a very young age from all those different parts.

The street food was amazing in Jamshedpur. Often in my lunch menus now I bring those kinds of flavours out. There was something called egg-roll, a very simple dish because the workers needed to eat something on the go. It was a roti, dipped in egg and pan-fried, with a little stuffing of pickled carrots and cabbage. The flavours are still right there in my mind and on my palate.

What first brought you to the UK?

After I followed my parents into the catering business, I went and had formal training in a hotel school in Chennai, then worked for a very prestigious hotel group that had its own training school. I considered myself very fortunate to be accepted and work for them for several years and in 1994 I came to the UK to head a new restaurant, Tamarind [in

Mayfair]. I came originally for three years but fell in love with the country, people and cuisine. It was the first time I'd stepped foot outside of India. No one told me how cold this country would be...

What was it about the country that fired your imagination?

The fast-changing scene of British gastronomy was what kept me here. Marco Pierre White and Nico Ladenis had just earned their third Michelin stars that year. Gordon Ramsay and Jamie Oliver had arrived. I found myself in the middle of it and thought it'd be silly to just sit on the side and watch. So I joined in, obviously learning from these mega-gurus around me, like Albert Roux.

My father came to visit me a few times and inspired me too. He had never been to this country but man, when he landed here, he went straight to the markets and made friends with a few butchers around town – he was switched on. After that I started training with butchers and fishmongers and farmers, and in different kitchens as well.

Since then, I've never moved away from British produce. It's been a part of my creativity. I eagerly wait for spring, and summer, and autumn – there's always an excitement about the new ingredients.





Apart from the UK and India, what destinations have surprised and inspired you the most?

I went to Antarctica so I've seen all the continents now. It was very beautiful and serene. I recommend it to anyone if they have the strength to cross that very shallow pass from Argentina. It takes two and a half days. The water is quite shallow, and very rough.



I'd never been so seasick ever in my life. But when I reached the other side it was just amazing. The ocean was calm and quiet like a lake, with seals and whales and penguins. It was summertime there, and the sun was up for almost 19 hours. Light has such a profound effect on our lives, and to watch it gleam over glaciers and change colour – I'd never seen anything like that.

I also absolutely fell in love with Brazil: so many subcultures. I was only there for five days, but I immediately went to the market and got lots of vegetables, 80 per cent of which I didn't recognise.



What can we expect from Mathura?

I've always been a fan of India as an Indian subcontinent, rather than divided into different parts. When planning the menu, I was blind to the political borders. I wanted to rekindle relations in terms of culture and cuisine. We are taking inspiration from places like Iran, Afghanistan, Burma, even Thailand and Vietnam.

Once you are able to explore, what are the corners you can't wait to travel to?

I'm quite ashamed to say I've never explored Japan. I have not managed to go yet, and I can't wait to. Peru and Japan are top of the list.

Mathura at Westminster Fire Station, 4 Greycoat Place, opens in September.



Angela Burnett,
co-owner of Moreton
Place Beauty and
Wellbeing, on her
favourite places
in Victoria and
Westminster

BY JONATHAN WHILEY

How long have you worked in the area?

I started working in Pimlico in 2016 when I acquired a beauty salon, Incredible You, on Moreton Street. In 2017, we underwent a refurbishment and rebranded as Moreton Place Beauty and Wellbeing. We offer a selection of luxury facial and massage treatments as well as nail, waxing and tinting services in a clean, calming and comfortable setting.

Where would you recommend for coffee?

Pimlico Fresh provides good coffee which you can enjoy alongside a hearty, delicious breakfast. They also have a great team who are always really helpful. Little Bread Pedlar is a recent new arrival on Moreton Street which is loved by all the Moreton Place team. The coffee is great and they also have a fantastic selection of artisan pastries and breads; their sourdough bread is the best I have ever eaten.

Where is a good place for a quick takeaway lunch?

I definitely would recommend Delizie D'Italia on Lupus Street. It's a great authentic Italian deli which serves delicious food and you certainly will not be left hungry as the portion sizes are large.

What is your favourite pub?

The Queens Arms on Warwick Way always has a great atmosphere, the food is excellent and, as it's just a few minutes walk from where I live, it's my go-to local.

What is your favourite shop?

I love ME+EM on Elizabeth Street as they offer a great selection of quality and stylish pieces.

Where is the best place for a cocktail ?

Chucs on Eccleston Street offers great cocktails and has a wonderful atmosphere – as you enter you feel like you have been transported to the Italian Riviera.

Where would you recommend a blow-out dinner ?

Gustoso Ristorante Enoteca on Willow Place is off the beaten track. I found it by accident one day and I have enjoyed many fantastic meals there over the years.

40 Moreton Place



Above: Angela Burnett, who co-owns Moreton Place Beauty with her daughter, Rachael

Left: Nothing like a coffee at Pimlico Fresh or Little Bread Pedlar and right: great cocktails at Chucs



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