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LONDON

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DAILY TELEGRAPH



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Inside

This week's Time Out
in no time at all

Mao Chow

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And five-star! Who knew smacked
cucumber could taste soooo good?

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Best mowers baa none

Meet the greyface Dartmoor sheep
that 'lambscape' the Natural History
Museum's Wildlife Garden

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Henry Golding

We talk to the 'Crazy Rich Asians' star
(and potential Bond) now playing the
tall, dark, handsome stranger in festive
romcom 'Last Christmas'

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'& Juliet'

What if she didn't kill herself at the end?
Superproducer Max Martin takes that idea for
his musical and injects
a massive dose of smash-hit pop

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Light-bulb moments

It's Christmas switch-on time in
London. And nowhere does it better
than Kew Gardens. Way to glow!

PAGE 44



Hello, London

Caroline McGinn
Global Editor-in-Chief
[@carolinemcginn](https://www.timeout.com/about-us/editorial-team/caroline-mcginn)



Do you know that we don't actually live in a city at all? There are nearly as many trees as people in London – a staggering 8.4 million – and it is so densely planted with them that it officially qualifies as a forest (p22). Trees are crucial for our wellbeing: filtering air pollution, soaking up CO₂ and making us feel happier. As the winter tree-planting season kicks off, we're celebrating the many ways you can get down and dirty with nature in the capital (p27). And we're looking forward to some of the season's frostiest outdoor illuminations (p44).

Come with us into the woods...

YOU SAID IT

What you've been rating and hating online

The National Portrait Gallery is shutting next June for a three-year refurb. A lot of its collection is going on tour, but this reader was more worried about his own art.
'What's going to happen to the drop-in drawing sessions? My life revolves around them. Please let there be a substitute.'

Jack S via Facebook

There's nothing like a winter weekend away. We told you about how Harry Potter's birthplace, a medieval house in Suffolk, is now on Airbnb. Magic, eh? Er, no...
'The thing is, it's not his birthplace. He doesn't exist.'

Matt D via Facebook

Staying on a story theme, there was a giant gingerbread house in Covent Garden. Okay, it was a recreation of the market building, so possibly slightly corporate. Still, delicious, you'll no doubt agree.

'Should we ask if they have a gluten-free option?'

James M via Facebook

There was a rare opportunity to spot Mercury this week, as it made its way across the face of the sun. Everyone was very excited and definitely not using it as an opportunity for terrestrial sniping.

'Problem in London is to spot the sun, not Mercury!'

Stefano F via Facebook

COMMENT OF THE WEEK

We showed you atmospheric pics of the Underground taken by photographer Mike Goldwater back in the 1970s. For many readers, they evoked memories, both good and bad.
'The world was in colour back then. And public smoking was allowed. And there was always the faint smell of piss and stale tobacco in the tube...'

Howard S via Facebook

Happy days, Howard! Okay, public smoking was a terrible idea in a confined space full of flammable man-made fabrics, but we loved the smell of piss in the morning: smelled like... Victoria (line). Don't remember colour, mind you. You sure about that?

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LONDON

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a deep, spicy kick.

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SPICE UP YOUR SENSES



City life

Edited by James Manning
@timeoutlondon



THE ESSENTIALS

Three things you have to do this week



Eat this

Italian street food hotspot **Mercato Metropolitano** has opened north of the river. You'll find its second sustainable food market – **Mercato Mayfair** – in St Mark's church.



Book this

The immersive dining champs at **Gingerline** are mashing up grub with '90s game show nostalgia from this month. Snap up a ticket for TV Dinners if you like your competitions served up piping hot.



See this

The **Royal Opera House** is hosting an after-dark late this Sunday. Head to Covent Garden for LED dance performances, reimagined ballet and opera, and hands-on crafting. All for just £8.

Get the latest from London at timeout.com/news

MOST GOOGLED

How do Oyster cards work?



ARE YOU EVEN a Londoner if you've never owned an Oyster card? Paying with your debit card might be on the rise, but the Oyster is still as quintessentially London as jellied eels, Adele or a night out at Rowans. In fact, 2.4 million Londoners (that's about a quarter of us) make a journey using an Oyster every day. But how do these little blue cards work? You've been googling it, so we thought we'd find out.

Inside every Oyster card there's a small chip that uses radio frequency identification (RFID) technology. When you beep on to a bus or through a ticket barrier, the tech transmits radio waves through the electromagnetic reader to a ticketing system. This keeps the Oyster's balance updated and checks that you've got a valid Travelcard loaded. It also lets TfL track how people are moving around on public transport.



That all sounds pretty easy in today's tech-saturated world, but it was a revolution back in July 2003 when the Oyster card launched. And it's still snazzy compared to backward places like, er, New York, which is gearing up to launch an Oyster-style card in 2021. (Guys, get with the programme!)

However, there are drawbacks. Oyster cards are expensive to make, and the next generation is already here: TfL has started encouraging contactless payments via phones and bank cards and monitoring wifi-connected devices to track people's movements far more accurately than Oyster can. Don't be surprised if your blue key to the city finds itself at the bottom of your sock drawer sooner rather than later. ■

Thomas Hobbs

More London FAQs answered at timeout.com/googled

RHS GARDEN

Wisley

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AN ODE TO

London's pigeons

Celebrating the most maligned, overlooked and underrated bits of London



LOOK AT A pigeon long enough and you'll find all the traits you'd want in a friend. Are they gentle? Absolutely. Do they look after their family? Yes, they do. Do they eat chips off the ground? Of course. But because pigeons have the temerity to want to share the city's pavements with us, we treat them with disdain. And this is a tragedy, London. This is a scandal.

One reason it's an outrage is that pigeons – far from being the 'rats with wings' we make them out to be – are one of Mother Nature's most extraordinary inventions. They don't merely flap around the streets – these strange beasts have many talents tucked under their wings.

'Go on, then,' you're saying. 'Impress me.' How's this? Pigeons can reliably distinguish between Picasso and Monet paintings. They are one of only a handful of species able to recognise themselves in a mirror. They can find their way home from 1,300 miles away. The little fellas can identify cancers as well as doctors can, and they navigate our jumbled streets effortlessly by following road junctions. Rats with wings? Complete claptrap.

I have a theory as to why we kick and slander the humble pigeon, and it's this: when we look down at pigeons, we see ourselves reflected back. Just think about it. They bob around London with no obvious end goal. Their landlords treat them with disdain. We watch them struggling to make ends meet in this brutal city and see the toll that London has taken on their fragile bodies. Their mangled feet are our broken hearts. They too are surviving, but only just. We hate to admit it, but these birds are us.

When we lash out at pigeons we are, in fact, punching a mirror. The birds are a scapegoat – a scapepigeon – for the ills of the city. Rather than consider the ways we have fouled the space in which we live, we pin the blame on the pesky pigeon. 'Gross, that pigeon's eating some sick,' we sneer. Do we ever say, 'Thank you, Mr Pigeon, for cleaning up the mess we've made'? No, we do not.

We need to mature, admit our fault and make peace with our feathered fellow citizens. If we start to love pigeons, who knows? Perhaps we can truly love ourselves. ■ *Ralph Jones*

THE VIEW
FROM YOU

What Time Out readers have been Instagramming this week



@jeanettelphoto

'A fab Family Southbank Smartphone Safari this morning.'



@taste4interiors

'@romulocafelondon in Kensington: they specialise in Filipino cuisine.'



@lolycortese

'Autumn morning over The Shard.'



'Word on the Water, a floating bookshop on an old Dutch barge.'

Send us your Instagram photos of the city with #timeoutlondon



“ THAT'S RIGHT, CRISPS MADE FROM RUDDY ROOT VEGETABLES! AND THEY'RE Tyrrellbly *Tyrrellbly* Tasty ”

Down at Tyrrells Farm in Herefordshire, we've been working hard to make our root vegetable crisps bigger, better and, well... veggier than ever before. With two jazzy new flavours and six Great Taste awards to shout about, they'll certainly be hard to 'beet'!



CITY ENVY

Great things that we love in other cities

Hong Kong's epic escalator

IF YOU'VE EVER trudged up the never-ending slope to a gig at Ally Pally or hiked up to the Crystal Palace Triangle, the idea of gliding upwards on a gigantic moving staircase might sound very appealing. In hilly **Hong Kong**, they have the right idea – the **Central-Mid-Levels Escalators** is the longest covered outdoor escalator system in the world. It rises 443 feet from top to bottom, and takes passengers 20 minutes to travel the entire length, passing bustling bars, clubs and the converted police station-turned-arts-centre Tai Kwun along the way. First opened in 1993, the mechanical walkway now carries around 78,000 people every day through the city's Central district – which beats the bus any day. You'll be craving a similar contraption next time you foolishly say yes to a mate's birthday drinks in Highgate. ■ *EI Hunt*

Stack up your travel bucket list at
timeout.com/dolist



MAKE LONDON BETTER

London's got problems. Here's how we fix them



Migrateful

WHAT IS IT?

A social enterprise that empowers refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants in London by helping them run their own cookery classes. It has trained up chefs from countries including Iran, Syria and Eritrea.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Some migrants might struggle to find jobs in the UK due to legal or language barriers. As well as providing a supportive community, Migrateful offers English classes and leadership workshops.

HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

Book a cookery class with one of the talented Migrateful chefs, and learn how to make some of their country's signature dishes. Fasten your pinny and take your pick! ■ *EI Hunt*

→ www.migrateful.org

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LONDON EYE

Talking shop

LONDON'S HIGH STREETS are home to hundreds of independent caffs, greengrocers, bookshops, stationers, bakeries and chemists. But gentrification, online shopping and the decline of the high street means that many of our beloved local businesses are under constant threat of becoming yet another Pret – and those that have survived are increasingly cherished for the colour and character that they bring to the capital's neighbourhoods.

At a time of monumental change for these places, illustrator Eleanor Crow set about documenting London's surviving old-fashioned shopfronts. She's created dozens of charming watercolours of the capital's favourite chippies, launderettes, florists, butchers and hardware stores. Stretching from Chiswick in the west to Woodford in the east, many of these local treasures have been serving Londoners for generations, and some of their historic shopfronts have even been listed.

Featuring more than 100 of Eleanor's beautiful watercolours, the resulting collection is a fascinating survey of London's enduring small shops. Long live the local! ■ *Rosie Hewitson*

→ 'Shopfronts of London' by Eleanor Crow is published by Batsford in association with Spitalfields Life Books. spitalfieldslife.bigcartel.com



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GREEN GODDESS

Eco campaigner Natalie Fee answers your questions about sustainable living in the city



Dear Natalie...

'My office sucks when it comes to the environment. We burn through paper towels, disposable cups and printer paper like nobody's business. Everyone leaves their computers on overnight. Our windows don't open so we blast the air con all summer. No one recycles properly, and our executives fly all over the world for meetings. How do I even start to change things without getting fired – or becoming the office bore who no one wants to talk to at the Christmas party?'

Nazir via email

Dear Nazir,
I'll admit that my first response on reading your question was: just quit! But seeing as that's not an option for most people (and maybe you *really* love your job), let's give your company the benefit of the doubt. Everyone's stupidly busy meeting deadlines and targets, and without a dedicated sustainability person, the

stuff that 'would be nice' often just doesn't get a look in.

So where to begin? I think the heart of your question lies in the 'becoming the office bore' bit. Saving the planet has become quite cool, and I can guarantee that you're not the only one in your company who cares. Speak to your colleagues and see if you can get a green dream team together.

Then go to the top. Money talks, and if you can show your management how eco-friendly changes will actually save them cash, you might be taken more seriously. The University of Cambridge found that by setting all its staff's monitors to go to sleep after ten minutes instead of 30, they'd save £3,000 each year. On top of that, being sustainable helps a company hire. According to one

study, three quarters of workers would take a hefty pay cut to work for a business which doesn't leave a trail of destruction.

So what if your bosses agree with you – but they don't want to hire a consultant or create a new role? There are still ways you and your green team can make a change. Ask your office manager and IT to reduce energy usage, bulk-buy recycled

loo roll and make sure your office is printing double-sided (or going paperless). You can see a useful free guide at tinyurl.com/sustainablesidekicks.

You never know: your meat-free, plastic-free, carbon-neutral Christmas party could turn out to be the most amazing one that the company has ever had! ■

Natalie Fee is an environmental campaigner, author and speaker. She founded the City to Sea non-profit, which campaigns against plastic pollution. Her book 'How to Save the World for Free' is published by Laurence King. Follow her on Twitter at @nataliefee and on Instagram at @nataliefee_.

Got a question for Natalie? Write to greengoddess@timeout.com.

WORD ON THE STREET

The most ridiculous things we've overheard in London this week

'Do not snort the Lemsip.'

'A core part of my personality is performatively disliking "Love Actually":'

'I wish Dad would carry me and not eat all my candy.'

'My husband is currently singing a song to a dying hamster.'

"I refer to myself as "big sexy" an awful lot."

'Ryan moved to Berlin a few years ago and, if anything, it just made him worse.'

'Who cares about arms? Your arms are a bunch of piss compared to your legs.'

'I'm actually never dating a pop star again.'

'Do you know why I'm so woke? Because I was born in Woking.'

Overheard something weird? Tweet us #wordonthestreet @timeoutlondon

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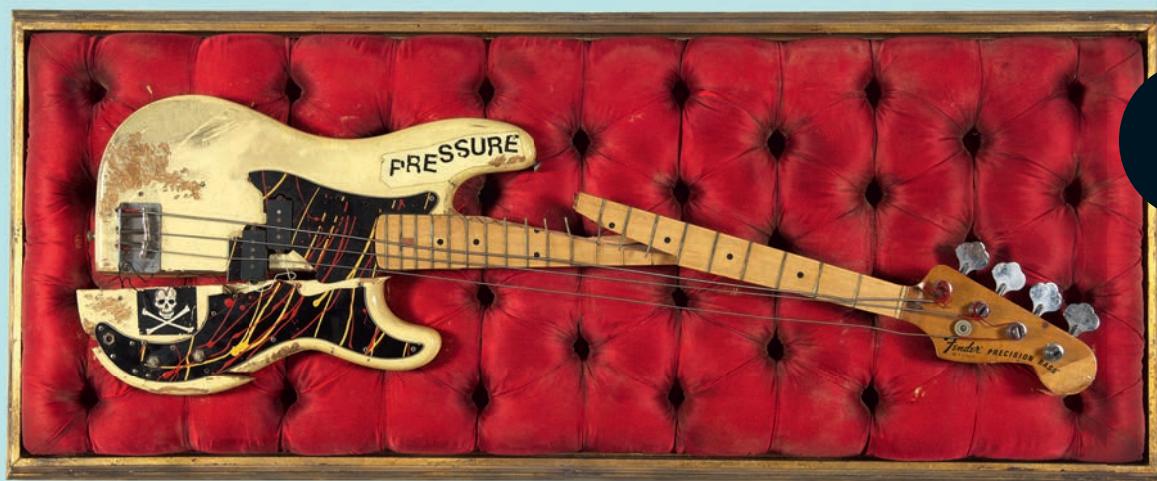
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FREE LONDON

Put your money away! Here are the week's best free events



A: YOU SHOULD GO

'The Clash: London Calling'

It's 40 years since The Clash released their seminal album 'London Calling'. To celebrate the milestone, the Museum of London has curated an exhibition from the band's personal archive, including hand-written notes, sketches, pictures, clothes and even Paul Simonon's broken bass guitar (pictured above). Smashing!

→ Museum of London. ☎ Barbican. Fri Nov 15-Apr 19 2020.

FUNNY TALK

Laugh Your Nuts Off

KP Nuts and Movember have teamed up for a night of comedy that aims to raise awareness of testicular cancer. If that sounds a bit heavy, there will be lols from Omid Djalili and Lee Peart, too. Book tickets on Eventbrite.

→ New Moon. ☎ Monument.

Tue Nov 12.

PARTY TIME

Special Brew's first birthday

Club night crew Special Brew is celebrating a year of hosting free parties with – you guessed it – a massive free party. Expect house, disco, '80s bangers and '90s slammers right through until 4am. See you on the dancefloor!

→ Paper Dress Vintage. Hackney Central Overground. Sat Nov 16.

SWEET TREATS

EllaMia launch

Need a Monday morning pick-me-up? New café EllaMia will be giving away 100 coffees and baked goods (like hazelnut praline slices and fruity oatmeal bars) from 11.30am – just in time for the mid-morning slump.

→ EllaMia, St Martins Lane Hotel. ☎ Leicester Square.

Mon Nov 18.

STARS IN YOUR EYES

Stargazing at the Royal Observatory

Learn about astrophotography (photographing astronomical objects) at this Google Pixel 4 event. Get tips from astronaut Tim Peake and help capture a mobile sky map of the stars. Reserve a spot in advance online.

→ Royal Observatory.

Greenwich DLR. Mon Nov 18.

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Did you know that London is a forest? No: literally. More than a fifth of the capital is trees. Nature writer *Paul Wood* explains why that's a big deal

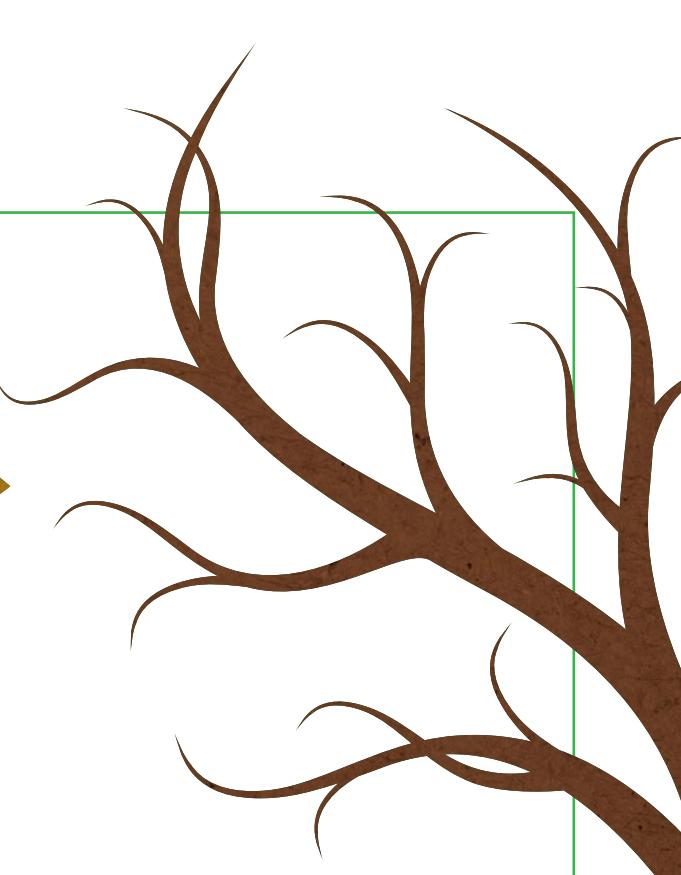
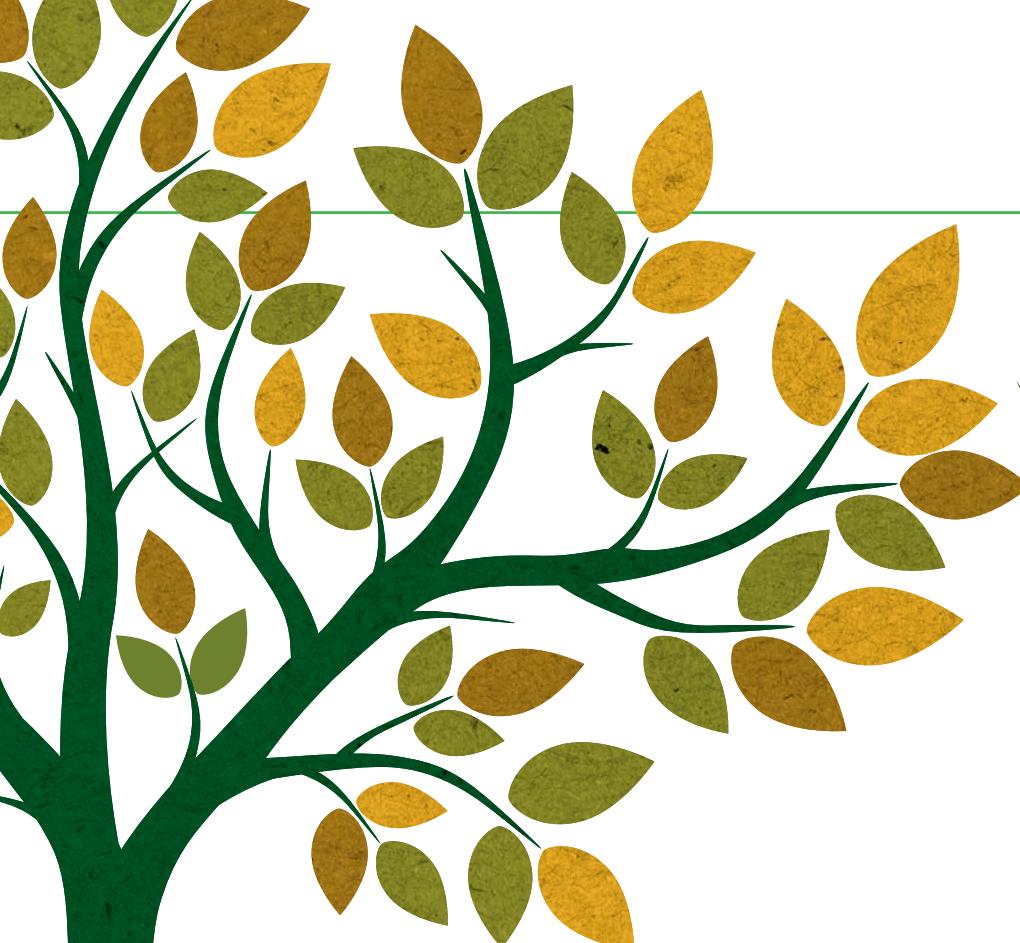


Root and

LONDON'S SKYLINE IS soaring. Sometimes it feels like the only things growing in this city are towers of glass, steel and concrete. Look closer, though, and you'll find something else putting down roots and scaling heights around town.

Our capital is full of trees. In fact, while it might not always seem like it, London is so packed with foliage that it's technically a forest. That's according to a United Nations definition that states that a forest is anywhere that's at least 20 percent trees. London's a respectable 21 percent.

While that doesn't quite put the city in the same bracket as the Amazon, it leaves us competing with Sherwood and the New Forest – places that are considered to be pretty leafy. There are a massive 8.4 million trees across the capital, nearly one for each of us 8.6million Londoners.



branch

Wind back the clock a few centuries, and London was a smaller city surrounded by countryside, including hefty areas of woodland. South London's Great North Wood (the reason for place names like Norwood and Forest Hill) once stretched from Croydon to Deptford. What's now Heathrow airport was a tiny corner in a heathland landscape of trees, grass and heather spanning from Hounslow to Hillingdon.

Precious pockets of this ancient woodland still survive: Highgate, Queens and Coldfall Woods in north London; Sydenham Hill, Oxleas and Lesnes Abbey in the south. All boast old, gnarled and characterful trees; oaks, hornbeam and some rarities, like the wonderfully named wild service tree. According to urban forest myth, its edible berries were used by the Romans to flavour beer.

But it's not just actual woodland that makes London a forest; it's everything else. Unlike some other cities – Paris for example – London has a wealth of trees and greenery right in the heart of the metropolis. Think Hyde Park or Regent's Park for starters. Or Hampstead Heath, Richmond Park and Clapham Common further towards the capital's edges. Then there's the land around

'A whopping 47 percent of this city is made up of green and blue space'

estates, private gardens, London's iconic squares, 900,000 street trees, and raggedy 'edgelands' like railway embankments and road verges too. In fact, a whopping 47 percent of this city is made up of green and blue space.

The plants that make up London's urban forest is important. Trees soak up pollution: nitrogen oxides, ammonia and sulphur dioxide are absorbed through their leaves, bark and roots (important, for a city that's swamped by toxic levels of the stuff). They're also prizefighters in the battle to keep global warming at bay, absorbing carbon dioxide and turning it into carbon. It's no wonder that 109,077 people signed a petition to get the government to discuss restoring nature on a massive scale to help stop the climate breakdown in parliament. 'Rewilding can draw millions of tonnes of CO₂ out of the air through restoring and protecting our living systems,' argued campaigners.

But trees' impact on our wellbeing is even greater than that. A study released in June showed that just a two-hour dose of nature every week significantly increased people's mental and physical health. And while it can be easy to fall



into the trap of thinking this means mini-breaks in the Lake District, it turns out that even short trips to city parks can boost people's mood for up to four hours afterwards. And that's not even mentioning the joy of sitting under a cooling canopy on a hot day (though that might feel rather distant in our current chilly weather).

As we head into the darker, colder months of the year it can be easy to feel like the nature around us has disappeared. In fact, the opposite is true. November is the start of tree-planting season. This year that's happening across the city thanks to a ballot running as part of National Tree Week, gifting trees to individuals and groups. In 2018, the same project led to 90,000 trees being planted around London. It's not the only project. There's Trees for Cities, who plant trees around town. In east London, the Tree Musketeers look after Wick Woodland on the Hackney Marshes and have a nursery for growing trees to plant.

In fact, each London borough has a department responsible for the trees in its parks and on its streets. Some are doing a better job than others. 'We're always looking for places to plant more trees,' says Greg Packman, Islington's senior tree inspector, an urban forester working in London's most densely populated borough. His job involves maintaining existing trees as well as planting new ones. As a result, inner-city Islington has managed to build 25 percent tree canopy despite

TREE IS THE MAGIC NUMBER

8.4m

Total trees in the capital:
nearly one per Londoner

900,000

Street trees in the capital

21

Percentage of London that's
covered by trees

90,000

Total trees planted during
National Tree Week in 2018

2

Number of hours a week you
need to spend engaging with
nature to get health benefits

having fewer parks than most boroughs. Packman wants residents to play an active role, too. 'More opportunities are needed for the public to get involved with looking after trees,' he says, 'if we are serious about increasing the tree canopy.'

Xanthe Mosley of Street Trees for Living, who plant trees in roadside spots across Lewisham, agrees. She says: 'Getting people to water young trees in the summer is our priority.' Her organisation finds sponsors and organises volunteers to look after trees. Mosley reveals some impressive stats. 'Early next year we will plant our thousandth tree in just five years,' she says. 'Next year, we're focused on planting trees near schools.' Street Trees for Living also has an enviable track record when it comes to nurturing saplings: just 5 percent in their care fail, compared to 30 percent of those planted by the council.

So, remember: from the small patch of green outside your flat to the wild scrub behind your local pub, the splashes of nature across the city add up to a massive, successful ecosystem that's helping to sustain our lives. London's a forest and it's time we gave our trees some respect. ■

→ Paul Wood (@thestreettree) is the author of 'London Is a Forest' and 'London's Street Trees'. He also leads guided tree walks. His next is in Ravenscourt Park on Sun Nov 17 with museumofwalking.org.uk.

Read our guide to London's green spaces
timeout.com/parks

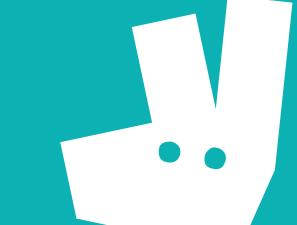


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Wet 'n' wild



From woodlands and wetlands to canals and bogs, London's full of different natural habitats. Five writers discover their secrets

The wetlands

'Sparrowhawk!' 'Kestrel!' I'm at Walthamstow Wetlands with Charlie Owens, the site's ecology and conservation ranger, and he keeps stopping mid-sentence to alert me to the local residents. 'It's the one that looks like it's got a topknot', he says, as I try to get a closer look at a tufted duck.

Walthamstow Wetlands is both a nature reserve and a Thames Water reservoir site. It only opened to the public in 2017, but the first reservoirs were hand-dug in the 1800s. Charlie's role here focuses on conservation, including fortnightly surveys where volunteers count all the birds on the water, and a 'ringing' project, where they place

colourful metal rings on birds' legs to keep track of them. 'We've done the project for two years so far. Birds who were ringed here as chicks have been found in the Peak District and Brighton, one appeared in Birmingham', explains Charlie. 'You can learn so much about their habits through these activities.'

Charlie is a mine of information. I learn about waxwings – birds with red-tipped feathers, which you'll see in winter at the wetlands – and I'm surprised to find out that there are mussels in the reservoirs – they collect on the concrete banks and the tufted ducks (the ones with the topknots?) feed on them. Otters, grass snakes and eels have all been spotted. 'Eels can climb over land – I don't think they'd have trouble

crossing over the path between reservoirs', Charlie says. Oh, and they grow up to a metre long. I'm both intrigued and terrified.

Putting aside images of an eel jumping out at me, I ask Charlie what makes the wetlands important. 'There's a whole heap of birds, invertebrates and mammals that rely on these types of habitats,' he explains. 'If reed warblers fly all the way from Africa and there's no reed for them when they get here, they can't breed – that population could crash.' It's not just the birds that benefit. Walking around the wetlands is incredibly peaceful and I learn a lot in one morning. Okay, I'm no David Attenborough but at least I can now spot a tufted duck. Probably. *Isabelle Aron*

FACT

There are metre-long eels living in London.

Eyes on the prize
Izzy goes birdspotting at Walthamstow Wetlands with ranger Charlie



FACT

London has six bogs – and they're helping to stop climate change.

The bog

Wading around in a soggy, brown peat bog doesn't sound particularly inviting. But the Farm Bog on Wimbledon Common is so beautiful it makes up for the fact you have to get a bit muddy. Hidden at the bottom of a tree-laden path, shallow pools of water are scattered with purple grasses and tufts of green. In the summer, the vegetation provides shelter for dragonflies, while lizards can be found sunbathing on nearby rocks.

As I tread through the pools, it sometimes feels like my wellies might get eaten up by the ground, Glastonbury style. This suction effect is due to two metres of layered,

spongy sphagnum. 'The moss at the bottom is around 6,000 years old,' explains conservationist Petra Sovic Davies. 'Testing samples, we can see that the environment around here used to be a lot more grassy and there were far more grazing animals roaming wild across the land.'

Bogs used to spread across the landscape from here all the way to Croydon, though today this tiny clearing is one of the last six in London. 'Over hundreds of years, many of these wetlands have been sucked dry to make way for agriculture and housing, or they have been drained by water companies who feed water back into our homes,' Petra tells me. 'It's a shame, because bogs are one of

the most efficient ways of removing carbon dioxide out of the air.'

The moss on the surface absorbs the global-warming gas and turns it into carbon during photosynthesis. Normally the gas would be released when the carbon decomposes, but at the bog, the carbon sinks below water level and can't fully rot: it remains trapped in the ground. This makes bogs superheroes in the battle to stop climate change.

It's no wonder local conservation groups are working hard to safeguard this bog by cutting back the nearby brambles and silver birch trees that quench their thirst on its moisture. We should be able to walk on water in Wimbledon for a short while yet. *Annie Lord*

Bog standards
Annie checks out moss with conservationist Petra in Wimbledon

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Shroom for manoeuvre

Alex takes a closer look at fungi called bonnets in Sydenham Hill Wood

The woodland

I've spent ten minutes in Sydenham Hill Wood and I've already passed the spot where my guide found a decaying fox carcass. 'We don't usually move dead animals,' says Rachel Dowse, a conservation officer from the London Wildlife Trust, 'but this one was starting to smell.' Rachel assures me this is all part of what keeps habitats ticking.

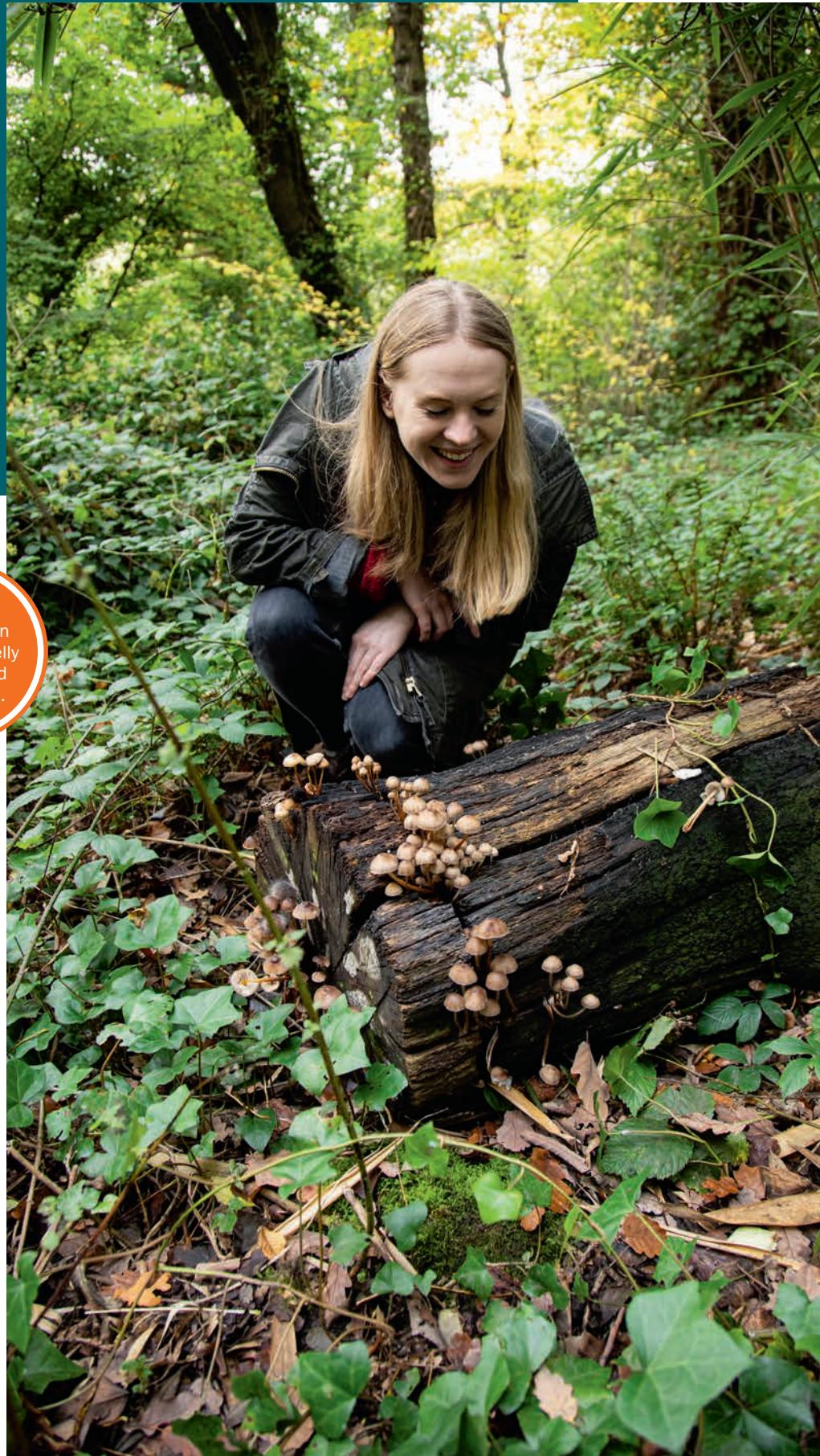
I'm in one of the last swathes of the ancient Great North Wood. It's home to 200 species, all in Zone 2.

Rachel points out what my urbanite eyes see as lumps of old wood, but on closer inspection I notice they're covered with colourful fungi at their prime. We spot flubby jelly ears and a rare blood-orange cinnabar oysterling that only grows in ancient woodland. 'The fungi sound like they were named in the Middle Ages,' says Rachel, 'but a lot of the names were created in the noughties to create interest in mushrooms.'

We rub our fingers over a jelly fungus called crystal brain that looks like the slime you grew gooey aliens in at school, and we flick the white tips of candlesnuff, releasing talcum powder spores. Rachel says the fungi we're touching are just small visible parts of a huge organism which spreads out in threads under the ground, literally mushrooming up when it needs to release spores. My favourite spore-emitter is the bizarre earthstar – a starfish-shaped shroom with a sack in its middle that spurts out dust when prodded.

We turn our attention to the tops of the trees where bat boxes hang. The wood is home to six species of bat. Over the winter they hibernate in a railway tunnel. 'The brown long-eareds are really cute,' says Rachel. 'When they sleep, they cover their huge ears with their wings. There are plants and fungi that can only grow here because it's so ancient. It's a special place.' Alexandra Sims

FACT
South London is home to a jelly fungus called crystal brain.



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FACT

The Natural History Museum's garden is looked after by three sheep.

The garden

'Baa, baa, baa!' Three adorable sheep are bleating at me, one after another, as I stand surrounded by ponds, shrubbery and trees shedding golden leaves. If it wasn't for the honking from nearby traffic, I could be fooled into thinking I was in rural Wales, but I'm actually at the Natural History Museum.

The institution has a wildlife garden that's accessible to the public all year round. Since it opened in 1995, more than 3,000 species have been identified there. Three full-time staff and 35 volunteers all chip in to help maintain the urban green space, which brings increased biodiversity to the capital.

For six weeks of the year, the garden is also home to Bee, Bracken and Ivy, the three greyface Dartmoor sheep who are brought in as 'lambscapers'. They're on loan from the London Wetland Centre in Barnes and play an integral role in sustainably managing the garden.

'Besides being very cute and popular, they do an important job of managing the site and are more than just lawnmowers,' Tom McCarter, wildlife garden manager, laughs. 'The way they eat creates uneven mosaic-like grounds which attract more diverse plants and insects.'

Tom passes me a birch branch with leaves and I get the chance to feed these cute grass-eating machines. I shake it and they swarm

around me, biting off the foliage and almost tugging me along with them.

'Because they're a hardier breed, they happily munch away on anything like bramble, twigs and smelly plants like mugwort. They want different nutrients and different tastes.' Tom explains. 'This project is to get people engaged with nature and to discover what's in their back garden. Even where we're standing, right next to Cromwell Road, nature is everywhere.'

I'm trying my hardest to concentrate on what Tom is saying but I can see the sheep out of the corner of my eye – and they seem to be grinning. Either I'm a natural sheep whisperer or they're just after more food. *Angela Hui*

Are ewe for real?
Angela meets one of
the Natural History
Museum's lawnmowers



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The canal

Canals and bats might not be the most obvious mix. Yet according to Tim Mulligan, an ecologist with the Canal & River Trust, the near-total night-time darkness makes canals a refreshing route for the nocturnal.

Bats are just one of the stars of this surprisingly abundant ecosystem, alongside crayfish, terrapins, mitten crabs and mink. Daylight timing means Tim and I are out today spotting kingfishers instead of the spookier critters. There's a kingfisher burrow just off the Limehouse Basin, the perfect place to start.

Tim and his team look after the wildlife on London's waterways, a remit which includes everything from these birds, to invasive exotic weeds, to the tiny snails we're now fishing out with Tim's trusty net.

(We put them back afterwards.) Tim's job is all about caring for the water's residents, which means he knows a lot about the more colourful characters – like the seal who rocks up to Billingsgate Market for breakfast, or the psychotic swan who drowns Canada geese in Camden Lock for kicks.

Aside from helping me with bird-watching and snail-spotting, Tim is keen to draw my eye to some of the threats faced by these waterways – such as the looming high-rise developments above, which block out the sunlight necessary for bottom-of-the-food-chain daphnia to develop. There's pollution, too, hence the Canal & River Trust's ongoing initiatives to get London residents litter picking, as well as the in-house efforts to build water-filtering floating ecosystems.

FACT
Bats use the city's canals as commuter highways.

These provide the triple whammy of flowers for pollinators, habitats for underwater animals, and a natural water filtration system which wards off pesky duckweed (that's the green stuff you often see on the surface).

That's not to say it's all rubbish – some of the canals' more wily residents have made the most of their urban existence. 'Eels love abandoned tyres,' Tim says. 'Every time we've tried to remove one, it's been full of eels.' Thankfully, our walk is tyre-free – although I'm pretty sure I can hear some bats under the bridge where we end our trip. I think I'll stick to land for now. ■

Bobby Palmer

Get a nature hit at timeout.com/green

Back of the net!
Bobby and ecologist Tim catch snails near Limehouse Basin

WANNA GET WILD?

Be a **ZSL citizen scientist** and help count the eels in London's rivers.
→ www.zsl.org/conservation

Walthamstow Wetlands is run by the **London Wildlife Trust**. Get involved!
→ www.wildlondon.org.uk/volunteer-with-us

Wild About Gardens will help you turn your garden into a thriving habitat.
→ www.wildaboutgardens.org.uk

Help the frogs at **Greenwich Peninsula Ecology Park** by clearing reeds.
→ www.tcv.org.uk/getinvolved

Take part in the RSPB's **Big Garden Birdwatch** in January 2020.
→ www.rspb.org.uk/get-involved

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Hot (desk) spots

Remote working is having a moment, but do you really need to rent a desk in a shared office? From shops to theatre bars, *Bobby Palmer* picks unexpected places to whip out your laptop

Drink, Shop & Do

At this quirky King's Cross café, there's loads of space for freelancers among the brightly coloured tables and jazzy hanging lanterns. Grab a coffee and a pastry to work through the day, then stick around in the evening for a glitter lettering workshop or some vagina cupcake decorating. That's all bases covered, then.

→ 9 Caledonian Rd. ☎ King's Cross.

Wellcome Café

The Wellcome Collection is one of London's hidden gems, an enormous, totally free museum and library of scientific artefacts and medical paraphernalia for the 'incurably curious'. If

that's you, its spacious café welcomes hard workers with open arms.

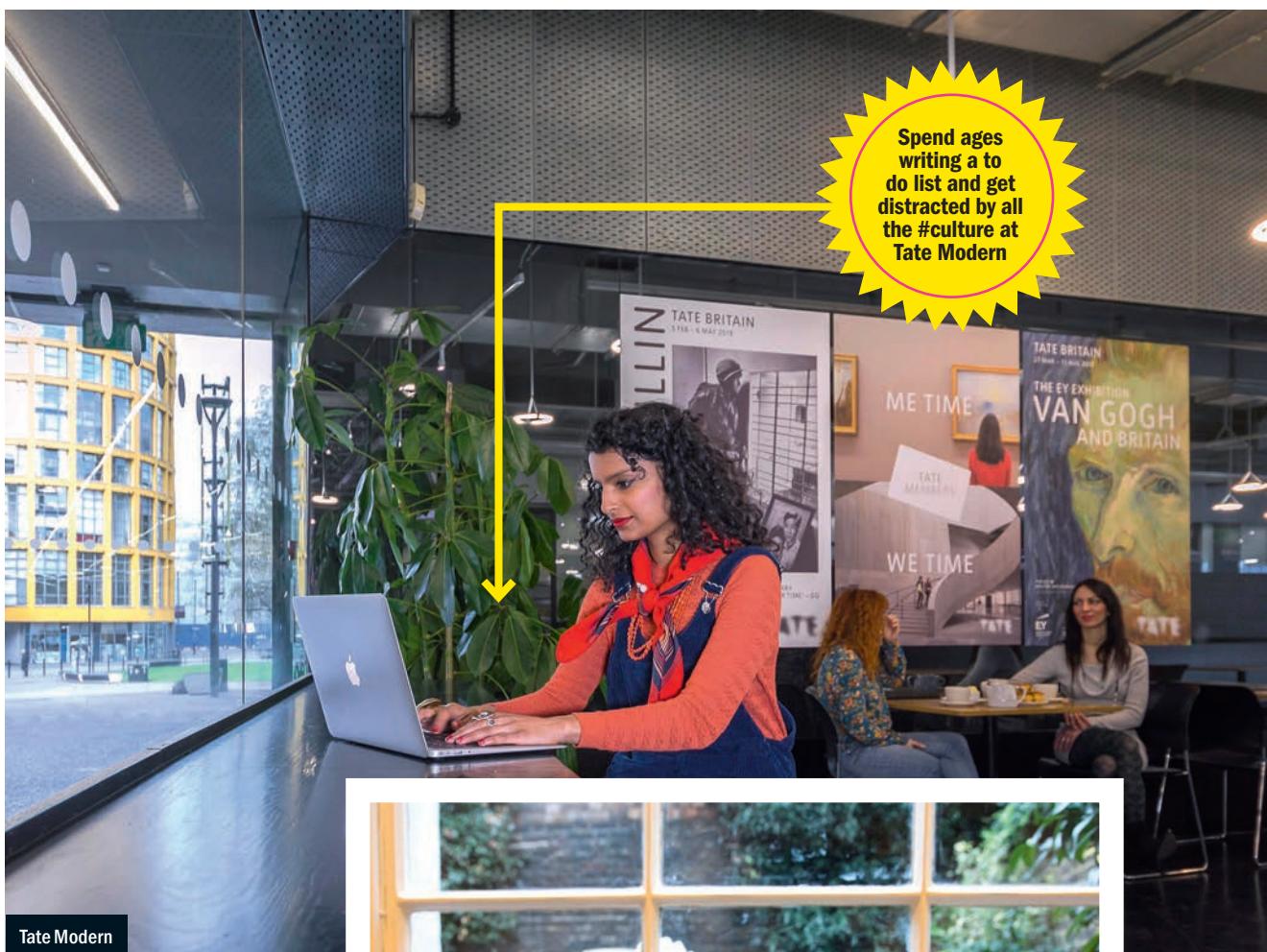
→ 183 Euston Rd. ☎ Euston.

Chucs at the Serpentine Sackler Gallery

Fancy making Hyde Park your new office? The café side of this uber-cool restaurant – in the Zaha Hadid-designed Serpentine Sackler Gallery – is a workers' haven away from the toil and trouble of London's busy (and much less pretty) co-working spaces.

→ West Carriage Drive, Hyde Park. ☎ Lancaster Gate.

Places to work



Tate Modern

Garden Café at the Charles Dickens Museum

While the man himself might have preferred a quill and ink to a battered MacBook Air, that doesn't mean you can't channel his writing spirit in the museum café. The floral courtyard is a welcome breath of fresh air in an otherwise busy part of Bloomsbury.

→ 48-49 Doughty St. Ⓛ Holborn.



Garden Café at the Charles Dickens Museum

Fifth Floor Café at Harvey Nichols

Free wi-fi for all customers means you can take a seat in the department store's stylish fifth-floor café and raise a glass of bubbly to celebrate a productive day definitely not spent idly scrolling through your Twitter feed.

→ 109-125 Knightsbridge. Ⓛ Knightsbridge.

The Distillery

The perfect Friday destination for freelancers, this working gin distillery lets you take a pew to fire off some last-minute email chases before treating yourself to a chaser of mother's ruin. You deserve it.

→ 186 Portobello Rd. Ⓛ Ladbroke Grove.

Tate Modern

There are a number of restaurants and cafés at Tate Modern, most with an enviable view of the Thames. Best of them is the bright and airy eighth-floor Granville-Grossman Members Room in the Blavatnik Building (formerly the Switch House). Membership starts at £90 a year, which is a lot less than the cost of renting desk space at a WeWork – and you get access to all the exhibitions too.

→ Bankside. Ⓛ Southwark.

The Wren Coffee at St Nicholas Cole Abbey

If you spend your days praying for unpaid invoices to be resolved, where better to work than in a church? St Nicholas Cole Abbey hosts a midweek service but it's also home to The Wren Coffee café from Monday to Friday. Aside from its beautiful interior, the space benefits from loads of natural light and top-quality coffee. Amen!

→ 114 Queen Victoria St. Ⓛ Mansion House.

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Places to work



Look Mum No Hands!

This café-cum-bike workshop is a fave destination for Lycra lovers, with cycling events often shown on the big screen. It's a great spot for freelancers, too, with its peloton decorations and windowside seats for those riding solo. Bonus points if you cycle there too.

→ 49 Old St. ☎ Old St.

The Garden Museum

This gorgeous museum housed in an old church on the south bank of the Thames is unsurprisingly famed for its gardens. Its Garden Café offers all the tranquillity of an alfresco Zen retreat while also providing cover from the rain.

→ 5 Lambeth Palace Rd. ☎ Lambeth North.

Tamesis Dock

For the money-conscious freelancer, London pubs have to offer that extra something to warrant splashing out on a drink as decadent as a pint or a G&T. How about a pub on a barge? Yep, that'll do.

→ Albert Embankment. ☎ Vauxhall.

Fortnum & Mason

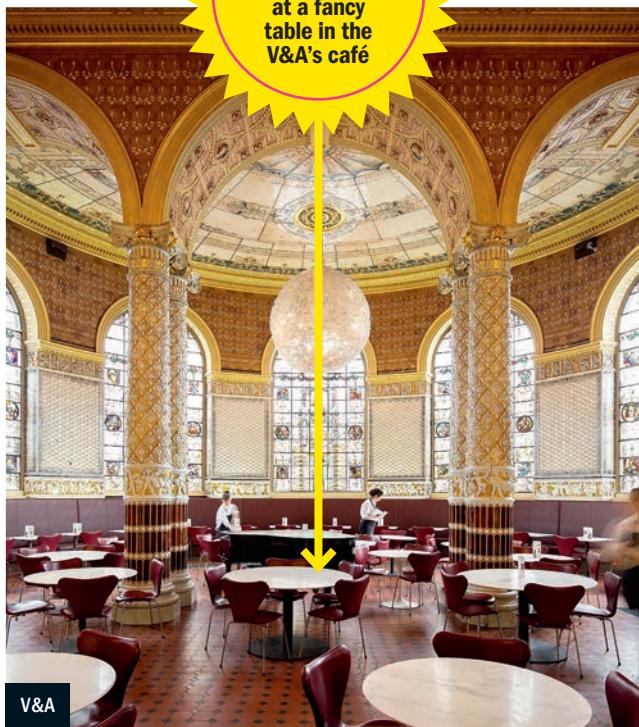
This foodie-friendly department store has ideal remote-working credentials: take your pick of the spacious gallery and the low-key 3 and 6 Bar. In need of a sugary pick-me-up? The wi-fi here extends to the ice-cream parlour on the first floor. Sweet!

→ 181 Piccadilly. ☎ Green Park.

very

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Create an overcomplicated spreadsheet at a fancy table in the V&A's café



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there's free wi-fi, fresh pastries and plenty of nooks and crannies where you can hide away for the day.

→ 77-85 Newington Causeway. ☎ Elephant & Castle.

The Doodle Bar

Perfect for the more creative remote worker, Bermondsey's Doodle Bar allows (even encourages) you to draw all over the walls when the confines of your laptop screen start to be a little too limiting or you're stuck staring at the spinning rainbow wheel of doom.

→ 60 Druid St. ☎ Bermondsey.

The Buttery Café at Burgh House

This majestic mansion sits on the south side of Hampstead Heath, housing the historic collections of Hampstead Museum. The café offers a range of locally sourced treats, and is an opulent location for decluttering your inbox. ■

→ New End Square. ☎ Hampstead.

Hurwundeki 15

Want to make the most of your time? There's no better way to do it than at this Korean restaurant, café and creative space, where you can also get a haircut. The '15' in the name refers to the number of minutes they'll take to cut your hair, so you can totally squeeze a trim into a screen break.

→ 242 Cambridge Heath Rd. Cambridge Heath Overground

V&A

There's free wi-fi throughout the V&A, so you can hot-desk anywhere, from the stunning National

Art Library to the Silver and Ceramics Galleries. One look at the historic main café, with its domed roof and marble columns, and you won't want to work anywhere else.

→ Cromwell Rd. ☎ South Kensington.

Southwark Playhouse Bar

Minutes away from Elephant & Castle tube, you'll find one of London's loveliest off-West End theatres – but this is a destination for more than just aspiring thespians. In the charming bar

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It's beginning to look *little bit* ~~a lot~~ like Christmas...

Let there be light! The Things to Do team count down to Christmas with the city's most luminous festive events

Nov 12 ←Covent Garden Christmas

Covent Garden's cobbled piazza and market buildings are especially irresistible at Christmas. Last year saw the iconic square house London's biggest hand-picked Christmas tree, which sparkled with 30,000 lights. Details about this year's festive treats are under wraps for now but keep your eyes on the website for updates and info on a potential celeb host.

→ Covent Garden Piazza. ☎ Covent Garden.
From Tue Nov 12.





Nov 13 ↑ Marylebone Christmas Lights

See one of London's most atmospheric high streets get all lit up this Wednesday. Alongside the lights, there are stalls to browse, a Santa's grotto, in-store discounts, a snazzy tombola and a decent celeb to push the button (soon to be announced). The lights are usually on display until Twelfth Night.
→ Marylebone Village. ⊕ Bond St.
From Wed Nov 13.

Nov 14 Regent Street Christmas Lights

The grand shopping street has its usual Christmas makeover, with garlands of lights and festive figures decorating the length of the road. This year marks the 200th anniversary of Regent Street – with that in mind, the display will be a throwback to its first ever Christmas light display in 1954.

→ Regent St. ⊕ Piccadilly Circus.
From Thu Nov 14.

Nov 14 Seven Dials Christmas Lights

Head to Seven Dials to see the Christmas lights sparkle into action on Thursday. Between 5pm and 9pm, enjoy shopping discounts, workshops, promotions and more. There will also be an interactive installation powered by a charity tap donation point for Shelter. Every time someone donates, it'll light up.
→ Seven Dials. ⊕ Covent Garden.
From Thu Nov 14.

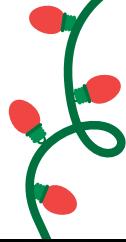


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Nov 15 The Enchanted Woodland

Each year, Syon Park's Enchanted Woodland transforms the 600-year-old gardens with a light display, completely illuminating the Great Conservatory. Those with a brisk pace can walk the glittering trail in half an hour, but allow longer if you want to snap pics and play with the interactive lights. It's almost always a sell-out, so book in advance.

→ Syon Park, Syon Lane rail. Fri, Sat and Sun from Fri Nov 15-Dec 1.

Nov 15 Christmas at Leadenhall Market

Come for the sparkle, stay for the snow and let the mulled wine flow in this vast Victorian market (better known to 'Harry Potter' fans as Diagon Alley). A 20-foot tree will take centre stage, and the Lord Mayor of London will be doing the honours and flicking the switch on.

→ Leadenhall Market. ☎ Monument.

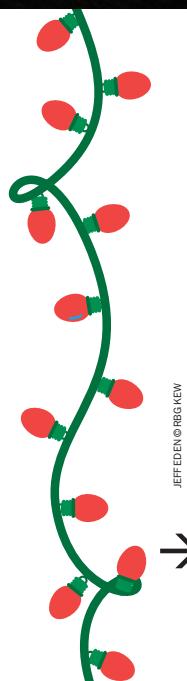
From Fri Nov 15.

Nov 20 ↑Christmas at Kew Gardens

Christmas at Kew sees the whole place get seriously lit. Feast your eyes on more than a million sparkling pea-lights, thousands of laser beams in the iconic Temperate House and a brand new waterfall of lights falling from tree canopies flooded with festive colour. Watch out for the return of the singing holly bushes too (it's not the mulled wine).

→ Kew Gardens. ☎ Kew Gardens.

Nov 20-Jan 5 2020.





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Christmas lights



Nov 21 Oxford Street Christmas Lights →

It's all change this year on Oxford Street – instead of the usual baubles, it'll be lit with 27 LED 'light curtains' which will be draped down the length of the street, each made up of 222,000 lights. The switch-on usually attracts more than 1 million Christmas lovers and the odd famous face – this year's event will involve a series of in-store gigs co-organised with Capital Xtra (the line-up is TBA).

→ Oxford St. ↔ Oxford Circus. From Nov 21.

Nov 22 Christmas Lights Bike Tour

Why see one lot of Christmas lights when you can see them all? That's the idea behind this three-hour, two-wheel trundle around the capital to gaze at its prettiest festive illuminations. After taking in London's most sparkling sights, including Oxford Circus, Regent Street and Seven Dials, you'll end your voyage with an atmospheric ride over Waterloo Bridge. You'll even get a free Santa hat.

→ Starts at 74 Kennington Rd. ↔ Lambeth North.
Nov 22-Jan 4 2020.

Nov 28 'Wave' at Ecclestone Yards

Ecclestone Yards is putting its own spin on Christmas lights with an installation of 500 individual orbs suspended in the space for you to get lost in. Designed by artist collective Squidsoup, you might recognise the installation from Four Tet's recent live shows at Ally Pally. ■

→ Ecclestone Yards. ↔ Victoria.
Nov 28-Jan 11 2020.

Find more festive events at
timeout.com/christmas



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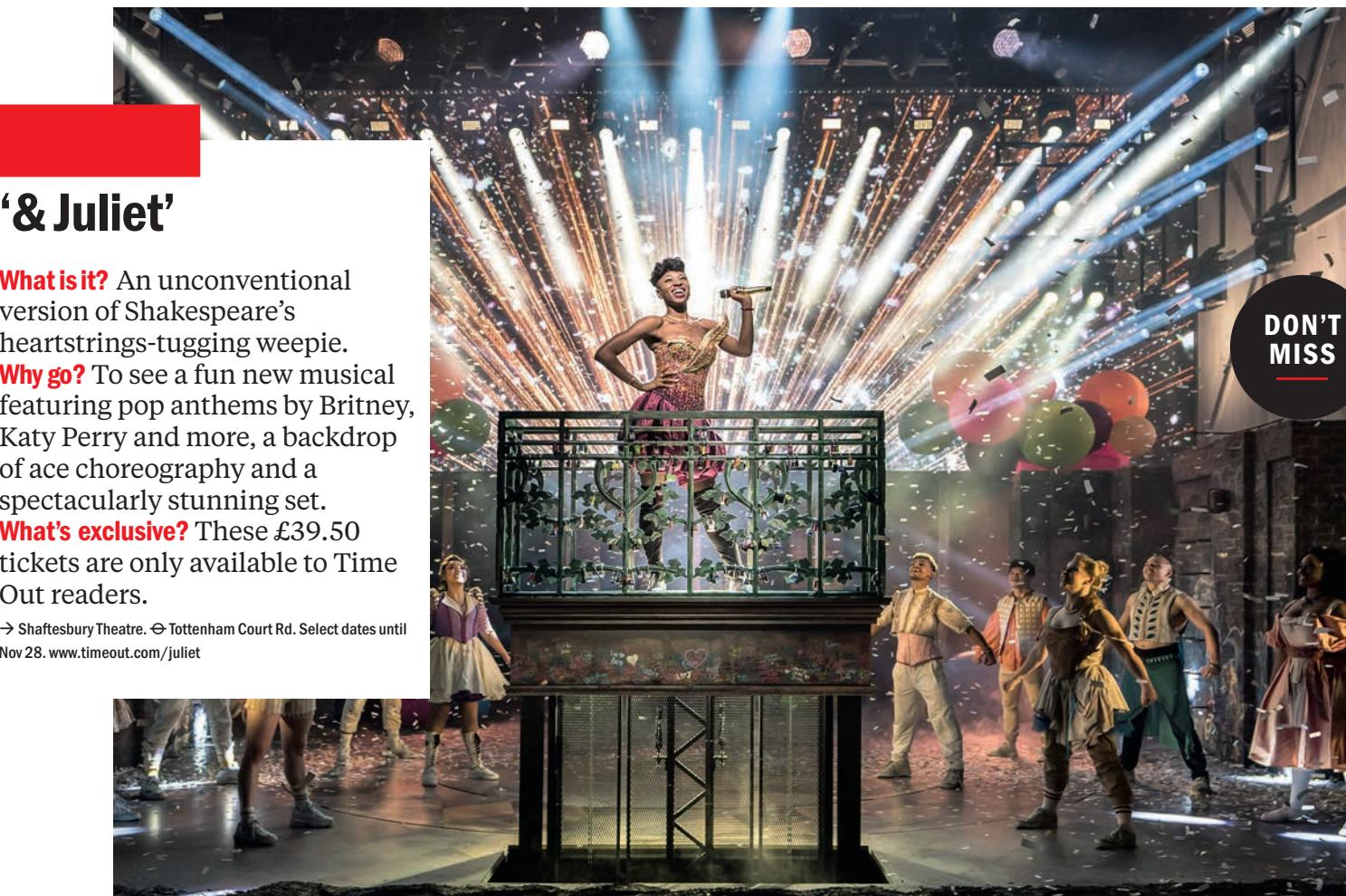
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'& Juliet'

What is it? An unconventional version of Shakespeare's heartstrings-tugging weepie.

Why go? To see a fun new musical featuring pop anthems by Britney, Katy Perry and more, a backdrop of ace choreography and a spectacularly stunning set.

What's exclusive? These £39.50 tickets are only available to Time Out readers.

→ Shaftesbury Theatre. ☎ Tottenham Court Rd. Select dates until Nov 28. www.timeout.com/juliet

Porky's BBQ

What is it? An all-you-can-eat wings deal at a Memphis-style restaurant.

Why go? If you're after some serious soul food, Porky's is where it's at. It champions barbecued meats, slow-cooked to perfection and smothered in Deep South sauces. Y'all interested?

What's exclusive? Unlimited wings, fries and a cocktail plus 90 minutes of beer pong for just £15.

→ Porky's BBQ. ☎ Cannon St. Until Jan 7 2020. www.timeout.com/porkys19

The Winter Bar Bus tour

What is it? A 90-minute festive drinking experience aboard an open-top bus.

Why go? To see London sparkle with a hot toddy in your hand, a cosy blanket on your lap and festive tunes in your ears.

What's exclusive? Save 39 percent – £19.50 gets you a ticket and a free glass of mulled wine.

→ Meet on Charles II St (by Her Majesty's Theatre).

→ Piccadilly Circus. Select dates until Dec 30. www.timeout.com/barbus

Blenheim Forge

What is it? A previously sold-out knife-sharpening workshop with the pros.

Why go? Blenheim Forge knives are loved by chefs around the globe. This is your chance to take a peek inside the workshop and hone your blade-sharpening skills.

What's exclusive? These classes are just £45 and exclusive to Time Out.

→ Blenheim Forge. Peckham Rye Overground.

Select dates until Mar 29 2020.

www.timeout.com/blenheim19

Music & Beans

What is it? A bottomless brunch feast at a new music café.

Why go? Hearty dishes and fresh puddings take centre stage here, but what makes this spot stand out from the crowd are in-store music lessons and an affordable rehearsal space that supports local bands and artists.

What's exclusive? Three courses and bottomless fizz are just £20.

→ Music & Beans. ☎ Mornington Crescent. Until Jan 24 2020. www.timeout.com/beans

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Terrarium Masterclass 23.11.19
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Thread Talks with
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Things to Do

Edited by Katie McCabe
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EVENT OF THE WEEK

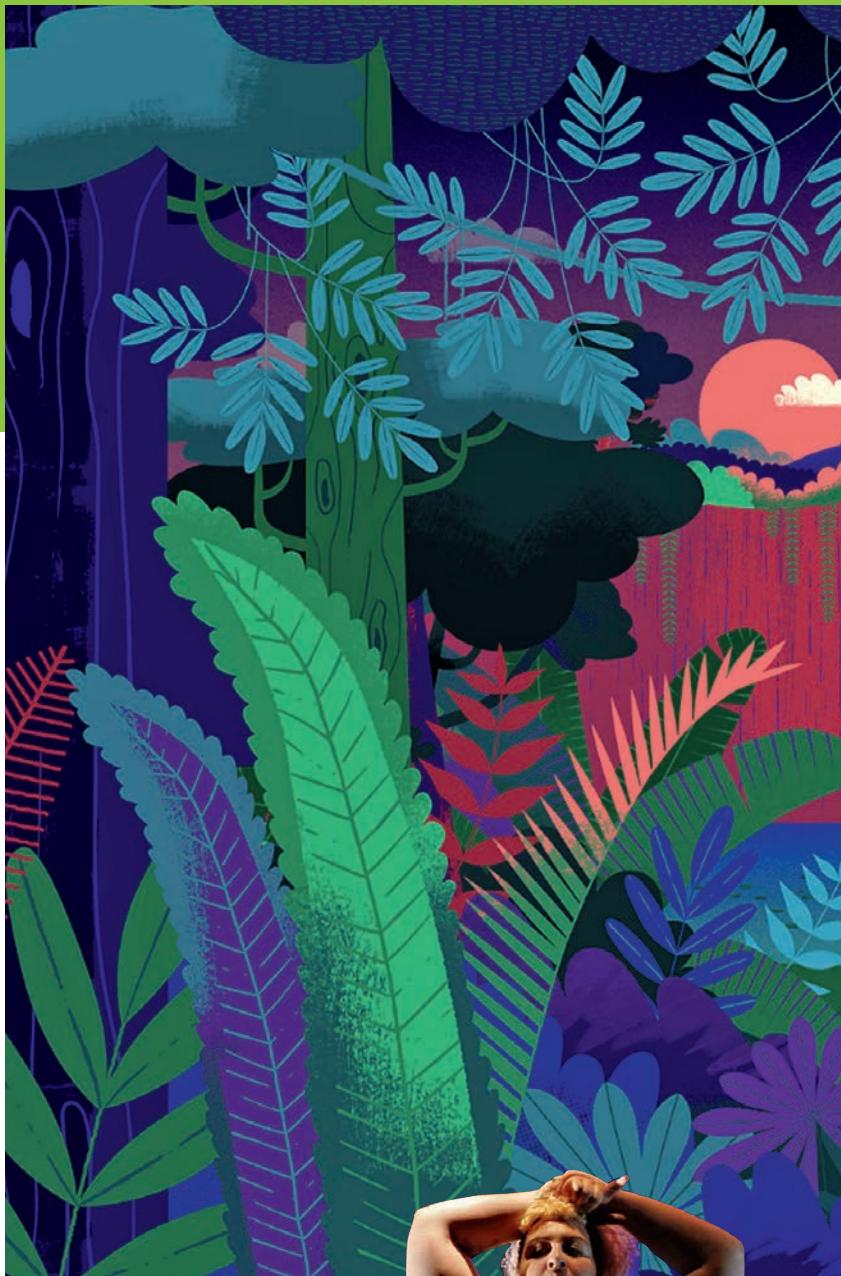
Fringe! Queer Film & Arts Fest

The big, beautiful celebration of LGBTQ+ creativity returns to east London today

LAUNCHED IN 2011 as a 'community response to arts cuts carnage', Fringe! Queer Arts & Film Fest has blossomed into a vital platform and showcase for London's LGBTQ+ creative scene. Taking place from November 12 to 17 at various east and north-east London venues, including the Rose Lipman Building, Hatch, Dalston Superstore and Genesis Cinema, this year's programme is packed with rare films, panels, poetry, parties and workshops. If you like your queer culture colourful and inclusive, you'll definitely want this one in your diary.

The fest opens with the UK premiere of **'Wig'**, a documentary about Wigstock, the legendary New York drag festival founded by RuPaul's pal Lady Bunny. Other must-see docs include **'Nothing to Lose'**, a joyous celebration of fat queer bodies, **'The Archivettes'** exploring Brooklyn's Lesbian Herstory Archives, and **'Unsettled: Seeking Refuge in America'**, a poignant portrait of LGBTQ+ asylum seekers. **'Top 3'**, a queer rom-com from Sweden, is the life-affirming closing film.

Then there are the stellar live events, like **Speaking from the**



WHAT IS IT?

A six-day mix of queer cinema and DIY dance parties.

WHY GO?

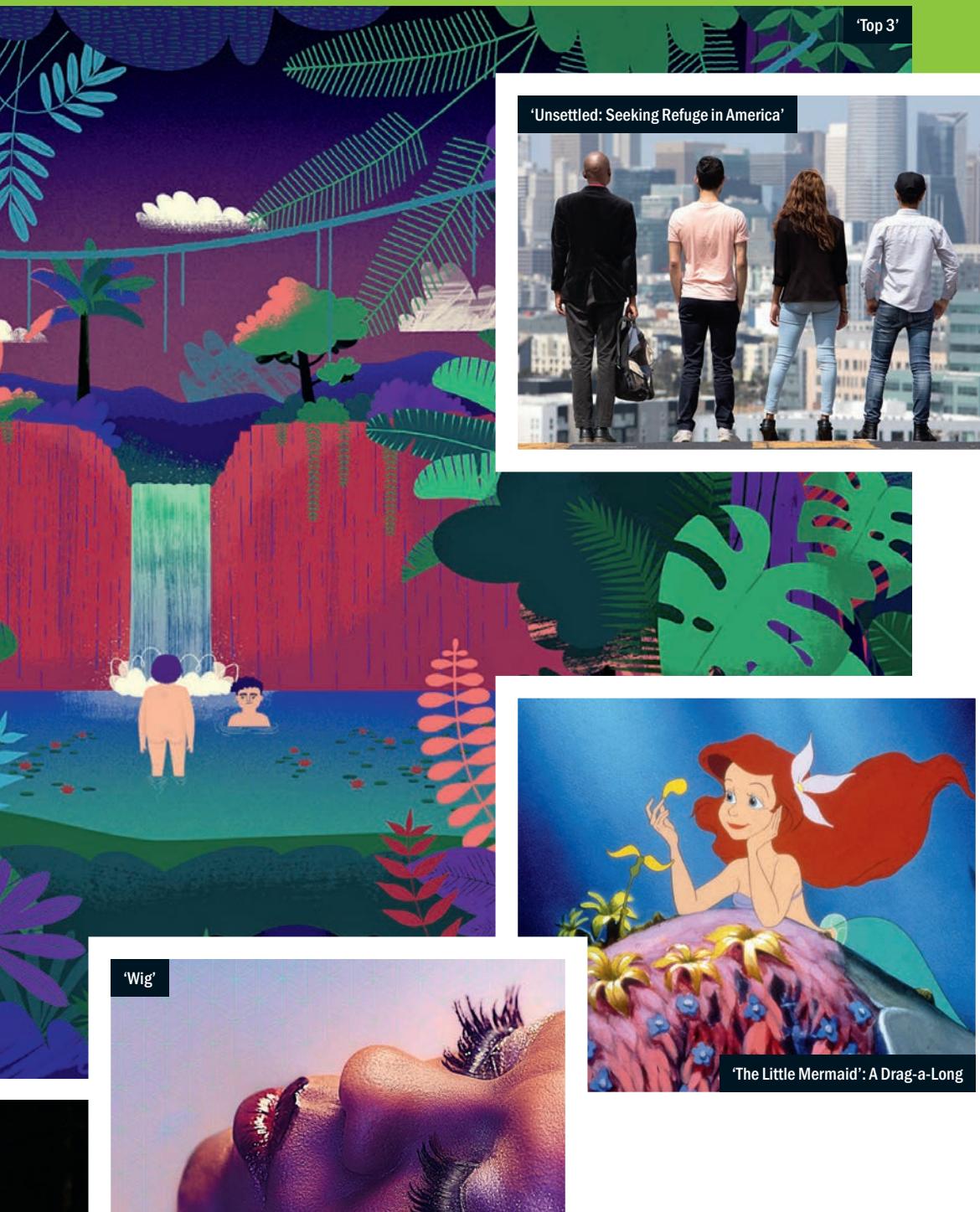
To sing 'Under the Sea' at a drag-enhanced screening of 'The Little Mermaid'.

→ Various venues. Tue Nov 12-Sun Nov 17. Prices vary.
www.fringefilmfest.com.



'Nothing to Lose'

Find nights from the fringes at timeout.com/thingstodo



Diaphragm – A Vagternoon with Ms Vaginal Davis, in which the boundary-pushing queer performer will present short films, artwork and a lecture, the **Bi and Mighty** panel on bisexual visibility, **Activism Speed Dating** and **Black Yoga**, a space for queer people of colour to connect through yoga. Meanwhile, Madge fans can attend a screening of her iconic 1991 documentary **'Truth or Dare'** aka **'In Bed with Madonna'** and **Extra Virgin: The Madonna Symposium**, a panel discussing her relationship with the LGBTQ+ community as an ally, icon and arguably, appropriator.

For dancing, there's **Happy Endings: Fringe!**, which is billed as a 'multi-sexual musical orgy' at Dalston Superstore, and **The Little Mermaid: A Drag-a-Long**. Given that the Disney classic's villain, Ursula, was modelled on gay icon Mae West and game-changing drag queen Divine, this immersive screening hosted by east London queens feels like a playful act of queer reclamation. Long live Fringe! ■



By Nick Levine
Who retired his fringe in 2009 and never looked back.

EDITORS' PICK

More brilliant LGBTQ+ nights this week

'Gay Sex and the Disappearing City'

Head to LGBTQ+ superpub The Glory for a fascinating-sounding 'performance-lecture' about the importance of queer spaces and the way they're threatened by gentrification. And by attending, you're helping to support one of the East End's most vital LGBTQ+ venues.

→ The Glory, Haggerston Overground.

Sun Nov 17. Free.

Oh Queer Cupid

This queer speed dating night isn't all about romance; instead, the focus is on making friends and connecting with people from across the LGBTQ+ spectrum. After the mini-dates, you'll enjoy stand-up sets from queer comedians riffing on sex, dates and relationships.

→ The Apple Tree. ☎ Farringdon.

Sun Nov 17. £8.

Drag Graduation Showcase

The gaggle of drag queens and kings who've completed the Royal Vauxhall Tavern's 'Art of Drag' course strut their stuff, sickeningly, at their graduation show. Expect lewks, lols and a whole lotta queer irreverence.

→ Royal Vauxhall Tavern. ☎ Vauxhall.

Wed Nov 13. £8.

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SOMETHING FOR THE WEEKEND

Friday



Syon Park's Enchanted Woodland

Prepare to be dazzled as Syon Park's 600-year-old gardens are filled with illuminations. Follow a twinkling trail dotted with luminous sculptures, lasers and tutti-frutti hues.

→ Syon Park & House. Syon Lane rail.
Fri Nov 15-Dec 1. £10-£12.

SCREAM Soho Horror Film Festival

Halloween's not over yet. Brace yourself for three days of new and obscure blood-curdling horror films, with many showing for the first time in the UK.
→ Karma Sanctum Soho Hotel.
↔ Piccadilly Circus.
Fri Nov 15-Sun Nov 17. From £8.

SHOP #LoveNotLandfill

The clothes at this pre-loved pop-up have been picked from charity shops by style-savvy influencers. Expect labels and one-offs at low prices. All proceeds go to charity.
→ 47-49 Neal St.
↔ Covent Garden. Thu Nov 14-Sun Nov 17. Free entry.



EXPERIENCE Digital Weekender

Get an augmented stone massage, see dancers controlled by technology and VR inspired by Kafka at this weekend of digital art.

→ Watermans Arts Centre. Brentford rail. Sat Nov 16-Sun Nov 17. Prices vary.

BROWSE Winter Craft Show

Meet local makers, join creative workshops and pick up handmade pieces at this modern take on a craft fair.

→ Unit 6, Bellenden Rd Business Park. Peckham Rye Overground. Fri Nov 15-Dec 8. Free entry.

'Streetstyle: From Teddy Boys to Grime Kids'

See portraits of punks, skinheads, ravers and today's grime fans in this exhibition charting the evolution of subcultures in the UK.

→ Trinity Art Gallery. ↔ Canning Town. Fri Nov 15-Dec 7. Free.

Sunday

Grown Up in Britain Weekender

See photos, flyers, films and ephemera submitted by the public at this exhibition celebrating youth culture over the last 70 years.

→ Ugly Duck. ↔ Bermondsey. Thu Nov 14-Sun Nov 17. Free.



BUY Tit's London

The breast pop-up shop in London is back championing female designers and giving 10 percent of all proceeds to the CoppaFeel! breast cancer charity. Pick up cards, clothing, ceramics and more.

→ 188 Shoreditch High St. Shoreditch High St Overground. Sat Nov 16-Nov 30. Free entry.

GET MERRY Primrose Hill Christmas Festival

Watch the Hill's famous dog show, eat street food, play at the fairground and see the Christmas lights being switched on.

→ Regent's Park Rd. ↔ Chalk Farm. Sun Nov 17. Free entry.

More twinkling lights at
timeout.com/christmas

Making It: Careers in Art and Design

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THREE OF THE BEST

Sustainable Christmas workshops

Scrap the tat and plastic packaging and find out how to have a more eco-friendly Christmas



Conscious Christmas Decorations

It might be the most wonderful time of the year, but Christmas is also the most wasteful. Now learn how to transform household waste into upcycled decorations. Think tin-can baubles and old wrapping paper tinsel.

→ Cake or Death Vegan Bakery, Dalston Junction Overground. Wed Nov 13. £30.



Rag Rug Wreath Making Workshop

Don't buy an unrecyclable plastic wreath, let expert Elspeth Jackson school you in art of rag rugging and help you turn fabric scraps into a beautiful garland for your door. Now you know what to do with those Christmas socks from your nan.

→ The Village Haberdashery, West Hampstead. Sun Nov 17. £75.



Plastic-Free Christmas Cracker Workshop

We all love a fortune-telling fish, but odds are it'll end up in landfill after Christmas. Craft your own planet-friendly crackers from recycled tissue and fill them with recycled paper hats and eco-friendly trinkets. *Alexandra Sims*

→ Crate St James Street, Walthamstow Central. Wed Nov 20. From £30.

More ways to be sustainable at
timeout.com/green

JUST ANNOUNCED

New Year's Eve
at Somerset House

House Gospel Choir

IF YOU'VE EVER spent New Year's Eve wedged into the crowd in Trafalgar Square, craning your neck to catch a glimpse of the Mayor's fireworks display on a big telly, you'll know it's an experience that must never be repeated. Even the shrewdest of Londoners can fall victim to last-minute NYE panic. All it takes is one friend suggesting you 'have a big one' and 'see what central's like for once' and, bang! You're crying on the Millennium Bridge at 1am, trying to Google Map a Sam Smith pub that might take pity on you and let you in for a pint of Doom Bar before closing.

At the Somerset House NYE party, however, you can get a brilliant view of the official fireworks from the River Terrace, do a bit of moonlight skating on the ice rink (which opens this Wednesday, November 13) and stay fed with something other than a £7 pizza slice. Last year's NYE do featured drag crew Sink The Pink, and Somerset House has just announced that the House Gospel Choir will be singing the crowd into 2020. Never heard of them? Picture an 18-strong troupe mixing gospel,

house and garage tunes into their harmonies, with a little help from a big brass band.

Aside from the main party, you can wander through the former palace like a lonely old monarch to see 'I Came Apart at the Seams', an exhibition of photographic and sculptural works by South African artist Mary Sibande. Once you've

done your round of midnight kisses and 'It'll be better in 2020' chats, get your second wind at a 'House Party' in the East Wing. Basically, no Millennium Bridge tears. You can be spontaneous on the other 364 days of the year, but if you're determined to spend NYE in central London, it's time to get your skates on. ■ *Katie McCabe*

Are you wearing someone else's engagement ring?

Schedule a complimentary consultation at taylorandhart.com/yourstory

TAYLOR & HART



WHAT IS IT?
A big, central London NYE party.

WHY GO?
To skate your way into 2020 on a moonlit ice rink.

→ Somerset House.
Θ Temple. Dec 31. £50, skate tickets £70.

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CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

C Coal Drops Yard Lights

See the swanky shopping spot's 'Northern Brights' turn on at 7.15pm. Before and after there'll be DJs and carols from the London Gay Men's Chorus. Plus, perform your favourite Yuletide tunes to compete to push the big switch-on button yourself.

→ Coal Drops Yard. ☎ King's Cross. Wed Nov 13. Free.

WATCH

S Hayman's Cinema Screenings

Hayman's of London is opening its distillery for this gin-themed pop-up cinema. Watch top flicks like 'When Harry Met Sally' and 'The Greatest Showman' while sipping fine gins and getting cosy on giant beanbags. Tickets include two gin cocktails and a goody bag with a distillery tour voucher.

→ Hayman's Distillery. ☎ Balham. Wed Nov 13-Sun Nov 17. £37.

SHOP

E E8 Handmade Market

Grab handmade, sustainable and ethically sourced bits and bobs from this Dalston market showcasing local designer-makers. Browse ceramics, knitwear, vegan soaps, natural skincare products, jewellery and home accessories using recycled fabrics. Plus, meet the crafters to discuss their work.

→ The Factory, Dalston Kingsland Overground. Sat Nov 16-Sun Nov 17. Free entry.

TO DO

The best events in your area

C Central N North S South E East W West



National Portrait Gallery

(Transition) Love, Elio and Lucy (detail) by René Campos, from the series Transition: Portraits of Transgender Teens, 2018 © René Campos

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C #LeakeStreet-Live

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→ Leake Street Arches. ☎ Waterloo. Thu Nov 14. Free.

S The Craft Half Marathon

Want to help children in need, get fit and drink beer while you're at it? Sign up to this half marathon or 10k. You'll have to commit to a £150 fundraising target for the Street Child charity, but you'll get to sip six half-pints over the course of the race (three for 10k runners) to sweeten the deal.

→ Wimbledon Common. ☎ Wimbledon. Sun Nov 17. £35.

C Tower of London Ice Rink

Want to whizz around the moat of one of London's most famous landmarks? Visit this fortress by the Thames for skating sessions with epic views of London in a grand historical setting.

→ Tower of London. ☎ Tower Hill. Sat Nov 16-Jan 5 2020. £15-£16.50.

Slip and slide at
timeout.com/icerinks

LEARN

Being Human Festival

This nationwide festival removes academics from classrooms, putting talks, masterclasses and panels into pubs, cafés and public spaces. Look out for gallery takeovers, hands-on workshops and behind-the-scenes tours, on topics spanning everything from Moroccan hip hop to LGBTQ+ history.

→ Various venues. Thu Nov 14-Nov 23. Free-£5.

W Bright Nights: Empire

Kensington Palace's next late explores the complex and contested legacy of the British Empire. Hear spoken word artist Jaspreet Kaur on the impact of Empire on the Asian community and Dr Erica McInnis talk about the need for more African-centred approaches to psychology.

→ Kensington Palace. ☎ High St Kensington. Wed Nov 13. £25.

N Night at the Vet College

Meet practising vets, see demonstrations and animal art and take part in interactive activities at this late.

→ Royal Veterinary College. ☎ Mornington Crescent. Wed Nov 13. Free.

EXCLUSIVE

Watch the greatest players on the greatest stage with our exclusive tickets to **Champions Tennis** at the Royal Albert Hall. Now from £16.

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Film

Edited by Phil de Semlyen
timeout.com/film @timeoutfilm

TIME OUT MEETS

Henry Golding

The 'Last Christmas' star on Wham!, those 007 rumours and taking compliments

FOR HIS STARRING role in the world-conquering romcom 'Crazy Rich Asians', former presenter of 'The Travel Show' Henry Golding seemed to come out of nowhere, lighting up the screen and breaking hearts. In 'Last Christmas', a winning slushfest co-starring Emilia Clarke and soundtracked by George Michael's back catalogue, he's about to do it all over again – this time as Clarke's mysterious new crush.

Were you a George Michael fan before this movie?
‘Massive. The majority of my childhood was in Surrey – I arrived [from Malaysia] in 1996 – and George was the king of pop stars. My go-to karaoke song is “Faith”. I grew up singing it.’

Are you good at it?
‘I’m terrible, of course! As all good karaoke [singers] should be.’

How do you feel about ‘Last Christmas’ becoming a future Boxing Day telly staple in years to come?
‘Every year I’ll be like, “What else is on?! Let’s watch ‘Love Actually’ instead.” But, you know, I think that’s what we’re in the movies for – to create timeless classics.’

It’s a very pretty portrait of London. You lived here for years, didn’t you?
‘I lived 500 metres down the road from Tom’s house on Brick Lane. It’s so crazy. We filmed on Cheshire Street in E2.’

“Faith” is my go-to karaoke song. I’m terrible at it’



Last Christmas



WHAT IS IT...
A fizzy Christmas romcom with a helping of cynicism.

WHY GO...
Want to hear Emma Thompson wailing folk songs? Course you do!

→ Director Paul Feig (12A)
103 mins.



IF HELEN FIELDING reworked 'A Christmas Carol', it might look a little like this good-natured romcom about a struggling millennial finding hope in a handsome stranger. If you can get past a daft twist that the film's trailer telegraphed months ago, and some low-flame chemistry between Emilia Clarke and Henry Golding, it's a feel-nice addition to the festive canon.

Clarke plays Kate, a wannabe singer and George Michael superfan, slumming it as an elf in a Covent Garden Christmas shop. 'I'm not a career elf,' she says, though such is her wrecking-ball outlook, she'd probably be sued for reputational damage by other elves if she was. Enter Golding's mysterious Tom. But who is he? And why does he have (gasp!) no phone?

Soundtracked by George Michael tunes, their romance spans a picture-postcard London. In the spirit of all good Christmas movies, it's wildly untroubled by geography (Islington to Covent Garden via Brixton?) or realism (strangers talk to each other – on an actual bus). The cast's charm mostly carries you through the sluggish bits, with Emma Thompson (who also co-wrote the script) a hoot as Kate's intense Croatian mum.

The mushiest bits are borderline indigestible, but its effervescence makes it a fun enough watch. At the least, it'll make you fall hard for its other romantic lead: London. ■ *Phil de Semlyen*

Le Mans '66



WHAT IS IT...
Ford's battle with Ferrari at the 1966 Le Mans race.

WHY GO...
The racing scenes are properly terrifying.

→ Director James Mangold (12A) 152 mins.



MATT DAMON AND Christian Bale race fast cars and bicker like brothers in 'Le Mans '66', a movie works best when it's honking around the track. Texan Carroll Shelby (Damon), a car constructor whose heart problems stalled his career, and Ken Miles (Bale), the salty British-born driver who would dominate the field, were a real-life duo born to be at the centre of a chatty action movie. 'Logan' director James Mangold keeps the drama nicely loaded with quick-fire banter.

There's a much less interesting plot thread that introduces corporate interests. Brusque Henry Ford II (Tracy Letts) hopes to make a name for himself beyond his father's reputation and is convinced to take on Ferrari at the 24-hour Le Mans race, thus rebranding Ford as a hot new upstart. But it's a dull peg to hang the movie on and, sure enough, these 'Mad Men' bits fall flat.

Thankfully, the driving scenes are a joy, especially when Le Mans is pounded by a rainstorm and the whole idea of a non-stop race seems like a death wish. And Damon and Bale are great company, steering the drivers' psychology to something complex and even mystical (Bale gets some spacy dialogue about the 'perfect lap'). No points for guessing who takes the checkered flag, or for knowing which version of 'Le Mans '66' – the half-smart business fable or the rough-and-ready boys' own adventure – works best. ■ *Joshua Rothkopf*

Do you think it's a good representation of the city?

'I think so. We filmed in Covent Garden, Embankment, along the Strand, Regent Street. It shows how multicultural the city is, and it tackles homelessness too. Perhaps it'll make people think twice about those who are less fortunate – who are spending Christmas on the streets.'

'Crazy Rich Asians' was celebrated for its Asian cast. With this one, you're the co-lead but your heritage is irrelevant. That feels just as important.

'Massively. It's normalising. My character and Michelle Yeoh's character [in 'Last Christmas'] aren't related. When people see two Asian faces in a movie, they're like, "Ah, mother and son." Isn't that weird? Is every white person related?'

There are Bond rumours swirling around you.

Are we at the point where it's accepted that the character could be half-Malaysian, as you are?

'There will always be naysayers and supporters. At the end of the day, the story has to remain king. Who you use or how you portray is important, but it's not the end-all. If it's a bad script, whichever actor gets chosen is gonna get destroyed.'

What's it like to be the subject of these rumours?

'It's an honour. I'm a massive fan of the movies. Growing up, [James Bond] was the guy you wanted to be. If I'm able to be part of something that has some kid roaming a playground with his hand pistol in the air, living a world of fantasy? Those are the types of films I want to be a part of.'

Apparently, Emilia Clarke said that when she saw 'Crazy Rich Asians' she thought you were the most attractive man she'd ever seen.

'Ha, ha, ha! She's a charmer.'

So are you getting used to the compliments now?

'Um... I take them with a pinch of salt. You're making me embarrassed now, dude! Look, the best compliments for me are if I remind people of old Hollywood. Because that [was] a time when men didn't have to be toxic to be the leading man. Everything else makes me blush.' ■

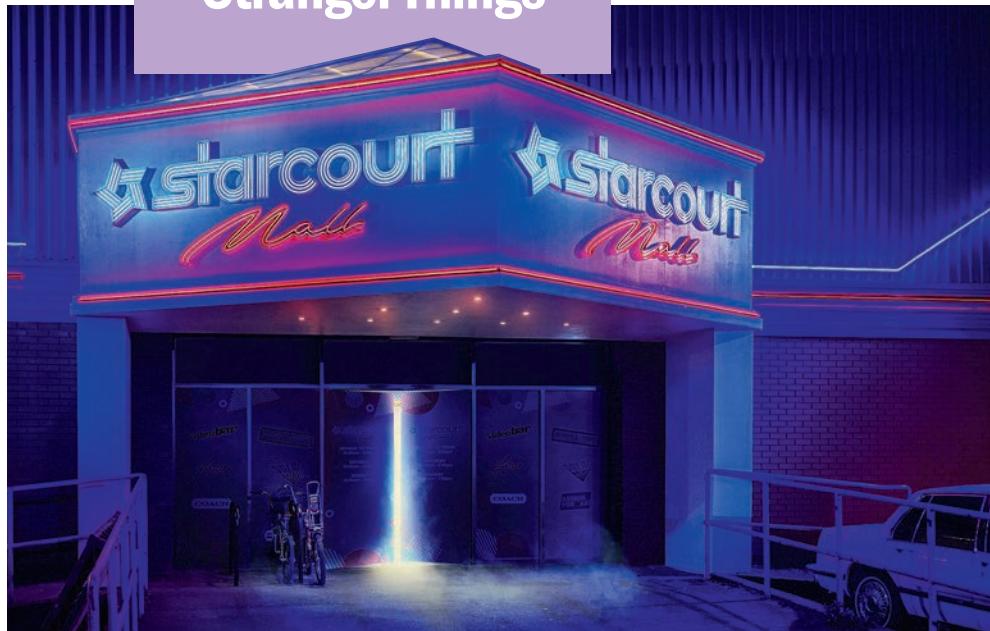
→ 'Last Christmas' opens Fri Nov 15.

By Alex Godfrey

Who thinks 'Wham Rap!' may be a seminal moment in hip hop.



The 50 greatest sports movies
timeout.com/film

FIRST LOOK**Secret Cinema
presents
'Stranger Things'**

London's 25 best cinemas at timeout.com/film

IF YOU'RE A convert to Secret Cinema's richly realised movie worlds, the launch of tomorrow's new 'Stranger Things' extravaganza can't come soon enough. As this exclusive first-look shows, a secret London location has been transformed into a corner of '80s Indiana. Attendees will be met with this eerily accurate frontage of Hawkins's Starcourt Mall. A shoppelgänger, if you will.

Secret Cinema presents 'Stranger Things' is billed as 'the inaugural TV experience' from the pioneers of experiential cinema. It's a departure – not least for not having a movie as a centrepiece. 'The fact that everyone keeps asking how on earth we are going to deal with the lack of a film is great,' says creative director Matthew Bennett. 'We hope everyone finds our solution as magical as we intend.'

So can Secret Cinemagoers expect the odd Demogorgon? 'Let's just say we have our Barb on the Secret Cinema staff,' hints Bennett, 'and she just happened to "catch her thumb" on a beer can the other night.' Sounds like a 'yes' to us. ■

→ Secret Cinema presents 'Stranger Things' runs from Wed Nov 13-Feb 23 2020. www.tickets.secretcinema.org/stranger-things

Marriage Story

NOAH BAUMBACH'S STUNNING divorce drama kicks off with a rare gentle moment. Married Brooklyn parents Nicole (Scarlett Johansson) and Charlie (Adam Driver) introduce themselves via a double diary of sorts as we watch snippets of their life: pizza munched and bedtime stories told. Nicole makes people feel comfortable, Charlie tells us. He, in turn, rarely gets defeated, she says. Both are deeply competitive. Alas, that's the side 'Marriage Story' is about.

Charlie and Nicole are splitting up. He's a rising theatre director whose brooding used to be catnip to LA-raised Nicole, a former teen movie star. But she has deferred her dreams for his, and now the relationship has soured. Expertly scripted by Baumbach (and partly based on his own break-up with Jennifer Jason Leigh), 'Marriage Story' may remind you of 'Kramer vs Kramer', but that movie was harsh on Meryl Streep's discontented mother. Baumbach is scrupulously fair to both.

Even the lawyers are a star turn here. Laura Dern's high-powered Nora butters up Nicole with tea and sympathy, while Charlie ping-pongs between a legal attack dog and a gentle giant (Ray Liotta and Alan

**FILM OF THE WEEK****WHAT IS IT...**

A divorce drama starring Adam Driver and Scarlett Johansson.

WHY GO...

It's got Oscars written all over it. In tears.

→ Director Noah Baumbach (15) 137 mins.

Alda, respectively). 'It's like a death without a body,' says Alda's lawyer of the divorce process. He's grimly on the money.

Somehow Baumbach burrows even deeper into his characters' pain once all the paperwork is done. Driver belts his way through Stephen Sondheim's 'Being Alive'

alone at a mic in a New York bar, investing it with tear-stained cynicism. Nicole sees Charlie only on custody days, swapping a sleepy kid between shoulders, tying his shoelaces out of practical safety, not love. With 'Marriage Story', Baumbach has turned his trademark comedies of urban dissatisfaction into something truly universal. It'll be clear-eyed company to anyone who's felt betrayed by their own hopes. ■ *Joshua Rothkopf*

Little Monsters

★★★½

LIKE ITS DECOMPOSING antagonists, 'Little Monsters' starts slowly and lurches around a bit. For the first 20 minutes or so, you wouldn't guess it has zombies, and will be wondering as to the whereabouts of its two biggest stars (Lupita Nyong'o and Josh Gad). Australian writer-director Abe Forsythe's scrappy film opens with an overlong introduction to failed death metal frontman – and failed man in general – Dave (Alexander England), who falls for his five-year-old nephew's ukulele-strumming teacher Miss Caroline (Nyong'o). But once the needy man-child volunteers to help on a fateful class outing to a petting zoo, the film finds its rhythm and ultimately proves to be a bloody charmer.

Much of this is down to Nyong'o, who's as adept at decapitating zombies as she is at strumming the ukulele, as Miss Caroline and Dave attempt to protect their confused young wards from the grasping dead after a mishap at the zoo's neighbouring military base. Gad makes intermittent appearances as



WHAT IS IT...

A zombie comedy set partly in a petting zoo.

WHY GO...

Because it's a zombie comedy set partly in a petting zoo.

→ Director Abe Forsythe
(15) 94 mins.

a children's TV entertainer named Teddy McGiggle – the joke being he's a swear-y, alcoholic sex addict – but the focus is on Nyong'o and England, who manage to summon up some endearing double-act chemistry amid all the f-bombs and guts-spilling.

Despite the prevalence of pre-schoolers in the cast, this is a firmly grown-up horror-comedy, featuring a few 'did they really just go there?' belly laughs. But it's the movie's non-saccharine warmth which really impresses. As Miss Caroline and Dave grow closer, the film reveals what it takes for an arrested-development loser like Dave to become a real man. ■ *Dan Jolin*

ALSO OPENING

THE GANGSTER, THE COP, THE DEVIL →

★★★½ Sylvester Stallone was impressed enough to commission a US remake of this frisky Korean crime flick in which Ma Dong Seok ('Train to Busan') plays a gang boss hunting down the serial killer who nearly offed him. Sly was half on to something: the film is a solid, if not quite exceptional, time-passer full of gangland vendettas, backdropped by lurid splashes of neon. Ma, a former mixed martial arts trainer, makes a charismatic co-lead alongside the story's nominal hero cop (Kim Moo Yul). There's major carnage along the way, including one hair-raising mass brawl with blades and iron bars. The villain is supremely hissable, too. *Trevor Johnston*



THE REPORT

★★★½

As this deafeningly dull political thriller records, the CIA embarked on a post-9/11 programme of extreme interrogation that amounted to torture. None of it resulted in any actionable intelligence, ever. Writer-director Scott Z Burns parlays the events into a dry and academic-feeling affair in which only Adam Driver makes an impact as a crusading investigator. It's a relentless data dump, loaded with

speeches, and the strong supporting cast (Jon Hamm, Matthew Rhys) get lost amid all the yakking. *Joshua Rothkopf*

2040

★★★½

Move over Al Gore, chipper Aussie actor Damon Gameau is here to take your crown with this optimistic documentary he presents and directs. It addresses the climate crisis, suggesting ways to ameliorate it within 20 years using only existing solutions (local energy hubs, electric cars, something called 'the donut'). He calls it 'fact-based dreaming' and it translates into an encouraging watch that's embroidered with nifty CG touches and animation. Hopefully the right people will watch it. ■ *Phil de Semlyen*

BOOK NOW



'Rocketman' at The Shard

The city's most spectacularly appointed cinema is throwing open its doors for a 'Rocketman' screening, 800 feet up. With those views, a free G&T and popcorn – plus costumes encouraged – it'll be worth the outlay. So fish out your feather boa and get along to the only screening higher than '70s Elton himself.

→ The View from The Shard. Wed Nov 20, 8pm. ⊕ London Bridge. £45.
www.travellingfilmshow.co.uk.

Music & Nightlife

Edited by Oliver Keens
timeout.com/music @timeoutmusic

21 SHOWS TO SEE AT

EFG London Jazz Festival

We distil the best of the 2,000 artists and 350 shows still on sale that make up this annual jazz-a-palooza

1 Let Soweto Kinch take you back to 1919

The incredible UK jazz wizard debuts his new project, 'The Black Peril', which revisits a time of monumental social change.

→ Earth. Nov 22.

2 Celebrate 100 years of the Bauhaus

Created around the Bau.Haus. Klang project, this event sees musicians Michael Wollny, Émile Parisien, Leafcutter John and others mark the centenary of the Bauhaus.

→ Barbican. Nov 24.

3 Go to a mini festival within a festival

The Royal Docks area in Newham hosts a weekend of jazz gigs, workshops, and installations that includes a trail of free shows.

→ Various Newham venues. Nov 23-24.

4 Discover if your toddler can jam

Jazz for Toddlers is one of the festival's annual highlights. This year Juliet Kelly and Tony Kofi will lead kids aged two to five through an introduction to the wonderful world of jazz.

→ Various venues. Fri Nov 15-Nov 24.

5 Hear the best of vocal jazz

The festival kicks off with its usual celebratory Jazz Voice event. This year's line-up includes Corinne Bailey Rae, Jalen N'Gonda and Cherise Adams-Burnett.

→ Royal Festival Hall. Fri Nov 15

6 Catch a true jazz chanteuse

Sublime vocalist Cécile McLorin Salvant performs from her latest album 'The Window' with pianist Sullivan Fortner. The evening opens with support from The McCormack & Yarde Duo.

→ Barbican. Sat Nov 16.

7 Watch a rock singer take on jazz

Chrissie Hynde shows off the latest string to her bow by performing from her newly released jazz album 'Valve Bone Woe', which features reworkings of songs by the likes of Charles Mingus and Frank Sinatra.

→ Royal Festival Hall. Nov 24.

8 Check out one of London's hottest jazz artists

Saxophonist and innovator Binker Golding leads his quartet through original compositions that explore harmony and experimentation.

→ Ninety One Living Room. Sat Nov 16.

9 Learn about the Jazz Penguin

A children's show that includes all kinds of quirky musical animal characters, presented by Goblin theatre company.

→ Crazy Coqs Live at Zédel. Sat Nov 16.

10 Find out what it's like to record for legendary European jazz label ECM

Joe Lovano and Julia Hülsmann talk to Jane Cornwell about their experiences recording for the properly iconic, free-thinking ECM label – kickstarting a day celebrating 50 years of the label.

→ Purcell Room. Sun Nov 17.





More at
[timeout.com/
music](http://timeout.com/music)

Christian Scott

11 Enjoy Steam Down, the coolest crew in town

What began in 2017 as a weekly residency for a bunch of players in Deptford has grown into one of the most trendy nights out in London, thanks to this award-winning, sweat-enducing ensemble.

→ Compressor House. Nov 23.

12 Honour the music of Horace Silver

Cape Verdean singer-songwriter Carmen Souza celebrates the life and music of the seminal pianist, loved for 'Moanin', 'Song Of My Father' and more.

→ Pizza Express Jazz Club. Sun Nov 17.

JOE LOVANO: CRAIG LOWELL

13 Direct a jazz performance

Jason Yarde and his large ensemble Acoustic Bombastic invite the audience to select what's played and by whom.

→ Cockpit. Mon Nov 18.

14 See how your beatboxing skills match up to a world champion's

Warm up your larynx before you take part in a free two-hour beatboxing and improvisation workshop with Londoner and world champion vocal artist Bellatrix.

→ Royal Festival Hall, White Room. Nov 23.

15 Go to Get the Blessing's 20th birthday!

Comprised of Portishead rhythm section Clive Deamer and Jim Barr, as well as saxophonist Jake McMurchie and Pete Judge (on trumpet) enjoy GTB marking their 20-year milestone.

→ Moth Club. Nov 23.

16 Go to a live podcast recording

Huw V Williams brings his podcast, Improvised Music Agenda, to the festival for two nights of conversation with musical interludes.

→ Vortex. Mon Nov 18, Nov 24.

17 See the European premiere of Danilo Pérez's new work

Wayne Shorter Quartet pianist Danilo Pérez debuts his new project, Global Messengers, which was co-commissioned by the festival.

→ Queen Elizabeth Hall. Nov 22.

18 Catch a jazzy movie

New feature film 'Bolden' is a biopic of cornet player Buddy Bolden (sometimes called the father of jazz), with a soundtrack by Wynton Marsalis.

→ Barbican. Sun Nov 17.

19 Delve into a classic album with Terri Lyne Carrington

Jazz drum legend and festival artist in residence Terri Lyne Carrington joins Classic Album Sundays founder Colleen Murphy to explore Nina Simone's 'Black Gold'.

→ Kings Place. Sun Nov 17.

20 Bask in the presence of influential saxophonist and composer Gary Bartz

Sideman to Charles Mingus, Miles Davis and Art Blakey to name a few, Gary Bartz is an iconic figure in the world of jazz. Hear him play backed by the band Maisha and Mogo-winning vocalist Zara McFarlane.

→ Royal Festival Hall. Sat Nov 16.

21 ...and finally, pay your respects

Breaking the Silence is a free concert that sees young musicians, led by Orphy Robinson, Jenny Adeyanju and Ineza Kerschamp, performing new compositions based on forgotten stories of the First World War. ■

→ Royal Festival Hall, Clore Ballroom. Nov 23.



By Roseanne Hanley
Who you'll usually find propping up a bar at a jazz club.



JUNCTION 2 FESTIVAL

FRIDAY 5TH JUNE

FIRST ACTS ANNOUNCED

-

LIVE

JON HOPKINS

DJS A - Z

FOUR TET

HESSLE AUDIO

HONEY DIJON

PLUS WEEKEND RESIDENT

AVALON EMERSON

BOSTON MANOR PARK LONDON

JUNCTION2.LONDON



TimeOut

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Frontier



BIG NEWS

Grace Jones will curate Meltdown 2020



WELL, WELL... THIS is major. Visionary singer-songwriter, actress and style icon Grace Jones will curate and headline the twenty-seventh iteration of the arts and culture festival which takes place at the Southbank Centre in June. She follows in the illustrious footsteps of, among others, David Bowie, Yoko Ono, Robert Smith, MIA and Nile Rodgers.

'I am honoured to be curating next year's Meltdown festival,' Jones said in a statement last week. 'Year after year, the festival continues to spread its colourful wings, allowing its curators to bring together an array of diverse talent not seen anywhere else. It's about time I was asked to curate Meltdown, darling, don't you think?!"

We definitely do think. Jones is a genuine original whose incredible live performances, complete with signature hula-hooping, have been slaying festivals including Lovebox, BST Hyde Park and On Blackheath in recent years. She's also a real wild card, so it's impossible to predict what kind of acts she might bring to the South Bank next year.

Meltdown 2020 will take place June 12-21, giving Jones ten days of gigs and cultural happenings to programme. She's no stranger to the prestigious annual festival, having performed at Meltdown in 2008 when Massive Attack curated.

'There's no denying it: Grace Jones is unlike anybody else,' says Bengi Ünsal, head of contemporary music at Southbank Centre. 'She was the first artist who made me feel that I could express myself, be whatever I wanted to be, and not be afraid of what the world might say.' Amen to that. And here's to our favourite 71-year-old hula-hooping goddess. ■ *Nick Levine*

→ Meltdown takes place Jun 12-21 2020.

Music & Nightlife



More news at
[timeout.com/
music](http://timeout.com/music)



SATURDAY 6TH JUNE

FIRST ACTS ANNOUNCED

—
DJS A – Z

**ADAM BEYER
AMELIE LENS
BEN KLOCK
DAX J**

PLUS WEEKEND RESIDENT
AVALON EMERSON

**BOSTON MANOR PARK LONDON
JUNCTION2.LONDON**



TimeOut

Relentless

FRONTIER



Okay, Arlo Parks: talk to me.

Well, Arlo may be a mere 19 years old, but the Hammersmith native is already carving out a reputation as one of the capital's smartest new lyricists, with some soulful pop nous to boot.

Oh God, not another musical wunderkind.

Sort of, but Arlo has a wise head on her shoulders. Debut EP 'Super Sad Generation' tackles the trials of young love with a deftness beyond her years ('Leave me to my own devices/It's better when your Coca-Cola eyes are out of my face...'), while a scroll through her Spotify will find her namechecking MF Doom or Gerard Way one moment and penning a track about eighteenth-century cad-poet Byron the next.

So, she's a bit of a wordsmith then?

Oh, big time. Arlo says she's equally influenced by musicians and writers. Her fave literary idols include Haruki Murakami, Sylvia

WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH

Arlo Parks



Plath and Hanif Abdurraqib – and you can really tell.

What's her music actually like?

It's bedroom pop-ish (read: intimate, lo-fi, not too dense), but it's also got a groove. If you've ever wished that King Krule's gritty confessional and Jorja Smith's warm pop smarts could just, like, smush together, you're now in luck.

And of all the London Parks, where does she rank? Is she, for example, better than Finsbury Park?

Well, it depends on what you're after, really. But Arlo's already rising fast enough to have landed a sweet support slot at Loyle Carner's huge Alexandra Palace gig on November 15. Expect some sizeable headline shows of her own in the not-so-distant future. ■Lisa Wright

CHARLIE GUMMINGS

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GIGS AND CLUBS

The best bookables and onsales this week



La Roux

After dropping comeback single 'International Woman of Leisure', Brixton's own Elly Jackson has announced a hometown headline show. You'll hear highlights from upcoming album 'Supervision', due two days after the gig.

→ Fabric. Feb 5 2020.

THIS WEEK

25 Years of Bugged Out!

The most influential crew in British clubbing history celebrates 25 years of making magic, with a best-of buffet featuring: 2manyDJs, Erol Alkan, Green Velvet, Modeselektor, Jungle and loads more. → Printworks. Sat Nov 16.

JUST ANNOUNCED

Boiler Room: London

Rinse FM's 6 Figure Gang team joins forces with drum 'n' bass veteran DJ Storm and

dubstep duo Sicaria Sound for a seven-hour rager that won't be live-streamed.

→ Electric Brixton. Nov 22.

Sega Bodega

The scalding hot Glaswegian producer drops a new show, where he'll be joined by a string quartet.

→ St Pancras Old Church. Dec 6.

Mobb Deep

Havoc and Big Noyd celebrate 20 years of the hip hop act's acclaimed fourth album 'Murda Muzik'. → Oval Space. Dec 7.

Gazelle Twin + NYX

Experimental composer Gazelle Twin joins forces with electro drone choir NYX for a special EFG London Jazz Festival performance

channelling the 'dizzying anxiety of post-truth Britain'. Topical, for sure. → Queen Elizabeth Hall. Nov 20.

Mystery Jets

Rescheduled date from the super-smart UK indie rockers.

→ O2 Shepherds Bush Empire. Apr 22 2020.

Ash

The Northern Irish band mark 25 years of recording with a new compilation and an extensive European tour next year.

→ Roundhouse. Mar 27 2020.

The Chainsmokers

Get 'Closer' to the chart-conquering EDM stars at their surprisingly modest London headline gig. → O2 Academy Brixton. Oct 16 2020.

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Theatre & Dance

Edited by Andrzej Łukowski
timeout.com/theatre @timeouttheatre

Max Martin on the songs from '& Juliet'

The super-producer gives us the lowdown on the biggest bangers in his sublimely OTT West End musical

FROM THE VERY moment it was announced, we were obsessed with the new West End musical '*& Juliet*'. If the fact that it was the brainchild of Swedish pop super-producer Max Martin – and features 29 of his iconic smashes – wasn't enough for love at first sight, then the gleefully preposterous plot, that sees Shakespeare's Juliet (Miriam-Teak Lee) return from the dead and head off on a girls' trip to Paris, sealed the deal. Here's a guide to six of the show's biggest bangers, with some input from the reclusive Mr Martin.

'...Baby One More Time'

'*& Juliet*' features numerous Britney Spears smashes, including 'Oops!... I Did It Again', 'Overprotected' and 'I'm Not a Girl, Not Yet a Woman'. But realistically, no musical celebration of Max

Martin would be complete without his most famous song. '...Baby One More Time' is performed near the start of the show: Juliet is singing it as she appears on stage after William Shakespeare is persuaded by his wife Anne Hathaway to change the ending to '*Romeo & Juliet*' and bring its heroine back.

Max Martin: 'I wrote this in my head in the middle of the night. I remember getting up and recording a sleepy voice version of it so as not to lose it.'

'It's My Life'

It's easy to forget quite how much stuff Martin has written, and for quite how many people: 'It's My Life' gave Bon Jovi a walloping Top Three hit back in 2000, and remains a karaoke anthem. In '*& Juliet*', it's the big pre-interval number, and while we shouldn't totally spoil

the surprise, let's just say that it marks the point when William Shakespeare decides that he'd like to bring *a certain other character* from '*Romeo & Juliet*' back into the show.
Max Martin: 'This song is all about taking control of your life, your destiny... and I love the way it is used in the musical. It's a real moment of surprise!'

'Since U Been Gone'

This absolute belter turned Kelly Clarkson from an 'American Idol' winner, little known outside of her home country, to a massive global superstar. In '*& Juliet*' it emerges as a song of self-empowerment as Juliet gathers her gal pals and tells *a certain other character* that she has moved on in his absence.





**'I wrote
"...Baby
One More
Time" in my
head in the
middle of
the night'**

Max Martin: 'This is an example of how a good song can become a great song, when someone like Kelly Clarkson sings it.'

'I Kissed a Girl'

Originally, Katy Perry's kerjillion-selling breakthrough song was a slice of lipstick lesbian silliness that caused a bit of controversy because of the suggestion it was trivialising

& JULIET: MICHAEL WHARLEY; SUNDAY IN THE PARK WITH GEORGE: MATTHEW NURPHY; CITY OF ANGELS: JOHAN PERSSON: THE PRINCE OF EGYPT: DARREN BELL

bisexuality. No danger here – it's sung by a male character who has an enjoyable snog with Juliet on the way to realising that he is in fact gay. **Max Martin:** 'I have such great memories of that song. It was the starting point for Katy's amazing journey, and I am so proud to have been a part of that.'

'It's Gonna Be Me'

Believe it or not, *NSYNC only had a single US Number One – and it's this bad boy, from 2000. It doesn't soundtrack an easily definable piece of action in '& Juliet' – but of course the real question is: how will the word 'me' be pronounced. Over to you, Max.

Max Martin: 'So much has been written about why Justin Timberlake pronounces the word "me" as "may" in this song. People now release memes online on April 30 with the title "It's Gonna Be May". Even Barack Obama did this one year... I never saw that coming!'

'Everybody (Backstreet's Back)'

Fans of Backstreet Boys are in for an absolute treat with '& Juliet', which contains no less than five of the biggest hits Martin wrote for AJ, Howie and the gang. Again, 'Everybody (Backstreet's Back)' doesn't soundtrack a major plot point here, which isn't really a surprise given the extreme specificity of the lyrics.

Max Martin: 'Denniz Pop and I had the idea to write a song by Backstreet Boys singing about Backstreet Boys coming back with a new record.'

→ '& Juliet' is at the Shaftesbury Theatre. ☎ Holborn. Until May 30. £22.50-£110. ■



By Andrzej Łukowski
Who is sad there are no Taylor Swift songs but what can you do?

BOOK NOW

Mega musicals coming to London in 2020



Sunday in the Park with George

Jake Gyllenhaal stars in this revival of Sondheim's art history musical, which landed rave reviews on Broadway.

→ Savoy Theatre. ☎ Charing Cross.
Jun 11-Sep 5 2020. £35-£250.



City of Angels

Cy Coleman's noirish musical is a kitsch-free zone starring Rosalie Craig and Hadley Fraser and directed by Josie Rourke.

→ Garrick Theatre. ☎ Charing Cross.
Mar 6-Sep 5 2020. £20-£95.



The Prince of Egypt

This new staging of a cult Dreamworks animation will bring epic ballads and desert magic to the West End next year.

→ Dominion Theatre. ☎ Tottenham Court Rd.
Feb 5-Sep 12 2020. £19.50-£149.50.

More musicals at www.timeout.com/theatre

Theatre & Dance

Death of a Salesman

★★★☆

THERE'S SOMETHING unsettlingly dreamlike about Marianne Elliott and Miranda Cromwell's new take on Arthur Miller's classic: furniture floats from wires as jazz melodies drift from voice to voice. It's transferring to the West End after a Young Vic premiere with its biggest stars Wendell Pierce and Sharon D Clarke remaining on board; they're on incredible form as a married couple whose schemes for the future rarely deliver their promise.

As the title's salesman Willy Loman, Pierce delivers a performance that captures all the subtleties of Loman's ballooning moods: puffed out with hot air, then shrivelled and baggy as reality gets a look-in. Clarke has the kind of loyally supportive wife role that could barely register, but here she's the only solid person in this family, weighed down by disappointment in the three men she relies on.

Despite the moody atmosphere supplied by Anna Fleischle's set



WHAT IS IT...
The Young Vic's Wendell Pierce-led take on the Arthur Miller classic, in the West End.

WHY GO...
It's stunning (and hopefully they've fixed the roof, too).

BOOK...
Buy tickets at timeout.com/tickets

→ Piccadilly Theatre.
⊖ Piccadilly Circus. Until Jan 4 2020. £15-£176.75.

and Femi Temowo's haunting music, the first act feels a little sitcommy in this chintzy West End space. But Elliott and Cromwell's psychologically astute approach starts to bite as Willy's miseries mount. Instead of retreating into a world of his own, he drags the whole audience into his head, a

place where decades-old memories blare like sirens. Casting this family as African-American adds an extra dimension to Miller's play. When Willy begs his white boss for his job, his humiliation is almost unbearable. And his son Biff's failures suddenly make sense: he's never acquired the kind of humility

demanded of African-American men in discriminatory '40s New York.

Despite its often-dreamy pace, these carefully observed moments give this 'Death of a Salesman' a nightmarish momentum that keeps you going through three-plus hours of well-thumbed regrets. ■

Alice Saville

The Great Gatsby

★★★☆

WHAT IS IT...
London's longest-running immersive show moves to new digs.

WHY GO...
You want to party like the Jazz Age never ended.

→ Gatsby's Mansion.
⊖ Bond St. Until May 31 2020. £29.95-£39.95.



FROM RELATIVELY HUMBLE beginnings at the 2017 Vaults Festival, The Guild of Misrule's adaptation of F Scott Fitzgerald's seminal novella has become the longest-running immersive theatre show in London. It's just moved into a new, larger venue at a very Gatsby-esque address just off Bond Street.

What's the secret of its success? Well it's not that it's a particularly faithful or incisive adaptation of the book. Indeed, it would be odd if the reason audiences were flocking to it night after night was because they were all in the mood for an elegiac takedown of capitalism. Nope, this 'Gatsby' is effectively a big old party. Most of the audience on the night I went turned up in the suggested 1920s fancy dress; the bar sells a truly lethal Old Fashioned; there's bags of time to just hang out and chat with your friends; and the plot bits are more akin to a series of party games where the audience is divided into groups and taken away for small encounters with characters from the show.

The cast are game enough and chunks of Fitzgerald's prose are sprinkled throughout the night like uncut jewels. But really, it's no more articulate an adaptation than that gif of Leonardo DiCaprio toasting the camera. On the other hand, part of the point of the novel is that the guests who flocked to Gatsby's parties had a fun time without ever really knowing him. And on that somewhat ironic score, this show has pretty much hit the nail on the head. ■ Andrzej Łukowski

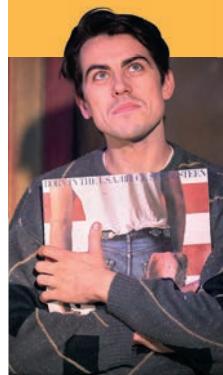
High Fidelity

★★★☆

WHAT IS IT...
A musical take on Nick Hornby's bestseller

WHY GO...
It's weirdly enjoyable. Creepy AF though.

→ Turbine Theatre.
Battersea Park rail.
Until Dec 7. £20-£36.



LOOK, IN RETROSPECT, a lot of things we thought were okay in the '90s were not okay. Nonetheless, 'High Fidelity' – Nick Hornby's 1995 novel about an unlucky-in-love music geek – was fairly benign. I posit this because its musical incarnation is, I'm afraid to say, creepy as hell. The issue is that, while on-page Rob – the record store-owning protagonist – is presented as a bit of a loser, he is, very crucially, *not a psychopath*. Here, his fixation with ex-girlfriend Laura makes him come across at best like a stalker, at worst like a genuine danger to society. 'You can run, little girl, but you'll never be free' goes one of the more horrifying lyrics – words you absolutely cannot imagine Hornby writing.

Matters aren't helped by the casting of Oliver Ormsen as Rob: his brooding intensity and razor-sharp cheekbones make him look like a handsome serial killer. The big dilemma here is that Tom Jackson Greaves's production makes for a weirdly enjoyable show, if you accept it's about a sociopath and his duo of incel wingmen. It's a solid production, and although the songs are generally light pop-rock, more memorable for the WTF lyrics than the tunes, the delicate alt country numbers are very nice.

'High Fidelity' flopped hard on Broadway in 2006 and it has definitely not been worth the 13-year wait for it to hit these shores. Still, I guess it's up to you whether you can enjoy the show on its own terms, or find the whole thing too icky to bother with. ■ Andrzej Łukowski

NEW SHOWS

THE HOTTEST THEATRE OPENINGS THIS WEEK

WEST END

La Clique

Saucy cabaret pioneers La Clique will serve up smut, spectacle and the odd flash of fire at this comeback show.
→ Christmas in Leicester Square. ☎ Leicester Square. Until Jan 4 2020. £21-£66.

The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe

For its first ever family Christmas show, the Bridge Theatre has bagged the London transfer of director Sally Cookson's

Narnia musical.
→ Bridge Theatre. ☎ London Bridge. Until Feb 2 2020. £15-£75.

Mary Poppins

The practically perfect supernanny is floating back into the West End in Disney's musical, starring Zizi Strallen ('Strictly Ballroom').
→ Prince Edward Theatre. ☎ Tottenham Court Rd. Until May 3 2020. £17.50-£177.50.

Measure for Measure

Gregory Doran's RSC production transports Shakespeare's grim story to 1900s Vienna.

→ Barbican. ☎ Barbican. Tue Nov 12-Jan 16 2020. £10-£59.50.

Touching the Void

The true story of a struggle for survival in the Andes, adapted by David Greig.
→ Duke of York's Theatre. ☎ Leicester Square. Until Feb 29 2020. £15-£85.

OFF-WEST END

Before I Was a Bear

Eleanor Tindall's queer love story follows a woman who meets her telly crush.
→ The Bunker. ☎ London Bridge. Tue Nov 12-Nov 23. £16, £10-£12 concs.

Extremism

A young cast perform Anders Lustgarten's look at the impact of Prevent on classrooms.
→ Theatre Peckham. Peckham Rye Overground. Until Nov 23. £12, £10 concs.

I Will Still Be Whole

A mother is reunited with her daughter in Ava Wong Davies's tender debut play.
→ The Bunker. ☎ London Bridge. Tue Nov 12-Nov 23. £16, £10-£12 concs.

TOP-SELLING TICKETS

ATTIMEOUT.COM/TICKETS

1 Everybody's Talking About Jamie

A teenager drags up for prom in this feel-good Brit musical.
→ Apollo Shaftesbury. Until Aug 29 2020.

2 Death of a Salesman

Wendell Pierce and Sharon D Clarke star in Miller's classic.
→ Piccadilly Theatre. Until Jan 4 2020.

3 Goldilocks and the Three Bears

The West End's biggest, starriest panto is back.
→ London Palladium. Dec 7-Jan 12 2020.

4 Ian McKellen on Stage

An audience with a legend.
→ Harold Pinter Theatre. Until Jan 5 2020.

5 Come from Away

The runaway hit musical.
→ Phoenix Theatre. Until May 23 2020.

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The Kissing Rebellion

Sparked by the 2015 Paris attacks, this dance-theatre piece explores how we heal after crisis.
→ Ovalhouse. ☎ Oval. Fri Nov 15-Nov 30. £16, £10 concs.

Slipped

Panto season kicks off with this innuendo-heavy and strictly adults-only gay spin on 'Cinderella'.
→ Royal Vauxhall Tavern. ☎ Vauxhall. Various dates Thu Nov 14-Jan 8 2020. £12.50-£18.

Stray Dogs

A new play about poet Anna Akhmatova's struggle to survive the Soviet regime.
→ Park Theatre. ☎ Finsbury Park. Wed Nov 13-Dec 7. £14.50-£18, £13-£16.50 concs.

Unknown Rivers

Chinonyerem Odimba's play explores the healing power of female friendship.
→ Hampstead Theatre. ☎ Swiss Cottage. Until Dec 7. £12-£14, £6-£10 concs.

#WeAreArrested

A biting drama about the risks of reporting on corruption.
→ Arcola Theatre. Dalston Kingsland Overground. Wed Nov 13-Dec 7. £10-£27.

EXCLUSIVE

'THE TAMING OF THE SHREW'



A radical take on Shakespeare's classic comedy featuring a full cast gender inversion – that's right, the women are in charge. This Royal Shakespeare Company production is set to be a real spectacle. Get two-for-one tickets for a limited time.

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Art

Edited by Eddy Frankel
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SHOW OF THE WEEK

Patrick Staff: 'On Venus'



LIFE IS A MESS of toxic, corrosive, acidic substances and ideas in Patrick Staff's work. The young English artist has filled the Serpentine with barrels collecting steady drips of acid from leaking overhead pipes. The ground is a perfectly reflective sickly green, dragging you into a mirror world of grim guuge.

And things only get nastier. Acid

etchings in one space reproduce newspaper articles, and their half-arsed retractions, about child-killer Ian Huntley coming out as trans – a story that was fake, with the idea of transitioning being used by the tabloids as a mocking, degrading weapon against both the government and Huntley.

The other space is given over to a horrifying film featuring

found footage of animal abuse on industrial farms. It's stomach-turningly unwatchable seeing these creatures – pumped full of growth hormones, harvested for their skin, fur and meat – being violently abused in grainy, shocking recordings.

At first, the show feels a little slight, a little empty, a little unintelligible, but taken as a whole, Staff's intention



WHAT IS IT...

Acid rain and toxic sludge in a minimal, shocking environment.

WHY GO...

It's art to turn your stomach, and change your mind.

→ Serpentine Sackler Gallery, Ⓛ Lancaster Gate. Until Feb 9 2020. Free.

BEST OF THE BEST

The top exhibitions you have to see in London right now



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Lucian Freud: The Self Portraits

Lumpy, bumpy, cruel self-portraits by twentieth-century Britain's greatest painter (probably). It's ugly art, but somehow still incredibly beautiful.

→ Royal Academy of Art. ☎ Piccadilly Circus. Until Jan 26 2020. £16, £14 concs.



United Visual Artists: 'Other Spaces'

This collective has organised an immersive series of laser light shows that mess with your perception. It's trippy, heady and will totally blow your mind.

→ 180 The Strand. ☎ Temple. Until Dec 8. Free



Bridget Riley

Mind-bending paintings by the grand dame of op art. It might give you a headache, but that's a small price to pay for art this good.

→ Hayward Gallery. ☎ Waterloo. Until Jan 26 2020. £16.50, £12.50 concs.

Find even more art at
timeout.com/art

becomes crystal clear. This is art about transformation and gender, but it's not a celebration. It revels in a brutal side of day-to-day queer existence, in the crushing pressure of a society that's constantly bearing down on you, in the destructive power of negative ideas, of forced conformation, of having to figure yourself out in a world that doesn't want you.

The artist is dunking the viewer in these barrels of acid and forcing us to watch this harrowing abuse. This isn't Staff saying 'accept me', this is Staff saying 'understand me', and that's pretty damn powerful. ■



By Eddy Frankel
Who is a barrel of laughs.



Find more shows to see at timeout.com/art

WHAT IS IT...

Rebellious, precise, erotic painting by an old-school punk.

WHY GO...

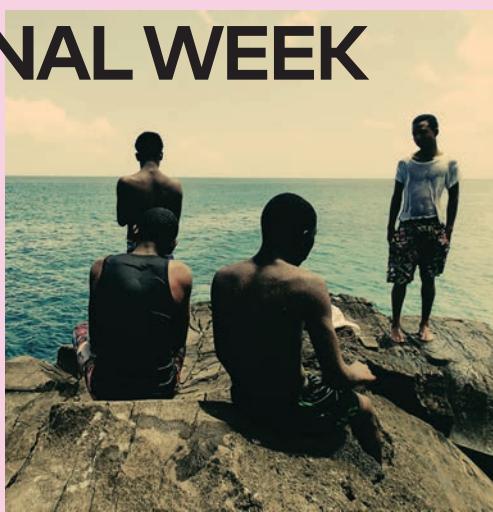
It's really rude, and seriously in your face.

→ Tramps. ☎ Old St.
Until Dec 22. Free.

HUMAN STORIES: CIRCA NO FUTURE NADIA HUGGINS

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Caroline Coon: 'The Great Offender'

★★★★★

CAROLINE COON HAS painted a vision of herself with a single, monstrous, enormous, gnarled, veined, manly hand. It's one of the first things you see in this show (which opened back in October but is on through to December). Her naked body is thin, angled, fragile; her skin hangs loosely, her face is lined. But that hand is something else: a grotesque, masculine appendage that she has somehow grown.

That's how her art works – mutation, pride, rebellion. The old-school punk (she managed The Clash for a bit) paints with absolute precision: nothing is a mistake. All the symbols of masculinity being forced through a mincer, all the rebellion, the attitude, the subversion, it's all on purpose.

It starts sedately enough – a quiet London street, a vase of flowers – but things ramp up pretty quickly. Nude footballers leap for a ball before a rapt crowd, they have both breasts and cocks, male features and big, full, red-painted lips. Their bodies are in motion, moving through the air and codes of gender at the same time.

Other images show a hot young couple nude on the beach, a row of stunning, godlike, naked surfers on the sand and a group of hideous, fat men in suits picking girls from a menu. There are gorgeous, brightly coloured prostitutes stoning a bunch of pallid, naked hypocrites; a happy family in an upside-down house; and a client/escort scenario where both are women, but might be performing as men, who knows? There's desire here, lots of it, but anger and indignation too.

The whole thing is a collision of art deco angles, Diego Rivera curves and socialist-realist bodies pushed to ridiculous extremes, manipulated and twisted to mock gender conventions, to laugh at greedy businessmen, to undermine societal norms. All those ideas are mashed and mangled until they mean nothing at all.

And Coon's big male hand is a message. She's saying we're all complicated, fluid beings, and if you don't agree she's going to take that big hand and slap you about until you do. ■ *Eddy Frankel*



Hamish Pearch

★★★★★

IMAGINE ONE OF THOSE TIME-LAPSE videos from a nature show: clouds swirling past at mach speed, tides ebbing, fruit rotting. And keep it in your imagination, because that's where young English artist Hamish Pearch's art happens – behind closed eyes, in the unconscious, in the dark night-time spaces we've all seen but can't grasp.

Stacks of charred, blackened toast dot the floor of the gallery, drooping daisies growing out of them. Huge pale mushrooms lie on stacks of paper or grow in the dark recesses of the room. Look up and you see the wall is corrugated iron. You're in some anonymous storage unit, lit only by security-guard torches. Mini industrial units sit on the ground. There's a tiny barn in one, a projection of images of fireworks in another. A sculpture of a sleeping receptionist faces it

all. She's dreaming of a gas station which has coalesced into a model of itself, spurting out of her head. It's like walking in on a scene mid-time-lapse, with all this secret, festering stuff frozen in the moment.

It's eerie, stark, surreal, and brutally suburban, like Giorgio de Chirico in Slough. Pearch's world is one where our ideas, memories and knowledge are stored away in boxes in lock-ups, left to decay on industrial estates that no one visits.

All this humanity is left to grow slowly mouldy.

Exploring all the dark, forgotten, empty places where we dump our crap, Pearch's art is a psychological trip through the English subconscious, the mundanity of everyday life and the things we hide from the world. It's only unsettling because he makes you aware of just how deep the rot has gone. ■

WHAT IS IT...
Surreal, weird art filled with mushrooms and toast.

WHY GO...
There's not mush-room for improvement here.
→ Soft Opening.
↔ Bethnal Green.
Until Dec 8. Free.

Eddy Frankel

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Ed Ruscha Spam, 1961 © Ed Ruscha.
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Food

Edited by Tania Ballantine
timeout.com/eatdrink @timeouteatdrink

RESTAURANT OF THE WEEK

Mao Chow



GOT A DIEHARD, card-carrying carnivore in your life? The kind who likes vegans, but couldn't eat a whole one? This is where you should take them. Quietly sit them down at the communal table, order pretty much one of everything off the small, laminated menu and say sweet FA about the place's USP. Which is not that all the street food is terrific value, or that it's Sichuan-leaning and beautifully spiced, but that every dish happens to have originally come from a plant.

They'll never suspect. Sure, the space is small – I've been in bigger minicab offices – and humble, but unlike many vegan gaffs, it's refreshingly free of propaganda. Instead, it just feels like a typically cheery hipster hangout, with retro tunes blaring out of the speakers and ice cream parlour pastels on the walls. The only seats are at a single sunshine-yellow table or at a wall counter, with your bottom on

WHAT IS IT...

A vegan, cash-only, Sichuan street food joint in Hackney.

WHY GO...

The smacked cucumber. The dry-fried beans. The dan dan noodles.

→ 159a Mare St, E8 3RD.
London Fields Overground.

a shiny red Tolix stool. Mao Chow doesn't take cards and the loo was out of order. ('We use the one at The Dolphin, a few doors down – they're very friendly.' This is definitely true: the bar staff at the bar called me 'darlin' and tried to get me to stay for drinks.) It's as laidback as a sunlounger on a half-price holiday.

As for the food, it's terrific. The smacked cucumber, with its crunch of sesame seeds and sharp lick of vinegar against all the oil and heat, was among the best I've had in London. Dry-fried green beans – another classic – combined the warm, low hum of roasted chilli with the mellow intensity of black bean and crunchy, earthy peanuts. Next-level good. Don't miss the dan dan noodles, either: these had a sweetish tinge, and even a small bowlful managed to be deeply satisfying; the secret ingredient (we asked how it was made and they, of course, wouldn't tell) was a topping





More culinary stars at
timeout.com/restaurants

of homemade Mao Chow vegan ‘mince’. Soft and moreish, it had the taste and texture of slow-cooked then flash-fried pork (which is exactly what it was standing in for). The whole thing was sloppy and delicious. I could eat it every day.

Also good were steamed dumplings, their chewy pastry filled with finely chopped mushrooms and more of that mystery mince, sitting over a puddle of chilli oil. And decidedly decent was an oyster mushroom bao. It was just the mapo tofu – the most obviously vegan dish of the bunch – that was on the ordinary too-too-wet side; only go for it if you’re an ardent tofu-fancier.

But here’s the thing. It’s never easy to get Chinese food in vegan form (plenty of restaurants will swear blind that a dish is vegan, then admit when pressed that there’s fish in the soy and oyster sauces, and beef in the gelatine). But to get Sichuan street food that’s memorable enough to please vegans and non-vegans in equal measure, with pay-packet-friendly prices, served up by jovial staff in a cute, fun space – well, that’s another thing entirely. Kudos to you, Mao Chow: you’ve only gone and re-written all the rules. ■

Dinner for two with soft drinks and cash tip: around £45.



By Tania Ballantine
Who will try to remember to take cash next time.

Gold



DRUMROLL, PLEASE. Gold is the best-looking and scene-iest place in west London. And, unlike others that have gone before it (Beach Blanket Babylon, hiiii), the food and service are surprisingly good, too.

You can't miss it: a honking great three-floor former pub right on the Portobello Road, its entire façade painted with a gold-and-white mural: the close-up of a soulful face, with enormous, searching eyes and deep metallic wrinkles.

Inside, the first section is still very pubby: dark and poky, with beer on tap. But push on to the back. Here, under a retractable glass roof, is a glorious conservatory, with brick herringbone floors, terracotta-washed walls and a jungle of foliage. If you're the sort of person who never wants summer to end, you'll want to take up a permanent spot. Which is probably why, at 6pm on dreary midweek evening, it was packed, with walk-ins turned away.



But anyway, the food. It's not really why you go – this is a lifestyle-hangout, where beautiful girls push things around their plates – but the cooking is better than you would expect. A generous dish of charred white peaches with bitter chicory and creamy burrata was one highlight. As was grilled squid with nutty, garlicky skordalia and zippy salsa verde, and butch chunks of grilled cabbage under

an anchovy-thick sauce. In fact, my main concern was that they seemed to put anchovy in about half the dishes. Order with care.

And there's a lot of expensive hair in this place. In short, Gold is not for everyone. But if you're a fashionable local, then you'll absolutely love it. In fact, you're probably there right now. ■ *Tania Ballantine*

Dinner for two with drinks and service: around £115.

WHAT IS IT...
A fashionable restaurant on Portobello Road.

WHY GO...
To see and be seen.

→ 95-97 Portobello Rd, W11 2QB.
⇒ Notting Hill Gate

EXCLUSIVE

Soak up the east Asian vibes at **Lan Kwai Fong** with four cocktails for just £16 – that's 60 percent off.

TIMEOUT.COM/FONG

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SAGARDI BASQUE COUNTRY CHEFS SAYS:

'Paying tribute to our roots, we showcase authentic Basque cuisine in a comfortable, modern ambience. Our finest seasonal produce includes piquillo peppers, mushrooms, Txuleton meat and Donostia wild fish, treated with finesse by chef Iñaki López de Viñaspre.' *Cordy House, 87-95 Curtain Rd, EC2A 3BS.*



GAMMA GAMMA SAYS:

'Head to Gamma Gamma to enjoy modern pan-Asian tapas right in the heart of Soho, with plenty of gluten-free and dairy-free options. Our creative chefs take their inspiration from all cultures, creating a true culinary fusion. Take in the art that adorns our walls for a really sensory experience.' *6 Greek St, W1D 4DE.*



HOT MAY POT POT SAYS:

'Hot May Pot Pot offers an authentic northern Chinese dining experience in sumptuous surroundings. According to the Chinese legend, communities unite over the hot pot, adding their contributions from land and sea. Hot May uses fine ingredients cooked in wonderful broths.' *30 Beauchamp Place, SW3 1NJ.*



CHEEZOLO SAYS:

'The perfect place for all cheese lovers, Cheezelo specialises in artisan cheeses and delicatessen from Europe, as well as cheese platters, cured meats, wine and other cheese dishes. Enjoy raclette and a fondue party, or one of the monthly cheese-and-wine classes.' *46 Chalton St, NW1 1JB.*

THREE OF THE BEST

Brixton restaurants

Going to the O2 Academy? Grab some pre-gig nosh at one of these south London gems



Kricket

★★★★★

The second bricks 'n' mortar site of this modern Indian small-plates spot (which started life at Pop Brixton) is just as cool as its Soho sibling. Don't miss the Keralan fried chook.

→ 41-43 Atlantic Rd, SW9 8JL. ☎ Brixton.



Nanban

★★★★★

The Kyushu-style ramen bar from 2011's 'MasterChef' winner Tim Anderson bashes out Japanese comfort food, like chicken karaage and stir-fried udon. It's dirty, delicious stuff.

→ 426 Coldharbour Lane, SW9 8LF. ☎ Brixton.



Smoke & Salt

★★★★★

This Pop Brixton shipping container may be small, but the food is mighty, the service excellent and the vibe super-cool. Go for small-plates food at its best: imaginative and flawless.

→ Pop Brixton, 49 Brixton Station Rd, SW9 8PQ. ☎ Brixton.

Find more Brixton belles at
timeout.com/brixton

KRICKET: HUGH JOHNSON; NANBAN: PAUL WINCH; FURNESS SMOKE & SALT: ANDY PARSONS

A promotional poster for the Hello Kitty 45th Birthday Pop Up at Ichiba in Japan Centre. It features a large illustration of Hello Kitty wearing a red headband with white polka dots. The text includes "JAPAN CENTRE", "Ichiba", "HELLO KITTY 45TH BIRTHDAY POP UP", "MON 4 - SUN 24 NOV", "Exclusive Bento & Menu", "Limited Edition Merchandise", "Find out more", and the website "www.ichibalondon.com". The Sanrio license logo is also present.

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TimeOut
THE BEST OF THE CITY

Drink

Edited by Laura Richards
timeout.com/bars @timeouteatdrink

The Fellowship and Star



DON'T BE PUT OFF by the mock-Tudor exterior; The Fellowship and Star is steeped in real history. London's first pub on a council estate was built in Bellingham to serve heroes returning from WWI, and became a community hub and performance space – Fleetwood Mac and Eric Clapton were among those who took the stage – before slipping into disrepair in the '80s. It also served as a training gym for the area's celebrity, heavyweight boxer Henry Cooper, ahead of his fight with Muhammad Ali.



Now the pub lives to fight another day following a £4 million restoration led by Phoenix Community Housing and the guys behind The Star of Bethnal Green. The before and after would make Martin from 'Homes Under the Hammer' flush with excitement. Now you'll find state-of-the-art cinema Bellingham Film Palace screening blockbusters for a fiver, grub from residents White Men Can't Jerk and rooms primed for

private parties. The pub has retained its '20s panelling but has had an injection of colour from flamboyant wallpaper and pink and turquoise upholstery, making it cosy and contemporary without destroying its character. And while old carpets have been axed in favour of parquet flooring, the wooden bar still stands in the round.

You'll see posters and little gloved touches in memory of Cooper – some friendly punters propping

up the bar on my visit even claimed to have met the man. That's what makes this refurb work: the pub is still invested in the local. See it in the booze, with Brockley, Orbit and Brick Brewery pouring (all great for washing down fried chicken). And every Wednesday, Bellinghamites get 20 percent off their bill. Not from these parts? You'll probably enjoy tables pushed aside at the weekend as the pub becomes a character-filled dancefloor. ■ Hayley Joyes

DRINK THIS

Reformed Pornstar



The meat brings us to Hawksmoor, the drinks keep us there. But for the first time since launch, the restaurant-and-bar group has overhauled its much-loved cocktail list. Don't worry: Shaky Pete's Ginger Brew stays put. And, actually, the new menu is a beaut based on six months of travel in the name of research (the dream). The Reformed Pornstar is a money shot moment, a see-through mash-up of the Milk Punch and the Pornstar Martini. Jasmine tea and champagne make it as classy as its name implies. ■
→ Hawksmoor restaurants and bars Londonwide. £12.

London Cocktail Club Clapham



THERE ARE ALREADY nine iterations of mixologist JJ Goodman's basement-bar juggernaut in the capital. But the newest London Cocktail Club – squeezed between a Five Guys and a Boots on Clapham High Street, like The Leaky Cauldron by way of 'Towie' – has a USP. A life-size Oscar maquette by the door and a continuous loop of retro Paramount and MGM titles projected above the stairs point (quite aggressively) to a movie theme.

Downstairs, the bar is split into three sections: one for 'Titanic', one for 'Star Wars' and one for 'Pulp Fiction'. The last is done up like a diner with fake windows on to LA, while the 'Star Wars' bit is Death Star-panelled. It falls just on the right side of gimmicky. There's even a two-for-one 'Orange Wednesdays' promotion.

Table service is friendly and the menu is extensive. My Tommy's Chilli Margarita was spicy, salty and garlicky – in a good way, I swear. My mate stuck to the theme with a Tom Cruise-saluting 'Choctails & Dreams', an indulgent concoction in a mug, topped with whipped cream and a Cadbury Flake. Yet, strangely, the sweetest part was the lassis, somehow the best-smelling loos I've ever set foot in – seriously, it's like they're plumbed with cherry Haribo. 'I could spend all night in there,' said my friend. Just don't mistake the hand soap for pick 'n' mix. ■
Bobby Palmer

WHAT IS IT...
A Clapham branch of LCC, this time with a cinematic theme.

WHY GO...
Sink a drink, 'Titanic'-style. Plus: Haribo-scented bogs.

→ 182-184 Clapham High St, SW4 7UG.
↔ Clapham Common.



More cheeky drinks at timeout.com/bars

BAR OF THE WEEK

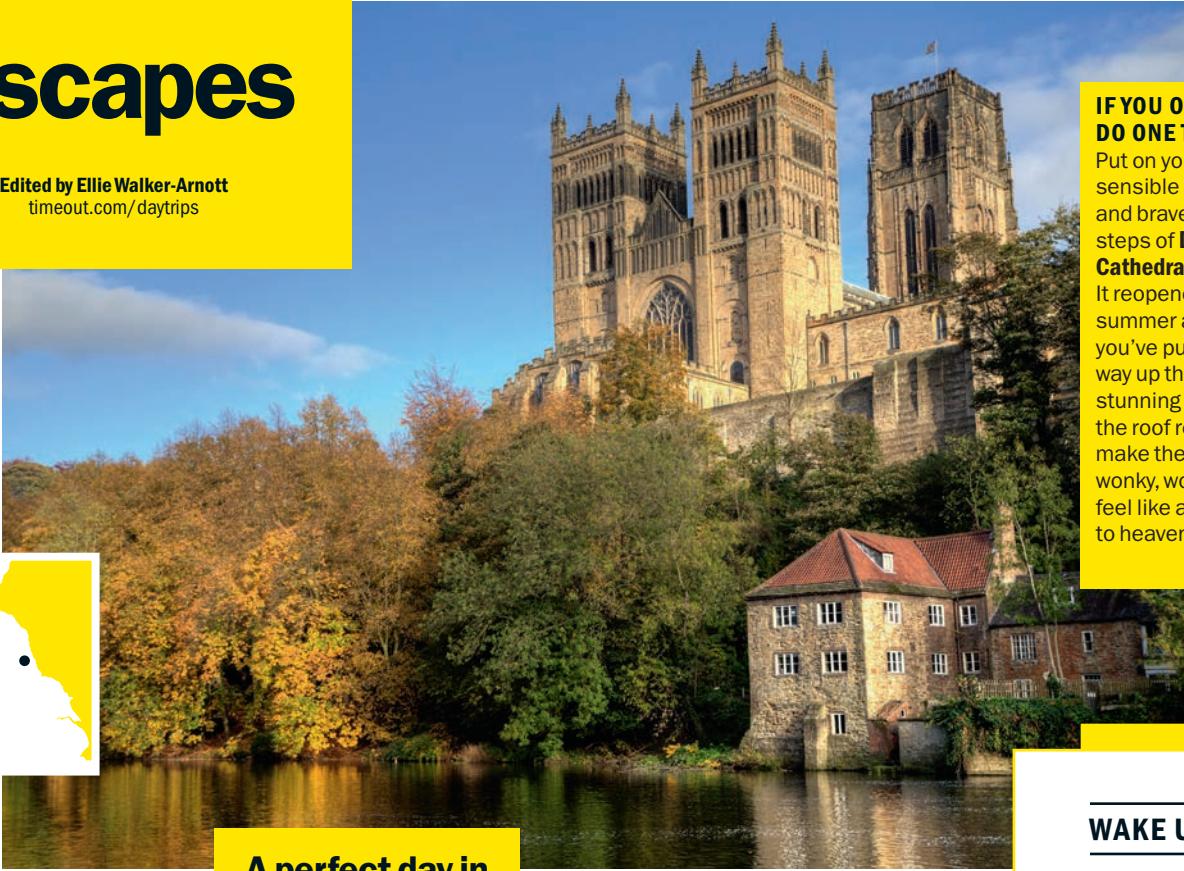
WHAT IS IT...
Henry Cooper's old Bellingham local with renewed heavyweight status.

WHY GO...
For knockout jerk chicken and films for a fiver.

→ Randlesdown Rd, SE6 3BT. Bellingham rail.

Escapes

Edited by Ellie Walker-Arnott
timeout.com/daytrips



A perfect day in

Durham

Historic streets, quaint tearooms and a spectacular light festival

WITH SWATHES OF greenery and the River Wear looping through its historic centre, Durham is one of England's prettiest cities. Its glorious cathedral is a pilgrimage site, traditionally to the shrine of St Cuthbert and, more recently, for 'Harry Potter' fans seeking Professor McGonagall's classroom and other magical delights. It's pleasingly easy to find your bearings in the city without getting lost. But be warned: it's pretty hilly.

First up

Get your first dollop of history at **Crook Hall and Gardens**. The manor house has the aura of an idyllic countryside retreat. Next up, visit **Durham Castle**. A friendly student tour guide will show you where the Norman chapel's mermaid lives.

Go on an adventure

Nearby **Auckland Castle** has just reopened and tells the fascinating, 1,000-year-old story of the politically and socially engaged Bishops of Durham. The real hidden gem, however, is the superb **Mining Art Gallery** just down the road. It combines local history with gorgeous artworks.

Stop for lunch

You can't move for scones in Durham. Get some of the best, plus satisfying homemade lunches, at **CaféDurham**, a warming retro-fitted abode. Try **The Café on the Green** to get up close to the cathedral, or nestle down with a hearty tray bake at the 'Alice in Wonderland'-themed **Be Tempted**.

Drink like a local

Travel back to 1920s Shanghai for drinks and nibbles at **The Rabbit Hole**, Durham's newly opened speakeasy tucked down tiny Mavin Street. Or squeeze inside **The Tin of Sardines**, (possibly) the world's tiniest gin bar which stocks more than 300 different brands. Beer aficionados should book a tour of **Durham Brewery**.

Soak up the vibes

You can enjoy the city's leafy scenery with a stroll along the Durham Riverside Walk at any time of year. From November 14 to 17, **Lumière** returns to the city for its tenth anniversary. The spectacular light festival and art trail draws thousands of visitors. ■ Rosemary Waugh

→ Get here: two hours 45 minutes by train from London King's Cross; around four hours 30 minutes by car.

IF YOU ONLY DO ONE THING

Put on your sensible shoes and brave all 325 steps of **Durham Cathedral Tower**. It reopened this summer and, once you've puffed your way up there, the stunning view from the roof really does make the winding, wonky, wobbly route feel like a stairway to heaven.

WAKE UP HERE

Forty Winks



Enhance your jaunt with a stay at Forty Winks. The guest house is an eccentric combination of vintage touches, carnival-esque shocks and a zoo's worth of taxidermy. The rooms and suites, however, are rather more reserved – think low-key decadence with lots of doughy white pillows. The Second Floor Suite offers awesome views of the cathedral, which seems like it's within touching distance. Drag yourself away for a hearty breakfast of avo, eggs and salsa on toast. Now you're ready to climb the cathedral tower! ■ Rosemary Waugh

→ Durham, County Durham. From £110 a night. www.fortywinksdurham.co.uk

Make your weekend merry and bright at timeout.com/daytrips



Don't miss

Space Lates – Apollo 12

THE NATIONAL SPACE CENTRE

has enough astronomical attractions to keep even Mr Armstrong entertained (probably) and its evening events are a bonus for super-keen space fans.

The next Space Lates event takes place this weekend and will cover all things Apollo 12, the sixth crewed flight in the Apollo programme and the second to land on the moon. You'll hear stories

from a navigation engineer who worked on the mission, get up close to a collection of meteorites and have the chance to quiz Nasa's lunar experts.

The interactive evening will finish with a spot of stargazing led by the Leicester Astronomical Society. We're feeling starry-eyed already. ■ *Lucy Lovell*

→ National Space Centre, Leicester. Sat Nov 16. £6, booking essential. www.spacecentre.co.uk

SWAP THE CITY FOR

A picture-perfect rural escape



LOOKING FOR A remote spot to bed down in for a wintery weekend? The tiny Berkshire village of Inkpen should do the job, even if it sounds like a place in an Enid Blyton book. Head off on a gothic country walk to visit Combe Gibbet, a seventeenth-century gallows that looms ominously at the top of a hill; hunt for vintage treasures in nearby Hungerford; or spot painted narrowboats bobbing by on the Kennet & Avon canal. Afterwards, the cosy Crown & Garter is a welcoming

home-from-home. The clutch of outhouse-style bedrooms are traditional with modern touches like a keecup you can borrow. The seasonal menu is more upmarket than you might expect at somewhere with such a laidback feel: lots of precise plating and rich desserts to reward a hard day's walking. Inkpen might not be the most buzzy destination, but The Crown & Garter is worth the train fare alone. ■ *Lisa Wright*
→ The Crown & Garter, Inkpen, Berkshire.
From £130 a night. www.crownandgarter.co.uk

THREE OF THE BEST

Christmas markets



Victorian Christmas Market Stratford-upon-Avon

Stratford-upon-Avon makes a magical setting for a Christmas market with a historical twist. Will's old stomping ground transforms into a Victorian winter wonderland, with stallholders donning lace bonnets and stick-on sideburns.

→ Dec 6-8. www.stratford.gov.uk



Frost Fayre Glastonbury

Dig out the flower crown and eco-glitter you wore at Glasto – they'll go down a storm at the Frost Fayre held in the pretty Somerset town. As well as outdoor stalls, a farmers' market and a grotto, morris dancers, buskers and street performances will add to the jovial atmosphere.

→ Nov 30. www.facebook.com/glastonburyfrostfayre



Caerphilly Christmas Market Caerphilly

The Welsh town of Caerphilly will be filled with Christmassy smells as more than 100 food, drink and craft stalls pop up for this market, with street performers on hand to entertain shoppers. At nearby Caerphilly Castle, you'll find Santa in his grotto and a festive ice rink. ■ *Lucy Lovell*

→ Dec 7-8. www.caerphillychristmasmarket.co.uk

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