

# TimeOut

LONDON

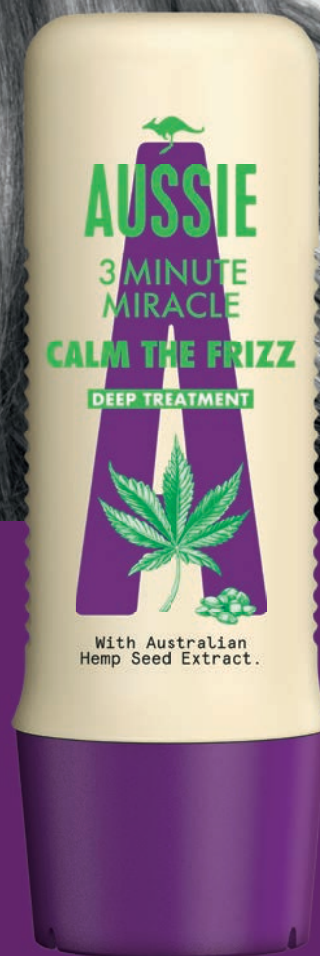


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# Time Out

## LONDON



## Hail to the newsagent

We salute London's open-all-hours heroes



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# Inside

This week's Time Out  
in no time at all

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Whether you're a Braai Negroni guy or a Zulu Espresso girl, it's drinks o'clock at fab South African bar Smokey Kudu

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# Hello, London

**Joe Mackertich**  
London Editor  
@j\_mackertich



Spring doesn't come easily to London. By mid-March, as other European cities erupt with flowery euphoria, London blooms begrudgingly, like a surly teenager forced to change into clean underwear. Try not to think about Parisian *jardins* awash with cherry blossom, Seville and its thousands of orange trees or azaleas cascading down the Spanish Steps in Rome.

London, for what it's worth, does have that one really flowery pub in Kensington.

That's not to say we don't care about spring. We have an absolute citywide *thirst* for it. I don't think anyone in the world *needs* spring like a Londoner does. I'll wager that when you looked out the window at 5pm last week, and saw that it wasn't already dark, you actually smiled. You may have even turned in your chair and said 'It's not dark!' to no one in particular, like an enraptured simpleton seeing daylight for the first time.

We love spring because, by the time it rolls around, we have forgotten London can be anything other than a wet, dark maze. Bring on the light.

## THE EDITOR'S ESSENTIALS

Three things you have to do in London



**EAT this**

**Jessie Ware** has cooked up a Jewish-ish pizza with **Yard Sale**, featuring brisket and latkes. Part of the money raised goes to a local care home.



**READ this**

Check out **Visions**, a London zine of modern sci-fi. The writing is top-notch and the thing itself is impossibly beautiful and cool to hold.



**BACK this**

Straws are out, keep cups are in. Next? Sack the sachet – we bin 855 billion a year! Go to **A Plastic Planet** to lend your voice to the cause.

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LONDON

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# City life

Edited by Isabelle Aron  
@timeoutlondon



## A celebration of Dalston's daughters

US artist Kehinde Wiley has turned his attention to east Londoners in a new exhibition at the William Morris Gallery. We talk to the curator about putting women of Hackney in the spotlight

**LAST YEAR, NIGERIAN-AMERICAN** artist Kehinde Wiley, who painted the official portrait of Barack Obama in 2017, went scouting for subjects on the streets of Dalston.

He was looking for real people for a series of portraits celebrating east London women of colour. The artworks are now part of 'The Yellow Wallpaper', Wiley's exhibition at the William Morris Gallery. 'We just stopped people in the street,' explains Rowan Bain, senior curator at the gallery. 'It was everyday people going about their business.' Wiley then invited the women to visit a makeshift studio in a nearby church hall. 'It was amazing to see how Kehinde was able to transform them and give them confidence,' Bain

says. 'In his work, the subjects are proud. They stand with their heads held high.'

One portrait (above) features Hackney local Kaya, who was on the school run with her daughters Asia-Imani and Gabriella-Esnae. The background is based on one of William Morris's wallpaper designs, a recurring theme in Wiley's work: he reimagines them in vivid hues.

Bain says it was interesting watching people's reactions on the shoot. 'It was great to see how the children responded to being photographed. Kaya's two-year-old really got into it,' she says. 'It's unusual to see children portrayed in this way.'

Wiley scouted Kaya because he wanted to represent a modern family in a traditional way.

'She is a proud young mother posing with her girls in the tradition of family portraiture,' says Bain, 'but she has her own individual style which is why Kehinde was drawn to her. The end result is a contemporary view of motherhood and family.'

The show subverts expectations of stuffy portraits. 'Kehinde plays with the idea of who is worthy of having a monumental portrait,' says Bain. 'You may have been to the National Portrait Gallery and seen lots of portraits of dead white men. You may wonder why you're meant to care. These paintings reflect modern-day London and who is worthy of being celebrated.' ■ *El Hunt*

→ Kehinde Wiley: 'The Yellow Wallpaper', William Morris Gallery.

⊖ Walthamstow Central. Until May 25. Free.



# DO- GOODERS

Four great London causes we want to highlight this month



## Amici

**They say** 'We're a dance theatre company that integrates disabled and non-disabled performers. Our shows work to challenge people's opinions about disability and the arts.'

*Shaun Dawson, producer*

### Why we love them

Everyone deserves an opportunity to express themselves and these guys have been breaking down barriers for 40 years.

**How to help** Donate via their website.  
→ [amicidance.org](http://amicidance.org)

## The Bike Project

**They say** 'We donate refurbished secondhand bikes to refugees. This access to transport means they don't have to choose between a meal and travelling to appointments with their case workers.'

*Muna Hussien, founder*

### Why we love them

Living in London costs. For a refugee, getting set up in the capital is a huge challenge. They need this.

**How to help** Buy their bikes – they also sell them to raise funds.  
→ [www.thebikeproject.co.uk](http://www.thebikeproject.co.uk)

## The Compass Project

**They say** 'We're training 16 pub workers as mental health first aiders, running arts workshops in their pubs to get rid of stigma.'

*David Paulin, project manager*

**Why we love them** A lot of people talk the talk about London's mental health crisis, but TCP is walking the walk.

**How to help** Go along to a fund raiser event at The Queen's Arms in Walthamstow.  
→ Follow [@the.compassproject](https://www.instagram.com/the.compassproject) on Instagram

## London Gaymers

**They say** 'We're a community for LGBTQ+ video and board gamers who meet online and in real life. We also spread awareness about how diverse games audiences can be.'

*Matt Hardwick, founder*

### Why we love them

What with Gamergate and the incel thing, gamers have a bad rap. This shows gaming has an inclusive side too.

**How to help** Join their community and enter their competitions. ■  
→ [www.londongaymers.co.uk](http://www.londongaymers.co.uk)



## MADE IN LONDON

Artist David Gentleman has lived in London since he was a student at the Royal College of Art in the '50s. His new book, 'My Town: An Artist's Life in London', documents the city through beautiful illustrations of Hampstead Heath, Camden and more.

→ 'My Town: An Artist's Life in London' by David Gentleman. £20.

## LONDON LIST

# Chunky wooden friends

Nature enthusiast *Jonathan Drori* on his top four London trees



### 1 The graveyard tree

In the cemetery at St Pancras Old Church, there's an ash tree surrounded by overlapping gravestones – placed there by Thomas Hardy, no less. They were moved when railway works nearby meant exhuming lots of graves. It's eerie and beautiful.

### 2 The royal tree

I love the secret square at the back of Ave Maria Lane near St Paul's, where there's an enormous, air-purifying London plane tree, which was planted in the 1830s to mark Queen Victoria's coronation. It's a quiet and special place.

### 3 The blossom tree

Within the grounds of Pembroke Lodge in Richmond Park, the John Beer Laburnum Walk is a dazzling tunnel of yellow blossom in May-June. The seed pods have evolved with poison in them to deter any pesky herbivores, so no nibbling.

### 4 The pom-pom tree

Adjacent to Highgate Cemetery, Waterlow Park has a lovely strawberry tree. It's not native to the UK but it can be found in Ireland and Spain, where they make a liqueur from the fruit which looks like tiny red pom-poms. ■

→ 'Around the World in 80 Trees' by Jonathan Drori comes out in paperback on Mon Mar 16. £12.99.





# Watch your speed. **The limit's changed.**

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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MAYOR OF LONDON



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# CITY ENVY

Great things that we love in other cities

## Copenhagen's carbon-cutting ski slope



ON THE MAYOR'S website, plans to make London a zero-carbon city by 2050 are tentatively described as 'ambitious'. Yet Copenhagen is set to do just that by 2025, which would make the Danish capital the first carbon-neutral city in the world. What's its secret?

It might have something to do with the city's pie-in-the-sky ideas, like **Amager Bakke**, an initiative built on the seemingly unrelated truths that waste incinerators aren't sexy and that Denmark is largely flat. Busy changing all that is a waste-to-energy plant with a ski slope on its roof.

Yes, really. The inside of **CopenHill** (its tourist-friendly name) is an enormous furnace built to burn trash to produce heat and electricity. The outside is built for fun, sporty pursuits.

Designed by Danish architects Bjarke Ingels Group, the unique structure has proved a hit with daredevils from all walks of Danish life. As well as skiing and snowboarding, visitors can hike or trail-run. There's even an 85-metre-high climbing wall on the side of the building, in case you want to live out your 'Free Solo'-inspired dreams. Behind that wall, the power plant treats up to 440,000

tonnes of waste per year – enough to heat 150,000 households and speed the city on its way to that zero-carbon goal.

London's low emission zones are great and everything, but isn't it time we had a green rooftop ski slope too? ■ *Bobby Palmer*  
→ [www.copenhill.dk/en](http://www.copenhill.dk/en)

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RASMUS HJORTSHØJ

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HE'S A LEGEND

'The Hatton Garden heist really lifted business'



Meet the Hatton Garden jeweller who's been flogging diamonds for 45 years

**EAST END-BORN STEPHEN PERRY** has spent the last 45 years working in London's high-end jewellery mecca Hatton Garden. Having started out as an apprentice, he now owns three family-run jewellery shops. Come heist or high water, he's a passionate believer in the area's craftsmanship and community.

**I started as a jeweller's apprentice in 1976, when I was 15 years old.** I did a five-year apprenticeship making fine jewellery. When you finished the apprenticeship, they would tie you to a lamppost on a chair and everyone who walked by knew you'd completed it. It was an initiation, a bit like being on a stag do.

**You never get used to working with things that are so valuable.** I'm like a boy in a sweetshop! I was brought up in a working-class family from Whitechapel and we never had much, so I value everything. If you come in and spend £50 I'll treat you the same as anyone spending a lot of money. The minute I lose that, it'll be time for me to stop.

**The Spice Girls once turned up in their Mercedes convertibles.** I've had people from all walks of life come in. I made an engagement ring for Barbara Windsor, some jewellery for Michael Caine and a boxing-ring pendant for Frank Bruno when he fought Mike Tyson in Vegas.

**I once discoloured a £300,000 diamond.** My heart sank. It had gone from this beautiful white to brown. Luckily, I took it to someone more experienced and it went back to normal.

**The Hatton Garden heist really lifted business because there was so much publicity.** For months after, there were loads of people coming down. If you're on Sky News, people want to come to the area to see what's going on – it caused such a buzz and gave all the shops a boost.

**I have a real emotional attachment to the jewellery.** Sometimes I'll buy a diamond and I won't want to sell it. I'll say to people: 'I hope you're going to look after this stone because it's

really special.' I've got a story behind most of my stones in the window and I've designed most of the rings. I don't think you get that with other jobs.

**I'd never want to leave Hatton Garden.** I know everybody around here and it's a really big community. There's rivalry, but it's friendly and we like to try and keep trade in the street.

**I used to teach apprentices to pass my knowledge on** but who wants to spend five years learning now? Everything's so fast these days.

**We're a proper family business.** My children work with me and there's nothing nicer for me than to see them happy. It's like having a legacy. ■  
*Interview by Lisa Wright*

→ Dynasty Jewels, Regency Jewels and Harmony Jewels are in Hatton Garden. [www.hattongardendiamond.com](http://www.hattongardendiamond.com).

For more unique looks at London life, head to [timeout.com/stories](http://timeout.com/stories)



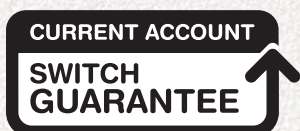
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HYPE DISH

# Quo Vadis's smoked eel sandwich

DISSECTION

What goes into the London plates that everyone bangs on about

**THIS SMOKED EEL** sandwich has been on Jeremy Lee's menu, in some form, since the mid-'90s. It started when he was working at Blueprint Café at the Design Museum and found he had a load of smoked eel and Poilâne sourdough to use up. Now, in its current iteration at

legendary Soho restaurant Quo Vadis, it's become a modern classic. We asked the formidable head chef to break down what goes into the much-loved London dish. ■

*Bobby Palmer*

→ Quo Vadis, 26-29 Dean St. ↻ Tottenham Court Rd. £10.50.

### The eel

'We buy about seven or eight eels a week from the same farm in Lincolnshire. This bundle of eels turns up every Monday morning like contraband.'

### The bread

'It's from Poilâne, in Paris. There was a time when you couldn't buy sourdough here, so we'd import it. I've worked with many bakers, but Poilâne refuses to surrender its crown.'

### The cream

'We put fiery amounts of mustard cream on the bottom, but the horseradish cream on top is the jewel in the crown. It has a kick like a mule – it really knocks your socks off.'

### The onions

'To ensure the richness isn't overwhelming, we steep thin slices of red onion in cider vinegar and sugar. Pile them on top of the sandwich, then scoff it all with your fingers.'

### The size

'The original sandwich was massive. Back then one could afford that largesse. But it was so big that it was too rich. We've worked on the size for years. I think this is about perfect.'

## WORD ON THE STREET

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

'Right, I'm breaking out the snack salami, it's desperate times.'

**'I didn't question his pubes!'**

'I could tell she liked me because she started talking about fantasy football.'

**'You had noodles for breakfast? Respect.'**

'And this is why I never gravitated towards falafel.'

**'You smell so minty, you're making me feel chilly.'**

'So what? You share 70 percent of your DNA with sweetcorn.'

**'You can't cancel Dalston.'**

'I just love St James's Park – everything is touchable.'

**'I'm obsessed with blowjobs at the moment.'**

'We have no wifi here – talk to each other!'

Overheard something weird? Tweet us #wordonthestreet @timeoutlondon

ANDY PARSONS



# Cheers

# Sainsbury's



# £9

Crémant De Loire



# FREE LONDON

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



## St Patrick's Day in Trafalgar Square

It's time to dig up your extremely tenuous Irish roots (your great-great-grandad's cat was adopted in Dublin, right?) and celebrate them with 125,000 other people who've done exactly the same thing. The St Patrick's Day parade and festival are back. Expect food, dancing, dressing up and exaggerated heritage.

→ Trafalgar Square. ☉ Charing Cross. Sun Mar 15.

## Disco at Paper Dress Vintage

You wouldn't expect to find a cool party round the back of a twee vintage shop, but that's what Special Brew is. Go for wonky house, fun disco and even an outdoor terrace. Close your eyes and you could almost be in Ibiza (if it doesn't rain). → Paper Dress Vintage. Hackney Central Overground. Sat Mar 14.

## Yoga in Flat Iron Square

Got a pair of fancy yoga leggings that have seen more of 'Love Is Blind' than you saluting the sun? Fair play, it's a great show. (Give Jessica's dog a spin-off.) But why not mix things up with a trial session by Balance Garden? → The Siding, Flat Iron Square. ☉ Borough. Every Tue. Book online.

## Chocolate in Covent Garden

In an eco stunt that we're not 100 percent sure makes sense, you can take the very-bad-for-the-planet packaging that your shop-bought lunch came wrapped in to Montezuma's pop-up and you'll get posh white chocs in return. → Montezuma's. ☉ Covent Garden. Fri Mar 13-Sat Mar 14.

## Women's gym time at Imperial Wharf

Hey, ladies! Are you patiently putting up with brands saying stuff like shapewear is '#empowering' for International Women's Day? Time to cash in on corporate feminism at this day of free classes just for women. → One LDN. Imperial Wharf Overground. Thu Mar 12. Book online.

Looking for things to do all year round? Try [timeout.com/free](https://www.timeout.com/free)



## SUN, SAND, SWIMMING LESSONS



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# All hail the newsagent

New Yorkers bang on about bodegas, but London's humble corner shops and newsagents are just as eternal. We pay tribute to our open-all-hours heroes.

Portraits *Andy Parsons*

## 'the corner shop' by Ben Okri

An ode to our convenience stores written exclusively for Time Out by the Booker Prize winner

the air unchanged,  
the muggy light,  
newspapers stand,  
the deck of sweets,  
and the never-altered counter.  
it's the canned food  
on the top shelves.  
they've been there for some time,  
never quite past their sell-by date.  
it's the secret pornography  
on the middle shelf.  
worn lino on the floor.

all the history of the street corners,  
those who were here,  
who with ingenuity thrived,  
by selling odds and ends  
to those the streets sprouted,  
from the home provinces  
or the remote  
corners of the world...

a time-capsule of goods  
made and packaged,  
of all local gossip,  
those who pass through,  
and those who have been there  
since the last oak.

strange mutations  
of Britain's soul  
live in those shops  
that retail destinies  
and distant memories.  
sardines, bread rolls,  
local papers,  
self-mirroring  
the street.  
a fading photograph.  
a time machine  
to a place that no longer is,  
but remains its own mood.  
an eternal province  
of the mixed quilt of the land.

they're growing fewer now.  
but the new ones are fluorescent  
and sell the new yorker  
and lottery tickets.  
time was when they  
were the grey daffodils  
at the street's junction,  
dealing in those items  
indispensable for daily living,  
to the bachelor, the large  
family, the schoolgirl,  
in need of supplies.

something of the micro-history  
of the land filters  
through those baked bean  
cans, those lightbulbs,  
those fork handles.

suburbia's life-support.  
fading image  
in the dark country.  
a quaint karma  
of lost empire.





THE BOUGIE ONE

# 'If customers are rude, I tell them to go to Tesco'

Abdullah Folak has owned **Palm 2** in Clapton for 25 years

**When Tesco moved in next door ten years ago, I thought it was the end for my shop.** They tried to buy us, twice, but instead of closing, we decided to change the business.

**Now, our corner shop is a bit different from your regular one.** We stopped selling cheap beer and decided to focus on selling artisan foods.

**The weirdest thing that people buy?** Hammocks. We have them hanging up from the ceiling and people come in and buy them in summer.

**If people get locked out of their houses, they'll often come into the shop** and ask to borrow one of our ladders. We've been here for such a long time, I think they see us as more than a corner shop.

**My favourite customer?** We have one guy who comes in – he fancies himself as a bit of a poet and he always reads his poetry out to me. He likes to sit and write it in the shop.

**We also have a lot of older regulars.** One lady – I call her 'young lady' – she's in her eighties and she comes in three or four times a week. She buys tea and a jam doughnut and sits down to eat it. If you offer to help her with her shopping, she gets really annoyed. She's been coming in for around 20 years.

**Rude customers are part of the job.** Sometimes they say 'but this is cheaper in Tesco' and moan about the prices. I tell them to go there, then. It's only next door.



INTERVIEW: ROSIE GIZAS/PAAS

## LEGENDARY NEWSAGENTS OF EAST LONDON



### Maks News

'This Columbia Road shop does amazing homemade samosas on Sundays for the market. You get a choice of three sauces including a lush tamarind one.' @misterdjohnson  
→ 154 Columbia Rd. Hoxton Overground.

### The Raj

'It has a massive fridge of energy drinks and sells vegan sausage rolls for a quid.' @peteellender  
→ 48 James Lane, Leyton Midland Rd Overground.

### London Fields Express

'If you're regular and spend a bit (maybe like £20) they often give you a free bar of chocolate.' @georgeblew  
→ 61-63 Westgate St. London Fields Overground.







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## All hail the newsagent



### LEGENDARY NEWSAGENTS OF NORTH LONDON

1

#### Expa

'Amazing shop with everything.'

@eatpasero  
→ 143-145 Philip Lane.  
⊖ Seven Sisters.



2

#### Nag's Head Market

'Always lets me pay for a drink can with my card, even though it's below the minimum spend.'

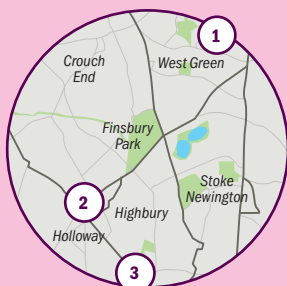
@deedeebeat  
→ 22 Seven Sisters Rd.  
⊖ Holloway Rd.

3

#### Islington Food & Wine

'The guy who works here has the patience of a saint. After about 9pm, all of his customers are pissed up dickheads.'

@joseph1  
→ 316 St Paul's Rd. ⊖ Highbury & Islington.



PRICE CHECK  
Pint of milk N/A  
KitKat 65p

### THE TRAILBLAZING ONE

## 'Our shop is porn-free'

Faruk Zina has run Hamdy's News in Stoke Newington with his four partners for five years

I actually retired in 2007. I'd come to the UK from India in 1984 and worked at newsagents Bobby's Convenience Store, up the road from Hamdy's, for 23 years. I quickly got bored of the quiet life, though. Hamdy's old owner Hamdy Shahein was a local legend. He ran the shop for 36 years. It was nerve-racking to step into his shoes. In the '80s he even led a campaign against WH Smith, who were making their agents stock porn. Hamdy's became the first newsagent in the UK not to stock it. We're still porn-, gambling- and alcohol-free. If someone offered me a million pounds I still wouldn't sell those things. They're just not nice.

INTERVIEW: ANGELA HUI





# AMERICAN EXPRESS EXPERIENCES

National  
Theatre

## PARADISE

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All hail the newsagent

THE CENTRAL ONE

# 'Tourists ask really silly questions'

*Matiullah Abed* has owned **London Bridge Confectioners** for the last 13 years

I'd love to pass my shop on to my children, but I don't know if it will be here in five years' time. Two years ago, I was 80 percent certain I would lose the business. When The Shard was built, the rent on the shop jumped a huge amount.

The most annoying thing about the job is tourists coming in asking where The Shard is. We're right next to The Shard, you can't miss it. And they constantly ask where London Bridge station is-- we're inside it. But it's part of the job.

Drunk people who've spent all day in the nearby pubs also cause mayhem every weekend -- shouting, singing, running around. I just say to them: 'Thank you very much, see you again soon.'

The biggest thing I've learned from working in my shop is English. I came over from Afghanistan in 2000, and couldn't speak much at all. It was hard to understand the customers. But now I'm fluent. I even know some sign language.



INTERVIEW: ROSIE GIZAS/PAWS

## LEGENDARY NEWSAGENTS OF CENTRAL LONDON

**Parliament News**  
 'I used to work in Millbank Tower and this was the absolute best place to get a fizzy drink when hungover. They do really rare drinks! @sockformation  
 → 56 Horseferry Rd.  
 ⊕ St James's Park.

**The Shoreditch Stop**  
 'It sells three types of curry with rice for £4. Plus my dog is allowed in.' @mariaisaturtle  
 → 53 Great Eastern St.  
 ⊕ Old St.

**Popin**  
 'A mini emporium of local and fresh produce outside Pimlico station. All with a smile.' @amyfionawomersley  
 → Rampayne St entrance.  
 ⊕ Pimlico.



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**THE SUBURBAN ONE**

**‘I gave Robert Pattinson his first job’**

*Vipin Patel, manager and owner of Natsons in Barnes, has been running his store for 22 years*

I’ve built up so many relationships over the years: one of my regulars, Will, even came to my daughter’s wedding. I also gave Robert Pattinson his first job. He worked as a paperboy for two years. Whenever it rained or there was bad weather, his parents used to help him do the rounds. Things have changed since then. Seventy percent of our revenue used to come from newspapers and magazines, but no newsagent can solely rely on them anymore. Now we have a tower of Beanie Babies.

INTERVIEW: ANGELA HUI



**LEGENDARY NEWSAGENTS OF WEST LONDON**

**Meet & Deep News**

‘The family who run this shop are so friendly. Always end up chatting for ages in there.’  
@brymay1  
→ 34 Hampton Rd, TW2 5QB.  
Strawberry Hill rail.

**Field Stores**

‘Unusually stuck on the end of a residential road.’  
@bigphildes  
→ 12 Chesterton Rd.  
⇌ Ladbroke Grove

**Rococo**

‘It was the only place near us that sold *Terrorizer* magazine in 2010.’ @ay19  
→ 12 Elgin Crescent  
⇌ Ladbroke Grove





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## LEGENDARY NEWSAGENTS OF SOUTH LONDON

1

### Day 1

'The shopkeeper here once asked me what I thought would hatch out of a Creme Egg.'

@chelshobbs

→ 182 Wandsworth Rd. Ⓞ Stockwell.

2

### Gerhold

'I won £1,000 on a scratch card there.'

@flamingo.face

→ 295-297 Upper Richmond Rd. Putney rail.

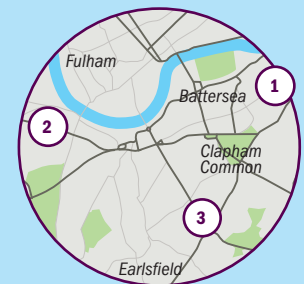
3

### Tooting Arena

'Really friendly local shop – they sometimes give me free baklava.'

@dathope

→ 6-8 Upper Tooting Rd. Ⓞ Tooting Bec.



## THE 24-HOUR ONE

# 'A customer told me he was going to do vodka tampons'

*Karen Cowley has been at the helm of Brothers Food & Wine in Peckham for five years*

**I'm the only white, female corner shop owner in Southwark.** The head of licensing for Southwark told me he didn't think that anyone else like me has done this job in the last 30 years. When I go to the cash and carry, I'm the only lady in there. It's definitely a male world.

**The students around here love my shop because you can buy booze 24 hours a day on the weekend.** We serve through a hatch after midnight. People will stop off in their Ubers on the way to afterparties to stock up on alcohol.

**The weirdest request I've ever had?** A guy came in asking for tampons and, when I asked if they were for a girl, he said no. Then he told me he was having a party with his friends and they wanted 'do vodka tampons' and, er, insert them!

Apparently it's a way to get alcohol into your system really quickly.

**I don't judge my customers for anything that they buy.** Of course we get people coming in stoned and buying everything because they have the munchies. I just find it amusing.

**There have been some hairy moments in the shop.** Occasionally we'll get a gang come in. There will be ten boys in the shop and they'll start nicking things. There's really nothing I can do about it.

**If anyone is rude to me, I'm just really nice back to them.** Before I owned the shop, I ran a café in Deptford, so I've dealt with the public for years and nothing fazes me. I kill them with kindness – and I get a proper kick out of it. ■



# AMERICAN EXPRESS EXPERIENCES

National  
Theatre

## The Corn is Green

### DON'T MISS OUT ON GETTING IN

Be one of the first to book for new National Theatre shows, including *The Corn is Green* featuring Nicola Walker (*The Split*, *Unforgotten*) as a visionary teacher helping young miners in North Wales.

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# LONDON FOR LESS

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## Sketching for the Scared!

**What is it?** Drawing classes for beginners at the iconic V&A.

**Why go?** This might be the best place in London to learn how to sketch. Find inspiration among the masterpieces of one of the world's greatest art and design museums.

**Wait, how much?** Normally a cool £99, but for you? Just £29.

→ V&A Museum. ⊖ South Kensington.

[www.timeout.com/sketching](http://www.timeout.com/sketching)



## Kurobuta

**What is it?** A bao, a main and a side, accompanied by an hour and a half of bottomless beer, wine or prosecco.

**Why go?** For the rare combination of tapas-style Asian food and classic rock 'n' roll. Starting life as a pop-up, Kurobuta is inspired by Japan's izakayas – informal bars where food and booze go hand-in-hand.

**Wait, how much?** With 44 percent off, it's just £25. How bao that?

→ Karobuta. ⊖ Marble Arch.

[www.timeout.com/kurobuta20](http://www.timeout.com/kurobuta20)

## Trinity Buoy Wharf Live!

**What is it?** Cheap tickets to loads of great Wednesday night gigs in at waterfront east London venue.

**Why go?** For a showcase of some stellar talent from the world of jazz. Featured artists include Tony Kofi, the Dave O'Higgins & Rob Luft Quartet and Pete Letanka with The Cape Crusaders.

**Wait, how much?** With over a third off, tickets will cost you just £8.

→ Trinity Buoy Wharf. ⊖ Canning Town.

[www.timeout.com/trinitybuoywharf](http://www.timeout.com/trinitybuoywharf)

## Inamo

**What is it?** Bottomless food and a bottle of bubbly in an oh-so-Instagramable pop-up pod.

**Why go?** Where do we start? For unlimited pan-Asian plates? Yeah. To eat in an igloo-style dining dome? Definitely. Because it comes with heaters, fluffy rugs, fairy lights and your own speakers? Absolutely.

**Wait, how much?** We've shaved 62 percent off the price – you'll pay £30.

→ Inamo Camden. ⊖ Mornington Crescent.

[www.timeout.com/inamopopup](http://www.timeout.com/inamopopup)

## Meet Space VR

**What is it?** A virtual reality escape room experience with a free drink.

**Why go?** For a totally berserk take on a popular pastime. Simply slip on the headset and you'll find yourself running around ancient pyramids or a futuristic city. Bonkers. If you're feeling really brave, they have horror scenarios, too.

**Wait, how much?** Up to 44 percent off, starting from £31 for two.

→ Meet Space VR London. ⊖ Wembley Park.

[www.timeout.com/meetspacevr](http://www.timeout.com/meetspacevr)

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# CARS

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# Things to Do

Edited by Katie McCabe  
timeout.com/thingstodo @timeoutlondon

## And What? Queer Arts Festival: a guide

The celebration of drag, theatre and filthy cult films returns to London this week, and it all looks terrifyingly good. How will you decide what to see? We have a few ideas...

**NO ONE FESTIVAL** can ever hope to encompass all the gamechanging queer artists in London but And What? Queer Arts Festival is trying its damndest. With 25 events on the roster, it's here to take us on a whistle-stop tour of the familiar, the underground and the completely indefinable. It has London acts we rate so highly they practically live in the Things to Do pages of Time Out (hello, there, The Cocoa Butter Club) and others we've yet to see. And it's not entirely London-centric, oh no – the festival has been infiltrated by a Manchester club night, too. So how to tackle the queer behemoth? Let us be your disruptive guide. Stops will include sleazy rock 'n' roll, twisted midnight-movie drag and a steamy room full of naked men holding books...

### Go clubbing in Manchester... without leaving London

At the first-night event, **A Very Big Opening**, you can watch The Cocoa Butter Club, a troupe spotlighting queer performers of colour, 'decolonise and moisturise' the stage with a piping hot alt-cabaret performance. Once you've wiped off your brow, throw yourself into Bollox, a club night Megabussed in from Manchester, complete with throbbing electroclash, trashy rock 'n' roll and, er, its own Westboro Baptist Church dancefloor installation. Let DJ Beardre Barlow lead the way as you dance between placards that shout QUEER RIOT, BODY FASCISM ISN'T CUTE and all-time favourite, PAT BUTCHER MADE ME GAY.

→ Colours Hoxton, Shoreditch High St Overground.  
Fri Mar 13. Free-£15 (donations welcome).

### Watch some stripped-back spoken word

**Naked Boys Reading** is exactly what its name suggests: a literary salon where sculpted men read aloud to the crowd while wearing nothing but a furrowed brow and possibly a nice pair of rugby socks. In the past, they've read from the Brontë sisters, 'Alice in Wonderland' and the erotic San Francisco diaries of Patrick Cowley, but for this night they'll be reciting the sour-but-spicy writing of cult film actress Miss Coco Peru. It's also a drag special, so the 'boys' will be

mixing it up with wigs and skimpy costumes during readings. If you're distracted by dangling modifiers, you're doing it wrong.

→ The Pleasance Theatre. ⊕ Caledonian Rd.  
Mar 19. £12-£15.

### See a new kind of cabaret

Pan-Asian collective The Bitten Peach takes its name from a story belonging to China's Zhou dynasty, where to 'enjoy the pleasure of a bitten peach' meant to be homosexual. But nothing is forbidden here, except lazy Asian stereotypes. At its show **'Crouching**



BITTEN PEACH: CORNIE GUMMING; CAPTURED COORINE; FRANKENBOBE; WAX LAZER; NAKED BOYS READING; PATRICK LONDON



Find more queer nights at  
[timeout.com/thingstodo](http://timeout.com/thingstodo)



The Bitten Peach

**Tiger Mum, Hidden Drag Queen'**, ShayShay, Lilly SnatchDragon and the rest of their fabulous drag family will take the audience on a journey to meet their 'queer Asian ancestors'. It's part cabaret, part burlesque, with a little sprinkle of circus – and is just the right amount of outrageous.

→ The Pleasance Theatre. ☉ Caledonian Rd.  
Mar 20. £12-£15.

### Meet a cult film star

If you've ever watched a John Waters movie, you've definitely seen Mink Stole. The actress has

starred in every one of the cult director's films. She judges dance competitions in 'Hairspray', vies for the title of The Filthiest Person Alive in 'Pink Flamingos' and penetrates Divine with a string of rosary beads while reciting the stations of the cross in 'Multiple Maniacs'. At **Idol Worship** you can see Mink on her first visit to the UK, where she'll be in conversation with real-life bestie, drag performer, film director and MC, Peaches Christ. It's going to be pure filth.

→ The Pleasance Theatre. ☉ Caledonian Rd.  
Mar 24-25. £20-£35.



Naked Boys Reading

### Come face to face with a drag monstrosity

Just like Bette Davis in a certain terrifying psychological horror, drag star Baby Lame's face is always freshly plastered in bright white make-up, but with much better blending, and tall blonde hair that can only be described as 'Dolly Parton smuggling a ferret through customs'. If her sharp MC skills are anything to go by, her solo comedy show, **'Whatever Happened to Baby Lame?'** will be full of sass, self-doubt and impromptu pop.

→ The Pleasance Theatre. ☉ Caledonian Rd.  
Mar 24. £12-£15.

### Get tickets to a hit show

Mika Johnson's **'Pink Lemonade'** takes the audience on a bittersweet journey through their dating experiences – stories of love, gender, exoticisation and painful goodbyes – told with the help of lemons, bashment beats and pink neon lights. Johnson's use of poetry and personal storytelling brought the show rave reviews when it debuted at the Edinburgh Fringe last year. Now's your chance to catch it for a short and juicy one-night run. ■

→ Rich Mix, Shoreditch High St Overground.  
Mar 18. £12.



**By Katie McCabe**  
Who is hiding her rosary beads from Mink Stole.



'Pink Lemonade'



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# SOMETHING FOR THE WEEKEND

## Friday



### Zodiac Film Club presents 'Daisies'

This club dedicated to cult classics is carrying on the International Women's Day theme with great female-directed films. Watch Věra Chytilová's 1966 comedy that was once banned for depicting food wastage. Very 2020.

→ The Curtain. Shoreditch High St Overground. Fri Mar 13. £11.50.

### STAY UP Sotheby's Friday Late: Pop Art

The auction house opens late for talks, print workshops with Jealous Gallery and exhibitions featuring work by Bridget Riley, Howard Hodgkin and more. → Sotheby's. ⊕ Bond St. Fri Mar 13. Free.

### SKATE Sk8 Fry Days x CrvWkd

Scared of skating in storms? Cosy up in London's shredding haven for street, mini-ramp and bowl sessions, darts and, most importantly, free fried chicken and beer. → House of Vans. ⊕ Waterloo. Fri Mar 13. Free.

## Saturday



### Deptford Literature Festival

A celebration of words flowing from SE8. Join Inua Ellams's Rap Party, hear Jay Bernard's verse about the 1981 New Cross Fire or explore Deptford Creek on a poetry walk.

→ Various Deptford locations. Deptford rail. Sat Mar 14. Prices vary.

### PLANT Rumble on the Roding

Plant trees and pick up plastic to regenerate the River Roding, then reward your hard work at a banquet with live music and DJs. A good excuse to wear wellies. → Secret Zone 4 location in east London. Sat Mar 14. £15-£20.

### LEARN Celebration of Multilingualism

Dream of being bilingual? Try out a new language at this day of taster sessions in everything from Mandarin to Cornish. → Barbican Centre. ⊕ Barbican. Sat Mar 14. Free.

## Sunday

### 'Where's Wally?' Fun Run

That's right, it's another *quirky* dress-up fun run. But this one is for charity. Throw on a Wally costume and join a sea of red-and-white stripes to fundraise for the National Literacy Trust.

→ Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. ⊕ Stratford. Sun Mar 15. £27.



### EXPLORE North London Through the Ages

Find out how N1 has transformed from monastic lands and dairy farms to an urbanite hub on this walk tramping over 1,000 years of history. → Meet at Highbury & Islington station. Sun Mar 15. £12.

### PARTY Rare Birds Bohemian Market

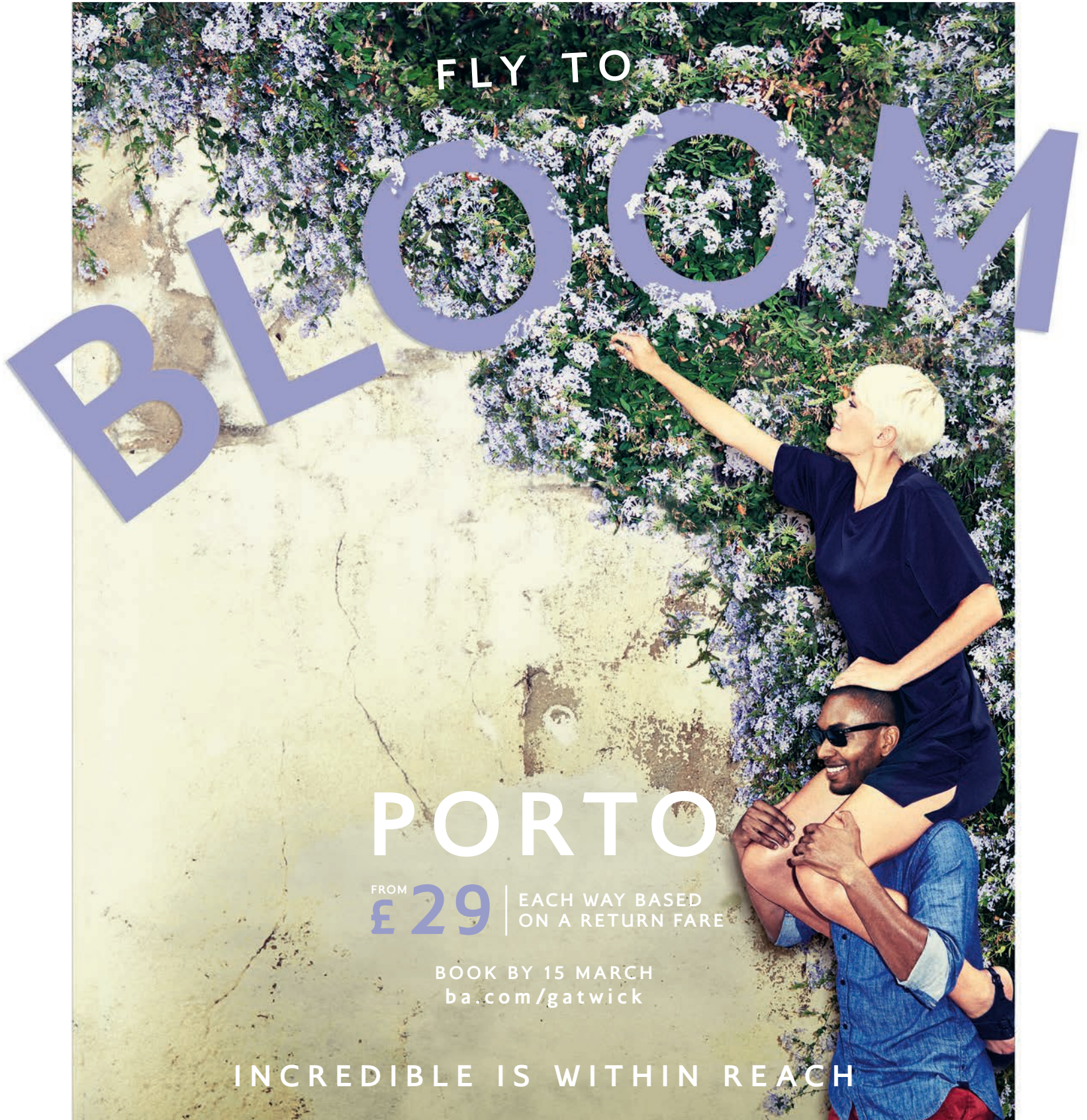
It's Sunday! Time to amble aimlessly around markets filled with boho clothes. At this one you can forget about tomorrow by dancing to afrobeat. → 93 Feet East. Shoreditch High St Overground. Sun Mar 15. Free.

More literature events at [timeout.com/thingstodo](http://timeout.com/thingstodo)





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THREE OF THE BEST

Japanese arts and culture festivals



The craft one

Know your saori-weaving from your sashiko embroidery? Pick up gorgeous handmade fabrics at the **Japanese Textile and Craft Festival**, where you can watch artists demo skills like dorozome (mud-dyeing) or learn to sew your own kimono at a workshop.

→ Craft Central, The Forge, Island Gardens DLR. Fri Mar 13-Sun Mar 15. £7.50, workshop prices vary.



The charitable one

It's been nine years since the devastating Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami. Help Aid for Japan, a charity supporting orphans of the disaster, raise money at **Japanese Art Festival**, a day packed with cosplay games, talks on the history of the kimono and sword-swishing displays.

→ Swiss Church. ⊕ Tottenham Court Rd. Sat Mar 14. £6, £10 otd.



The foodie one

Craving some sushi? **UCL Japan Festival** has partnered with top Japanese joints like Happy Sky Bakery, Ekiben LDN and Cubé Café so you can get your fill of bento classics, yakisoba, Japanese fried chicken, matcha brownies and bubble tea. Pace yourself ready for a bout of paper sumo. *Alexandra Sims*

→ UCL Main Quad. ⊕ Euston Square. Sat Mar 14. Free.

TEXTILE: EMILIE SANDY PHOTOGRAPHY; ARTS: PAT LYTTLE; FOOD: EMBEN LDN

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**TRENDING**



## Video game karaoke

Has the Mario theme song been bouncing through your brain like an 8-bit coin since about 1995? You're not the only one. Londoners are finding new ways to relive their heyday of getting gamer's thumb down the arcade. At **Maraoke**, people get together in Loading Bar to sing pop songs that have been rewritten with lyrics *about* videogames (think Lionel Richie's 'Hello' as a tribute to Halo). And at **Ready Singer One**, London's 'nerdiest choir', the hymn sheets are swapped for the harmonies of video game and movie theme tunes. If you need us, we'll be in Dalston delivering a tearful rendition of the Tetris Theme Song to a very concerned crowd.

→ Next Maraoke: Loading Bar, Rectory Rd Overground, Fri Mar 13. Free.  
Find more about Ready Singer One at [www.readysingerone.co.uk](http://www.readysingerone.co.uk).



BOTTOM: ADAM BRAN

## Science on the frontline

Meet the experts working in some of the world's most hostile territories and discover the importance of exploring these places to learn more about the world we live in and the things that shape our planet and ourselves.

Wednesday 11 March 2020, 6.30pm – 7.30pm  
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Find out more at [royalsociety.org/events](http://royalsociety.org/events)



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**OPERA HAS A** hard time shaking off its elitist image. It's no longer the preserve of those with triple-barrelled surnames – you can get a ticket to a Royal Opera House performance for £11 – but it can often still feel formal.

Taking these conflicting feelings into account, London gallery Zabludowicz Collection is launching Hot with Excess, a new series hoping to challenge what it means to stage an opera. There'll be no overtures and arias. Instead, you'll see work by artists like Trulee Hall who'll deliver a psychosexual opera that responds to the gallery's building, a former Methodist chapel, and Benjamin



Orlow, who has compressed his year in the Finnish army into a 24-hour film. Artist Marijke de Roover will mock the three-act structure of a romcom: 'set-up, crisis, resolution', in an opera that deals with her experience of unrequited crushes.

Going to an extreme, operatic performance-art piece that defies all

easy definitions might, to some, feel even more intimidating than sitting in the Opera House stalls. But we're keeping an open mind. From now on, a night at the opera could mean a bit of 'La Traviata', or a multisensory 'orgy' in a gallery that has a pop-up mezcal bar. The choice is yours. ■

*Katie McCabe*

**WHAT IS IT...**

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**WHY GO...**

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# Film

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

FILM OF THE WEEK

## Brazil nuts

'Bacurau'



**MOBILE RECEPTION IS** on the fritz, the local water supply has been stopped up, there's a UFO-shaped drone flying overhead and someone's started picking off the locals one by one. Welcome to the fictional Brazilian town of Bacurau ('nighthawk' in English), the dusty setting for a supremely violent guilty pleasure of a movie that crams elements of the western, John Carpenter-y thriller beats, mordant wit and a jab or two at the regime of Brazil's president, Jair Bolsonaro, into one hugely entertaining exploitation flick.

'Bacurau', the opening credits note, is set 'a few years from now', although there's little that's futuristic in evidence. The town is a tight-knit community in the scrubby sertão

of the country's remote north-east, cut off and mostly self-sufficient. The film opens with it mourning the death of the local matriarch, Carmelita, grousing about the corrupt authorities and gossiping about Lunga, a local outlaw who's holed up nearby. The place is big enough to have its own DJ but small enough for him to address the inhabitants individually during his alfresco broadcasts.

### WHAT IS IT...

A remote Brazilian town comes under assault from a mysterious foe.

### WHY GO...

It's utterly bonkers – in the best possible way.

→ Directors Kleber Mendonça Filho, Juliano Dornelles (18) 131 mins.

Co-writers/directors Kleber Mendonça Filho ('Aquarius') and Juliano Dornelles use these opening scenes to establish the tight bonds of this community and introduce a rich tableau of characters: from the sharp-tongued and boozy town doctor (Sônia Braga) and the local troubadour who



converts local legends into song to the reformed gangster with a past so chequered, there's a YouTube video devoted to his top ten shootings.

Then the killings start. They're the work of a group of murderous American tourists, led by a German mercenary (Udo Kier, all malicious charisma), who've signed up to take out the population of Bacurau out of sheer psychotic bloodlust. They use antique weapons and take an almost orgasmic pleasure in machine-gunning the locals, an





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**Funeral blues** The people of Bacurau bury one of their own, as outlaw Lunga (below) takes revenge

unsettling sight that sometimes tips into straight overacting. Maybe this is the film's futuristic element – 'Bacurau' is set in a world where the rich can pay to kill the poor like big-game hunters without much risk – and it's clearly meant as a pointed allegory for corrosive American consumerism and a feckless Brazilian state.

The co-directors use old Panavision lenses to capture the dusty backdrop in leached-out widescreen, with the occasional kitsch storytelling mannerism – editing geeks should look out for some 'Star Wars'-style wipes – to

bring a nicely analogue feel to the visuals. The violence has a retro feel too, with some delirious B-movie moments that will thrill genre-heads as the townspeople fight back. One head shot, in particular, comes straight out of the splattercore handbook. Maybe the film loses its own head a bit at this point too, with its deeper message lost in the epic bloodshed, but you'll be having too much fun to mind. ■



**By Phil de Semlyen**  
Who thinks you should see the film before going near any review... okay, never mind.



## Calm with Horses



**THERE'S A SENSE** of claustrophobia in both small towns and criminal gangs, the product of closed-in horizons and limited ways out. That's the trap in which Douglas 'Arm' Armstrong ('Lady Macbeth' star Cosmo Jarvis) finds himself in this surprising and often inspired Irish crime drama.

Arm is an enforcer for the drug-dealing Devers family and companion to young Dympna Devers (Barry Keoghan) in a small town in the west of Ireland. When the pair are ordered to kill a disgraced former ally by the family's psychotic boss, they face a moment of crisis. Arm's situation is further complicated by his son Jack (Kiljan Moroney), who needs money to attend a special-needs school.

Lots of elements of the story feel familiar, but they play out in unusual and unpredictable ways here. We've seen the heavy-with-a-heart character before, but Jarvis gives Arm real pathos, even at his most violent. There's real desperation, too, when he tries to connect with young Jack. Keoghan's Dympna is similarly less of a giggling psychopath than he wants to be, and less of a manipulator than he thinks. At times the pair are almost charming: really just boys caught up in something they don't understand.

This is the first feature from director Nick Rowland, already a Bafta nominee for his short

### WHAT IS IT...

An ex-boxer is in too deep with an Irish crime family.

### WHY GO...

A thrilling car chase involving two old bangers.

→ Director Nick Rowland (15) 100 mins.

film 'Slap', and he treads a fine line between hitting genre beats and avoiding clichés. If the film doesn't quite have the sharpness of John Michael McDonagh's best work in similar terrain (particularly 'The Guard'), it's a worthy companion piece, as dangerous and soppy-drunk as an old pub brawler. ■  
*Helen O'Hara*





# BACURAU



“OUTLANDISH... FIERCE AND INTRIGUINGLY UNIQUE”

THE TELEGRAPH



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From Brazilian filmmakers Kleber Mendonça Filho (AQUARIUS) and Juliano Dornelles comes this daring, intoxicating blend of neo-Western, siege thriller and political allegory. Winner of the Cannes Jury Prize, and starring legends Udo Kier and Sônia Braga.





# LONDON ON SCREEN 'The Elephant Man' (1980)

## How David Lynch recreated Victorian London in a W12 loo

**FEW FILMS CAPTURE** Victorian London as atmospherically as 'The Elephant Man', 40 years old and back in cinemas this week. With its flickering gas lights, filthy cobbled streets and historic London locations which have since been either demolished or radically altered since it was filmed in 1980, David Lynch's great (and only) period piece is a true urban time capsule. 'We built on the bones of the city,' remembers producer Jonathan Sanger. 'There was a lot of construction going on, so we filmed at these more down-at-heel, raw Victorian locations. We knew they'd soon be gone for ever.'

The real-life story of Joseph Merrick (called 'John' in the film, and played by John Hurt), a man with appalling physical deformities who turned fear and loathing into acceptance, 'The Elephant Man' was filmed partly at Shepperton Studios and Wembley's Lee International Studios on soundstages. But to recreate the bustle and edginess of Merrick's London, Lynch used real-life locations – most of them in the east of the city.

A key discovery was Homerton's Eastern Hospital. The building would be demolished six years later but an abandoned ward there made a perfect surrogate for the London Hospital, where Dr Frederick Treves (Anthony Hopkins) treats Merrick. 'That ward hadn't been used in over a hundred years and the fact we got to light it ourselves really made the film look like this authentic gothic fairytale,' says Sanger.

Tower Hill's grand Royal Mint Court was used for the hospital's exterior shots, while the



David Lynch gives notes to John Hurt in a W12 WC. Left: the pair at Liverpool Street Station



cobbled streets of Rotherhithe and Wapping stood in brilliantly for the nineteenth-century capital as a whole. 'They still looked like something out of a Dickens novel,'

says Sanger. Finding an 'atmospheric urinal' in Hammersmith for the scene in which Merrick is taunted by strangers and makes his famous 'I am not an animal!' speech was another 'eureka' moment.

In a strange way, London also provided the film's relatively rookie director with a creative safe haven (Lynch had only 'Eraserhead' to his name at this point). '[Co-producer] Mel Brooks

used to call David "Jimmy Stewart from the planet Venus",' laughs Sanger. 'I think if we had filmed in America with an American crew, they might have found David confusing. You Brits love an eccentric.'

The locations bring authenticity and the film's craft makes it great, but there's a deeper reason why it endures: in angry times, Merrick's journey from bullied to beloved is a much-needed reminder that hatred can be overcome. 'It's a hopeful film about the importance of humanity,' says Sanger. 'Those stories never go out of fashion.' ■ *Thomas Hobbs*

→ 'The Elephant Man' 4K restoration opens Fri Mar 13.

## Misbehaviour



**THERE ARE ONLY** two contexts in which value is measured based on weight, girth and physical finesse, points out Keira Knightley's earnest feminist student, Sally Alexander, in 'Misbehaviour'. One is a beauty pageant, the other is a cattle market.

Directed by Philippa Lowthorpe ('Swallows and Amazons') this mostly factual story of the disrupted 1970 Miss World competition leaves no question as to why the newly established Women's Liberation Movement wanted to derail the event. Lines of contestants skitter

about in swimsuits, while male organisers gawp at them.

King of official perving is presenter Bob Hope (a suitably creepy Greg Kinnear), a man so arrogant he had every one of his gags filed alphabetically for a future library. Full props to a radiantly bitter Lesley Manville who pops up from time to time as his wife Dolores – 'long-suffering' doesn't begin to cover it.

The script is a bit predictable, but the '70s-brown set designs and the Granny Takes a Trip

**WHAT IS IT...**  
A nostalgic but critical look at the ill-fated Miss World 1970.

**WHY GO...**  
It's a cheesy crowd-pleaser with a rousing message.

→ Director Philippa Lowthorpe (12A) 106 mins.



outfits are excellent – especially Knightley's patchwork suede dress.

But 'Misbehaviour' is best at showing the limitations, as much as the successes, of second-wave feminism. There's a parallel narrative about Miss Grenada/Jennifer Hosten (a poised Gugu

Mbatha-Raw) vying for victory with Pearl Jansen (Loreece Harrison), the black contestant from apartheid South Africa. Compared to these women, Sally's issues almost feel like small beans. This is a film about how far we've come – and how far we still have to go. ■ *Rosemary Waugh*



## Film

**IN THE AGE** of social media, brickbat comments are an occupational hazard for any filmmaker. Actual bricks, thankfully, tend to be a lot rarer. But when the powerful Georgia-set LGBTQ+ drama 'And Then We Danced' opened in its capital Tbilisi, the trolls actually turned up to the cinema – and things got scary, fast. 'We screened the film for three days,' says writer-director Levan Akin, 'and audiences seeing it had to brave crazy people throwing rocks at them. It was insane.'

With police guarding screenings from the homophobic mob, 6,000 brave souls caught Akin's powerful story of a young dancer getting to grips with his sexuality. The film, which premiered at Cannes before opening in Tbilisi in November, reflects an intolerant society – and that society decided to reflect itself straight back. Ultra-nationalist groups protested against it; even the church weighed in. 'I still get death threats,' says Akin. 'The creepiest ones are voice messages on Instagram.'

But there's been a tonne of love too, with filmmakers like 'God's Own Country' director Francis Lee reaching

# 'I still get death threats on Instagram'

'And Then We Danced' director Levan Akin on his LGBTQ+ game changer



Levan Akin (left) with star Levan Gelbakhiani

out in solidarity and supportive messages flowing in. 'I get 50 of them a day,' says Akin. 'Someone said: "I brought my grandma to the movie. She's never seen a gay person and she was crying by the end." We can reach those people.' Thanks to that eventful cinema run, a warm Cannes reception and its growing international profile, 'And Then We Danced' has become the little film that could change minds.

Akin, who was raised in Sweden by Georgia-born parents, and once interned for auteur Roy Andersson ('I just rang the doorbell and asked if I could. I ended up working on "You, the Living"'), shot the film in 25 days, mostly guerilla-style. 'I wanted to do something hopeful because it's such dark times we're living in,' he says. '[The film] is a love letter to the country, and to culture and art and how they're always changing.' Its timely message of love overcoming intolerance has struck a major chord in Georgia. 'It's been a game changer,' says Akin. A few creepy Insta messages have been a small price to pay. 'You know what? I don't even listen to them.' ■ *Phil de Semlyen*

## And Then We Danced ★★★★★

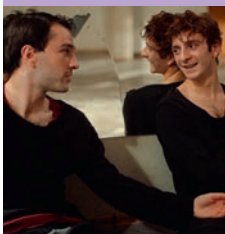
### WHAT IS IT...

A young Georgian dancer grapples with his sexuality.

### WHY GO...

For its charismatic, loose-limbed star, Levan Gelbakhiani.

→ Director Levan Akin (15)  
113 mins.



'THERE'S NO SEX in Georgian dance,' barks a grim-faced instructor in this coming-out gem. 'This isn't the lambada.' Boy, he's not kidding. If the powers that be had their way, the artform that young dancer Merab (Levan Gelbakhiani) is mastering would barely pack the erotic charge of some morris men capering on a damp village green. Georgian dance is an expression of the country's ultra-traditional values and not a space for a man to come to terms with his sexuality.

It is, in other words, a perfect crucible for director Levan Akin to explore the pressures that keep Merab from addressing who he really is. The furtive glances exchanged with handsome class newbie Irakli (Bachi Valishvili) come laden with risk, considering there's locker-room gossip of a gay dancer who was packed off to a monastery. Upping the stakes even further, Merab wants to make the national dance team, replacing that banished troupe member.

Gelbakhiani, a dancer himself, is a magnetic presence: by turns boyish, petulant and defiant. He's often filmed in flat shallow focus – this isn't the most visual film of the year – but, whether throwing shapes to Abba or grimly clinging on to his waiting job, he gives this clash of cultural and personal identity a relatable face. 'And Then We Danced' is a bold reminder that even the most entrenched traditions can be changed. ■ *Phil de Semlyen*

## ALSO OPENING

### THE ELEPHANT MAN →

★★★★★

David Lynch's 1980 masterpiece is newly restored in 4K and well worth rediscovering. It charts how John Merrick (John Hurt), brutalised by a childhood in which he was hideously abused as an inhuman freak, gradually became a lion of Victorian society. But that's only half the story the film tells. The darker side offers the steamy, smoky hell of a London facelifted by the Industrial Revolution. *Timothy Sortie*

### RUN

★★★★★

It's set in a small, ailing Scottish community but 'Run' channels the American myth of



Bruce Springsteen's 'Born to Run': that fast cars and the open road offer an escape from small-town boredom for factory worker Finnie (Mark Stanley). With a 77-minute running time, it's a stripped-back drama and a bit one-note at times. But thanks to the seat-clutching intensity of its racing scenes and Stanley's commitment, it will keep you hooked. *Dan Jolin*

### CUNNINGHAM

★★★★★

American dancer and choreographer Merce Cunningham's radicalisation of the form demands an equally radical approach from a documentary. So this 3D effort makes a lot of sense. Yet while 'Cunningham' lets the dance speak for itself, it relies too heavily on the familiar (and boring) narrative of 'maverick is panned by critics' followed by 'world catches up to maverick's genius', while Cunningham himself remains elusive. Still, for regulars in the Sadler's Wells audience there's plenty to enjoy here. *Rosemary Waugh*

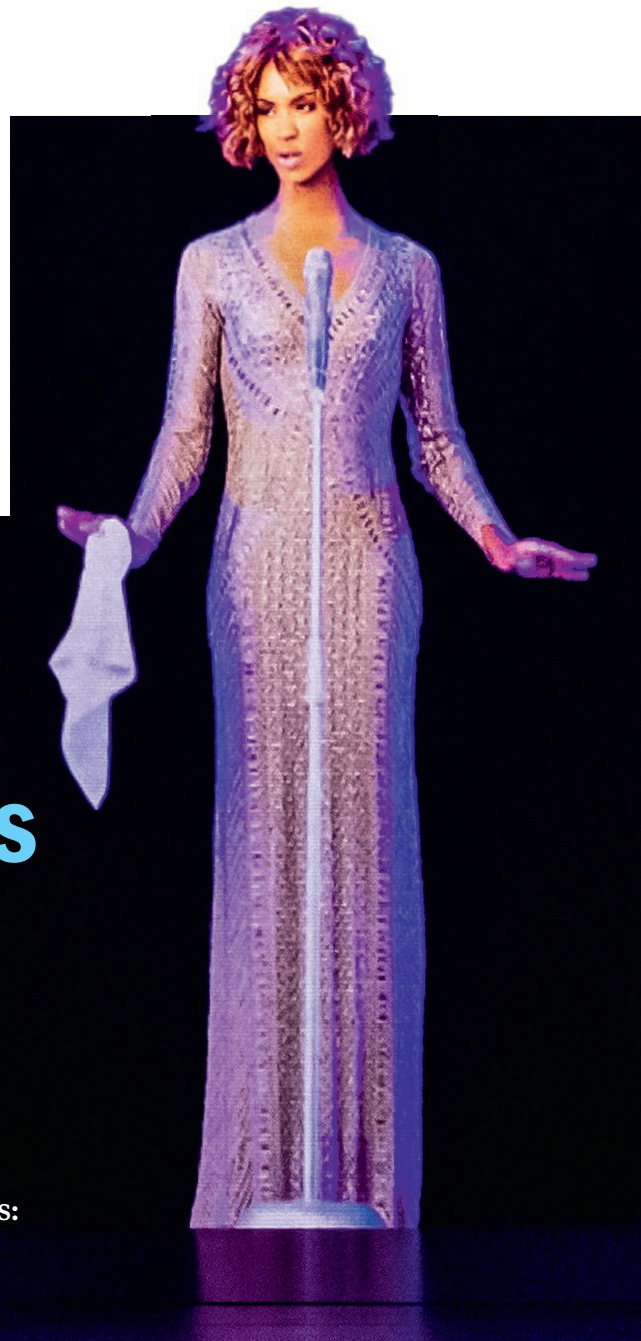


# Music & Nightlife

Edited by Oliver Keens  
timeout.com/music @timeoutmusic

## Are holograms the future of music?

We sent a massive Whitney Houston fan to watch her hologram show in Manchester. Relax, humanoid pop stars: the end is not nigh...



**I'M IN MANCHESTER'S** O2 Apollo, about to experience something that's been called 'ghoulish' by *The Guardian*, 'a farrago' by *The Daily Mail* and 'terrifying' by an ITV viewer who saw it perform for Eamonn Holmes on 'This Morning': a Whitney Houston hologram. Specifically, 'An Evening with Whitney: The Whitney Houston Hologram Tour'. It's produced by the singer's estate with BASE Hologram – a company who have previously created versions of Buddy Holly, Roy Orbison and Maria Callas.

While a Tupac hologram grabbed headlines back in 2012, virtual tours are still such a novel experience that I'm pretty conflicted about it. Should I be feeling guilty for attending a spectacle that Houston herself might not have approved of? Am I contributing to the death of live music as we know it by giving publicity to a tour that could lead to a slew of other holograms, like the mooted Amy Winehouse one (currently postponed). Plus I'm a massive Whitney fan – what if it ends up looking like '90s CGI?

The Apollo is busy but not packed to its 3,500 capacity. That could be down to ticket prices – entry to the London show this week for example costs around £70. A varied crowd (mums and daughters, groups of thirtysomething female mates, gay and straight couples) seem excited as they knock back Friday night drinks in their seats. When the show begins at 8.45pm with 'Whitney' materialising out of thin air, it becomes clear that the hologram is both impressive and a bit unsettling.

Houston's mannerisms have been captured with great attention to detail, right down to the white handkerchief she'd wave elegantly while performing. The hologram doesn't move much, just a few steps forward and to the side, but it does contribute some ill-advised stage patter. 'Welcome to Whitney Houston, very much alive,' it (or should that be 'she'?) says jarringly

at the start. It's not the last time this show creepily uncomfortable.

The hologram's face is a bit less convincing than its body, but it's still impossible not to be blown away by the joy of Houston's music or the majesty of her vocals, which seem largely drawn from various gig recordings during her '90s heyday. It's hard to tell: the hologram changes costumes a few times, but it doesn't seem to age much. The show is at its best when the thrill of hearing iconic songs along with thousands of fans transcends the awkwardness. 'How Will I Know' and 'I Wanna Dance with Somebody (Who Loves Me)' get everyone up on their feet like they're at a wedding reception; hearing 'I Have Nothing' and 'Step by Step' is genuinely a little emotional.

Perhaps because holograms can't answer back, some audience members aren't entirely respectful. The Whitneygram was reportedly

**What if the hologram ends up looking like '90s CGI?**







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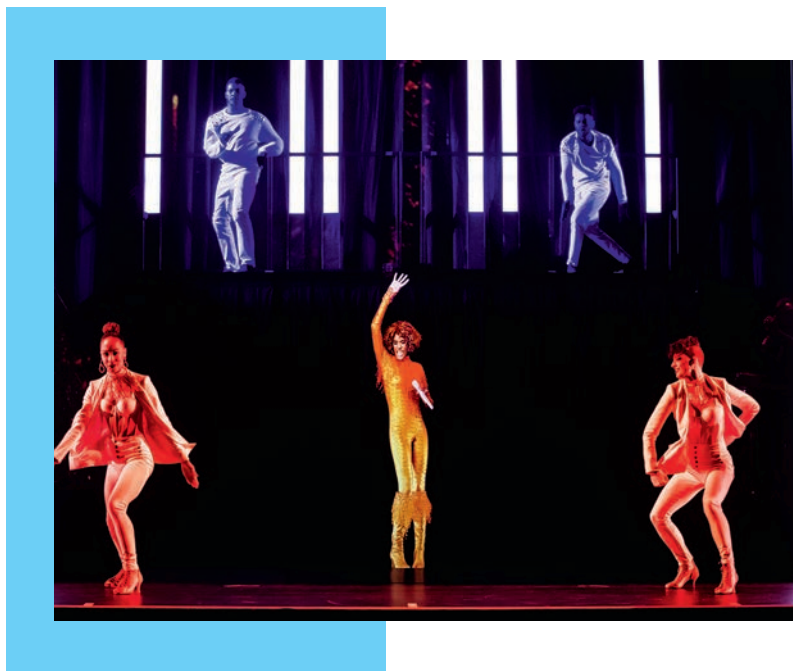


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## Music & Nightlife



heckled at an earlier show in Sheffield. Tonight's crowd aren't so brazen, but there's a lot of talking during songs and some truly uncomfortable interruptions. As 'My Love Is Your Love' begins, a woman shouts out the 'Sing, Mommy!' ad lib on the original recording by Houston's then five-year-old daughter Bobbi Kristina Brown. Given that Brown died in 2015 in circumstances tragically similar to those that claimed her mother, it's a desperately sad and crass moment.

The hologram is joined by a live band and live backing dancers who unwittingly highlight virtual Whitney's slightly too narrow proportions. But on the plus side, the technological trickery does allow it to instantly change costume – during a twirl, no less. It's the best moment of the night, and a bit of magic this show could use more of. As realistic as it is, I'd find it more enjoyable if the concept embraced its inherent artifice by adding loads of clever special effects, rather than trying to be a gig experience. This dazzling smoke-and-mirrors stuff would go down a storm in Vegas, where the hologram is about to begin a residency. A Kevin Costner 'gram, might, however, be a step too far.

Still, when the show ends 75 minutes later, the crowd don't seem short-changed at all. What this evening really lacks is spontaneity and the thrill of being in the same room as a superstar, which means the hologram experience still feels a bit, er, hollow. Some audience members are clearly moved, and I am too actually, but that doesn't mean it's a *proper* tribute to Whitney's talent. Until we as fans work out what we really want from hologram tours – or if we even want them at all – they're always going to feel more like a curiosity than the future of music. If you want a one-line verdict, it's this: it's not right, but it's okay. ■

→ 'An Evening with Whitney: The Whitney Houston Hologram Tour' is at the Eventim Apollo, Hammersmith. ☺ Hammersmith. Tue Mar 10.



By Nick Levine  
Who still misses the real Whitney. RIP.





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# WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH Palms Trax

**Okay, Palms Trax - I'm detecting something dancey?**

Correct. The DJ and producer also known as Jay Donaldson is one of techno's shiniest new superstars - and that isn't just cos of his glistening noggin. The Berlin-based upstart has been soundtracking the summer since his dreamy debut 'Equation', the surprise hit of 2013.

**He certainly is shiny. Where did he come from?**

Born and raised in the West Country, Donaldson has been on the fast-track to fame since landing an internship at Soho's mighty Phonica Records, where the former jazz pianist learned his Aswad from his elbow. The big leap came when he went to Berlin, of course.

**He moved to Berlin to focus on music?**

Yep, that old chestnut. As well as cranking out suave summer hits he also hosts his own radio show on



NTS, 'Cooking with Palms Trax', where he shows off his collection of Chicago house, afro disco and boogie. Palmsy also made the A-list last summer when he took on the headline slot at Amsterdam's Dekmantel Festival - now he's basically festival royalty.

**Did you just call him 'Palmsy'?**

Oh yes. Known for his self-deprecating humour, he's possibly slightly embarrassed about just how popular he's become - fans chant his name and everything. Expect cries of 'Palmsy, Palmsy, Palmsy' when he takes on an exciting 13-week residency at Shoreditch's XOYO this April.

**So, say his name three times and good things will happen, right?**

Er, no. He's not the Candyman. ■ *Chal Ravens*

→ Palms Trax's XOYO residency runs from Apr 3 to Jun 26. @ Shoreditch.

ROB JONES

# JUNCTION 2 FESTIVAL

## FRIDAY 5TH JUNE

ARTISTS IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

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CERI

**THE BRIDGE**

HOSTED BY: ION FESTIVAL

NINA KRAVIZ  
FOUR TET  
MIDLAND  
LEON VYNEHALL  
DMX KREW LIVE  
CARLOTA

**THE RESIDENT ADVISOR**

**RED ROOM**

FATIMA YAMAHA LIVE  
HONEY DIJON  
CHAOS IN THE CBD  
YU SU  
ZOZO

**THE WAREHOUSE**

IN ASSOCIATION WITH: RELENTLESS ENERGY DRINK

HESSLE AUDIO EXTENDED SET  
SKEE MASK B2B ZENKER BROTHERS  
AURORA HALAL LIVE  
ROZA TEREZI B2B D. TIFFANY  
TASHA

**THE WOODS**

HOSTED BY: 9000 DREAMS

AVALON EMERSON  
JOY ORBISON  
OCTO OCTA B2B ERIS DREW  
PEACH  
TASKER

**THE LOADING BAY**

SAOIRSE  
ECLAIR FIFI  
CROMBY  
JORDAN  
EFFY

## SATURDAY 6TH JUNE

ARTISTS IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

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**THE MAIN STAGE**

BEN KLOCK B2B MARCEL DETTMANN EXTENDED SET  
ROBERT HOOD LIVE  
DENSE & PIKA LIVE  
MIND AGAINST  
ADIEL

**THE BRIDGE**

HOSTED BY: DRUMCODE

ADAM BEYER  
AMELIE LENS  
MACEO PLEX  
ENRICO SANGIULIANO  
JOEL MULL

**THE RESIDENT ADVISOR**

**RED ROOM**

DIXON  
AVALON EMERSON B2B  
ROI PEREZ B2B DR. RUBINSTEIN  
DJ BORING LIVE  
BRAME & HAMO  
KIARA SCURO

**THE WAREHOUSE**

IN ASSOCIATION WITH: RELENTLESS ENERGY DRINK

DAX J B2B KOBOSIL  
BLAWAN  
999999999 LIVE  
BENJAMIN DAMAGE LIVE  
ANASTASIA KRISTENSEN  
SAMA'

**THE WOODS**

HOSTED BY: HALF BAKED

SETH TROXLER B2B  
MARGARET DYGAS  
FUMIYA TANAKA  
TRAUMER  
ROBIN ORDELL

**THE LOADING BAY**

FRANCESCO DEL GARDA  
BINH  
OMAR  
SUGAR FREE  
FRANKEL & HARPER

BOSTON MANOR PARK, LONDON  
WWW.JUNCTION2.LONDON

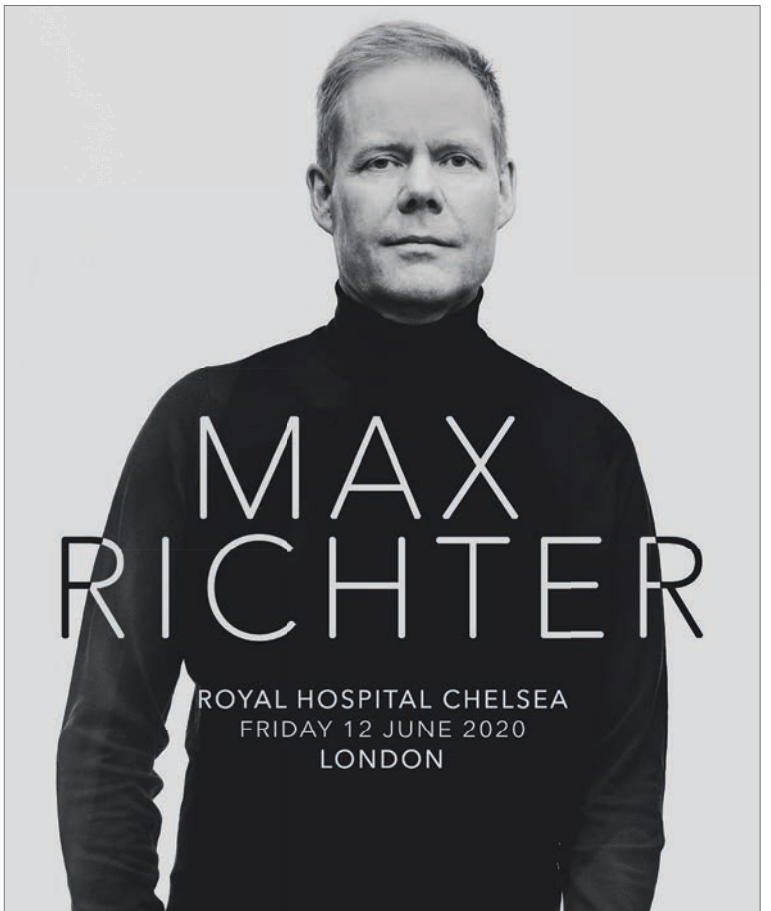




**Caro**  
EMERALD

THURSDAY  
11 JUNE 2020  
LONDON  
ROYAL HOSPITAL  
CHELSEA

CREDIT: ADRI MOUTHAN



**MAX  
RICHTER**

ROYAL HOSPITAL CHELSEA  
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Take The Long Way Home  
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It's Raining Again  
Give A Little Bit

**SATURDAY 13TH JUNE 2020  
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## GIGS AND CLUBS



### BST Hyde Park: Duran Duran

Calling all wild boys and girls! The pop legends are the final headline act announced for the

BST Hyde Park concert series. They'll be supported on the day by Gwen Stefani – whose music incorporates a strong new-wave influence – and their 'Notorious' collaborator Nile Rodgers, who'll be performing with Chic.

→ Hyde Park, Jul 12.

Senbla in association with United Talent Agency presents

# BRIAN WILSON GOOD VIBRATIONS GREATEST HITS TOUR

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### THIS WEEK

#### Sue Veneers

A brand new night starting this week, based at the underused Cell 200 in King's Cross (which boasts a caged podium, no less). Chester Hayes, Bryony Masters and Adonis's Shay Malt are your hi-NRG DJ bunnies for this one.

→ Cell 200, Sat Mar 14.

### JUST ANNOUNCED

#### Jamie 3:26

Well worth getting down to the London Fields home of excellent soul, funk and disco label BBE soon. There's a party to celebrate the launch of 'A Taste of Chicago' – a crucial new compilation of Chi-flavoured house from DJ Jamie 3:26.

→ BBE Store, Mar 20.

#### Riz Ahmed

A rare date from the polymath rapper 'n' actor, here with new album 'The Long Goodbye'.

→ Lafayette, Apr 14.

#### Jarvis Is...

Jarvis Cocker's new project is pitched as a collaboration between audience and band, where the songs evolve with every gig. Debut album 'Beyond the Pale' is due the week of this Roundhouse show, but we can't guarantee songs will evolve once you've actually bought the album (that would be weird).

→ Roundhouse, May 9.

#### Hayley Williams

The Paramore-fronting rock idol embarks on her first ever solo tour.

→ Electric Brixton, May 16.

#### Anjunadeep

It's the first festival at new Greenwich Peninsula venue Magazine: 10,000 fans of hypnotically buzzy house label

Anjunadeep will be descending to catch DJs like James Grant and Jody Wisternoff play across multiple stages, outdoor and in.

→ Magazine, Jul 25.

#### Lady Gaga

She's back! The pop maverick is bringing The Chromatica Ball – a new concert tour named after her upcoming sixth album.

→ Tottenham Hotspur Stadium, Jul 30.

#### Texas

Say what you want about Sharleen Spiteri and the gang, they're no slackers. This London Palladium show is part of a 25-date UK tour.

→ London Palladium, Oct 27.

#### Genesis

Tony Banks, Phil Collins and Mike Rutherford are reuniting for their first tour in 13 years, so expect their pair of London shows to sell out sharpish.

→ The O2, Nov 29-30.



LOL

There's an all-Oasis club night now



MICHEL LINSSEN/REDFERNS

**MOTORMOUTH MANCUNIAN** gobshites or the UK's best ever rock 'n' roll stars? Love them or hate them, everyone has an opinion on Oasis. Since Liam 'n' Noel swaggered into view in the mid-'90s, slugging it out for the Britpop crown and playing to a quarter of a million people at Knebworth at

the apex of their enormous success, the battling brothers have been a firm fixture in everyone's musical knowledge.

The band are seemingly no closer to that fabled reunion, but now you can stop crying your heart out, stock up on cigarettes and alcohol and head to Camden for a night entirely

dedicated to their wares.

So, what's the story? Well, as the first of a new series aimed at going in hard on one beloved artist, Back to Back Oasis will be bowling over to Camden's Dingwalls on Friday March 13 for a night playing solely bangers, B-sides and live bops from the band. Unlike many of the

increasing slew of artist-centric nights taking up residency in the city (from Cher to Robbie, all your faves have had parties of late), here you'll hear only Oasis. No '90s also-rans, no laddy inferiors, just wall-to-wall Gallagher for four golden hours. The team behind Back to Back previously flexed their fan muscles putting on a similar Springsteen-centric night, so they should be well-versed in pleasing punters.

Running from 11pm until 3am, it's definitely (no maybes) guaranteed to be a parka-filled, sunglasses-indoors excuse to indulge your most glorious Gallagher-loving fantasies. After all, you can wait for a lifetime to spend your days in the sunshiiiiine, but the chance to grab your mates and listen to a set of Oasis slammers at full volume is one not to be sniffed at. ■ *Lisa Wright*

→ Back to Back Oasis is at Dingwalls on Fri Mar 13. ☺ Camden.

More nights out at [timeout.com/clubs](http://timeout.com/clubs)

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# Theatre & Dance

Edited by Andrzej Łukowski  
timeout.com/theatre @timeouttheatre

## TIME OUT MEETS

# Emilia Clarke and Daniel Monks

She's a global star looking to open a post-dragon chapter in her career. He's a little-known Australian actor who stunned critics with his UK stage debut. Together, they're taking on Chekhov

'OH MY GOD,' roars Emilia Clarke in faux horror, after I tell her I've never watched 'Game of Thrones'.

'I should say I haven't seen "Game of Thrones" either,' ventures Daniel Monks, who's co-starring with her in 'The Seagull'.

'I'm SURROUNDED!' bellows the erstwhile dragon queen. 'You've not even seen my FUCKING SHOW!'

'But,' interjects Monks, 'I have seen every episode of Jonathan Van Ness's "Gay of Thrones" [a video series in which the "Queer Eye" star recaps each episode of the fantasy show]. I know everything!'

'It's fine,' Clarke sighs. 'None of my friends have seen all of it either.'

'She's very good in this play and I'm sure she's very good in "Game of Thrones",' affirms Monks.

The pair are clearly getting on like a house on fire – allies in what is a West End debut for both of them. But it's astonishing what different

journeys they've taken to be here, in the London Bridge rehearsal room of super-director Jamie Lloyd, preparing to play Nina and Konstantin, the damaged couple at the heart of Chekhov's classic play 'The Seagull'.

You probably know who Emilia Clarke is. Fresh out of drama school, she was snapped up to play Daenerys Targaryen in "Game of Thrones", a role that swallowed the next decade of her life and made the motormouthed, swear-happy Brit a global superstar. If she hadn't got that gig, she thinks she'd probably have 'gone on to do six plays in theatres above a pub'.

Instead she's been on a wild ride – in which 'all my successes and failures have been on a huge scale' – frantically cramming high-profile feature films ('Terminator Genisys', 'Solo: A Star Wars Story', 'Last Christmas') into the gaps between

**'It's a bunch of fucked-up people fucking each other up even more'**  
Emilia Clarke

shooting the TV mega-show. She did do one Broadway play, a production of 'Breakfast at Tiffany's' that she describes as 'slightly catastrophic'. But that chapter is closed. Now, she has a production company and is looking to parlay her star power into more personal projects. She wants to do more theatre: 'It's something I care really deeply about, because it's fucking *acting*, it's *proper*!'

You probably won't know who the slyly funny, quietly intense Daniel Monks is. An Australian, as a boy

MARC BRENNER



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[timeout.com/theatre](https://www.timeout.com/theatre)



he dreamed of being an actor but gave up on the idea after a botched operation left him disabled aged 11. As he puts it, 'I was very closeted – about my sexuality and my desire to be an actor.' By his mid-twenties he'd reconciled himself to both, and after a promising stage career in Sydney he took advantage of his Irish ancestry to move to the UK.

He made his Brit stage debut with an incandescent take on the title role in the Donmar's 'Teenage Dick', a high-school-set riff on 'Richard

III'. He suddenly became a name on people's lips – and Lloyd snapped him up for the role of Konstantin. A serious and articulate advocate for disabled actors, he says 'I don't just want to play disabled stories, and it feels really exciting to play a character [Konstantin] not written as disabled. I just know that if my 13-year-old disabled self saw me now, it would have encouraged me to dream bigger.'

By coincidence, Clarke was at the press night for "Teenage Dick"

and was blown away by Monks, but the two didn't meet until he was cast in 'The Seagull' about a month later. 'I thought: That's mental,' says Clarke of finding out the actor she'd admired had been cast opposite her. 'I was over the moon!'

'It was surreal for me,' says Monks, 'because on press night everyone was saying Emilia Clarke was in the audience. Then straightaway I got this audition.'

'The Seagull', then, is Chekhov's first great play and follows a group of

lonely Russians living a sad, slightly absurd existence on an isolated country estate. At the beginning, Nina and Konstantin are a couple of sorts – she's a vulnerable wannabe actress, he's a brooding writer. Things go wrong, quickly, in large part because of Konstantin's mum Irina and her boyfriend Trigorin.

It's a bittersweet and complicated story. Clarke's succinct description is: 'It's a group of singularly alone people trying desperately to connect to each other. Or a bunch of fucked-up characters fucking each other up even more.'

There are plenty of clichés around Chekhov, but Clarke and Monks are quick to point out that a show directed by the ever-thrilling Lloyd (fresh off a brilliant, radical 'Cyrano de Bergerac' with James McAvoy) is never going to be conventional.

'He's really experimenting with form,' says Monks, 'but only in the interests of making it as direct as possible, getting rid of all the superfluous stuff.'

'No samovars, no white linen, no crickets in the background,' enthuses Clarke. 'And when you strip it back to its bare essentials, all you're hearing is a truth so profound it's frightening. This shit will fuck you up.'

The two of them have very different pasts, and may have different futures. He's a rising star, she has to contend with the enormous success of her past. Will he break into film? Will she become viewed as a heavyweight actor? Who knows? But for now, they're on a new adventure together. And it seems to be going well. ■

→ Playhouse Theatre. ↻ Embankment.

Wed Mar 11-May 30. £20-£224.



**By Andrzej Lukowski**  
Who told Kit Harington he  
had seen 'Game of Thrones'.



15 MAR – 3 MAY

A Unicorn Production

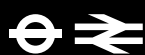
# GULLIVER'S TRAVELS

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By Lulu Raczka  
Directed by Jaz Woodcock-Stewart



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## Theatre & Dance



### Pretty Woman



**YES, IT IS** a big mistake. Yes, it is a HUGE mistake.

It wafted over from Broadway on a miasma of bad reviews, so I was braced for this musical version of the clearly quite dated 1990 Julia Roberts smash to be a touch problematic.

In fact, 'Pretty Woman: The Musical' is so witless that it defies any serious attempt to scrutinise its politics. Telling the story of Edward, a ruthless businessman whose life is changed on a visit to LA after he picks up Vivian, a free-spirited hooker, it is in fact no more about capitalism or sex work than it is about sports cars or cruise liners – all of these things are just plot points as Gary Marshall and JF Lawton's book hauls itself wearily through its 'Pygmalion'-like paces.

The film, of course, had Julia Roberts and Richard Gere to style it out. Here, leading man Danny Mac is no Gere. But he has less to work with. This Edward is a blandly pleasant guy whose only discernible personality traits are a fear of heights and being a remorselessly destructive vulture capitalist, an apparent contradiction the play has no interest in exploring.

Aimie Atkinson can't hold a candle to Roberts. But her

Vivian is winningly goofy and the clear highlight.

Stretched out with songs, the story is baffling. Edward hires Vivian for six days on the grounds that a live-in hooker is less hassle than a girlfriend; they fall in love and he decides corporate raiding is bad because... she's nice? I get the appeal of 'Pretty Woman'. It's an old-school feelgood Cinderella and Prince Charming fantasy. The musical hits all the beats of the beloved film, down to the costumes.

But it's so half-arsed. The film's writer-director team Lawton and Marshall haven't just failed to update 'Pretty Woman' – it's backslid.

There were drunk people in tiaras there when I went, who seemed to be having fun, and drunk people in tiaras are a legitimate and important part of the West End ecology. But I would argue that they might have also enjoyed themselves at a better musical version of 'Pretty Woman', or even just a more interesting one than this cynical, soulless, nostalgia cash-in. ■

Andrzej Lukowski

#### WHAT IS IT...

An aggressively stupid musical version of the Julia Roberts film.

#### WHY GO...

You've already paid for the ticket and there's a good offer on wine at the bar.

→ Piccadilly Theatre.

⊖ Piccadilly Circus. £15-£195. Until Jan 2 2021.



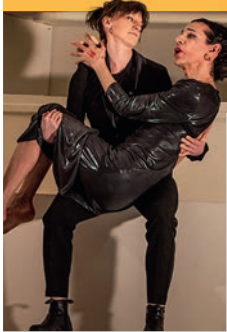
## Trainers



**WHAT IS IT...**  
Cheerfully leftfield 'theatre essay', set in a post-everything future.

**WHY GO...**  
The joyous partnership between the two performers.

→ Gate Theatre. ⊖ Notting Hill Gate. Until Mar 21. £18, £13-£15 concs.



**SYLVAN OSWALD'S 'TRAINERS'** is so called because the theatrical essay's unnamed narrator is fascinated by gym instructors (ie trainers) and how they take the uncertainty out of life simply by telling you what to do to improve yourself.

This confession feels pivotal to a show that seems to blend clarity and obscurity wilfully. For starters, what is a 'theatrical essay'? The deliberately rambling introduction suggests the narrator is happy enough not being entirely sure. But this funny, self-deprecating, approachable sequence does at least explain the nuts and bolts of what is going to happen in front of us.

The two actors in Hester Chillingworth's staging – that would be Nicki Hobday and Nando Messias – perform this essay, frequently turning it into a dialogue between the narrator and his late boyfriend, Steven. The story of their relationship in a war-torn, parallel, post-gender world, 'Trainers' is an erudite, shaggy-doggish piece of metafiction. The words occasionally drift, but Messias and Hobday are excellent in this perpetual-motion production. They don't so much act out the roles of Steven and the narrator as trippily illustrate their story, chugging cooking oil, falling down holes, shovelling in coffee granules, and more. In a sense, the production feels as much about their partnership as the text.

■ Andrzej Łukowski

## The Mikvah Project



**WHAT IS IT...**  
A heart-melting love story set in a Jewish ritual bath.

**WHY GO...**  
Because where else will you see an onstage pool?

→ Orange Tree Theatre. ⊖ Richmond. Until Mar 28. £15-£32, £15 concs.



**TWO MEN ARE** wallowing awkwardly, nakedly together in a single Jewish ritual bath (the title's 'mikvah'). Josh Azouz's tender look at their relationship is soaked both in water and harder-to-shift things: tradition, self-doubt, hypocrisy.

A mosaic-tiled pool is recessed into the stage, its water reflecting Eitan and Avi's limbs as they meet, first by accident, then more deliberately. Eitan is 17 and still a kid, really, and Josh Zaré makes him visibly fizz with excitement as he mimes driving his first car or drifts into confused monologues about the girls he's meant to fancy. Avi doesn't have time to help him work things out, because he's married and trying for a kid. In theory. Alex Waldmann's performance captures the contradictions of this man who always knows the right thing to do, but can't quite stay on track. Tradition. Forbidden lust. We've seen it all before. Except we haven't, because Azouz's writing dances, torturing unspoken truths into hilariously weird metaphors; Avi tries to use footballing loyalties to codedly explain why Eitan should choose a heteronormative life.

Georgia Green's witty, earthy production doesn't always evoke the more spiritual side of the mikvah's role. But it still has the power to transport you from bustling synagogue to nightclub to snatched moment in the sun with this still pool of water at its heart. ■ Alice Saville

## The Last Five Years



**WHAT IS IT...**  
A cannily-structured musical about a relationship in turmoil.

**WHY GO...**  
It's smart and totally charming.

→ Southwark Playhouse. ⊖ Elephant & Castle. Until Mar 28. £27.50, £22 concs.



**JONATHAN O'BOYLE'S ASSURED** staging of American writer-composer Jason Robert Brown's musical romcom has charm to spare. 'The Last Five Years', which has gained a host of diehard fans and a 2014 movie version since it debuted in 2001, tells the story of a marriage break-up in opposing chronological directions. We meet struggling actress Cathy at the end, hurt and angry, before watching her soon-to-be-successful novelist husband Jamie in love's first flush. Their timelines briefly intersect at their wedding.

It's a neat approach, one that adds a fresh lick of dramatic paint to the often-staged story of how two people in a relationship can end up on painfully different pages. It's jerry-rigged for poignancy. Brown's score is a quicksilver delight, ranging from ballads to tango and buoyed by dextrously funny lyrics. It's a perfect match for the show's constantly turning – literally here, with a revolving stage – portrait of the intoxicating, mercurial nature of love. O'Boyle uses the piano played in turn by Molly Lynch's Cathy and Oli Higginson's Jamie as a touchstone. From their comic timing, to their singing, to their shading of their characters, this pair never fail to hold the stage. It's also hard to escape the feeling that, as written, Jamie gets an easier ride. Higginson gives us flashes of celebrity-fuelled narcissism in Jamie's breathless 'you can do anything' attitude; Lynch breaks Cathy out of the lovelorn, insecure bracket she threatens to be stuck in – her grimly determined performance of 'Climbing Uphill/Audition Sequence' is a comedy delight. ■ Tom Wicker

EXCLUSIVE

## 'GHBOY' AT THE VAULTS



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**NEW SHOWS**  
THE HOTTEST THEATRE OPENINGS THIS WEEK

**WEST END**

**Blithe Spirit**

Jennifer Saunders stars in Noël Coward's light-as-air comedy about a vengeful ghost.  
→ Duke of York's Theatre.  
⊖ Covent Garden. Until Apr 11. £20-£99.50.

**On Blueberry Hill**

Two prisoners deliver interlocking monologues in this poetic, intricate work by Irish playwright Sebastian Barry.  
→ Trafalgar Studios.  
⊖ Charing Cross. Until May 2. £15-£65.

**One Jewish Boy**

Stephen Laughton's look at antisemitism and the inheritances we can't shake off.  
→ Trafalgar Studios.  
⊖ Charing Cross. Until Apr 4. £27.50-£32.50.

**The Seven Streams of the River Ota**

Auteur-director Robert Lepage's marathon seven-hour show follows Hiroshima survivors and their descendants.  
→ National Theatre, Lyttelton.  
⊖ Waterloo. Until Mar 22. £30-£125.

**OFF-WEST END**

**Afterplay**

The late Irish dramatist Brian Friel's highbrow exercise in fanfic imagines a meeting between the characters from two Chekhov plays.  
→ The Coronet Theatre.  
⊖ Notting Hill Gate. Until Apr 4. £25-£30, £15 concs.

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**Akram Khan Company**

KAASH (REVIVAL)

Fri 22 – Mon 25 May

Image credit © Jean-Louis Fernandez

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**1 Uncle Vanya**

Toby Jones takes the title role in this moving, surprisingly relatable take on Chekhov's classic. He plays a boozy, angsty estate manager who can't let go of the past.  
→ Harold Pinter Theatre. Until May 2.

**2 Endgame**

Boy wizard Daniel Radcliffe shows off his grown-up acting chops in this Beckett double bill, which serves up surrealism and clowning galore.  
→ Old Vic. Until Mar 28.

**3 Hamilton**

The mega-hyped sell-out hip hop musical by Lin-Manuel Miranda.  
→ Victoria Palace. Until Aug 29.

**4 The Seagull**

'Game of Thrones' star Emilia Clarke swaps dragons for Chekhov.  
→ Playhouse Theatre. Mar 11-May 30.

**5 Les Misérables**

The revamped revolutionary musical is still pulling in the West End crowds.  
→ Sondheim Theatre. Until Oct 17.

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**Buyer & Cellar**

Jonathan Tolins's comedy follows a struggling actor who lands a job working for Barbra Streisand.  
→ Above The Stag Theatre.  
⊖ Vauxhall. Wed Mar 11-Apr 19. £22.50-£25.

**Love, Love, Love**

The first major revival of Mike Bartlett's satire on baby boomers, directed by Rachel O'Riordan.  
→ Lyric Hammersmith.  
⊖ Hammersmith. Until Apr 4. £10-£42.

**N89**

Mark Daniels's London nightbus comedy.  
→ Matchstick Theatre.  
Deptford rail. Until Apr 2. £12, £8 concs.

**The Tempest**

Shakespeare's storm-tossed story, staged with Jermyn Street Theatre boss Tom Littler at the helm.  
→ Jermyn Street Theatre.  
⊖ Piccadilly Circus.  
Wed Mar 11-Apr 4. £27-£31.

**The Time Machine**

This HG Wells-inspired story unfolds among The London Library's bookshelves.  
→ The London Library.  
⊖ Piccadilly Circus. Until Apr 5. £32-£35.

**EXCLUSIVE**

Award-winning 'Succession' writer Lucy Prebble's medical drama 'The Effect' returns to London at the Boulevard Theatre. Grab tickets from just £18 each.

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Edited by Eddy Frankel  
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# Art



**CAO FEI IS** teleporting you from one constantly changing city to another. Step through the doors of this London show and suddenly you're in her Beijing studio, walking through the foyer of the former cinema and theatre it's housed in.

She's filled the space with old theatre tickets, film canisters and photos of workers from the 1970s. The recreated building was once an auditorium, now it's an artist's studio. It's changed from place of leisure to place of production. It's a transformation that you'll find everywhere in her art.

Slip through the side door and you'll find yourself in a sterile room. Plonk on the VR headset and now you're in the theatre's kitchen, turning on the radio, flicking through the newspaper; then whoosh, you're moving through an old electronics factory filled with kissing workers; then whoosh again, you're sat in the auditorium,

## When fiction looks a lot like reality

### Cao Fei: 'Blueprints'



watching a film next to a woman telling you that she has to leave the country.

Time is slipping, narratives are falling apart, reality is spinning into fantasy, all to symbolise society's constant state of flux.

'Nova' is the centrepiece of the show, a feature-length film about a man losing his son in cyberspace. It's

gorgeous – you can tell it was shot by an artist – but it's overlong, poorly scripted and badly acted.

It would, rightfully, be torn apart if it was screened in a cinema, and doesn't really stand up to scrutiny in an art gallery either.

Much better are the films and installations in the side rooms. In 'La Town', Cao Fei creates a stop-motion dystopia filled with

amoral humans and rampaging giant turtles. In 'Asia One', young Chinese factory workers fall in love while fighting for a sense of identity in a whirlpool of mechanised production, sticking labels on boxes in some neon Amazon-like warehouse. They're trying to find joy and meaning in a rancid version of modernity.

Everywhere in this show you find people and places being transformed by work and capitalism, surveillance and control. It's a science fiction world filled with astronauts and police, giant octopuses and artificial intelligence, with all the humans struggling to maintain a grip on reality, and themselves. Cao Fei's fantastical sci-fi art isn't about the future, it's about right now, and you'll find your life everywhere in it. ■

**WHAT IS IT...**  
Time-travelling socio-political art.

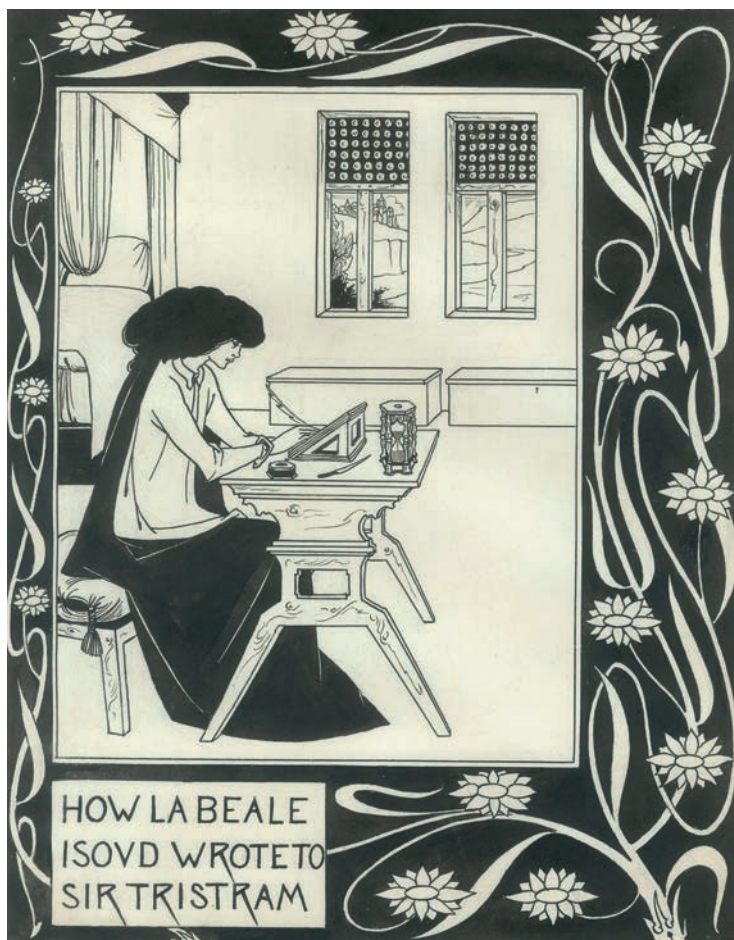
**WHY GO...**  
It's brutally relatable.

→ Serpentine. ↻ Lancaster Gate. Until May 17. Free.



**By Eddy Frankel**  
Whose narrative is also falling apart.





## Aubrey Beardsley



**THE VICTORIANS:** buttoned-up, sermonising sexophobes. And their art? Sentimental pictures of big-eyed children and spaniels, right?

Well, #NotAllVictorians. Aubrey Beardsley (1872-1898) did things differently. His sleek black-and-white drawings are filled with sex and death and... well, sex and death mainly. Needless to say, his images caused a fair amount of scandal.

They also titillated and thrilled, and while it would be false to imagine Victorians up and down the land plastering their bedroom walls with Beardsley soft porn (rather than imagining a smallish group of bougie art-loving Londoners consuming it), the simple existence of it beautifully disrupts what we think we know about the nineteenth century.

This gorgeous retrospective covers pretty much everything Beardsley did, from early medievalist and mythological subjects through to illustrations for *The Yellow Book* (a quarterly arts publication) and explicit pictures of Ancient Greeks getting frisky. The earlier pieces are similar to Pre-Raphaelite Edward Burne-Jones's work but while Burne-Jones was crushingly bad at depicting feet, Beardsley is king at

drawing heels (an underrated talent if ever there was one). The small curve of flesh below the ankle is, perhaps, the sexiest thing of all in his artworks.

The obviously sexy pics, meanwhile – the ones with the extra-large cocks and the woman having a powder puff popped between her bum cheeks – seem a bit teenage when viewed all together.

More interesting are the androgynous, gender-fluid aspects. Tate Britain's emphasis of this could be an attempt to jump on the zeitgeisty bandwagon, but the theme emerges so naturally it doesn't feel cynical. A photo-etching illustrating Théophile Gautier's 'Mademoiselle de Maupin' shows the title character in frilled britches and a musketeer-like floppy hat, looking not unlike Rachel Weisz out hunting in 'The Favourite'. It's audacious, bold, sexy and knowingly funny. Not a bit what you expect from the Victorians. ■  
Rosemary Waugh

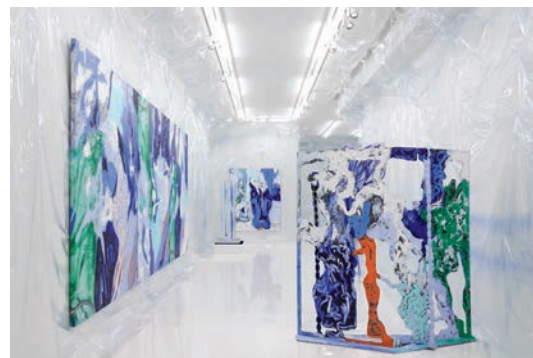
**WHAT IS IT...**  
Very saucy Victorian drawings.

**WHY GO...**  
Beardsley will titillate and thrill you in equal measure.

→ Tate Britain. ⊖ Pimlico. Until May 25. £16, £15 concs.

## BEST OF THE BEST

The top exhibitions you have to see in London right now



### Donna Huanca: 'Wet Slit'

This is a show of stinky, filthy, weird, ritualistic painting about the body and sex, as you might guess from the title, and it's great.

→ Simon Lee Gallery. ⊖ Green Park. Until Apr 18. Free.



### Steve McQueen

The Turner Prize and Oscar winner's work is full of beauty, but full of pain and injustice too. This is staggering, powerful, necessary art.

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



### Isa Genzken

With this installation of aircraft seats and windows, Genzken proves that she's still the master of punk minimalism.

→ Hauser & Wirth. ⊖ Oxford Circus. Until May 2. Free.

Find more shows to see at [timeout.com/art](http://timeout.com/art)





**WHAT IS IT...**  
A whole exhibition dedicated to art about trees.

**WHY GO...**  
It's a chance to celebrate nature, but in an art gallery.

→ Hayward Gallery.  
📍 Waterloo. Until May 17.  
£6-£13.50.

## 'Among the Trees'



**IT'S TIME TO** make like a tree and go see some art, because the Hayward Gallery's new exhibition is all about our arboreal friends.

Trees have always played powerful, symbolic roles in human society, and in contemporary art, they represent countless ideas. Here, forests become places of dark suburban escape in George Shaw's unsettling paintings, and signifiers of painful living memory in Steve McQueen's haunting 'Lynching Tree' photograph; trees are used to undermine traditional ways of looking in the focus-less photos of Thomas Struth and Peter Doig's stunning painting of a building seen through branches. Every work in this show puts a different symbolic weight on the idea of trees.

There's an emotional conflict at play in 'Among the Trees': on the one hand, the whole exhibition feels like a calm, safe, quiet haven, like any forest. But on the other, there's a sense of foreboding. Some works carry the threat of a tree toppling, of the unseen darkness of the forest, of imminent environmental collapse. The show lures you in

into the woods with the promise of tranquillity, then bashes you over the head with a branch.

As a whole, it works, but it doesn't really stand up to closer scrutiny. Although many of the works are good, by the time you've seen your billionth black-and-white photo of a tree or blurry painting of branches, it all ends up looking the same.

Because of that, the wilder, weirder works stick in your mind best. Roxy Paine's glowing burnt-out-forest-ember installation is grim and desolate; Giuseppe Penone's incredible reclaimed tree carvings are elemental and impressive; Ugo Rondinone's huge white tree is towering and imposing; Kazuo Kadoyama's endlessly layered trunk is mind-bending and minimal. Strongest of all is Eija-Liisa Ahtila's six-screen video portrait of a giant Finnish spruce. It's the work that best translates a dwarfing sense of natural wonder, an appreciation of trees as something bigger, older, more powerful, more beautiful than us.

The rest just sort of blurs into one, and by the end, you can't see the art for the trees. ■

*Eddy Frankel*

New Exhibition

21 Feb–07 Jun 2020

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ENGLAND



# Food

Edited by Tania Ballantine  
timeout.com/eatdrink @timeouteat

## RESTAURANT OF THE WEEK

# Herbs have it

## Vardo



**NEVER MIND IF** you're into food: the Duke of York Building is very cool. It's a contemporary beauty, plonked, seemingly randomly on the footprint of an old café, in the middle of Chelsea's historic Duke of York Square, where most of the buildings are Georgian and listed. Its circular space is all clear curves and sweeping pale concrete on the outside (fun fact: the glass walls can retract downwards in sunny weather, providing an 'instant alfresco' vibe). Up top is a narrow perimeter roof terrace.

Inside, it's equally swish – minimalist woods, stone, more curves – and a fitting setting for a menu that I'm going to call 'Caravan 2.0'. That is, eclectic, fusion-y small plates from the same team as first brought us killer coffees and coconut bread, but sharper and more stylish. The menu is large – almost too large – and includes an impressive number of plant-based options.

**WHAT IS IT...**  
A new small-plates restaurant from the Caravan team

**WHY GO...**  
Jerusalem artichokes, retractable glass walls, people-watching.

→ 9 Duke of York Square, SW3 4LY. ↻ Sloane Square

Nearly everything we ate was terrific: bright, thrilling plates, their bold ingredients plucked from every shelf of the world's larder.

Some were simple: an n'duja pizza, papyrus-thin, the heat of the spiced sausage paste casually accessorised with curls of dark, gleaming cavolo nero and mellow little hellos of confit garlic. We sampled several dishes that were completely vegan, but so substantial that even the hungriest of card-carrying carnivores would find them satisfying. Like a bowl of joyfully calorific jerusalem artichokes, served piping hot, their centres waxy

and smooth, their outsides adorned with green harissa, milder and zestier than its celebrated rose-coloured cousin, and the occasional sweet, tangy pomegranate seed to pop in your mouth. Oh, and fresh mint. Later, a wholesome shitake donburi, its nutty, chewy, brown-riced base under a stratum of pickled veg, including, of course, slivers of vinegary mushroom, and more fresh herbs on top: they're a bit of a theme here. Finally, a trio of chunky pulses – lentils, peas and broad beans – coaxed into one giant, warmly spiced fritter. Only a single dish: an over-wet aubergine, its flavours clashing, threatened to rain on the parade. But anywhere that can do silken tofu this well (crisp-edged and tumbled with crunchy stalks of water spinach, the whole lot slathered in salted black beans,

sesame and lots of red chilli), is fundamentally in my good books.

Besides, Vardo is about more than the eats (though they're excellent). It's also a place for unrivalled people-watching – with views of the King's Road, a strip of London that's more catwalk than shopping street – in an avant-garde setting. And if your budget isn't huge (though portions here, given the postcode, are refreshingly generous), then come for just a few snacky plates before heading up to the circular roof terrace. It's open to the public and completely free. ■ **Dinner for two with drinks and service: around £100.**



By Tania Ballantine  
Who loves plucking things from larders. Mostly biscuits.

ISSY CROKER





# Berto



**HAVING HAD A** huge hit with pizzeria Zia Lucia (which now boasts four branches across the capital), Italian-born pals Claudio and Gianluca have turned their hands to a different dough: the pasta kind.

Based next door to the original Zia Lucia on Holloway Road, Berto specialises in hearty (read: huge), hand-cut pasta dishes, with a smattering of antipasti and homemade desserts. Freshly made and rolled out daily in the open kitchen, there's a plethora of pasta to pick from: traditional egg-and-flour, wholewheat, gluten-free, potato gnocchi, plus a vegan option.

And then there's the choice of shapes and sauces: sprightly tagliatelle came slathered in a rich and pleasingly salty slow-cooked beef ragù. The cacio e pepe tonnarelli (chunky-looking spaghetti) was silky, wonderfully tangy and delivered a warm smack of pepper with each forkful. We also ordered a bowl of nutty, wholewheat



fettuccine tossed with lip-tingling 'nduja and shreds of fresh, creamy burrata. It was carb heaven.

Extra brownie points go to our server for leaving a bowl of grated parmesan on the table (the usual measly sprinkling administered by waiters is never, ever enough).

Away from the pasta, a starter of deep-fried aubergine and beef polpettine (Italian-style croquetas) was not just juicy, but bursting with

meaty flavour. In fact, the only flat note in the entire meal came from the vegetable fritti, which were bland, a little soggy and in need of a sauce to dip them into.

With its all-glass front and oversized skylight, Berto is a bright and airy spot, and the service is just as beaming. Clearly Claudio and Gianluca are on a roll. ■ *Liz Darke*  
**Dinner for two with drinks and service: around £70.**

**WHAT IS IT...**  
 A pasta restaurant from the team behind Zia Lucia

**WHY GO...**  
 For cacio e pepe that's as good as Padella's. Seriously.

→ 155 Holloway Rd, N7 8LX. ☺ Holloway Rd.

**EXCLUSIVE**  
 Find lipsync battles and party games with prizes at Duo's Kandi Karaoke night. Tickets just £4.  
[TIMEOUT.COM/KANDIKARAOKE](https://www.timeout.com/kandikaraoke)

Sponsored Listing

## Going out? Try here.



KING'S CROSS

### BAR EL RINCON SAYS:

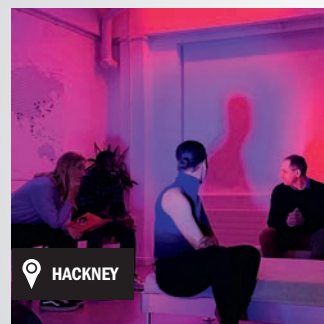
'Camino launches Bar El Rincón, a new wine and tapas place next door to Bar Pepito and opposite Camino King's Cross. Focusing on sustainability, Bar El Rincón has a small but perfectly curated selection of drinks – all served in an intimate, relaxed space with exposed brickwork and banquet seating.'  
 Regent Quarter, Varnishers Yard, N1 9FD.



THE CITY / WEST END

### LONDON SWINGERS SAYS:

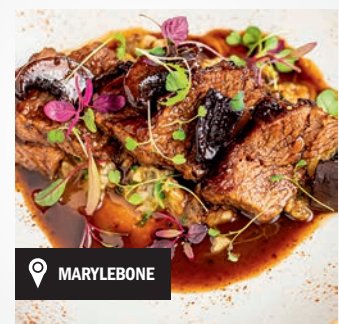
'For an epic day or night out, head to Swingers City or Swingers West End where you'll discover two beautiful crazy-golf courses, delicious street food from the likes of Patty&Bun, Pizza Pilgrims and Hackney Gelato and a world-class cocktail menu, all under one roof.'  
 8 Brown's Building, EC3A 8AL.  
 15 John Prince's St, W1G 0AB.



HACKNEY

### 'DIALOGUE IN THE DARK' SAYS:

'This immersive sensory exhibition is set in total darkness, designed to push you out of your comfort zone. Wander through a simulation of London locations in complete darkness – you will begin to think more creatively, more expansively. For tickets, visit [www.dialogueinthedarklondon.co.uk](http://www.dialogueinthedarklondon.co.uk).'  
 Space, 129-131 Mare St, E8 3RH.



MARYLEBONE

### THREE FALCONS SAYS:

'This little gem is a lively, friendly English pub, exuding warmth and hospitality. It would be a crime not to stop off for a drink or bite to eat at a place that offers you the ambience of a neighbourhood pub in an area full of history and charm. You will find yourself immersed in a relaxed and welcoming atmosphere.'  
 1 Orchardson St, NW8 8NG.



THREE OF THE BEST

Dalston restaurants



Angelina

★★★★★

This chic fusion joint knocks out Japanese-Italian grub. The five-plate tasting menu changes twice weekly, but we've had gems like homemade focaccia and bonito-dusted doughnuts.  
→ 56 Dalston Lane, E8 3AH. Dalston Junction Overground.



Chick 'n' Sours

★★★★★

Lights are set low in this fried chicken and cocktail spot. Try the house fry: drumstick and thighs revved up with pickled watermelon. Or, if you want boneless, get the katsu curry.  
→ 390 Kingsland Rd, E8 4AA. Haggerston Overground.



Little Duck – The Picklery

★★★★★

Sibling to Rawduck (RIP) and Ducksoup, this restaurant has a focus on fermenting. Anywhere you sit, expect an eyeful of the pickling projects used in the daily-changing menu.  
→ 68 Dalston Lane, E8 3AH. Dalston Junction Overground.

Find more Dalston dazzlers at [timeout.com/dalston](http://timeout.com/dalston)

WORDS: ELIA BRADWOOD; ANGELINA: BRUNA INGULHES; PHOTOGRAPHY & CONTENT CREATION (KALOPSIS/CONCEPT); CHICK 'N' SOURS: HARRY PSEFFOUDIS; LITTLE DUCK: KRISTIN PEREIS

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# Drink

Edited by **Laura Richards**  
timeout.com/bars @timeouteatdrink



**BAR OF THE WEEK**

**WHAT IS IT...**  
A child to South African restaurant Kudu.

**WHY GO...**  
Have a Margarita, Mojito and Sazerac like you've never had them before.

→ Arch 133, Queens Rd, SE15 2ND, Queens Rd Peckham Overground.

**A BOUNCER PULLS** open the door to one of the arches by Queens Road Peckham station, as if it were an exclusive club. Plenty of railway arches have transformed into breweries and bars in south-east London – Peckham has a shedload of them – but this is the first along this stretch and there's something very different about it. Mainly the fact that it feels nothing like drinking underneath the comings and goings of Queens Road. The bricks have been painted in earthy red tones, a directional sound system played soul tunes we could easily talk over and thanks to impeccable soundproofing, I hardly detected the rumblings overhead during what became a very protracted cocktail session. The lights of a very stylish chandelier flickered a touch... or maybe I was just a bit drunk.

ANDY PARSONS

## A star Saffa bar Smokey Kudu



That all probably makes it sound a bit bougie, but it's not. Smokey Kudu is the child of Kudu, a knockout South African restaurant a couple of hundred metres down the road. What Kudu does well is to marry fun flavours with top-notch service. And that's what they're doing at its spin-off bar. Two smiley staff worked the floor, with a dedicated bartender in a beanie hat behind the bar, smoke occasionally puffing from his workstation.

Divided into four sections, the menu works from light, aperitif-style drinks through to heavy, boozy cocktails, reimagining the classics using ingredients native to South Africa. If you don't fancy that, the SA wine list is just as on-point. But you really should try the cocktails, priced from £8 to £10: the Naartjie-ito, a zesty spin on the Mojito filled with smashed mandarin oranges (plus the classic's signature mint, of course);



the Saffa-Rita, a Margarita with chilli tequila and a chakalaka salt rim; the Bafana Bafana-Zarac, an absinthe-washed Sazerac riff with a blend of brandy and banana at its base. The signature Smokey Kudu is a whisky Old Fashioned served in a bottle and smoked with South African spices. You uncork it and the smoke wafts gently upwards, before you empty the remaining contents of the vessel into your glass. It was the perfect nightcap.

I wanted to try all of the cocktails, and as one drink became two became three, time seemed to stop in this transformative little railway arch. Also, where else can you drink cocktails with a side of biltong? ■



By **Laura Richards**  
Who isn't normally a smoker.



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# Escapes

Edited by Ellie Walker-Arnott  
timeout.com/daytrips

## IF YOU ONLY DO ONE THING

Chatham has a fascinating maritime history. Learn about it on a visit to **The Historic Dockyard Chatham**. There are immersive tours through a quarter-mile-long ropery, a real-life spy submarine and loads of lovely period buildings to explore.



A weekend in

## WAKE UP HERE

### The Lodge



This rustic cabin, on the edge of the Kent Downs, is not only a great base for exploring Rochester and Chatham, it's a sweet spot to shake off city stresses. The Lodge, which is ideal for four holidaying pals, is simple. Outside it has a woody vibe, while the light, open-plan interior is functional and comfy. But really the draw is all that greenery outside the window, and the chance to immerse yourself in it. Set an early alarm to take in a sunrise through the trees from your very own deck. Beats the views from the top of the bus any day. **Paula Akpan**  
→ Culverstone Green, Kent. Sleeps four.  
From £282 for two nights.  
[www.sykescottages.co.uk](http://www.sykescottages.co.uk)

# Rochester and Chatham

A medieval castle, hearty food and peaceful rambling

**THIS PEACEFUL POCKET** of Kent might not immediately spring to mind as a staycation spot, but it should. The coastal communities that sit beside the winding River Medway make for a tranquil and super-easy escape (we're talking less than an hour from London, lazies). The cobbled Medway towns have a villagey vibe yet there's a surprisingly buzzy food and drink scene, plus plenty to bewitch history fans.

### Explore this

Visit the museum inside Grade I-listed townhouse **Eastgate House**. The building inspired Charles Dickens, and the Swiss Chalet he wrote in now stands in its gardens. Next, pause in **Rochester Cathedral**, the second oldest in England, to gawp at the ceilings of a hallowed building that's been around since AD 604.

### Walk this

Stretch your legs in the vast **Riverside Country Park** which follows the River Medway. You can lose yourself (metaphorically, not physically) in this rambling green space. Wannabe twitcher? The estuary is a haven for birds, so keep 'em peeled.

### Eat this

After your rural ramble, refuel on Rochester's charming High Street. Take surf'n'turf to the next level at **Brettingtons Steak and Lobster House** or keep it simple with good old-fashioned café grub at **Tiny Tim's Tea Rooms** around the corner on Northgate. Fromage fan? Back on the High Street, head to vegan-friendly **The Cheese Room** to sample local dairy goodness and wine.

### Drink this

Pop into the grand, waterside **Copper Rivet Distillery** in Chatham to learn about the process. It's one of the few grain-to-glass craft distilleries in the country. More of a drinker than a thinker? Try **Smoke & Liquor** in Rochester for cocktails made skilfully with local spirits – the Rum 5 Punch is a real knockout.

### Climb this

Having survived no fewer than three sieges in its time, imposing **Rochester Castle** holds a number of secrets within its walls. Pant your way up the partially ruined fortress's 200-odd stairs to take in ace views over the Medway. ■ **Paula Akpan**

→ Get there: 38 minutes by train from London St Pancras International to Chatham; around one hour by car.

Find trips for lazy Londoners at [timeout.com/daytrips](http://timeout.com/daytrips)



## Escapes



Don't miss

## The Cornish party that can only happen at low tide

**YOU DON'T WANT** to be the last person to leave this party on the Isles of Scilly, off the coast of Cornwall. It takes place on a patch of beach that only appears during a really low tide. The seabed between the islands of Bryer and Tresco, usually under five metres of water, is revealed and locals spill out on to the crab-studded sand to have a knees-up. The pop-up Low Tide Experience

features local gin bars and the freshest fish served up from beached boats, plus a live music stage driven into place on the back of a tractor.

The festivities only last a couple of hours before the sea returns. Partygoers leave, the water level rises and the boats bob back up like nothing ever happened. ■ *EW-A*

→ Low Tide Experience takes place on Apr 10, May 8, Aug 21 and Sep 20. [www.visitislesofscilly.com](http://www.visitislesofscilly.com)

## OFF THE GRID

### A campsite in zone 6



**NO TIME FOR** travel? No problem. There's an authentic rural getaway just a tube ride away. **Home Farm Glamping** is near Elstree, so basically still London, yet you can legit get back to nature and toast marshmallows over an actual fire here.

If camping isn't your thing, no sweat. The bell tents and yurts on site are super-homely, with snug double beds and private firepits. Other home comforts include proper showers and hot-water bottles

when it's chilly. The only thing you need to provide is food for the barbecue; though if even that feels like too much like hard work, you can pre-order dinner (and an excellent cooked breakfast).

Going to sleep to the sound of rustling trees, you'll feel like you've actually made the effort to leave your comfort zone (or zone 6) – and pretty smug about how easy it'll be to get home. ■ *Sarah Gibbons*  
→ Elstree, Hertfordshire. From £80 a night. [www.homefarmglamping.com](http://www.homefarmglamping.com)

## THREE OF THE BEST

### Stargazing stays



#### Coll Hotel Inner Hebrides

In one of Scotland's only International Dark Sky Places, this hotel makes the most of its location.

Bedrooms boast big views while stargazing equipment can be found in the lounge. Outside, the lack of street lights across the Isle of Coll allows for uninterrupted astral appreciation.

→ From £90 a night. [www.collhotel.com](http://www.collhotel.com)



#### Sky Den, Northumberland

There's something stunning to see from every window in the Sky Den treehouse – including vistas of the starry heavens above. The triangular loft is where to station yourself come nightfall. The roof opens entirely for unobstructed views of Europe's largest area of protected night sky.

→ From £165 a night. [www.skyden.kielder.co.uk](http://www.skyden.kielder.co.uk)



#### Dunkery Beacon Country House, Devon

The owner of this small hotel in rural Exmoor – a designated Dark Sky Reserve – is a keen astronomer and lets guests use his Newtonian telescope. The former hunting lodge is a perfect base from which to enjoy the Exmoor Dark Skies festival each October. ■ *Anya Meyerowitz*

→ From £85 a night. [www.dunkerybeaconaccommodation.co.uk](http://www.dunkerybeaconaccommodation.co.uk)

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[timeout.com/daytrips](http://timeout.com/daytrips)





  
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