24 FEB - 8 MAR
LONDON THEATRE WEEK

The best of the West End for £15, £25, or £35.

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24 FEB - 8 MAR

LONDON THEATRE WEEK

London Theatre Week is here! It’s the time of year to see the very best of the West End with tickets for over 40 top shows, including most of London’s hottest smash hits at great prices. Snap up tickets for hits including Dear Evan Hansen, Mary Poppins, The Book of Mormon, and dozens more for £15, £25 or £35.

So, be quick for your chance to catch all the amazing shows — from those you’ve always wanted to see to the exciting new ones you won’t want to miss.

Only on TODAYTIX
On the menu: hearty steaming goodness for our cold dark city
Give tradition the finger.

Life’s full of rules and regulations. People dictating what you should do. Or shouldn’t. If unchallenged, rules go unchanged.

2020 is a leap year. One of these so-called rules dictates that this is the only time when women are ‘allowed’ to propose. Silly.

We believe that rules are meant to be broken. So we’re rebelling. Giving tradition the finger. And we encourage you to do the same. Express yourself. With who, or what you truly love. And we want you to decide what that means.

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Call that a dog’s dinner?

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Inside

This week’s Time Out in no time at all

Game of clones
Caryl Churchill’s thrilling father-and-son drama ‘A Number’ returns stronger than ever, with Roger Allam and Colin Morgan

Local superheroes
As Comic Con Spring hits town this week, we salute the staff and stock of the best comic shops in London

Silo
One restaurant. Zero waste. Five stars

‘It’s legitimately gonna fuck people up’
‘The Handmaid’s Tale’ star Elisabeth Moss on new film ‘The Invisible Man’

Rats, body fluids, fatbergs
Meet the Londoners with the jobs from hell – who love their work!

FEATURES AND REGULARS
11 City Life  20 Word on the Street  22 Free London  24 Comfort food  35 How to be happy in a hellish job  42 Exclusive offers  44 Things to Do  54 Film  60 Music & Nightlife  70 Theatre & Dance  74 Comedy  76 Art  80 Food  83 Drink  85 Escapes
Hello, London

Somewhere on the fringes of Fitzrovia sits an unremarkable café that represents, to me, the ultimate in comfort food.

There are no head-height servings of parmesan or coma-inducing curries. What it does have is a bitter – some might say badly made – americano. And to me, that particular americano embodies comfort.

I’ll explain. While our predecessors associated the C-word with sensible jackets, warm baths and reasonably priced hotel rooms, the current generation is more likely to think of the TV show ‘Friends’ or the voice of their favourite podcaster (hello, Josh Clark). Comfort represents not justcosy physicality, but also an easing of the soul, whereby all of our digital dread, climate terrors and societal unease melt, like so much hot cheese, into momentary, blissful insignificance. It’s the opposite of watching ‘Question Time’, basically.

That café, by the way, was situated between the college in which/two.lt/four.lt-year-old me studied part-time and the office where I had my first journalism job. Every Monday, I would leave the former and head to the latter, with just enough time in between to sit and enjoy a coffee. I will always associate that café with that feeling of not needing to rush, and nobody needing anything from me. In London, that’s comfort.

Need someone else to tell you that ‘Rocks’ is an excellent film? ‘Rocks’ is an excellent film. Required viewing for any Londoner, especially.

Regular readers are no doubt wondering how my Porto trip went. It was excellent! Visit Bonaparte Downtown if you’re there.

The Tullio Crali exhibition at the charming Estorick Collection. It gives you everything you want from Italian futurist art (spiky lines, dogmatism).
Watch your speed.
The limit’s changing.

If you hit someone at 30mph, they’re 5 times more likely to die than if you hit them at 20mph. That’s why as of 2 March 2020, we’ve reduced the speed limit across TfL roads in central London.

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A very private portrait

We unzip this candid shot from the urinals taken at an Alexandra Palace beer festival in 1979

PHOTOGRAPHER PETER MARLOW, who died in 2016, lived in London for much of his life. He began his career as a photojournalist: capturing conflict in Northern Ireland, Angola and Lebanon. Later, he stepped away from documenting war and became known for his candid photography of life in the UK. This 1979 photo, ‘A Beer Festival in Alexandra Palace’, features in the Barbican’s new exhibition, ‘Masculinities: Liberation Through Photography’. Curator Alona Pardo explains why it’s such compelling image. ‘This is a public urinal, which says something about men’s lack of privacy, but also their togetherness,’ she says. ‘The men look equally comfortable and yet deeply uncomfortable about the whole situation. One guy is looking around directly at Marlow – he’s annoyed. It’s such a private moment, and yet utterly public.’

Although taking photos in toilets is probably not recommended, Pardo sees this image as empathetic, not sexualised or sensationalist. ‘This is just the everyday bloke taking a piss at a beer festival. It’s respectful. This isn’t the lads puking up around the back of Ally Pally, though I’m sure they were doing that!’

Pardo says that Marlow’s skill was in documenting small, unassuming snapshots of everyday moments around the city and beyond. ‘He often captured the things that weren’t of interest to other photographers,’ she says. ‘Whether it’s men in the bleachers or a dad taking his son to the chip shop, he gets up close and personal.’

© El Hunt

Get the best table at a restaurant

**Tomas Kubart** restaurant director at Kerridge’s Bar & Grill

‘How to get a table in any restaurant? Social media! Almost all maître d’s in London are on LinkedIn and they love expanding their networks with potential clients. I’ve done this several times and it’s never failed.’

**Paulo de Tarso** former maître d’ and co-founder of Margo

‘For the proverbial hot ticket, booking at short notice can work in your favour. Find out who the big dog is and employ good old-fashioned polite manners and generosity. Say things like: “I know it’s late notice, but you’d be making our year.” Slipping a nice tip won’t hurt either.’

**Stani Visciano** maître d’ at Lina Stores

‘It always helps to be a regular – I remember faces and will always try to accommodate a friendly one. It might sound silly, but give compliments – flattery will get you far! I’m known for my red glasses and I love it when people give me compliments on my suit or my glasses.’

**Jonno Forbes** group general manager at Dinner by Heston Blumenthal

‘We get lots of requests to sit by the window. Guests often book online and put “window table” in the requests box. The ones that get selected first are those explaining why you want the window table – whether you’re celebrating an occasion or having a really important meeting.’

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**MADE IN LONDON** Cool things from makers in the capital

Ever noticed how many pit bulls there are in Peckham? That was the inspiration behind New Cross collective **Garudio Studiage**’s ‘Dogs of London’ tea towel. On it, you’ll find Hackney, Islington, Richmond and more represented through pooches. That’s one way to liven up doing the dishes.


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**LONDON LIST**

**Hidden landmarks**

Tour guide **Jonnie Fielding** on his favourite secrets of the city

**Police coat hook**

There’s a large hook by Leicester Square station. It’s said that a copper used to hang his coat on a nearby nail. Eventually they installed an official coat hook.

**Hidden fossils**

When Christopher Wren led the rebuild of the City of London following the Great Fire of 1666, he used fossil-rich Portland Stone from Dorset’s Jurassic Coast. You can still see it around the city today.

**Stretcher railings**

During the Blitz, loads of metal stretchers were made here. Many of London’s railings were melted down for the war effort, so the stretchers were used to replace them. Spot them in the south-east.

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ZOE CO₂, whilst driving: 0g/km, MPG: N/A. The official combined fuel consumption figures in mpg (l/100km) for the All-New CLIO and CAPTUR shown are: 44.1(6.4) – 67.2(4.2). The official CO₂ emissions are 127 – 94g/km.

WLTP figures shown are for comparability purposes; only compare figures with vehicles tested to the same technical procedure. Actual real-world driving results may vary depending on factors such as weather conditions, driving style, vehicle load or any accessories fitted after registration. WLTP is a new test used for fuel consumption and CO₂ figures; however, until April 2020 the CO₂ figures are based on the outgoing (NEDC) test cycle which will be used to calculate vehicle tax on first registration. Please visit renault.co.uk/configures for WLTP figures for any selected options. £1000 Cash offer towards New ZOE and £500 towards other new Renault cars. Offer can be used in conjunction with other Renault retail offers. Order and register by 31 March 2020 (registered by 30 June 2020 for New ZOE). Excludes Twingo, Traffic and Master Passenger models. Retail customers at participating dealers only. For details see renault.co.uk/voucher. Warranty offer applies to new cars (excluding Traffic & Master Passenger vans) for up to 5 years from first registration with unlimited mileage during the first 24 months, then limited to a total of 100,000 miles or 5 years, whichever comes first. The paintwork warranty runs for 3 years and the anti-corrosion warranty for 12 years. Exclusions and limitations apply. For Warranty terms and conditions visit renault.co.uk/warranty.
SOULEYMAN BAH WAS five years old when his family arrived in the UK as asylum seekers escaping political disturbance in Guinea. Once in the UK, he was diagnosed with a rare eye condition. Now, he’s a medal-winning sprinter and a contender for Team GB at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympics. Last year he became the first disabled candidate to compete on ‘The Apprentice’.

When I was at school in Guinea, I couldn’t read any of the books or see the whiteboard. I didn’t get my eye condition diagnosed until my family moved to the UK. I have retinitis pigmentosa, a rare degenerative inherited eye condition which affects my peripheral and night vision. It gets worse over time and eventually leads to blindness.

I didn’t speak English when I moved here, so I made friends through sport. I was especially good at racing against the other kids. I’d win races every sports day. When I moved to Kingston, I broke a school record and started to take sprinting seriously.

I want to bring positivity into the world of visual impairment. It’s not the same thing as blindness. Sometimes people will see my white cane, and then see me glance at my phone to look at the time. They’ll be like: What the hell’s going on here?

I love jogging along the river Thames. I love how it connects the whole of London. Whether you’re in Kingston or Waterloo, everyone sees the same river.

Sometimes when family come to visit, I’ll take them on a guided tour. We always joke about the irony of going sightseeing with somebody who can’t see!
Growing up, I didn’t see many people in the public eye who were partially sighted. Mo Farah, Usain Bolt and Jessica Ennis were my main role models, and I used to think that, because of my visual impairment, I couldn’t compete at that level.

I first learned about visually impaired sport when the 2012 Olympics came to London. It was a real lightbulb moment. I thought: I can do this.

Last year I entered ‘The Apprentice’. When I got fired, Alan Sugar called me ‘brave’. I thought that was a bit patronising. I experience this a lot when I do everyday things – buying a bottle of milk, or taking the bins out. People say: ‘You’re so brave.’

I’ve never allowed myself to view my disability in a negative way. I’ve always used it as something to help me and empower me – it pushed me to win at sport. I always see the silver lining.

Winning my first gold medal at the Junior Paralympic Games felt amazing. It didn’t really hit me until the medal ceremony.

I’ve been working hard to try and get selected for the 2020 Tokyo Paralympics. When the season starts this summer, I’ll find out if I’ve made the GB team. If I put in a fantastic performance early in the 2020 season, hopefully that should bag me a ticket. ■

Interview by El Hunt

Souleyman Bah works with Guide Dogs to raise awareness of misconceptions around sight loss in the UK.

For more unique looks at London life, head to timeout.com/news
ACCORDING TO CAPITAL folklore, cabbies used to refuse to go to the depths of south London. Those days might be behind us, but south of the river remains short-changed on the tube front. With a measly 29 stations (compared with 241 the other side of the Thames) southerners have slim pickings. The Northern line at least extends as far as zone 4, but otherwise the Jubilee, Bakerloo, District and Victoria lines all make half-arsed efforts at serving south London.

‘It’s often said that the Underground didn’t venture into south London because of the dangers from digging up seventeenth-century plague pits,’ says Simon Murphy, curator at London Transport Museum. Sounds grisly but it’s actually not true. ‘The majority of mass plague graves are north of the river and they proved no obstacle to the growth of the tube running far beneath them.’

The real reason comes down to cold, hard capitalism. Long before tubes, lots of private railway companies carved up the city and established loads of suburban railways, with great connections south of the river and beyond. When the first private tube companies began operating after 1863, they focused on north London, where there was more opportunity. ‘The Underground chose to run extensions into the open semi-rural districts to the north instead, where they’d have less competition and sell more tickets,’ says Murphy.

So the lack of south London tube stations came about because, once upon a time, that side of the river was actually better connected. Just remember that next time your train gets delayed. Again. ■El Hunt

Find more London stories at timeout.com/news
Ready-made Sunday

Dominique Ansel

Cronut creator and Europe’s most famous baker on his favourite West End spots for a relaxing end to the week

Breakfast
I love the mornings in Covent Garden when you can wander the quiet streets and alleyways. I pop into St John Bakery in Neal’s Yard for a custard-filled doughnut, then grab a cup of coffee at Jacob the Angel just a few steps away.

Shop
Stepping into travel bookshop Stanfords transports you from the middle of London to anywhere in the world, just by flicking through the pages of its thousands of books, maps and guides. There’s nothing more inspiring than learning about the world through other cultures and cuisines.

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City life

Tapas and wine
I never miss a chance to go to Barrafina. I grab a seat at the counter and a glass of wine or sherry. I always start off with the pan con tomate – garlic-rubbed toast topped with juicy ripe tomatoes drizzled with fragrant olive oil and white pepper to finish. Perfection.

Park
Then I take a stroll through Soho Square Gardens. One of the things I love most about London is all the quiet green squares and little parks you stumble upon, allowing you to have a mini getaway from the busy streets around you.

Gallery
Sir John Soane’s Museum is unlike any other museum I’ve been to. You get an amazing insight into British art and architectural history and entering the house is like walking into a time machine. You’ll find incredible relics in every corner.

Steak and chips
Hawksmoor is always reliable. The steaks are amazing but the best part is choosing from all the different sides to go with your meat – Tunworth mash, creamed spinach and triple-cooked chips are my favourites.

Dominique Ansel Treehouse is open now.

Covent Garden.
City life

CITY ENVY

Great things that we love in other cities

LA’s Britney Spears pop-up, The Zone

London isn’t short of gig venues or amazing live music, but you know what it doesn’t have? A gloriously OTT Britney Spears pop-up where you can recreate all her iconic music videos. Enter LA’s The Zone: a 30,000-square-foot space in a former Kmart that’s been painted pink (obviously). Want to shimmy down a hall of lockers and pout in the gym as ‘...Baby One More Time’ blasts in the background? You can. Feel like dancing on a silver chair in a black room à la ‘Stronger’? Go for it – and you can stare at yourself in a starry mirror while you do it. Best of all, you can visit the space station from ‘Oops!... I Did It Again’ and meet the astronaut who will offer you that necklace the old lady threw into the ocean (bonus: he’ll fart out a bit of fog when you press the jewel). In short: it’s a nostalgic ‘90s-’00s playground and we want in. Until then we’ll be hanging out vaguely near the snakes at London Zoo singing ‘I’m a Slave 4 U’ on repeat. ■ Michael Juliano.

ASK AN EDITOR

Your going-out problems solved by Time Out editors

Dave from Tooting asks: ‘I’m trying to eat less meat but I’m struggling to get on board with those weird meat and cheese substitutes. Where’s a good place to ease myself in?’

Tania Ballantine, Food editor

I get it. Not everyone wants to feel like they’re eating a science experiment. Instead, go big on dishes made with chunky plants, like the jackfruit burritos from Club Mexicana (life-changingly good). Or tofu – pressed beancurd – in its most exciting form: the puffed stuff in Sambal Shiok’s ‘standard’ laksa (like crisp-edged flavour sponges). Then, when you’re ready for something more ‘future food’, try the insanely delicious dumplings at Mao Chow (they’re made with spiced ‘vegan mince’, but also chopped mushrooms), and finish with the ultimate in great fakeness: Temple of Seitan’s popcorn ‘fried chicken’. You’ll never look back. ■

Got a going-out dilemma? Email hello@timeout.com

Overheard something weird? Tweet us #wordonthestreet @timeoutlondon

WORD ON THE STREET

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

‘We need to find out how many blokes lose their balls on stag dos per year.’

‘It’s a big salt-and-vinegar energy, the seaside, isn’t it?’

‘My vegan birthday cake is like a beautiful delicious version of the poo emoji.’

‘Thank GOD I have one carrot!’

‘I’m going through a Mars phase lately. The chocolate, not the planet.’

‘Do you know who I haven’t seen for a while? Kelly Clarkson.’

‘Your face looks like an elongated mango.’

‘I only want to get pregnant for the free dental work.’

‘Let’s just hope that next time we’re here, we get puked on again.’

‘There’s been a lot of fluids on that carpet over the years.’
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Nationwide Building Society, Head Office: Nationwide House, Pipers Way, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN38 1NW.
Crazy golf at Coal Drops Yard
Nineties rave culture, eh? Acid house, gurning lads, the party line and – of course – the famous crazy golf scene. Mad for it? More like mad for a hole-in-one. Thankfully this oft-forgotten side of the subculture is getting its due with a nine-holer in Coal Drops Yard, inspired by the area’s hard-partying history. Bag tickets on the King’s Cross app. No eccies allowed.


Pancakes at The Lamb Tavern
Nothing breaks up the working day like a pancake race – one of the best-known sources of carbs and endorphins. On Shrove Tuesday you can get your fix of both in a 100m relay. Or skip the running and just eat some batter.


Queer, black book chat at Libreria
Delve into the works of African, Caribbean and Afro-Latinx authors at Okha, a monthly queer and black book club. February’s read is the Booker Prize-winning ‘Girl, Woman, Other’ by Bernardine Evaristo.


Self-illustration in Shoreditch
Are the likes on your selfies plunging in 2020? First, send your friends a stern text. Then, sign up for The Idvid’s self-illustration class where you’ll learn how to draw a better picture of yourself than any iPhone can take.

→ Protein Studios. Shoreditch High St Overground. Sat Feb 29.

Vegan pancakes at byChloe
Pancake Day isn’t just a fun laugh for those of us who guiltily gobble up milk and eggs like there’s no climate crisis. Plant-based chain byChloe is making sure vegans get fed too, giving away 50 pancakes at each of its sites from 10am.

→ Multiple locations. Tue Feb 25.
Model shown is a New Puma ST-Line X 1.0 155PS Mild Hybrid Electric Vehicle (MHEV) Petrol 6 speed manual with optional LED Headlights and Driver Assistance Pack. Fuel economy mpg (l/100km) (Combined): 50.4 (5.6). *CO₂ emissions 99g/km. Vehicle shown may not reflect latest UK specifications. Figures shown are for compatibility purposes only; they only compare fuel consumption and CO₂ figures with other cars tested to the same technical procedures. These figures may not reflect real life driving results, which will depend upon a number of factors including the accessories fitted (post-registration), variations in weather, driving styles and vehicle load.

* There is a new test used for fuel consumption and CO₂ figures. The CO₂ figures shown, however, are based on the outgoing test cycle and will be used to calculate vehicle tax on first registration.
Pasta? Rice? Potatoes? Dumplings? Submit to our carb overlords and you’ll make it to spring unscathed. Here’s how to eat your feelings.
I USED TO think eating for pleasure and being strong were incompatible concepts. Then a Mars bar changed everything. I was in one of the weightlifting classes I go to three times a week at my gym. An out-of-towner – who, judging by his arms, was no stranger to barbells – had signed up to do a drop-in session, and he ran in as we were starting. He was eating, which isn’t unusual for serious weightlifters. But when I saw that he was tearing through caramel rather than 30 grams of protein, dust and sadness, like I’d been forcing down, my heart soared.

I’d been living a double life, you see. I’d refuel after leg day with fluffy chips from Sutton and Sons or Jolene’s pastries, not chicken and broccoli. Gym-me would religiously track her lifts, then not-gym-me would go home and eat arancini instead of protein balls. And I felt bad about it. I’d swallowed fitness Instagram’s messaging whole: if you want to be healthy you have to follow a diet dictated by macros, food pyramids and MyFitnessPal alerts, rather than curiosity, pleasure or even hunger. And it just wasn’t me. Ruby Tandoh writes in ‘Eat Up’ how eating has become a ‘chore’. This is an age of ‘gains’, of food as fuel: a means to an end, rather than an end in itself. But it can be so much more.

Comfort food, in the Western imagination, means cheesy carbs. But ultimately, it’s whatever makes you feel good – and in a city like this one, that isn’t (and shouldn’t be) limited to Anglocentric stodge, it can mean bright spicy laksa, rich jollof and chest-warming osso buco. In fact, it has less to do with ingredients than your attitude to them: it could even be a protein box from Muscle Meals eaten in a cool-down zone if that’s truly what your stomach yearns for. Or a Mars bar.
I was brought up in Nigeria in the ‘80s. One of my favourite memories of growing up was the owambe parties. These parties were huge. We’re talking hundreds and hundreds of people. It’s like a carnival where everyone in town would contribute. The most popular dish was jollof rice. It’s cooked in a tomato and red pepper sauce with spices, garlic, ginger, onions and rich meat stock. Paired with smoked goat, it’s heavenly!

In those days, it was pretty much only eaten at parties. It was cooked in a giant cauldron. It was very rare to cook it at home as it’s quite a laborious process.

Things are different today. Jollof rice can easily be prepared in domestic kitchens and it’s a regular feature on dining tables across West Africa. Even so, the novelty of the dish hasn’t worn off. ‘Party jollof’ is more delicious than home-cooked. Traditionally, it’s cooked outdoors over an open wood fire, which gives it its signature smokiness.

I remember watching my mother and aunts cooking jollof rice like this outside; the rice and red bell peppers bubbling away; feeding the open fire with wood.

The secret to their recipe? Bell peppers. My mother and aunts would take their time to select the freshest peppers and grind them with tomatoes to create the delicious sauce for the rice.

At Akoko, we use the same recipe. It’s slowly cooked in a charcoal oven so it takes on the distinctive smoky flavour of the party jollof rice.

The special jollof recipe Ajibola Akokomi is putting on the menu at new restaurant Akoko reminds him of his childhood.
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Comfort food

Find extra special soups and stews

Seven chefs reveal the ingredients that make their liquid-ish lunches extra-comforting

Beef soup at Bao Soho
‘We skim and reserve the fat that floats to the surface. Adding it back in towards the end brings out the essence of the aromas from all the other ingredients.’
Erchen Chang, head chef

Egusi at Chuku
‘Dried crayfish is a great way to add umami flavour to this Nigerian soup. We wanted ours to be a dish for everyone so found a vegan alternative: kale and melon seeds.’
Emeka and Ifeyinwa Frederick, chefs and founders

Osso buco at Quality Wines
‘When we’re making this veal stew we put star anise in with the sofrito [base sauce] and take it out after the braise. Using it sparingly boosts savoury flavours in the stew without giving it an obvious, unwelcome aniseed note.’
Nick Bramham, head chef

Minestrone at Jolene
‘It’s really important to start a minestrone with a good base. Adding a parmesan rind adds umami to any soup, elevating flavours with its saltiness. It’s also a great way to use up something that would normally go straight in the bin.’
David Gingell, chef

Matzo ball soup at Monty’s Deli
‘We add a tiny bit of monosodium glutamate (MSG) to our matzo ball soup. It’s perfect. There’s still a lot of negativity towards the stuff, which I don’t understand, given the overwhelming evidence that it’s completely safe.’
Owen Barratt, chef

Squid, potato and tomato stew at Stoney Street
‘North African spice mix ras-el-hanout is always really good in soups. If you rub vegetables in it and roast them before adding to the soup it helps deepen flavours.’
Alex Hely-Hutchinson, founder
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SIM-only 1 month plan. Includes unlimited calls and texts to standard UK landlines and mobiles, and roaming within EU countries. Terms apply. Trustpilot 4.5 star rating Jan 2020. See smarty.co.uk
The Staff Meal is the only opportunity our team gets to sit down and catch up. It’s a really important – we take it very seriously. If I see someone working during the staff eating period, I’ll give them a bollocking.

We do it twice a day: breakfast at 11am and then dinner at 4.45pm before service. There are 12 of us in the morning and 18 to 20 at night. Everyone – the chefs and the floor staff – sits down for 15 to 20 minutes. In my kitchen, the chefs love cooking staff food as they can make whatever they want (within our budget!). It’s an opportunity to experiment. A lot of them have spent time in India and they love cooking curries. Gnocchi is on the restaurant menu at the moment, so for the staff meal we’re doing amazing things with potato skins. We have a guy leaving soon, and he’s asked for vegan burritos on his last shift.

One of the main requirements for cooking staff food is sustenance. You’re not going to cook soup for people who are on their feet all day. For me, comfort food is sitting round the dinner table knowing that, for 15 minutes, you’re in your sanctuary. We’re family here, and families bicker, but if there are any problems we can always talk it out at the table.

Fill up at a family meal

Head chef and co-owner of Trullo, Conor Gadd, takes us behind the scenes at one of the team’s pre-service dinners

Learn the science of comfort food

Ever found yourself craving a trip to Padella after a terrible argument with your boyfriend? Turns out there’s biochemistry behind it. There’s a specific part of your brain – called the nucleus accumbens – which controls the release of feelgood hormones dopamine and serotonin (triggered by drugs, sex and tasty food). ‘It manages our impulses,’ says Uxshely Carcamo, founder of The Food Therapy Clinic, ‘and makes us crave foods that give us that hit of short-term pleasure.’

What kinds of foods do this? Carbohydrates – which help with hormone production – and fats. (Apologies to your cholesterol levels.)

But that’s not all. There’s also a distinct psychological link between sinking your face into pasta and feeling content, explains Carcamo. ‘Our brain likes to make associations between certain smells, tastes and periods of time. So foods can often trigger happy memories of childhood,’ she says. ‘If we were rewarded with ice cream when we were younger, our brains can form an association between the taste and the feeling we got as a child and covet it again.’

So, yeah, it turns out comfort food is a big dose of hormone-making carbohydrates and brain-tricking nostalgia all wrapped up in one chemically induced kick.

Just like mama used to make...

Learn the science of comfort food

The East African-Indian Supper Club
Food documentary-maker Abbas Asaria cooks Indian and East African cuisine that explores his heritage.


Mam Sham
Run by two ridiculously charismatic best friends, Mam Sham is more house party than supper club. Courses are punctuated by drag or cabaret acts.


Syrian Supper Club
Started in response to the 2012 humanitarian crisis, these fundraising celebrations of Syrian food take place all over the city.

→ Leiths School of Food and Wine. Goldhawk Rd. Check website for upcoming dates.

Make new pals at a supperclub
POWER UP THE TOWER
932 STEPS | 42 FLOORS | 1 EPIC CHALLENGE

VerticalRush
12.03.2020

Sign up as a team or go solo: shelter.org.uk/verticalrush
Load up on mac ’n’ cheese

Our pick of the best gloopy pasta in the whole damn city

**The fishy one**
Claw does a best-of-the-British-seaside number: Salcombe crab, melty London-made raclette and ogleshield, topped with finely sliced spring onions.

→ 35 Earlham St.

Covent Garden. £9.

**The vegan one**
Macaroni pie is a Caribbean comfort-food classic, and London’s premier plant-based version attracts massive queues at Eat of Eden in Brixton Village.

→ 4 Brixton Village.

Brixton. £4.50.

**The Scottish one**
Scottish specialist Mac & Wild does an och-aye!-inducing gooey mac ’n’ cheese. It features haggis: think extra-cheesy cheeseburger and you’ll get the idea.

→ 9a Devonshire Square.

Liverpool St. £6.50.

**The posh one**
Four cheeses are melded with luxe lobster and topped with a whole tail at Bob Bob Ricard. It’s rich, and given the price tag, whoever’s paying will have to be too.

→ 1 Upper James St.

Piccadilly Circus. £29.50.

**The extremely cheesy one**
Rich ogleshield, tangy Quicke’s cheddar, full-flavoured lincolnshire poacher, Brue Valley mozzarella and nutty old winchester go into The Cheese Bar’s pasta.

→ Unit 93-94 Camden Stables.

Camden Town. £9.

**The blue one**
On your next trip to Hawksmoor, swap fries for a side of mac ’n’ cheese. Stilton, garlic, nutmeg: it’s so refined it probably spends its weekends at Soho Farmhouse.

→ 157a Commercial St.

Liverpool St. £6.

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Liverpool St. £6.

Since Rose Johnstone went plant-based in 2016, she’s eaten plenty of warming vegan nosh

Do you really think that after a stressful day, or a big night out, we vegans think to ourselves: You know what I could really go for right now? A room-temperature ancient-grain salad washed down by a heady bottle of kombucha. Oh no, friends. We crave comfort food just like everyone else – and in the last five or so years, London has been delivering. You’ll find plenty of plant-based versions of soul-warming faves in the capital: take YoungVegans in Camden, which does a vegan pie made from ‘steak’ marinated in rich, dark ale and slathered in gravy. There’s also a form of vegan comfort food that existed long before the time of ‘plant-based alternatives’. When I need to eat my feelings, the first thing I think of is a warm, fragrant bowl of laksa or ramen. Bermondsey’s Hakata makes a vegan ‘tonkotsu’ ramen (a creamier version of the noodle soup), with burnt garlic oil, that will have you emitting inappropriate sounds. Need to turn up the fire levels? Order from the wide selection of vegan Sri Lankan curries at Everest Curry King in Lewisham. The aubergine curry (go on, eat those little green chillis) is the equivalent of wrapping yourself in a fluffy blanket. Plus, by eating vegan, you’re making the world a greener place. And isn’t that the most comforting feeling of all?
NIVEA Q10 Power, with Q10 that’s 100% identical to the Q10 made by your skin, reduces the appearance of lines and wrinkles.

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A TODD HAYNES FILM

MARK RUFFALO ANNE HATHAWAY TIM ROBBINS

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INSPIRED BY TRUE EVENTS

SCREENPLAY BY MARIO CORREA AND MATTHEW MICHAEL CARNAHAN DIRECTED BY TODD HAYNES

IN CINEMAS FEB 28
The sewerman

Andy Howard, 50, is a special projects manager at Lanes Group, the waste water maintenance partner of Thames Water. His team’s job, in other words, is to keep London’s sewers flowing.

We’re also known as sewer ‘flushers’. If that means going underground to unblock a fatberg or just keep the waterways clean, we put on our suits and down we go.

I’m not going to lie to you: sewers stink. But you know what? You can smell faeces, vomit, urine and alcohol all day long. You get used to that. It’s the smell of fat that drives you mental – a sort of combination of rotting meat and the inside of a smelly toilet.

When I say fat, it can be like wading through porridge or a chicken korma. Wet wipes, condoms, congealed fat, as well as other things people flush down the toilet – they’re all mixed in.

That smell stays with you for days. You breathe it in, it gets into your skin and becomes part of you, oozing from your pores. People move away from you on the tube.

Every sewer has a different smell. Blackfriars has its own smell. Whitechapel has its own smell. They all do. Even when you break wind, you smell it and think: Oh, that’s Whitechapel Road, that is!

You never look at sewage and see a turd floating down. Everything’s mixed up, so it looks like dirty water. It sprays in your face, your eyes, your ears, your mouth.

Weil’s disease is a big fear – you get it from rat urine. You can put your hand on an area that’s been contaminated and it will just seep into your skin. It’s a killer. I’ve known guys who’ve caught it and been in a coma for two weeks.

It takes professionalism and a good dollop of humour to spend your working days up to your knees in fat, wet wipes and poo.

Yes, it’s dirty, smelly and dangerous, but I love it. Sewermen have a real passion for what they do. We are literally the last line of defence when there’s an issue.

It’s that sense of purpose that makes me happy. I’ve done a lot of jobs over the years – soldier, chef, lorry driver, steel erector – and if I’d learned anything, it’s that whatever you do, you should do it for you.

www.lanesgroup.com
Humane traps aren’t always that humane. Take sticky pads, for instance. I’ve found pads before with just a tail left on them, or a foot. How desperate has an animal got to be to chew its own foot off?

The smell of a decomposing rat is pure awful. It’s hard to put into words. Just rotting flesh that’s been left to fester for weeks. It really gets inside you.

Rats aren’t always the most disgusting part. I remember visiting a house where rats had chewed through the toilet pipe. It was a three-bedroom house shared by around 13 people and it was pure squalor.

When I got into the bathroom, I realised they had stopped using the toilet and had been shitting in the bath. I just turned around and left. It was too disgusting.

I’ve learned to compartmentalise. To be happy in a grim job, you’ve got to focus on the good bits. For me, it’s meeting people, discussing their issue over a cup of coffee, laughing and cheering them up.

We’re like rat-busting superheroes. And that’s a great feeling. Making other people happy makes me happy in return.

My secret to happiness? You need to switch off when the job is done. You need a distraction. I love cooking. I also travel a lot; whenever I can, I see a new city, a new country.

The ratcatcher

Ignat Charakchiev, 29, is a pest-control technician at Fantastic Services, who tackle everything from cleaning to rat-proofing.

Pest control can be a dirty business. We deal with fleas, foxes, bed bugs, pigeons, squirrels and other infestations. But rats are the worst.

Rats are gross. They’re smelly, diseased, they urinate everywhere, they can bite and however you block their holes, they can always find a way back.

But rats are also very clever. So to beat them, you’ve got to show them respect, learn how to think like them.

A lot of people think we’re just out to kill things. But it’s all about control. Poison is always a last resort.
COULD THE AIR INSIDE YOUR HOME BE MORE POLLUTED THAN OUTDOORS?
Scientific research suggests that it could be¹

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- 99.4% USER SATISFACTION⁵
The trauma scene cleaner

Ryan Colquitt, 39, is a regional operations manager for SafeGroup, specialising in remediating crime scenes, unattended deaths and extreme cleaning emergencies.

We don’t just do crime scenes. We clean anywhere there’s been an unexpected death: an unattended body at home, a suicide in a hotel or a death under a train.

Usually the body will have been taken away but that doesn’t mean there isn’t a lot to clean up: body fluid, sometimes blood.

A big job is when we get called to a really bad decomposition or unattended death and find they’ve not only decomposed in a kitchen or bathroom but it’s dripping through the floorboards.

I’ll never forget the man who died watching TV. By the time he was discovered, he’d been there so long he’d sort of melted into the sofa. We had to take up the floorboards to clean body fluid off the pipes.

Then there was the man who died in the bath. He’d fallen out with his family so nobody found him for months. When we arrived, there were probably 6,000 bluebottles in the flat.

I don’t know how long he’d been there but it was enough to fill the bathtub with six inches of body fluid. That was the worst I ever smelled. You quickly learn to breathe through your mouth on jobs like that.

Train traumas are different. You come across body parts on the tracks. Once, one of my colleagues found an eyeball.

That’s how I never let the job get me down: the feeling that I am, in some small way, helping people with their emotional journey. To clean away the awfulness of so they don’t have to visualise it.

My job has long hours and it’s not making me rich, but I love it. Knowing I’m doing a fantastic job for people washes any bad stuff away. It’s actually given me a more positive outlook on life.

If there’s one thing I’ve learned, it’s this: people fall out for the silliest reasons. And it’s only when they can never see another person again that they realise they should have done something about it. It makes me think about my own life and the people in it.

→ www.thesafegroup.co.uk

WAYS TO GET HAPPY

Watch otters at London Wetland Centre

Hacking away at an awful Excel spreadsheet? Get out of the office and over to LWC to see the cheeky mammals get their feed on.

→ www.wwt.org.uk

Go gardening with dinosaurs

Weeding and planting is so good for you it’s available on the NHS. Do it on islands where wonky dinosaurs live for even better vibes.

→ www.crystalpalacepark.org.uk

Wild swim at Hampstead Ponds

Get all the goodness of a cold-water dip plus the fun of pretending to be a posh north Londoner who can simply buy themselves happiness.

→ www.hampsteadheath.net
In a December 2019 independent study of 227 premium lager drinkers, 55% preferred Export versus Stella and 55% preferred Export versus Peroni whilst in each case 8% expressed no preference. Please see www.carlsberg.co.uk/export-2020 for verification details.

Probably the most modest beer in the world.

So, you probably wouldn’t know that most drinkers prefer the taste of Carlsberg Export to Stella and Peroni.

We’d humbly suggest you try it.
You get the greatest satisfaction at the end of a job, when you know it’s gone well. When relatives of the deceased thank you for everything you’ve done.

What has death taught me about life? Nobody is guaranteed a tomorrow. That’s not to say I’m off bungee jumping at the weekend, but it does allow me not worry so much about things I can’t change.

Nothing lasts for ever. A tough experience may not be as tough tomorrow, next week or next year. Surround yourself with people you trust and who are supportive.

People ask how I can stay positive in the face of so much death. But death is not something to be frightened of. Bodies aren’t horrendous, they’re just people who have died.

You need a sense of humour to do this job. Never at the expense of someone who’s died, that’s completely unacceptable. But every morning we come into the office, have a coffee and tell jokes. Dad jokes, I’m afraid. Or football. Or Morecambe & Wise. You have to.

Young men often have the biggest problem letting go of their emotions. Often they are the ones desperate to have a cry but feel they can’t because that’s not what men do. I try to make it okay to cry in front of another man.

I like the job because I like caring for people, whether they’re living, grieving or have died. If you can’t care for people, you wouldn’t enjoy this job.

‘I try to make it okay to cry in front of another man’
A different kind of energy company has landed.

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LONDON FOR LESS

Food, drink, screenings, pop-ups: don’t miss our exclusive offers and discounts

Crystal Palace Spa

What is it? We’ll tell you what it isn’t: in Crystal Palace! This extravagant spa is in Marylebone (confusing, we know), and it’s offering a Turkish hammam or Moroccan bath for one or two.
Why go? For a serious pamper party. This package includes full-body exfoliation, a soap massage, a body mask and drinks.
Wait, how much? £39 solo or £69 with a pal, that’s 71 percent off.

The Latin Collective

What is it? Latin dance classes with post-lesson club-night entry.
Why go? Because it’s time to up your game from drunkenly grooving to ‘Despacito’ at your local dive bar. Seriously, salsa and bachata are two of the sexiest dances ever. Once you’ve learnt the basics, you can test your moves on the club’s dancefloor.
Wait, how much? Up to 79 percent off – classes start from £12 for five.

The Wine and Spirits Show

What is it? One of the booziest exhibitions in London.
Why go? For the unlimited tasters, obviously. There’ll be more than 500 wines and spirits to try (although we strongly recommend you don’t sample them all), as well as some ace food stands and free masterclasses.
Wait, how much? We’re sorting you out with half-price tickets, so it’ll cost you just £27.50. Cheers!

FishWorks

What is it? A seafood platter for two with a glass of prosecco each at a nautical Covent Garden restaurant.
Why go? To share some fresh fruits de mer with a friend. This place is a restaurant and a fishmongers, so you can be confident the chefs here know their oysters from their elbows.
Wait, how much? £29 for both of you, that’s nearly half-price.

‘The Effect’

What is it? The return of award-winning playwright Lucy Prebble’s story about love and science.
Why go? To witness this tantalising tale of Connie and Tristan, who meet and connect on a clinical trial. Is what comes next the real deal or just a pharmaceutical side effect?
Wait, how much? We have tickets for up to 37 percent off, so you can bag a seat from just £14.

Theatre, music, events: get the best deals in town. Search ‘Time Out offers’
It’s GLOW time!

Shine a light on dementia at GLOW, Alzheimer’s Society’s new family friendly night walk.

Battersea Park
Friday 13 March

Kempton Racecourse
Saturday 21 March

Search: GLOW walk
Things to Do

Gosh! Comics
The staff at Gosh! are full of knowledge but never make you feel stupid. Graphic novels are the speciality here, but it’s also well stocked with Marvel and DC omnibus hardbacks, prints, rare bookplated editions and a healthy supply of manga in the basement. Gosh! is known for its events too: regular ‘drink and draw’ sessions; and author signings (Alice Oseman, creator of queer graphic novel ‘Heartstopper’, will be in store on March 14). It’s right in the middle of high-footfall Soho but makes a real effort to support small-press and self-published comics by giving them decent shelf space alongside more commercially friendly titles. Get digging – you might find the next ‘Ghost World’ or ‘Scott Pilgrim’ among those stapled pages.

→ Gosh! Comics, 1 Berwick St. ◆ Piccadilly Circus. Find out more at www.goshlondon.com

Orbital Comics
It’s nothing short of a miracle that this bright yellow ‘neighbourhood’ comic shop is still standing in Covent Garden. Like Gosh!, it makes space for small press. It is the place to go for rare back issues (claiming to have the best selection of vintage comics in London). Last year Jake Gyllenhaal paid a visit to promote ‘Spider-Man Far from Home’. Ask nicely and the Orbital staff might tell you which comics were touched by Mr Mysterio.

→ Orbital Comics, 8 Great Newport St. ◆ Leicester Square. www.orbitalcomics.com

Mega City Comics
Mega has been going strong in Camden Town since 1987, and has customers who have been visiting since they were buying Hulk comics with crumpled pocket money. Its shelves are lined with graphic novels, indie comics, vinyl toys and T-shirts, but keep an eye on the employee’s picks: the team of four know their stuff. It’s well-known in comics circles – even Alan Moore has made an appearance here. Mega loves a movie tie-in, so if you’re keen to deep-dive into the world of Harley Quinn after watching ‘Birds of Prey’, the staff will have piles of DC back issues to guide you on your blood-splattered journey.

→ Mega City Comics, 18 Inverness St. ◆ Camden Town. www.megacitycomics.co.uk

Forbidden Planet
This is a bit like putting ‘Rolling Stones Greatest Hits’ in a best albums list, but FP is a great place to buy new releases. And posters. And… well, everything. Even if your only experience with comics is a stray copy of Viz you once read while on the loo, you can find solace in the sizeable film section, especially if you’re very into Studio Ghibli.

→ Forbidden Planet, 179 Shaftesbury Avenue. ◆ Tottenham Court Rd. www.forbiddenplanet.com

The smell of latex and the sound of plastic dice: it must be Comic Con! Ingratiate yourself with the cosplaying masses at London’s comic shops.
30th Century Comics
The name’s futuristic but the inside is pure nostalgia. Here you’ll find boxes and boxes of vintage comics going all the way back to the 1900s. Flick through the yellowing pages of Doctor Strange and retro Bunty annuals. It also has a great collection of outmoded pulp novels with titles like ‘Two Smart Dames’. ■
Katie McCabe

→ 18 Lower Richmond Rd. Putney Bridge. www.30thcenturycomics.co.uk

DOs AND DON’Ts
How to avoid fandom faux pas at Comic Con Spring

DO
Ask cosplayers if you can get a photo, rather than scurrying up to Captain Marvel and snatching a selfie. Even superheroes, assassins and genocidal demons from alternate timelines need their personal space.

DON’T
Openly snicker at anyone’s cosplay outfit. Yes, that guy’s Cyberman get-up may be shonky, but do you realise how much chutzpah it took to get here from Zone 4 in that thing? Allow it.

DO
Come freshly showered. Yes, we’re talking to you, Phil.

DON’T
Whiff like a three-day Warhammer marathon. Seriously, Phil. Radox.

DO
Pick up some original art. Many artists will be offering bespoke sketches. If you’ve always wanted a professional depiction of Dr Doom in a bubble bath, this is your chance.

DON’T
Take a credit card if your inner geek lacks self-control. Nobody wants to exit Olympia in a replica Predator mask, £900 down and abaze with disoriented regret.

DO
Buy some actual comics (or manga, or graphic novels, or trade paperbacks). Creatively, comics are enjoying a golden era right now, but at Comic Con they can get sidelined by all the TV and movie glitz.

DON’T
Assume that every comic will be suitable for any kids you’re chaperoning. The big US publishers have all but given up on the under-15s. To sidestep sex and swears, ask dealers for their ‘all ages’ books.

DO

DON’T
Give Ian ‘The Emperor’ McDiarmid grief about ‘The Rise of Skywalker’. He didn’t write the bloody thing, okay? Joe Madden

A new exhibition celebrates the strength and resilience of people swept into poverty.

Search PICTURE BRITAIN
SOMETHING FOR THE WEEKEND

**Friday**

**BREW LDN**
Just when you thought London was overflowing with craft beer, a new hops party comes to town. Try flavours from nearly 150 of the world’s best brewers and soak up the booze with top street food.


**CELEBRATE Queerstory**
Stonewall Housing is behind this LGBT+ History Month night of films, DJs and spoken word. Feeling confident? Sashay down the runway and have your style judged by Munroe Bergdorf.


**SCRIBBLE After Hours: Drawing Salon**
Been obsessed with creepy folk traditions since ‘Midsommar’? Learn to sketch English characters like The Green Man and Obby Oss in this class.


**Friday Late: The Eyes Have It**
Keep your peepers peeled for workshops exploring optical illusions, talks on camouflage, dance performances, zine-making classes and film screenings at this art night themed around eyes. Stay to dance like no one’s watching to DJ duo Wahalaa.


**WATCH Exploding Cinema**
Films are projected on to every surface at this showcase of underground moving image. Immersive cinema, done right.


**PARTY DIY Space for London Open Day**
The cooperatively run social centre opens up for drop-in print workshops, nail treatments, film screenings and music.


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**Saturday**

**Burnt Roti Festival**
The magazine celebrating South Asian culture is bringing its print publication to life for this all-day fest. Watch films, listen to panel talks on creative writing and filmmaking, and belly-laugh to comedy sets.


**SOMETHING FOR THE WEEKEND**
Run riot in London’s fanciest buildings at [timeout.com/latess](http://timeout.com/latess)

**Sunday**

**BROWSE London Potters Studio Fair**
See clay creations from 20 local potters in the stunning surroundings of a hidden Victorian playhouse covered in gilded murals.


**BUY Zero Market N22**
Spend your Sunday feeling all virtuous at this market full of refill stations and eco-friendly stalls.

Welcome to Slytherin season

Ambitious, cunning… misunderstood? Soon, us Muggles will have the chance to embrace our darker sides at Warner Bros. Studio Tour London – The Making of Harry Potter

Yes, the house’s founder trapped a huge, evil snake in an underground chamber for nearly a thousand years. And sure, its official house ghost is the spooky and silent Bloody Baron. But hey, Slytherin’s not all that bad. In fact, it gave rise to some of the greatest witches and wizards of all time.

And who knows: maybe the Sorting Hat would put you in the green and silver house.

From April to September this year, Warner Bros. Studio Tour London will host ‘A Celebration of Slytherin’. It’s your opportunity to go behind the scenes and discover authentic sets, props and costumes from all eight films. The difference is that, this time, the Studio Tour will showcase some never-before-seen Slytherin treasures. Let’s take a closer look at what to expect…

Step into the Slytherin common room

Remember when Harry and Ron disguised themselves using Polyjuice Potion to sneak into the Slytherin common room in the ‘Chamber of Secrets’? In a Warner Bros. Studio Tour London exclusive, this set will be displayed for the first time ever, allowing visitors to discover details up close. It’ll be furnished with authentic props and will feature an imposing fireplace.

Experience the Great Hall like never before

In ‘The Philosopher’s Stone’, Slytherin (briefly) wins the House Cup before Dumbledore awards extra points to Gryffindor. For the first time, the Great Hall will be decked out in green… except for a few banners of the rival house ready to be unveiled. Can you spot them?

Get up close to the Malfoy family

Great hair, not-so-great criminal records. The Malfoys were once an esteemed house, but fell in status alongside Lord Voldemort. Original costumes belonging to the family will be on display. Don’t get too close though – you never know what curses could be on them.
A Celebration of Slytherin’ at Warner Bros. Studio Tour London runs from April 3 to September 6. You’ll be green with envy if you forget to book tickets – they’re bound to sell out. And speaking in Parseltongue won’t get you in for free. Adult tickets are £47 and family tickets are available.

BOOK NOW!

Slytherins
The dark-marked to the good-at-heart

Tom Riddle –
aka Lord Voldemort
100 percent evil (obviously)

Dolores Umbridge
Super evil. Terrible taste in interior decor

Bellatrix Lestrange
Totally deranged and totally in love with Voldemort. Cool outfits, though…

Draco Malfoy
A bully who secretly just wanted to earn the love of his dad

Horace Slughorn
A harmless Potions teacher who accidentally helped Tom Riddle

Regulus Black
Died attempting to destroy Voldemort’s Horcruxes

Severus Snape
A much-maligned dark horse who stayed true to the cause

Witness the rise of He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named
You knew this was coming. Arguably Slytherin’s most famous wizard, Lord Voldemort went through many guises throughout the Harry Potter saga. The Studio Tour will showcase the evolution of his costumes, from orphaned Tom Riddle to young Hogwarts student, and then to super-villain.

‘A Celebration of Slytherin’ at Warner Bros. Studio Tour London runs from April 3 to September 6. You’ll be green with envy if you forget to book tickets – they’re bound to sell out. And speaking in Parseltongue won’t get you in for free. Adult tickets are £47 and family tickets are available.

→ Book now at www.wbstudiotour.co.uk
JEWELLERY & SILVERSMITHING FAIR

OLD TOWN HALL
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THREE OF THE BEST

Mardi Gras parties

Mardi Gras Brixton Day and Night Festival
Parade around Pop Brixton’s jumble of shipping containers at this day-to-night party. Join swing dance lessons and show off your moves to live ‘swamp soul’ and tasty cuts of funk from London’s only specialist New Orleans vinyl DJ.

Bayou’s Mardi Gras Crawfish Boil
Mardi Gras doesn’t mean ‘fat Tuesday’ for nothing. In true New Orleans style, this Southern soul food joint will be cooking up a huge feast of cajun chicken gumbo, chargrilled oysters and cornbread with a classic crawfish boil.
→ Bayou Bar. ✪ Tooting Broadway. Sun Mar 1. £27.50.

Mardi Gras at Peckham Springs
The railway arch bar will be decked out in beads and balloons for this Louisiana hoedown. Arrive between 4pm and 6pm to nab a free Southern Hurricane cocktail. Slosh it back dancing to DJs and a brass band and tucking into po’boy sandwiches.
DID YOU KNOW that James I was given the nickname ‘Queen James’ because of his intimate relationships with several male courtiers? I didn’t. Not until I went on Queer Lives at the Tower, a new tour of the Tower of London that shines the spotlight on the lives, loves and experiences of LGBTQ+ figures linked with the landmark.

It begins with a kind of disclaimer: because history has been documented predominantly through the eyes and actions of men, this hour-long tour won’t offer as much of an insight into the lives of queer women. That’s a shame, and one that will hopefully be rectified in future LGBTQ+ tours of London’s palaces planned for later this year. Still, the queer stories that the tour does explore are vividly brought to life with ‘creative storytelling’ by actors and a ‘drag raven’. The wingless – but still very fabulous – raven acts as our primary tour guide as we move between rooms watching imagined interactions between several kings and their same-sex lovers.

The tour is fascinating and often funny but ends poignantly with a mini-candlelight vigil for Roger Casement. A key figure in Ireland’s fight for independence and in the Easter Rising of 1916, Casement’s homosexual activities were used by the British government to undermine his case for clemency when he was convicted and executed for high treason. That this happened just over a century ago is a crushing reminder that the push for greater LGBTQ+ rights and acceptance has been a long, hard (and ongoing) battle.

Nick Levine
PANCAKE DAY

Filippin’ Good Fun Pancake Race
Embarrass yourself at this Shrove Tuesday race. Every entrant in fancy dress gets a free pancake. Donations go to Greenwich & Bexley Community Hospice.
→ Greenwich Market.
Cutty Sark DLR.
Tue Feb 25. Donation.

Where the Pancakes Are
Fifth Birthday
London’s premier crêpe peddler is throwing a day-long batter party. Tuck in to special pancakes and join the three-legged race.
→ Flat Iron Square.
→ London Bridge.
Tue Feb 25. Prices vary.

TO DO
The best events in your area

Central North South East West

LATES

Thursday Lates: Gothic Romance
A rare chance to see Horace Walpole’s ghost-white gothic pile after dark, when it looks even more magical than usual. Hear curious tales with a free fizz in hand.
→ Strawberry Hill House.
Strawberry Hill rail. Every Thu until Mar 26. £20.

EXCLUSIVE
Make your own whisky with some of the best in the business at The Blend by Chivas masterclass. Tickets are just £10 – that’s 33 percent off.
WWW.TIMEOUT.COM/CHIVAS

JOIN IN

Ready Singer One
Self-dubbed ‘London’s nerdiest choir’, this singing troupe belt out tunes from videogames, films, TV shows and anime. Fingers crossed for the Mario theme.
→ Address on request.

PARTY

House of Yacht Volume One
DJs The Have Yachts will be lounging around the decks for this party dedicated to smooth ‘80s rock (like Hall & Oates to Steely Dan) for a nautical crowd.
→ Orford House.
→ Walthamstow Central.
Fri Feb 28. £3.

Buy Art. Drink Beer. Do Good
Sip on Northern Monk brews, watch street art being made and bid for a masterpiece in the auction at this charity fundraiser.
→ Kill the Cat. → Aldgate East.
Sat Feb 29. Free entry.

ScienCity Chivas
Experiment with a camera obscura, get acquainted with a plague doctor and join a silent disco at this late exploring how London grew from a small city into a global hub for scientific enquiry.
→ Science Museum.

The Sweaty Betty Express
The sports brand and Frame take over KX’s concourse for some high-energy flashmob-style workouts.
→ King’s Cross station.
→ King’s Cross. Sat Feb 29. £5.

The best events in your area

Central North South East West

EXCLUSIVE
Make your own whisky with some of the best in the business at The Blend by Chivas masterclass. Tickets are just £10 – that’s 33 percent off.
WWW.TIMEOUT.COM/CHIVAS

POP! Festival
See stories of Grenfell and Notting Hill Carnival explored through art at this month-long grassroots festival celebrating the Portobello area. There’ll be a mix of installations, street art and theatre. This week see ‘XXIV’, a dance piece exploring high-rise council estates.
→ Various locations.
Thu Feb 27–Mar 27. Free.

Where the Pancakes Are
Fifth Birthday

Find out more online at THEAMERICANFLATIRON.COM AND GET YOUR FREE PANCAKE!

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THROWING A DAY LONG BATTER PARTY.

TUCK IN TO SPECIAL PANCAKES AND JOIN THE THREE LEGGED RACE.

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TUCK IN TO SPECIAL PANCAKES AND JOIN THE THREE LEGGED RACE.
Elisabeth Moss

‘The Invisible Man’ star on embracing the darkness and battling Aussie arachnids

‘NO ONE WANTS to watch me having brunch on a sunny day in a movie,’ says Elisabeth Moss in a suitably shadowy corner of a Hollywood soundstage. Sure enough, she has become a go-to pick for movies and TV shows with a darker edge – including the new horror adaptation of HG Wells’s ‘The Invisible Man’. Set in San Francisco, it reimagines the villain from Universal Pictures’ old monster movie as a modern-day stalker who torments his ex (Moss) – even after his apparent suicide. Invisible antagonists are a theme of our chat, right down the terrifying spider in her on-set trailer.

On set, is the movie’s unseen monster a tennis ball on a stick? Someone in a green suit?

‘Sometimes it would be [the stunt double] in green suits, sometimes it would be nothing. A lot was just me and my imagination.’

The original ‘Invisible Man’ was bent on chaos, whereas this movie seems to be more about control. That feels very contemporary.

‘Extremely. The balance in this movie is between straight-up entertainment and this extremely complicated emotional character arc. I watched it by myself and I jumped, like, nine times. It’s legitimately gonna fuck people up.’

If you remove this homicidal invisible guy, it’s a movie about abusive relationships, right?

‘Exactly that. When I first read the script, I was so impressed with what Leigh [Whannell, the writer-director] had done. You don’t think: Let’s do “The Invisible Man” and let’s make it a feminist retelling of the story that’s about gaslighting and abuse but that’s what he did. Everyone has had some sort of experience with this – whether it’s politically or it’s when you’re thinking: This is wrong and everyone is like, “No, it’s fine.”’

What movies scare you the most?

‘Jordan [Peel’s] films like “Get Out” and “Us”. He’s really redefining a genre [by making] thoughtful popcorn movies. They’re movies that you’re gonna see in the theatre and get the shit scared out of you, but but at the same time you might talk about them or think about them after you leave. The characters are always interesting in them.’

Does that familiarity help you with a role?

‘I’m cool either way. Like for [indie drama] “Her Smell” I have zero relation to grunge music and zero relation to being a rock star and I don’t do drugs. So, I’m comfortable going from scratch.’
The Invisible Man

A #METOO HORROR film that couldn’t be any more timely if it shuffled into a courtroom with a Zimmer frame, ‘The Invisible Man’ retools HG Wells’s seminal sci-fi novel into a tart statement on toxic men and their gaslighting ways. It’s not flawless – the supporting characters are thinly sketched and intrepid plottholers will have a field day – but it’s surprisingly smart and, crucially, it has Elisabeth Moss to cover the bits that aren’t.

Moss can pull off Joan Crawford brittle and Sigourney Weaver badass, and she holds it all together as Cecilia, an architect traumatised by her abusive tech entrepreneur husband, Adrian Griffin (Oliver Jackson-Cohen). Within the opening moments, she’s drugged him, scaled the walls of their modernist seaside slab and legged it. Soon, Griffin is reported dead by suicide. But is he? And why have things started going bump in the night? Is there a Hubbadook at large, tormenting her from beyond the grave?

Aussie writer-director Leigh Whannell (‘Saw’), doubling Sydney for San Francisco, is a natural fit for the material. ‘The Invisible Man’ is respectful to the classic Universal monster movie with which it shares its name (look out for a cameo from those trademark bandages), but this is no reverential retread. It has ideas of its own, specifically around the way an abusive relationship can turn a life into a prison.

Its greatest coup, though, is in gaslighting the entire audience. You’ll find yourself scouring the frame for this malign force in the tiniest refraction of light. Whannell knows you’re doing it, too, and lets scenes go on so long, you start to doubt your own eyes. There shouldn’t be any doubting the magnetic Moss, though: she’s the real deal.

Phil de Semlyen

WHAT IS IT...
HG Wells’s sci-fi novel gets a horror spin for the #MeToo era.

WHY GO...
Elisabeth Moss is on top form as a very modern scream queen.

Director Leigh Whannell (TBC) 80 mins.
CÉLINE SCIAMMA IS one of the most exciting young French filmmakers around: her ‘Water Lilies’, ‘Tomboy’ and ‘Girlhood’ are all intimate, intense studies of young girls or young women at points of profound change. Those earlier films were all contemporary, realist tales. Now, with ‘Portrait of a Lady on Fire’, she has crafted a powerfully original story of art and love, almost entirely set on a Breton island in the eighteenth century, and one that operates on the level of a radical, painterly reverie – just somewhere to the left of reality. It’s Sciamma’s most cerebral and challenging work to date, and one that’s full of ideas about artists and muses, the female gaze and solidarity. It feels stately and quiet at first, and you wonder if it might end up being too polite, too controlled. But it harbours a rising passion that’s devastating when it bursts into life.

It begins with Marianne (Noémie Merlant) teaching an art class that throws us into an extended flashback to a pivotal moment in her life that takes up almost the entire film. We see her being rowed by a boatful of men to a remote island: she’s a professional painter for hire, and she’s arriving there to paint Héloïse (Adèle Haenel), a young woman whose mother wants a portrait of her to send to her prospective husband, an aristocrat in Milan.

Already one painter has come and gone. Marianne’s challenge is to get Héloïse to sit for her during the time they live in close quarters in her family home, talking walks on the stormy beach or in the nearby dunes. Marianne does get her subject to sit for her – but what happens is far more interesting than just superficial success, as a growing bond develops between them that’s reflected in the curious development of the paintings. A bond emerges, too, with the only other person left in the house when Héloïse’s mother travels away: a servant, Sophie (Luàna Bajrami), who gets help from both women when a crisis emerges in her life. ‘Portrait’ might be set in the 1770s but it feels totally contemporary and relevant in its energy and in what it says about art and who’s making it, and how that affects how we view the world and each other. It’s also an intensely moving evocation of female love and friendship, without ever being coy or unnecessarily erotic. It’s bold and proud. One of the many winning things about this film is that it exists in a wider world dominated by the desires and rules of men but Sciamma strips men out of the film almost entirely, apart from during its bookends. It’s deeply romantic and also deeply thoughtful – an electric combination.

■ Dave Calhoun

FREE WITH MUBI GO


THREE QUESTIONS FOR Céline Sciamma

1. **When did you first conceive this story?**

   “It was after [2014’s] ‘Girlhood’. I wanted to devote a whole film to a love story. My films have mostly been about the rise of desire as the discovery of oneself. Now it was all about crafting this love dialogue around equality, and the sexiness of consent. I think this is timeless and it belongs to today.”

2. **Why did you decide to set the film in the eighteenth century?**

   “People who don’t like the film say: “Oh, it’s lacking conflict. We don’t see the problem of homosexuality enough.” I didn’t set it in the past to push the forbidden side of it because it’s still forbidden. I mean, [homosexuality is] not super-welcome today. This movie is all about equality and how things can be surprising because there’s no gender, age or intellectual domination – and we’re not playing with social domination either.”

3. **Lesbian sex scenes are often censored more harshly. Did that worry you?**

   “I never think about that. [For] ‘Tomboy’ I had to create suspense with a Play-Doh penis. It’s not a film designed for kids, but I wanted them to see it – and they have. The film’s running in schools and 200,000 kids have seen it, which is amazing. You have to be fearless.”

   Interview by Hanna Flint

WHAT IS IT…

A story of forbidden love in eighteenth-century Brittany.

WHY GO…

It’s a romantic late Valentine’s treat.

— Director Céline Sciamma

(15) 122 min
COLOR OUT OF SPACE

WHAT IS IT...
An HP Lovecraft adaptation full of sci-fi weirdness and wonders.

WHY GO...
Nicolas Cage milks an alpaca.

Director Richard Stanley
(15) 106 mins.

THIS HP LOVECRAFT adaptation from Richard Stanley (‘Hardware’) plays like ‘The War of the Worlds’ on ayahuasca. A meteor crashes and something alien emerges… only these minds are immeasurably more psychedelic than HG Wells’s fighty spacemen. Trees mutate, new flora sprouts and the well starts talking. Somehow it’s an hour before anyone asks: ‘What the hell is going on?’

It’s a good question, though not one you’re invited to linger over. The trip is the point here, even if Stanley takes his time building up to it as he introduces Nathan and Theresa Gardner (Nicolas Cage and Joely Richardson) and their three kids. They’ve swapped the big city for the sticks where Theresa is recovering from a mastectomy and Nathan is farming alpacas.

So far, so Country Life. Then the meteor hits and kaleidoscopic mayhem breaks out. Stanley brings real craft and control to all the gonzo grandeur, aided by a corking score from saxophonist Colin Stetson. There’s even a nod to SFX legend Rob Bottin’s creature work – a mutated cherry on top for horror fans.

Everyone else will be busy savouring vintage Cage line readings (‘Now if you don’t mind, it’s time we milk the Al. Paac. AHHHS!’) and the ultra-vivid visuals. It takes a lot for a movie to out-bonkers Cage on this kind of form. ‘Color out of Space’ manages it in style. ■ Phil de Semlyen

TRUE HISTORY OF THE KELLY GANG

WHAT IS IT...
The mostly true story of legendary Aussie outlaw Ned Kelly.

WHY GO...
Russell Crowe is great as a beefy bushranger.

Director Justin Kurzel
(18) 125 mins.

AUSTRALIA’S ANSWER TO Robin Hood or Jesse James, Ned Kelly has had almost as many screen depictions as that pair down the years. There’s been the silent one (1906’s ‘The Story of the Kelly Gang’), the serious one (‘Ned Kelly’ with Heath Ledger), the funny one (‘Ned’) and the accidentally funny one (‘Ned Kelly’ with Mick Jagger). Now comes the trip, frustrating one.

Director Justin Kurzel looks to coax an origin story of national identity from Peter Carey’s Booker Prize-winning novel. As in his brilliant ‘Snowtown’, Kurzel is a master of slow-brewing tensions. Early on, this edge stems from Kelly’s formidable mum (Essie Davis, superb) and a young Ned facing off against a British sergeant; later, it’s Nicholas Hoult’s odious constable and George McKay’s grown-up Ned. A gleeful Russell Crowe makes off with the middle bit as a highwayman who shows Ned the ropes.

It’s all heading somewhere special as Kelly muses on masculinity and colonialism, but then coherence gives way to flashy visuals and bursts of expressionistic violence. A nocturnal shootout is strobed like a rock gig, but all the showiness blunts the film’s thinky edge. The climax is a punky, Peckinpah-like splurge that jettisons the emotion and power in a hail of lead. ■ Phil de Semlyen

BFI Flare is back for another year of top-notch LGBTQ+ cinema. Highlights of the bumper line-up include ‘Steelers’, a documentary about the world’s first gay rugby club, and hilarious-looking romcom ‘Ellie & Abbie (& Ellie’s Dead Aunt)’. Also don’t forget the fest’s reliably brilliant club nights.


The 50 best LGBTQ+ films at timeout.com/film
Céline Sciamma (TOMBOY) turns the male gaze over its head to present its female version: a feminist tale of lesbian desire, aching romanticism, and creative collaboration.

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This meaty legal drama feels like a less inspired version of an idea director Todd Haynes already explored in “Safe”: am I being poisoned? There’s not a single zinger from Mark Ruffalo as real-life attorney Rob Bilott, a lawyer for polluting chemical giant DuPont who becomes its prosecutor. He can’t match his fiery ‘Spotlight’ form, while Anne Hathaway is wasted as his wife. It’s solid enough as a legal procedural, though it never feels like the radical, subversive Haynes who made ‘Carol’. Joshua Rothkopf

A surgical dissection of male ego, Swedish drama ‘Force Majeure’ gets a broader, Hollywood redo. During a skiing holiday, Pete (Will Ferrell) flees from a controlled avalanche, leaving his wife Billie (Julia Louis-Dreyfus) and their sons behind. Can they shake the incident off as the cracks begin to appear? Sadly, the original’s balance of subtle comedy and darker moments isn’t here and, one 11-minute confrontation aside, the tension is sapped by the oversharing characters. Zachary Shevich

‘Villain’ may look like an exercise in Laandan gangsterism, as Craig Fairbrass is released from prison to find his useless brother in debt to the wrong people. But by playing it straight, it avoids campy Guy Ritchie clichés. No one’s called ‘Mr Fish Finger’ and there are no cards saying stuff like ‘Chapter 4: The Blag’. Instead, there’s pathos, nods to gentrification, and a sense of a man out of time. It feels like modern-day London: diverse, scared of the young, scared of getting old. And not a slo-mo bit in sight. Chris Waywell

The world’s poor are being pushed out of cities by corporate speculation on housing. That’s the premise of ‘Push’, an enlightening if lethargic doc. It follows a UN investigator as she meets witnesses to the crisis. The tenants are eloquent, passionate and doomed; the experts are woolly, apart from economist Joseph Stiglitz. ‘They’re not intrinsically evil,’ he says of subprime-hoovering private equity firms. ‘But they are intrinsically amoral. So amoral that I would say they are… evil.’ Chris Waywell
Music & Nightlife

Reviewed by Oliver Keens

timeout.com/music @timeoutmusic

Enormous bands from across the genre spectrum are re-teaming for 2020 tours. Here’s the lowdown

Supergrass

Years away: 10
Why now? Drummer Danny Goffey says it’s ‘the first time that we collectively felt the buzz to get back in a room together and play the songs’. We say: it’s never too soon – or too late – for any Britpop revival.
Worth it? The Oxford band have more hits than you might remember, including ten UK Top 20s, so their huge shows at Alexandra Palace on March 6 and 7 should be more than ‘Alright’.

My Chemical Romance

Years away: 7
Why now? Let’s call it the seven-year itch coupled with an altruistic desire to return jet-black eyeliner to the world’s biggest venues.
Worth it? Their legions of fans clearly think so – a trio of shows at the 30,000-capacity Stadium MK in Milton Keynes on June 18, 20 and 21 have already sold out.
Don’t hold your breath...

Bands who seem destined never to reform

The Maccabees
Having split after 14 years in 2016 with major farewell shows, lead Macca Orlando Weeks has since become a writer of children’s fiction.

Destiny’s Child
Sure, Beyoncé brought out Kelly and Michelle during 2013’s Super Bowl halftime show. But can you picture a full-scale reunion?

Girls Aloud
Nicola Roberts has said she’d love a twentieth anniversary tour in 2022. But will her bandmates agree?

Oasis
Remember them? A reunion could in theory happen... if squabbling siblings Liam and Noel ever bury the hatchet.

Elastica
MIA tried to reunite the Britpop band for Meltdown in 2017, but singer Justine Frischmann said no. She’s a successful painter now.

Pussycat Dolls

**Years away:** 10  
**Why now?** No real reason, tbh. Maybe Nicole Scherzinger just fancied slipping into her dancing shoes again?  
**Worth it?** Come on, don’t cha wish more pop stars had moves like this lot? The group’s reunion shows at The O2 on April 17 and 18 will be a dazzlingly choreographed blast from the past. New single ‘React’ is a banger too.

JLS

**Years away:** 7  
**Why now?** Let’s be honest, all boybands get back together eventually, and Aston, JB, Marvin and Oritsé need to get in on the act before One Direction decide to reform.  
**Worth it?** One hundred percent. They’ve called it the ‘Beat Again’ tour after their signature hit, and their hometown shows at The O2 on December 1, 3 and 10 are bound to be a nostalgic pop-R&B delight.

Pavement

**Years away:** 10  
**Why now?** Stephen Malkmus and the gang are reconvening to celebrate the band’s thirtieth anniversary – they’re only slightly late, since their debut EP came out in 1989.  
**Worth it?** Well, their reunion shows are certainly exclusive. They’re only playing two dates: at Primavera Sound in Barcelona on June 4 and NOS Primavera Sound in Porto on June 13.

Rage Against The Machine

**Years away:** 9  
**Why now?** They’ve given no specific reason, but the rap-rockers are well known for their revolutionary and anti-authoritarian views, so their bombastic bangers should strike a chord in 2020’s highly polarised political climate. If you want to vent some rage, they’re here to help you do it.  
**Worth it?** For sure. They’re headlining Reading and Leeds festivals on August 28-30, which is absolutely the perfect place to see big, brash and loud RATM smash it this, or indeed any, year.

By Nick Levine
Who can’t dance like a Pussycat Doll, but gives it a go anyway.
RIP Andrew Weatherall

Music & Nightlife editor Oliver Keens reflects on the passing of a towering London music legend

TIME OUT TURNED 51 last year. I’ve worked here about ten of those years now. After a while, you get used to certain names flowing in and out of the magazine, like a neighbour’s cat cruising charmingly through your garden. They’re in listings, they’re feverishly name checked in interviews, they’re used as sonic references, they’re held up as masters of their craft. This was the case with Andrew Weatherall, who died last week. It was impossible to keep him out of Time Out.

Since he passed away last Monday at Whipps Cross Hospital, many have joyously shared his studio work online and drawn comfort from a body of recorded music that will thankfully last forever: pivotal work with Primal Scream that brought Balearica to Bradford and the rest of the UK, releases as part of Two Lone Swordsmen, The Sabres Of Paradise and The Asphodells, a weight of remixes on his labels Boy’s Own Recordings and Rotters Golf Club.

But a strange thing happens when a great DJ dies. That side of their genius really does all go in an instant, just like that. That magic power to make a room fizzle with excitement, that shamanic ability to bewitch grown humans with nothing but sounds. Gone.

His last London date was on New Year’s Eve, a five-hour set at Hackney Wick’s Mick’s Garage. It’s a lovely venue, but decidedly modest for a man of his immense standing: a founding father of the acid house movement and pretty much every indie fan’s favourite DJ, ever.

But that was his thing. He very clearly eschewed the life of a superstar DJ and the bland megagigs it entails. He chose to constantly ply his craft in small, intimate places instead. He played the teeny-tiny Horse Meat Disco in December, for example (with fellow DJ Artwork helping on lights, randomly). He was due to play the insanely small Margate Arts Club in April too. Such gigs were oversubscribed beyond belief, but for those lucky attendees, they were able to chat and share passions with their hero in a human way that seems unimaginable with most DJs.

Having crawled from the fertile ooze of the ’80s rave explosion, Weatherall largely walked away from electronic music in the early 2000s to become a rockabilly nut. But he folded himself back into the scene with A Love from Outer Space – a nomadic party run with Sean Johnston that locked into a permanently slow, narcotic electronic groove and became a genuinely loving community of friends and hypnotised fans.

It’s been pointed out that, spookily, you can still see the man on Google Street View – walking purposefully up Kingsland Road, looking customarily fantastic in smart brown shoes, wide-legged camel-coloured trousers and tats galore. It’s just one of many perspectives on Andrew Weatherall – a street-pounding, eye-catching local London legend.

He is survived by his partner, his family and about seven million children of the acid-house revolution. Rest in peace.
WHAT’S THE DEAL WITH

Lynks Afrikka

So you’re trying to get me to listen to a man named after a deodorant?
Technically, yes, but much like the pongy locker room favourite, this Bristol musician is going to be iconic. FYI, his two live backing singers are called Lynks Shower Gel (‘You might remember us from your Christmas box sets!’), so you’d better get used to the whole name thing.

Does he sound anything like he smells?
Absolutely not. Rather than awkwardly masking the hormones of teenage boys, Lynks is bold, queer, unashamedly hilarious and stupid amounts of fun. Sonically, he somehow mashes up club beats, chanty bratty Shampoo-style pop, weird squelchy electro and — on one song — a sample from the Headspace app.

Um, what?
‘On Trend’ pauses its spiralling social anxiety with that knowing nod, but skewering concepts and turning the confusion of everyday life on its head is very much Lynks’s thing. ‘I Don’t Know What I Want’ is an increasingly frenetic clatter of millennial angst, and ‘Str8 Acting’ rails against the often-reductive presentation of queer culture, cloaking it in the guise of a piss-taking club banger (‘Drinking cold, cold beer in a hot, straight club/ It’s a lot like a pub, but with slightly less chairs’). ‘How to Make a Béchamel Sauce in /one.lt/zero.lt Steps’, meanwhile, is... well, exactly that. But to music.

We’re guessing the live show is a calm and sedate affair...
Oh, totally, if by ‘calm and sedate’ you mean ‘a masked man in a cheerleader Barbie outfit doing sick synchronised choreo with his two pals’. At a London show earlier this year, he even brought a piñata. Now, that’s entertainment. ■ Lisa Wright

→ Lynks Afrikka plays the Tooting Tram and Social on Sat Feb 29.
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Jessie Reyez
The super-talented singer-songwriter who co-wrote Calvin Harris and Dua Lipa’s hit ‘One Kiss’ has announced a headline show.

Jack Peñate
South London troubadour follows comeback album ‘After You’ with a hometown show at new venue Lafayette.
→ Lafayette. May 27.

George Clinton
The visionary Parliament-Funkadelic frontman swings by Kentish Town as part of his global farewell tour.

Damon Albarn
After his Barbican gig sold out, the Blur and Gorillaz muso has announced a second London show for ‘The Nearer the Fountain, More Pure the Stream Flows’, his new project inspired by Iceland’s natural beauty.

Party on the Heath with Pride in London
This brand new LGBTQ+ pop celebration will feature a fortieth anniversary show from Village People (with original singer Victor Willis) plus Sophie Ellis-Bextor performing with Sink The Pink.

The Weeknd
His upcoming album ‘After Hours’ - due March 20 - has already yielded the ace Number One hit ‘Blinding Lights’. Now the artist also known as Abel Tesfaye has announced a trio of London arena dates. Tickets go on sale on Friday at 9am.
Laura Marling
The award-winning folk singer-songwriter gears up for the release of her currently untitled seventh album with a trio of intimate gigs.
- Islington Assembly Hall. May 27.
- Leicester Square Theatre. May 29.

Hideaway Festival
This new event in Essex on the old V Festival site has a family-friendly vibe and two legendary headliners: Tom Jones and his hula-hooping namesake Grace Jones.

Bright Eyes
After a nine-year hiatus, Conor Oberst and co are back and embarking on a world tour featuring this sizeable London show.
- Eventim Apollo. Sep 1.

Purity Ring
The brilliantly offbeat electropop duo have booked their first UK gig in five years. It’s in support of new album ‘Womb’, due April 3.
- Roundhouse. Sep 18.

Alain Morissette
Her O2 Shepherd’s Bush Empire show on March 4 is sold out, but the ’Jagged Little Pill’ singer has just announced a much bigger gig at The O2. You oughta know that tickets go on sale on Friday at 9am.
- The O2. Sep 28.

Oh Wonder
The melodic indie-pop duo have booked their biggest London headline gig to date as part of their ’Wear Your Crown’ tour. Be ready when tickets go on sale on Friday at 9am.

Incubus
Only European performances of the ’Make Yourself’ set.
- Royal Albert Hall. Mon 08 & Tue 09 June.
- Eventim Apollo. Sep 1.

Laura Marling
The award-winning folk singer-songwriter gears up for the release of her currently untitled seventh album with a trio of intimate gigs.
- Islington Assembly Hall. May 27.
- Leicester Square Theatre. May 29.
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In a nutshell...
A shiny, 220-cap basement venue from the teams behind Peckham’s Four Quarters and Bermondsey Social Club.

Where is it?
Next to the Bussey Building complex, a stone’s throw from Peckham Rye station.

What’s the vibe?
Accessed via a steep staircase on Peckham’s bustling Rye Lane, it should feel dingier than it is, but actually occupies a rather decent basement space. If you’re not on the modestly sized dancefloor, there are fancy neon-lit booths around the perimeter to have a breather. All very sophisticated.

What makes it a great venue?
It’s a basement room that avoids all the pitfalls of most basement rooms. The sound is top-notch, the audience space for shows is enclosed while the balcony that runs around three walls means you’ll never be squashed at the back, struggling to get a glimpse of the stage. It’s got an intimate feel, where punters can see the artist up-close.

What’s the booze situation?
As well as an extensive cocktail list, there are craft beers from Beavertown and beyond on tap – no watery lagers in sight.

What’s coming up there soon?
Check out Peckham Audio’s full listings on their website – there’s everything from Grime MC Novelist to post-punkers Phobophobes and a house and disco night from rising Peckham promoters Dots. ■

Will Richards
Peckham Audio, 133 Rye Lane, SE15 4ST.
Peckham Rye Overground.

Read about more venues at timeout.com/music
I MADE IT approximately ten minutes into the pilot episode of the Ben Elton-penned David Mitchell vehicle 'Upstart Crow' before being unable to take it any more. So you could say that I came to this inexplicably definite-articled stage version of their Shakespeare sitcom with a doubt or two.

But whether it’s an improvement in quality, me mellowing in my old age, or simple Stockholm syndrome from being stuck in a theatre with it for two-and-a-half hours, ‘The Upstart Crow’ grew on me.

It doesn’t start well: all cheap populist laughs about the variable quality of Shakespeare’s plays (by all means make a coherent argument about why you think ‘Measure for Measure’ is shit, but if you go for the king, you’d better kill the king, and Elton’s script absolutely does not kill the king).

With the cast almost entirely made up of returnees from the telly, the early scenes are fairly dependent upon you knowing who everyone is, with big rounds of walk-on applause for Gemma Whelan’s Kate and Rob Rouse’s Ned. That everyone says ‘futtock’ when they mean ‘fuck’ is irritating to the point of distraction. The ‘joke’ that Shakespeare’s daughters have OTT Midlands accents is lazy and contemptible (it’s hard to imagine any other accent being mocked this way in /two lt/zero lt/two lt/zero lt). There are discussions about race, sexuality and gender that are probably well-meaning but come across a bit ‘OK boomer’. And yet... the tittering Shakespeare-bashing is largely confined to the start, and Elton ends up weaving a somewhat endearing tribute to the Bard, as the plot – which very loosely follows the events triggered by a pair of shipwrecked African royals arriving in town – becomes a knowing mashup of ‘Twelfth Night’, ‘King Lear’, ‘Othello’ and ‘The Winter’s Tale’. It’s maybe not quite as dazzlingly crafted as that sounds – it’s no, um, ‘Shakespeare in Love’ – but it has both a formal ambition and ultimate fondness for its subject that count for something. Toss in some agreeable silliness with a man in a bear suit, a wonderful turn from Mark Heap as a self-denying puritan and a fistful of genuinely good gags and you have a fun night, smoothly
directed by stage-comedy supremo Sean Foley.

It would be remiss not to talk about star David Mitchell, although it’s fairly inconceivable that you couldn’t guess how he plays it. Despite being responsible for one of the greatest comedy performances in history (that would be the impossibly neurotic Mark Corrigan from ‘Peep Show’), Mitchell’s subsequent, panel-show-heavy career suggests a man unwilling to leave his comfort zone. The fact that he makes his West End debut reprising a sitcom character reinforces this. Still, he’s more confident and charismatic than one might expect from a relative stage novice, and he’s not bad with the chunks of ‘Lear’ he has to perform – a further stage career is there if he’s game for the challenge.

The extremely obvious point that I have been circling around is that if you enjoy ‘Upstart Crow’ you’ll surely enjoy ‘The Upstart Crow’, and if you don’t enjoy ‘Upstart Crow’ the odds are fairly low that you’d make any effort to see ‘The Upstart Crow’. But if it’s not great art – it’s not even the greatest postmodern Shakespeare tribute in the West End: that’s ‘& Juliet’ – it’s fairly winning. I was worried Mitchell, Elton et al came to lazily bury Shakespeare, but in fact they rather sweetly come to praise him.

By Andrzej Łukowski
Who might change his name to The Andrzej Łukowski.

A Number

CARYL CHURCHILL’S SHORT, sharp 2002 masterpiece ‘A Number’ has always had a sci-fi air to it: it is, after all, about a father being confronted by multiple clones of his son. But where its original run – starring Michael Gambon and Daniel Craig, no less – came with the assumption that Churchill was writing in response to the cloning of Dolly the Sheep, a couple of decades’ distance here is handy. They allow for this production from Polly Findlay, who virtually treats ‘A Number’ as a kitchen-sink drama. Yes, it is still about Salter (Roger Allam), a man who is visited by a series of versions of his son Bernard (Colin Morgan). But ‘A Number’ benefits from not being tied into distracting contemporary events. Allam’s Salter is a disarmingly gentle man with a soft south-east accent and a nondescript suburban home. He seems genuinely remorseful at the way he’s lived his life, often unable to look the various permutations of his son in the eye. And yet he lies and manipulates.

In the first scene, Salter tells a traumatised Bernard that he was the original. In the next, Salter is confronted by a far more menacing Bernard, who turns out to be the true original, who Salter abandoned as an infant, deciding that he would start over instead. In Findlay’s production, ‘A Number’ is very clearly a play about fatherhood: the damage parents do to their children, and the irresponsibility of trying to run away from them. Allam’s Salter does not obviously seem like a monster (although there are hints that maybe he was). But he abandoned his son over and over again, in almost exquisitely cruel fashion, and ‘A Number’ explores the terrible consequences.

By Andrzej Łukowski
Who might change his name to The Andrzej Łukowski.

WHAT IS IT...
Caryl Churchill’s cloning drama, starring Roger Allam and Colin Morgan.

WHY GO...
It’s an incredibly moving take, powered by Allam’s performance.

→ Bridge Theatre.
OUTH London Bridge.
Until Mar 14. £15-£75.

February 25 – March 2 2020 Time Out London
BE MORE CHILL
★★★★☆
This Broadway import is a puzzler. It’s a new musical-theatre phenomenon that’s been winning the hearts of digital native Gen Zers. But its retro story, aesthetic, sounds and social politics are all stuck somewhere between the invention of Pac-Man and the release of ‘Dookie’. It’s fun, but ‘Dear Evan Hansen’ and ‘Everybody’s Talking About Jamie’ are proof that you can make musicals about teenage boys that are smart and subtle. ‘Be More Chill’ is not. Alice Saville

PASS OVER
★★★★☆
Antoinette Nwandu’s ‘Pass Over’ is like a radical rewriting of Samuel Beckett’s ‘Waiting for Godot’ with Vladimir and Estragon switched for two young black men, Moses and Kitch, who pass repetitive days on a street corner. But while Nwandu echoes Beckett’s blend of sharp comedy and utter despair, there is one major difference. Beckett’s tramps existed inside a vacuum; Nwandu’s young men are grounded in a reality that’s horrifically recognisable. Rosemary Waugh

MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE
★★★★☆
The last time hip hop and the music of Sting coincided in any significant manner was when P Diddy turned ‘Every Breath You Take’ into ‘I’ll Be Missing You’. But Kate Prince, the powerhouse behind the ZooNation hip hop dance troupe, is a fan, and this dance-theatre show is a passion project. Sting’s earnest socio-political leanings lend themselves to a story about the refugee crisis. But there’s a by-numbers feel to the plot, and little emotional connection. Siobhan Murphy

LA CAGE AUX FOLLES
★★★★☆
This is not ‘La Cage aux Folles’ the musical. If you are expecting ‘I Am What I Am’, just hum it quietly to yourself. This is adapted by Simon Callow from Jean Poiret’s original 1973 play. While there’s definitely drag involved, sans show tunes and jazzy choreography you’re left with a more bitter aftertaste. Director Jez Bond is careful to have us laughing with the gay characters on stage, rather than at them, even if the farce loses its way towards the end of the second half. Tom Wicker

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WEST END

Pretty Woman: The Musical
The vintage romcom-turned-musical hits London after a shaky start on Broadway.
» Piccadilly Theatre.
» Piccadilly Circus.
Until Jan 2 2021. £20-£234.

The Prince of Egypt
Stephen Schwartz is dusting the Egyptian sands from his 1998 Dreamworks movie to make this ambitious new Biblical musical.
» Dominion Theatre.
» Tottenham Court Rd.
Until Sep 12. £19.50-£149.50.

Women Beware Women
Thomas Middleton’s brutal tragedy of sexual intrigue.
» Blackfriars. Until Apr 18. £7-£82.

I Think We Are Alone
Physical theatre dons Frantic Assembly stage Sally Abbott’s look at loneliness.
» Theatre Royal Stratford East.

Darkfield: Séance, Flight, Coma
A trio of mindblowing, tech-heavy immersive shows, each set in a pitch-black shipping container.
» Lewis Cubitt Square.
» King’s Cross. Fri Feb 25-Mar 22. £30-£37.50. £25 concs.

OFF-WEST END

The Spirit
Belgian artist Thibault Delferiere’s boundary-pushing solo show.
» Battersea Arts Centre.

Darkfield: Séance, Flight, Coma
A trio of mindblowing, tech-heavy immersive shows, each set in a pitch-black shipping container.
» Kings Cross. Fri Feb 25-Mar 22. £30-£37.50. £25 concs.

OFF-WEST END

Meat
Gillian Greer’s play follows a couple who meet for dinner, and chew over their issues.
£17-£18. £5-£12 concs.

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1 Endgame
Daniel Radcliffe stars in this grimly funny Beckett play.
» The Old Vic. Until Mar 28.

2 9 to 5 the Musical
A rhinestone-studded kitschfest from Dolly Parton.

3 Leopoldstadt
Is it Tom Stoppard last play?
» Wyndham’s Theatre. Until Jun 3.

4 Uncle Vanya
Toby Jones lights up a classic.
» Harold Pinter Theatre. Until May 2.

5 Hamilton
Mega-hit hop hop musical.

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EXCLUSIVE
‘ON BLUEBERRY HILL’

Multi-award-winning author Sebastian Barry’s new play sees two inmates explore survival, forgiveness and love. Niall Buggy and David Ganly take the stage at Trafalgar Studios for this highly anticipated play. Best available tickets are just £25.
» TIMEOUT.COM/ONBLUEBERRYHILL

Ts&Cs apply.
They met on the set of '¡Three Amigos!' way back 1986 and they've been fast friends ever since. Now, 34 years on, Steve Martin and Martin Short are talking down the line from New York and LA about their live double act, which has become a global box office hit and an Emmy-nominated Netflix special. The pair bring new show 'The Funniest Show in Town at the Moment' to London this month.

How did the live show come about?
Martin Short 'We were asked to interview each other at a comedy festival about six years ago, and we had such a great time doing it we thought: Oh, let's do it again. And then it morphed into a more thought-out show.'
Steve Martin 'Marty used the word "morphed" but I would use the word "evolved". But that's just the difference between him and me.'

You've known each other for more than three decades. How has your friendship 'morphed' or 'evolved'?
Steve Martin 'I think Marty likes me more than I like him, but that's fine.'
Martin Short 'No, I wouldn't say that's true. I know Steve's strengths and I know his many, many weaknesses. I think it's safe to say he tolerates me.'

How do you find performing as a double act?
Steve Martin 'Oh, for me it's a huge relief! I always found working alone isolating and lonely.'
Martin Short 'What's fun about the shows is you're constantly trying new things, new lines, new ideas, and sometimes you just bomb. And if you bomb by yourself you have to kind of live with that. But if you bomb with someone else it becomes a funny story over wine later.'
Steve Martin 'Or in Marty's case, over wines.'

Steve, is it safe to say that you wouldn't be performing stand-up if you weren't performing with Marty?
Steve Martin 'Oh, I would not be performing stand-up. Although performing with Marty has made me think about performing alone, I'll tell you that! No, I do actually prefer performing with somebody, and I think that'll probably be for the rest of my life – it just might be over in about an hour.'

Catherine O'Hara described the live show as 'a children's show for adults'. Do you agree with that?
Steve Martin 'Well, I think what I agree with is it's so fun-filled, it's literally wall-to-wall laughs. It's just non-stop and that's, I guess, what a children's show is.'
Martin Short 'And I agree that Catherine O'Hara said that.'

You're in London for a couple of nights. Is there anything you're looking forward to doing?
Martin Short 'I have many relatives there – there are many Shorts living in London – so I'll be seeing a lot of cousins.'
Steve Martin 'And me, I'm going to be there with my wife, and we like to go to galleries, we always like to go to the Tate.'
THE
TEN BEST GIGS
THIS MONTH

10
Mawaan Rizwan
High-energy, eccentric work-in-progress from this fast-rising star and writer on Netflix’s ‘Sex Education’.

9
Amusical: ‘Once More with Feeling’
The comedians-do-musical-theatre take on that all-singing ‘Buffy’ episode.

8
Plosive Comedy in Dulwich
Reigning ‘Taskmaster’ champion Ed Gamble headlines with Desiree Burch, Adam Hess and Suzi Ruffell.
→ The MCT at Alley’s. North Dulwich rail. Mar 27. £17.

7
Live at the Chapel
A double-headline bill with beer-guzzling poet Tim Key and Edinburgh Comedy Award winner Bridget Christie.

6
The Blindboy Podcast
The plastic-bag-wearing comedian – half of The Rubberbandits – brings his ace podcast to London.

5
Dane Baptiste: ‘The Chocolate Chip’
Sharp gags and social commentary from the ‘Live at the Apollo’ star.

4
Luke McQueen: ‘The Person Behind the Celebrity’
Ludicrously high-concept chat show.
→ Moth Club. Hackney Central Overground. Mar 5. £11.

3
Stevie Martin: ‘Hot Content’
Apunchline-heavy look at social media from this comedian and journalist.

2
Tommy Tiernan: ‘Tomfoolery’
Legendary Irish comic.

‘If you bomb with someone else it becomes a funny story’

By Ben Williams
Who still holds out hope for ‘Father of the Bride Part III’.

Catherine Cohen: ‘The Twist...? She’s Gorgeous’
A first chance for Londoners to catch 2019’s Edinburgh Comedy Awards Best Newcomer winner and her gloriously self-absorbed, heavily ironic cabaret.
IF YOU THINK a show about masculinity should be full of images of guns and cowboys and beer and beards, then you’re not going to be disappointed here. Unless you also want that show to be a celebration of those things, in which case you’re in for a rough ride. Because this exhibition doesn’t celebrate what it means to be a man, it undermines it, subverts it and totally reshapes it.

It’s a sprawling, long show, with sprawling, long captions: it has a lot to say, and a lot to subvert. Think boys don’t cry? Well, Bas Jan Ader films himself openly weeping in one of the show’s standout works. Think the army is the greatest expression of heterosexuality there is? Well, Adi Nes stages scenes of soldiers in intimate, charged, erotic situations. Think only men have great facial hair? Well, Ana Mendieta and Catherine Opie’s images of women with hair glued on to their mushes have something to say about that.

The show is full of moments where ideas and ideals of masculinity are flipped and reversed. Some of it works better than others. Thomas Dworzak’s collection of Taliban images nabbed from the backroom of a Kabul photography studio is brilliant: these supposedly terrifying men, sitting there with thick eyeliner, posing with flowers. Transgender Canadian artist Cassils documents their transformation into a bodybuilder, Annette Messager takes close-up photos of men’s crotches in the street, Karen Knorr hilariously sneers at men in fancy London members’ clubs. It’s a constant process of poking, prodding and tearing apart. The thing is, in its desperation to foreground alternative views of masculinity, the show fails to look at masculinity itself. You could argue...
that art history is already all about masculinity, but the male gaze is an outward thing, and the moments here where things get introspective – where masculinity is explored rather than undermined – are some of the most interesting bits of the show. Masahisa Fukase’s chronicling of his and his father’s ageing bodies is painfully touching, Rineke Dijkstra’s portraits of bruised, battered bullfighting boys are shocking and joyful, Andrew Moisey’s fraternity book is idiotic, aggravating and brilliant.

Yes, the most masculine thing about the show is how it won’t stop lecturing you about what masculinity is. But the exhibition makes you walk away asking infinite questions. And in a society where gender is ceaselessly melting into an ever more fluid substance, questions are our best tools for trying to figure out how to navigate the world.

BEST OF THE BEST

The exhibitions you have to see in London right now

Steve McQueen
The Turner Prize and Oscar winner’s work is full of beauty, but full of pain and injustice too. It’s staggering, powerful, necessary art.

• Tate Modern. Southwark. Until May 11. £13, £12 concs.

‘Forgotten Masters: Indian Painting for the East India Company’
Ridiculously gorgeous paintings by artists who are finally getting the recognition they deserve.

• Wallace Collection. Bond St. Until Apr 19. £12.

‘Picasso and Paper’
Works on paper by history’s most famous painter. Of course it’s good. Pablo could make art out of mashed potato and it would be brilliant.

Léon Spilliaert

This show opens with a black blob. An inky, scrawly, looming lump of damp mountainside, like a geological metaphor for impending doom. And from there, it doesn’t get much lighter.

Léon Spilliaert was born in Ostend, Belgium, in 1881. He spent most of his life between there and Brussels, and his gothicky, wobbly paintings are filled with the frigid features of the local landscape. The strongest sense conveyed is how freaking freezing it is. Every tiny figure is battered by a bitter wind, each hunched-over human a drastically poor opponent when pitted against the elements. His favoured medium of fuzzy Indian ink washes and gouache makes everything look like it’s viewed through the evening mizzle.

This neatly comprehensive exhibition moves through the themes of Spilliaert’s career, including the Symbolist-ish illustrations he made for a couple of books and his woe-is-me self-portraits. He found his niche and stuck to it, and that niche was desolation. These are sad, gloomy, lonely images, called things like ‘Alone’ and ‘Misery’.

If it all sounds a bit teenagery, that because it is. Not just in its obsession with depression, but in its lack of interrogation of it. The most obvious comparison is Edvard Munch, but whereas the painter of ‘The Scream’ slapped his bare soul across the canvas, spreading existential angst like Marmite, Spilliaert gives only a sense of emptiness. And that’s the essential problem of the show. Spilliaert’s output is never quite good enough.

The exception to this rule is when he paints the sea. There’s more emotional nuance to expanses of water than all the windswept humans on shore. Perhaps if he’d turned his eyes seawards instead of inwards, his art would have plumbed greater depths. Rosemary Waugh
**Isa Genzken**

★★★★★

**BETWEEN ‘HERE’ AND ‘THERE’,**

there’s a whole lot of in-between. And German punk minimalism supremo Isa Genzken’s installation at Hauser & Wirth revels in those transition spaces and moments.

The central bit of the gallery is filled with rows of aeroplane seats and windows. The blinds are half open or fully closed; they look like pairs of eyes, asleep or drunken or confused or wide awake. They’re sleepy little adjustable windows on to the world.

Architectural models in the next space show designs for windows and doors to nowhere – pointless additions to buildings which create only middle places, not starting points or destinations. A concrete sculpture near the entrance manages to be both open and closed off at the same time.

There’s a lot of waffle in art about ‘liminality’, but this isn’t about in-between-ness, it’s the creation of it. That’s different, and it’s a lot more interesting. Genzken’s art feels like a plea for nuance, for a bit of grey in a black-and-white world. Genzken creates in-between spaces, nowheres, places where you don’t have to be one thing or another, where life doesn’t have to be set in stone. It’s a bit of conceptual sanity in a world where that’s totally lacking. ■ Eddy Frankel

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CALVIN KLEIN

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MAKE DO AND mend. Waste not, want not. The post-war generation were raised on these commandments. Then, somewhere down the line (I blame the ‘80s), we all lost our way. Food and fashion became fast, everything became disposable. But not at Silo. Relocated from Brighton, this stylish Hackney restaurant from chef Doug McMaster wears its eco credentials on its sleeve: everything is sustainable, with many of the dishes made from ingredients otherwise destined for the bin.

First up: no preachyness here. The warm, welcoming staff gave us just the right amount of background. If you sit up at the counter, as we did, you can even chat to the friendly, unflappable kitchen team. It’s fun. Otherwise, there are well-spaced tables, in a modish dining room. The ceilings are enormously high (put it this way: there’s a full-sized palm tree in one corner, but it looks like a pot plant). The floor is made from natural cork, the elegant seats from biodegradable wool, the lights from crushed wine bottles. That may sound shabby chic. It’s not. It’s chic chic. With a touch of industrial edge (the building was once a sweet factory), the exposed girders and warehouse windows offset by ebony-stained tables made from sustainable English ash. Oh, and did I mention that the menu is projected on to a massive whitewashed wall?

A no-choice number, it’s officially six courses, but dessert is two dishes and there’s bread (‘Siloaf’) too. This overture of dark, dense sourdough perfectly sums up Silo’s ethos and commitment to quality. The grain is sourced locally, the flour milled on site, and when it’s cut, every crumb is collected and put into the house tamari (an intense, soy-like fermented sauce). Each crusty-edged, chewy-centred slice seemed to lead inexorably to another. It should surely be illegal.

Other dishes were impossibly pretty, their good looks matched by harmonious Eurasian flavours. I loved them all equally, but a few are etched on my memory. Like skinned red artichokes, their waxy bodies sitting in a pool of brown butter and that sourdough tamari. There were flickers of sweet, sour and heat against a canvas of deep, salty savouriness. If you’ve ever wanted to pin down that elusive umami taste, this is where to find it. Or rich, deeply flavoured pieces of braised dairy cow – six-year-old bulls that farmers cast aside – with parsnips two ways (cubed and puréd, both excellent) and a peppercorn sauce. Or a dazzling pumpkin tart, made from the discarded skins of an earlier course. Then topped with rhubarb snow (again, the rhubarb had made earlier appearances).

There’s so much more I could say. But I won’t. At £50 a head, it’s on the pricy side for Hackney, but is still a bargain for the league it’s playing in. Eating at Silo is about more than just the service, setting and food. It’s about what it’s trying to achieve. No, not trying. Succeeding.

Dinner for two with drinks and service: around £145.

What is it?
A stylish zero-waste restaurant in Hackney.

Why go?
It’s actual food for thought.

→ Unit 7, Queen’s Yard, E9 5EN. Hackney Wick Overground.

By Tania Ballantine
Who, as it happens, blames the ’80s for a lot.
**Allegra**

**ON THE SEVENTH** floor of the fancy Stratford Hotel, Allegra is almost comically swish, with gently dimmed lighting, stone surfaces, funky plants and smooth jazz music.

Happily, the food is every bit as good. A savoury choux bun snack that came filled with chicken liver parfait was the first saliva-inducing hint of what was to come. Topped with crushed pistachios, it was creamy and rich, with citrusy preserved kumquat giving it a much-needed bite of acidity. Next up, an artichoke velouté was a good-looking bowl of pure comfort: smooth, velvety and moreish, with a pool of sharp quince to balance it all out. It also came with a sweet little fried brioche bun, topped with some shaved chestnut.

Main courses were similarly strong. Poached Cornish brill, artfully wrapped in charred green leaves, fell apart at the prick of a fork. The wild venison loin, meanwhile, was sheer decadence on a plate.

The tender, pink-middled slices came doused in meaty gravy, with pickled blackberries adding a lightness; while the accompanying celeriac was roasted and well seasoned. Desserts, too, were on-point: a highlight being the ginger cake, deconstructed and delightfully crumbly, also with crunchy, caramelised pecans.

But there were a couple of low points, too. A cottage pie of braised venison shoulder, which came with the deer-themed main, was upsettingly salty; and a waiter tried to upsell us on the wine. On the whole though, service was top-notch: staff were friendly, explained all the dishes, and even poured all the posh sauces for us.

Allegra is a seventh-floor wonder, one where you just have to embrace all of that fancy-pants glitz and glamour.

**■ Ella Braidwood**

**Dinner for two with drinks and service:** around £160.

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**Sponsored Listing**

**Exquisite Pho**

Get a pho, a side and a drink at Banh Bao Brothers for less than half price. Just £12.

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**THAMES CLIPPERS SAYS:**

‘A better commute starts here. It’s time to take the Thames and try a stress-free commute with a comfy seat, an on-board bar and access to 4G. Thames Clippers is offering 20 percent off season tickets to new app customers until March 8, starting from £22.24 per week.’

**THE HALAL GUYS SAYS:**

‘The Halal Guys are pioneers of American halal food, serving sandwiches and platters of chicken or gyro over rice, with their famous white and hot sauces. With restaurants in Earl’s Court and Leicester Square, discover why their food cart lines are the longest in NYC: 14-15 Irving St, WC2H 7AU.’

**NAVRTAR SAYS:**

‘This is the UK’s first free-roam virtual reality and bar experience. Explore Navrtar’s VR demo area. There’s a choice of bespoke games, from surviving an impending horde of zombies in Apocalypse to protecting the world from alien invasion in Alien Defence.’ Dickens Yard, Longfield Avenue, WS 2UQ.

**GOLD STEP SAYS:**

‘Get ready for the new offering from JaguarShoes Collective. A tequila and mezcal cocktail bar, drenched in rays of golden light, Gold Step is aimed at those seeking out the good times, as well as those who want to explore tequila options beyond shots and margaritas.’ 32-34 Kingsland Rd, E2 8DA.
**Three of the Best**

**Tooting restaurants**

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**Daddy Bao**

A spin-off of Peckham’s popular Mr Bao, this trendy Taiwanese spot pumps out pillow-soft buns; we love the beef brisket bao. Do order a side of the terrific sesame-slathered aubergine too.

→ 113 Mitcham Rd, SW17 9PE. 📍 Tooting Broadway.

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**Sea Garden & Grill**

Under the cover of Broadway Market, this friendly spot dishes out modern seafood, like tempura soft-shell crab in a bun, or mussels in a cider cream sauce. The veggie stuff is also ace.

→ 99 Broadway Market, SW17 0RJ. 📍 Tooting Broadway.

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**Plot**

Another Broadway Market joint, Plot deals in weekly changing modern Brit small plates. Think beer muffins with Marmite butter, or wild mushrooms with pickled walnuts.

→ 70-72 Broadway Market, SW17 0RL. 📍 Tooting Broadway.
Is London done with craft beer?

As Craft Beer Rising’s founders launch a new mega-festival, has the artisanal ale craze reached its peak or is there still room for more in the pump?

THIS WEEKEND, a potential 8,000 partygoers will be piling into the Old Truman Brewery for a beerathon, complete with a vegan street food market, a ‘pub rave’ and a whopping 146 drink exhibitors. BrewLDN is a new event from the founders of London favourite Craft Beer Rising. Its co-creator Daniel Rowntree says he and his partners wanted to throw an inclusive party in line with the two-lot/two-lot drinking landscape: ‘I mean… craft beer is no longer rising,’ he says. ‘It’s risen. It’s not going anywhere.’

Almost ten years on from the boom, craft beer is fully mainstream. In London alone there are now more than a hundred breweries. There’s a whole generation of pubs that have never seen pumps of Fosters and Stella. But this scale brings its own issues. ‘The industry’s gone bonkers compared to 2013,’ says Rowntree. ‘It’s massively competitive.’ If everyone is doing it (including the corporate mega-brewers), how do you stand out in this landscape? Evolve.

‘Cask beer’ is having a resurgence,’ says Rowntree. ‘I think it’s a bit of a nostalgia thing.’

He also acknowledges the impact of the low-and-no craze, which he attributes as much to attitudes as health: ‘I don’t think people like getting drunk any more,’ he suggests. He thinks the wellbeing movement could see the emergence of ‘healthy’ and ‘functional’ beers – enhanced by CBD, aloe vera and the like – as well as tipples such as the carb-free ‘hard seltzer’, which appears at Brew LDN. ‘It’s like alcoholic sparkling water,’ he says. ‘A sessionable, light-tasting drink that’s made using the same equipment as craft beer.’

Craft beer is far from done, but it is changing. Above all, Rowntree sees punters expect just that: independent, and giving a shit about the same things they do. ‘Brewing good beer is no longer enough,’ he says. ‘You’ve got to have a point of difference: what you stand for.’


By Laura Richards

Where to try the trends

CBD beer

At Shoreditch’s TT Liquor (17b Kingsland Road) you can get a taste of Green Times, a low-alcohol IPA brewed with natural cannabinoids, as well as more familiar amarillo and mosaic hops.

Cask beer

The Harp (47 Chandos Place) is famed for its cool selection of cask beer (fermented in the barrel, aka ‘real ale’) in an old-school setting off Trafalgar Square. Or visit Nunhead’s Beer Shop (40 Nunhead Green), which has two casks pouring from the likes of London’s Anspach & Hobday and Shipley’s Salt.

Low-and-no

More and more ‘alcohol-free’ beers (0.5% abv or less) are filling up fridges. Head to Paddington’s Heist Bank (5 North Wharf) to sample the much-loved Lucky Saint on tap, or Colours Hoxton (2-4 Hoxton Square), which pours the very impressive Special Effects by Brooklyn Brewery on draught.

Beer Shop

Find more hoppy haunts at timeout.com/craftbeer
Feeling the pressure of London life? Of course you are. We all are. As much as we love it here in this non-stop city, we’re well aware that it’s important to schedule in little breaks here and there. That’s why we’ve teamed up with Thameslink and Southern to bring you four relaxing day trip ideas that are easily accessible via train. So whether you’re partial to a drop of wine with sweeping vineyard views or you’re dreaming of sinking into a spa, you’ll find it here. And thanks to the big investments that Thameslink and Southern are making into improving their stations and services, the journeys there are about as smooth as it gets.

**Go for a ramble in Arundel**

**Distance from London by train**
1 hour 22 minutes from London Bridge to Arundel

**Why go there?** This hillside medieval market town in West Sussex is most famous for its castle – but that’s not the only reason to pay Arundel a visit. Walkers are spoiled for choice with green trails through nature reserves – all with views of the South Downs and the castle. Riverside pub The Black Rabbit provides a scenic lunch stop, and from there you can continue to the small hamlet of South Stoke.

**Soak up the historic charm of Lewes**

**Distance from London by train**
1 hour 6 minutes from London Bridge to Lewes

**Why go there?** An arty atmosphere is guaranteed at this bohemian-tinged East Sussex town. Wind through pretty streets until you get to Lewes Flea Market, get lost in a tome at Fifteenth Century Bookshop and taste wine at Symposium. If you’ve got time, catch the bus to nearby Charleston, a gorgeous farmhouse made famous as a favoured retreat of Bloomsbury Group luminaries like Virginia Woolf and Vanessa Bell.

**Treat yourself to a spa day in Arlesey**

**Distance from London by train**
40 minutes from King’s Cross to Arlesey, then a 15-minute bus ride

**Why go there?** Once, you might’ve balked at the idea of booking into a countryside spa in a Georgian manor surrounded by 150 acres of Bedfordshire parkland. But everyone deserves a bit of luxury – so why not take the plunge? A spa day at Champneys Henlow starts at £94, and you can book massages, beauty treatments and more. Bliss.

**Sip wine in Box Hill**

**Distance from London by train**
1 hour 24 minutes from London Bridge to Box Hill & Westhumble

**Why go there?** Stroll for 15 minutes from the station through leafy lanes and you’ll find Denbies Wine Estate: a Dorking vineyard that produces award-winning wine, which you’re invited to taste. They run fascinating wine-tasting tours, as well as cheese-making and wine-making experiences, and even outdoor vineyard tours on vintage trains.

Get outta town!

Rail against the stresses of city life with these super-chill escapes that are just a short train ride away…

→ Book your journey now with Thameslink at [www.thameslinkrailway.com](http://www.thameslinkrailway.com)
A weekend in Ely

Ely

**Boat trips, trad tearooms and riverside boozers**

**ELY MAY BE** a city, but it feels more like a market town. Sure, it’s got a corker of a cathedral – one of the country’s finest – and its roster of A-list connection includes everyone from Oliver Cromwell, who lived here, to Claire Foy, who swept in to film ‘The Crown’. But the place is so small you can easily do it in a day, and so chilled you won’t need to rush. Browse dusty antiques, savour a long lunch and eke out the last of the evening sun with a drink by the river.

**Eat this**

A meal at The Old Fire Engine House is like eating at a mate’s place. Or maybe a mate’s mum’s place. The décor is homely and the menu is all hearty casseroles and proper roasts. The best bit? You’ll be offered seconds – and it’d be rude to say no.

**Drink this**

Cask ales are on the cards at The Prince Albert in town. On a warm day, nothing beats an ice-cool beer on The Cutter Inn’s terrace as you watch the narrowboats pootle past. The same goes for The Riverside Bar & Kitchen, which does ace cocktails.

**Buy this**

Hunt for treasures at Waterside Antiques Centre. There are three floors stuffed with swag, so give yourself plenty of time – and refuel at Peacocks Tearoom next door afterwards. The twice-monthly Farmers’ Market is also worth a splurge.

**Try this**

Cambridge may have the monopoly on punts, but Ely’s got Liberty Belle Cruises. Set sail for a half-hour saunter up the River Great Ouse with Captain Bob and you’ll get a bitesized city tour. Too sedate? Drive ten mins out of town to Hannam’s Wake Hub for some white-knuckle wakeboarding. You adrenaline junkie, you.

**See this**

For something a bit different, visit when the Ely Eel Festival is on (May 7-10). The city takes its name from the eels that surrounded it back when it was an island, and the festival includes the brilliantly bonkers World Eel Throwing Competition. The eel in question is just a stuffed toy – fear not, animal lovers.

> Get there: one hour 20 minutes by train from London King’s Cross; around one hour and 40 minutes by car.

**IF YOU ONLY DO ONE THING**

Peak inside Ely Cathedral, which is England’s third-longest and real easy on the eye. Buy a ticket for a guided climb of the tower or get a free glimpse of the interior from the West Doors. You can admire the exterior from The Almonry Tea Room, which serves tea, scones and the best views in town.

**WAKE UP HERE**

**The Ellis-Miller House**

Swerve twee Cambridgeshire B&Bs and sleep over in this stunner from the 1980s. Designed by architect Jonathan Ellis-Miller in American modernist style, the simple, single-storey home is built primarily of steel and glass, which means lush countryside views from its expansive windows. The RIBA award-winning building has a huge, light-filled living room and a little suntrap of a garden out back. You could almost be in the Californian hills or an episode of ‘Mad Men’, instead of ten minutes’ drive from Ely Cathedral.

**Elevate your weekend at timeout.com/daytrips**

> Prickwillow, Cambridgeshire. From £65 a night. www.airbnb.co.uk
Tiny homes

Four hideaways that are probably smaller than your flat

The secluded chalet
Having so little space might be teeth-grindingly annoying when you’re sharing it with four SpareRoomers, but it’s another thing entirely on a weekend break. The Chalet at Tan Yr Ogof, which sleeps two in a snug bedroom, is just right for a day or two spent exploring the peaks and valleys of Snowdonia. The mini woodland cabin is a ten-minute walk from the base of Snowdon, and close to the Hafod y Llan trail which you can hike to spot a waterfall.

→ The Chalet at Tan Yr Ogof, Beddgelert, Gwynedd. Sleeps two. From £211 for three nights. www.nationaltrust.org.uk

The island outhouse
This dinky, one-room ‘cottage’ on Lundy is a former lighthouse keepers’ store. Which basically means it was a cupboard. Before that, the Old Light Cottage was a latrine and a pigsty, but (thankfully) you wouldn’t know it now. Inside, there’s a single bed, a petite kitchen and an armchair – all you need for a solo stay on the island, where you can find coastal rambles, puffins, a pub (just the one), no wifi and zero electricity in the middle of the night. It’s the ideal spot for finding peace, and avoiding the rest of humanity.

→ Old Light Cottage, Lundy, Devon. Sleeps one. From £150 for three nights. www.landmarktrust.org.uk

The former guardhouse
You’d never think this building – a tiny white dot on the coastal landscape – was a home for two. It wasn’t always. Bomb-proof Sea Sentry was built during WWII to house soldiers guarding local coastal defences, but now it’s been transformed into a neat rental. Space might be tight, but you won’t wish for more, thanks to clever design, big sea views from the sliding windows upstairs and the king-size bed they’ve somehow managed to squeeze in down below.

→ Sea Sentry, Shaldon, Devon. Sleeps two. From £585 for three nights. www.uniquehomestays.com

The little lodge
No square footage is wasted in this compact cottage. A former gatehouse guarding the entrance to Houghton Hall (once home to Sir Robert Walpole, Britain’s first PM), modest Houghton West Lodge has everything you need for a peaceful break – and nothing more. The bedroom just has room for a double while windows look out over trees.

→ Houghton West Lodge, King’s Lynn, Norfolk. Sleeps two. From £280 for four nights. www.landmarktrust.org.uk

Find micro adventures at timeout.com/daytrips

OFF THE GRID

The Lost Garden Retreat

ARRIVING HERE CAN cure even the stress caused by driving out of London on a Friday night. However tightly wound you feel, the waiting hot tub, the glow of the woodburner and the twinkle of an unpolluted night’s sky will unfrazzle you.

Waking up, under woollen blankets, feels really special, too. The light finds its way in as you hear the pitter-patter of squirrel feet on the safari-style tent’s tarpaulin. It all feels a bit Disney, but it’s genuinely uplifting instead of nauseating. After only a day, you’ll feel right at home. And refreshed enough to tackle the M25 again. Almost.

→ Hinxton, Suffolk. From £220 a night. www.canopyandstars.co.uk

Samantha Willis
/barb2right

Hintlesham, Suffolk. From £220 a night. www.canopyandstars.co.uk

Ellie Walker-Arnott
/barb2right

Sea Sentry, Shaldon, Devon. Sleeps two. From £585 for three nights. www.uniquehomestays.com

Old Light Cottage
24 FEB - 8 MAR
LONDON THEATRE WEEK

Which show should you see?

When did you last go to a West End show?
- Last week
  - What do you want to see?
    - A classic
      - Play
        - How about...
          - Uncle Vanya
          - Endgame
          - The Woman in Black
          - The Seagull
    - A new sensation
      - Musical
      - How about...
        - Les Misérables
        - City of Angels
        - The Phantom of the Opera
  - A new sensation
    - From the Fringe
      - How about...
        - Baby Reindeer
        - The Shark is Broken
    - From Broadway
      - How about...
        - Come From Away
        - Be More Chill
        - Dear Evan Hansen

- Last year
  - I want a show that makes me...
    - Think
      - BAE
      - How about...
        - Max Poppins
        - The Prince of Egypt
        - Life of Pi
        - The Lion King
        - Matilda
    - Smile
      - The Fam
      - How about...
        - Mamma Mia!
        - & Juliet
        - Waitress
        - Wicked
        - Magic Mike
    - Laugh
      - The Girls
      - How about...
        - The Play That Goes Wrong
        - The Book of Mormon
        - Magic Goes Wrong
        - 9 to 5
        - The Musical
        - The Comedy About A Bank Robbery
  - Never
    - What's your favourite TV/Movie genre?
      - Classics
      - Comedies
      - Romcoms
      - Comedy
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