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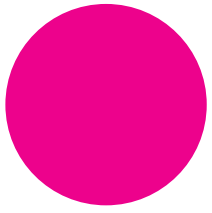
TimeOut

LONDON

She's all heart

Pop star Self Esteem on
acceptance, sexuality
and having a laugh





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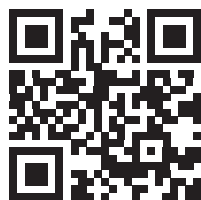


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in no time at all

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INTERNATIONAL BRAND OF THE YEAR
CAMPAIGN

Hello, London

Joe Mackertich
London Editor
@j_mackertich



Valentine's Day approaches, and I'm single for the first time in many years. Save your sympathy for someone else though: this guy's in love! In love with the fair city of London, that is.

Being unattached here, at this time of year, is *fine*, isn't it? I haven't been chunked out of anywhere for bringing the mood down with my unappetising, cloying 'singleton energy'. No one's crossing the street to avoid me, in case I suddenly try to marry them. The young people in nice clothes treat me with cold indifference. Exactly the same as they did before.

My supercharged love for London is manifesting itself culturally. I've made a real effort to up my intake of live music. My local gallery and indie cinema can't get rid of me. I've even booked a few trips to the theatre. Doing stuff by yourself is a great way to properly take in culture, to feel immersed by it, while simultaneously lessening the stigma attached to drinking by yourself. It's harder to feel pity for a lonely man necking pints if he's also applauding the 'Jerusalem' revival.

Still not watching any dance though. I'm not *that* in love.

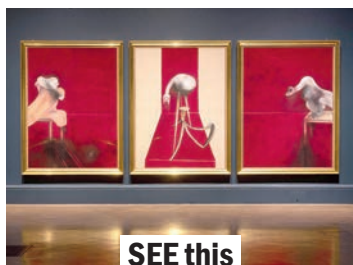
THE EDITOR'S ESSENTIALS

Three things you have to do in London



WATCH

'Boiling Point' is still on at a few cinemas. I watched it at the Rio, round the corner from where it was filmed. Recommended!



SEE this

The Royal Academy's Francis Bacon exhibition has the whole city in an arty tizz. I cannot wait to get down there and feel the gore.



SHOP here

Provisions in Holloway is a great indie place to pick up (and try loads of) fancy cheese and wine. Very helpful, nice staff, too.

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LONDON

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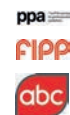
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City life

Edited by Isabelle Aron
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Tim Key's love poem to London

The comedian and poet shares his ode to the city, 'A London Superdate'

ILLUSTRATION: STEVE BEECH; TIM KEY: JONATHAN BIRCH

'If you can't organise a decent date in London, there's no hope for you!' That was what Pearl had put in her text.

Well, challenge accepted! I'd give Pearl an absolute humdinger of a Valentine's night. One riddled with romance. Because Pearl's a keeper, that's why. I was quietly confident in the planning stages, let's put it that way. With London as my canvas, what could go wrong?

I affixed my tie and beret and met her under the clock at Waterloo as per. We kicked proceedings off on the London Eye, Pearl's favourite ferris wheel. We took our usual capsule and I taped my bluetooth speaker to the window. Lionel Richie filled our orb like a gas as we sipped Prosecco from my Evian water bottle.

I then knocked Pearl sideways by whisking her off to a 'lovers' cinema' in Soho. The concept is that every seat is on the back row, which they've done by pulling out all the other seats and they run at a loss. We watched 'The Road to Perdition' and canoodled a little and then headed east.

I'd found a restaurant called Candle where not only were the tables candlelit but also they cooked by candlelight and, when you ate, the waiter illuminated your fork with a lighter as you moved it to your lips. I kissed Pearl by the burning water wheel and then we went further east still.

We were lucky enough to get a late-night table in Last Rolo for dessert. We drank coffee and ate their famous deep-fried last Rolos and we paid the extra to go into the kitchen and see the porters binning the Rolos that weren't the last ones.

We were fat with ardour when our Über came, I'd clicked yes to the 'romance' option and the back seat was festooned with rose petals and honey, the latter of which ruined Pearl's frock and also my rugby shorts. We shook hands at Pearl's drop-off and I waited for her jet-black front door to shut.

My heart was churning with love as we sailed back through the capital. I gawped cheerfully out of the window and marvelled at the other lovebirds, walking on air amongst the great landmarks of London. A couple were making out against the front of Hamleys and I bit my lip in approval. ■

→ 'Here We Go Round The Mulberry Bush. An Anthology of Poems & Conversations (From Outside)' by Tim Key is out on Feb 14. 'Tim Key: Mulberry' is at Soho Theatre, Feb 9-26.

HYPE DISH
Rita's indulgent tear-and-share garlic bread
DISSECTION

What goes into the London plates that everyone bangs on about

FLUFFY, FRAGRANT AND dripping in butter. When Rita's launched its one-of-a-kind garlic bread at its Soho restaurant, the dish sold out on day one. 'It's satisfying, salty and a little bit nostalgic,' says co-founder Gabriel Price. 'I grew up between here and the States,

and the dish is a meeting of two of my favourite things: the garlic bread from a Crouch End pizzeria and the warm Parker House rolls you get with dinner in the US.' He explains its magic formula. ■ *Chiara Wilkinson*
→ 49 Lexington St. £4.50.



LITTLE ESSEX STREET WC2R

THE STREET THAT CHANGED MY LIFE

Author *Jacqueline Wilson* recalls getting her first book deal

WHEN I WAS in my early twenties, I sent out my first novel, but people were turning it down. A year or so went by, and I received a letter from Macmillan publishers inviting me to their offices in Little Essex Street. By that stage, I was despairing – I thought they'd pat me on the head and say 'nice try, dear'.

I was living in Kingston upon Thames at the time. When I was younger, my mum used to take me into London to visit Selfridges at Christmas, but I didn't really know other parts of the city. I set off for Waterloo and walked along the Strand, before I was ushered into a grand boardroom, all mahogany and gleaming. It was like I'd been removed from my ordinary life and there was this magical life of luxury and culture that I had one toe in.

The head of Macmillan's crime list told me that my book, 'Hide and Seek', was going to be published. Afterwards, I skipped down the street and bought an egg-salad sandwich on the Strand to celebrate. I'd wanted to be a writer since I was six years old, so it meant the world to me. Nothing's ever been as exciting as that moment. ■ *Interview by Chiara Wilkinson*

→ Jacqueline Wilson is at the Imagine Children's Festival at the Southbank Centre on Feb 20.



The green butter

'We purée garlic with parsley and add it to butter with parmesan and pepper. It's indulgent, smooth and very buttery. We sprinkle sea salt on the roll to hold the butter in place.'

The parmesan

'We shave a little cheese on top of the butter for an extra flourish of flavour. We use Grana Padano from an Italian supplier – it's the perfect box-ticking cheese, not too heavy.'

The garlic

'We go through a lot of garlic – we make about three kilos of this butter a day. It's made with confit garlic as well as raw, so it has a warm, roasted flavour, but is also punchy.'

The bread

'We cook the dough in garlic oil. It's baked just before service in a very hot oven to make a chewy crust and a pillowy soft centre that soaks up the butter.'

The process

'When you pull the bread apart, the butter starts to melt and you can dunk it in. Sharing food at the beginning of a meal brings everyone together.'

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London restaurant staff on what *not* to do on a date

The silent witnesses share the worst dates they've seen play out

Don't flirt with the staff

'I've seen a couple gaze into each others eyes only for the woman to go to the bathroom and the man pass a piece of paper with his phone number on to the waitress. The waitress gave the piece of paper to the woman on her return from the bathroom and she made a quick exit. He was left with a red face and the bill.' *Tim Healy, owner, Joe Allen*

Don't be late

'A gentleman was incredibly late for a date and his excuse was that he'd got caught up shaving himself from head to toe in preparation. Why he felt the need to approach the date as if swimming the channel is a mystery best left unsolved.' *Olga Turral, waiter, The Pig & Butcher*

Don't try to blag it with the wine list

'Don't show off about wine if you clearly have no idea. More than once, I've had someone tell me they hate sauvignon blanc, but love sancerre (sauvignon blanc from the Loire Valley), which is a sticky one to explain without making them sound stupid to the guest they're trying to impress.' *Ian Toogood, general manager, Launceston Place*

Don't be a dick

'We once had a couple on a first date. He was on time, she was ten minutes late. When she arrived, he tapped his watch and said: "You are very, very late!" before even saying hello. Needless to say, she had a glass of water and left. It was painful to watch.' ■ *Rizwan Khan, general manager, Junsei*

ASK AN EDITOR

Your going-out problems solved by Time Out editors

Felix from Archway asks:
'What's the best cinema in London for a date? I'm looking for somewhere with a romantic vibe, where you won't have people sitting right next to you and munching popcorn in your ear.'



Phil de Semlyen,
global film editor

The first time I went on a movie date with my partner was to a screening of 'Roman Holiday' and I fell asleep (in my defence, I was quite jet-lagged). So am I the best judge of what makes a good



cinema date? Possibly not. But I would recommend cosying up in one of London's snug below-ground screens, like the **Curzon Bloomsbury** or the swish new **Odeon West End**. Other date-friendly spots include the **Everyman Canary Wharf** – easily the most romantic thing in Docklands – and Homerton's beautiful **The Castle**, which is run by a couple and thus has love vibes built in. Oh, and of course, Notting Hill's super-comfortable **Electric**, which even has beds and blankets. You know, in case one of you is jet-lagged. ■

WORD ON THE STREET

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

'Making lunch is relentless, don't you think?'

'I'm only wearing my lovely red suede boots in posh weather.'

'Can we order food first and then talk about your teeth?'

'I've always been big on hand-washing, even before the pandemic.'

'I liked that Guinness cake. Couldn't taste the Guinness, though.'

'Why is it so hard to eat bombay mix without dropping it on the floor?'

'Is it okay if I ask you questions about vinegar?'

'I can't deal with your toxic productivity.'

'Don't drag Beyoncé into this.'

'I think I've got a tomato seed up my nose.'

Overheard something weird? Tweet us #wordonthestreet @timeoutlondon



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MAYOR OF LONDON



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The pleasure's all hers

A smash-hit second album, a Brit nomination and fresh sense of her own identity – it's been a big year for Self Esteem. *Kate Lloyd* finds out how she got there.
Portraits Vic Lentaigne

'WHAT WOULD Rita Ora do?'

That's a question Rebecca Taylor – aka Self Esteem, pop artist and cover star of *Time Out*'s *very romantic* Valentine's issue – asks herself a lot.

How would Rita Ora pose if she was asked to 'act natural' in an outfit that's just a shirt, tie and some very big earrings? Would Rita Ora drink the champagne brought to the *Time Out* cover shoot to use as a prop? Would she lick a lollipop with 'I fucking love me' written on it? The 'Rita Ora Test' has even led to Taylor getting the same personal trainer as the singer. ('As I'm lifting, I'm like: Yes, this is literally what Rita would do!')

And nearly every time she brings it up, it's followed by a massive, filthy laugh.

'It's a big part of my artistic process. Hahaha!'

Second acts

That laugh (which is still reverberating around my head days later) has been ringing out across the empty *Time Out* office for an hour now. It's Friday night and Taylor and I have somehow managed to work our way through a screwtop bottle of prosecco as we chat. To be fair, the 35-year-old – who rose to fame in '00s folk band Slow Club – has plenty of success to toast. Over the past 12 months, she has gone from retired indie star to hyped pop powerhouse.

Her second solo album, 'Prioritise Pleasure', was released in 2021 and became a cult hit with a certain type of millennial who'd got better at saying 'no' to stuff during the pandemic. Covering the pressures to be thin and hairless, get married, have babies and hide our greedy, lazy, horny, moody bits, the record sounded like the posts of 1,000 body-positive influencers smushed into 45 minutes of very fun bangers. People related hard. I remember being forwarded the single 'I Do This All the Time' – a spoken-word track with lyrics like 'When I'm buried in the ground/I won't be able to make your birthday drinks but I will still feel guilty' – by friends, like it was a meme.

The result, for Taylor, has been a brand new fanbase. She's even been nominated for Best Newcomer at tonight's Brits. But the best thing to come out of this era, she says, is how it's made her feel about herself. 'You get stuck on this conveyor belt of "To be a good friend, you have to be all these things",' she says. 'Or: "You need to get married and have babies." It's not sustainable.' She sits across from me in double denim, her Telfar bag plonked on the table. 'I feel deep stress if I can't be exactly what you want me to be. I think other people feel like that. I think other *women* feel like that. And I just put it into words. It's like a really gentle, radical statement.'





Humble beginnings

The origin story of Self Esteem goes something like this: Taylor grew up in Rotherham, just outside Sheffield, with parents who were shy, unassuming ‘Sylvanian Family people’. She spent a lot of time on her own ‘playing imagination games’, which is why she reckons she has so many wild ideas now. Her parents were eager to let her try everything she fancied, from cricket (which she had the talent to do professionally) to music, which is how she ended up in Slow Club.

The band – started by Taylor and friend Charles Watson – were the kind of group that introverted guys on Tinder would be surprised you’d heard of. ‘Our fans were heteronormative couples,’ she says. ‘And I was a repressed queer person in a band with people that were happily settled down. At gigs I was like: Why isn’t anyone snogging *meeee?*’ In fact, Slow Club’s first video, released in 2006, is so ‘indie twee’ you half expect a ukulele-wielding Zooey Deschanel to show up in it. ‘We thought we were so cool,’ says Taylor. ‘But there was an inherent uncoolness to that whole indie era. That’s why there’s nostalgia for it.’

By 2017, Taylor was feeling increasingly disillusioned with male-centric band life. She started turning to pop acts – Rihanna, Beyoncé, Katy Perry, ‘even, like, Jesse fucking J’ – for inspiration. They were the kind of performers the rest of the band ‘scuffed at’. ‘They didn’t want to hear about them and they certainly didn’t want

to be influenced by them,’ she says. She obsessed over the work of female performance artists like Marina Abramović and the queens of TV show ‘Ru Paul’s Drag Race’ (‘I’m into the lives of these people in the way that a bloke might care about Ronaldo’). And then she started writing her own stuff. ‘I stopped equating “being good” with being “what men wanted”,’ she says.

Was leaving the band awkward?

She pauses.

‘I did a soft exit,’ she says. ‘It was like: I’m gonna maybe do this, or maybe be back. That wasn’t very cool of me but I was fucking shit-scared.’

A turning point

What Taylor became was a performer with Gemma Collins-levels of comedy swagger. The kind who, at our Hoxton Hotel cover shoot, can go from making a jellyfish-shaped, Muppet-textured dress look high fashion, to describing its lumpy train as its ‘ballsacks’, to pretending to fellate a wine bottle to referring to herself as a ‘Tesco catalogue model’, all in under two minutes.

It’s exactly what Londoners want from a pop star in 2022. A singer who – while on all-fours with two assistants attempting to pull off her shoes – asks a PR: ‘Can you video this for social?’ It’s also exactly how Taylor is even without an audience. She has the energy of that girl at school who’d always lure you into trouble. Her stories are laced with sideways jokes and overshares that make you

THREE BEST DATE SPOTS IN LONDON



Rowans Bowl

‘The fact that you can get frozen Margaritas on tap and you don’t even have to bowl is very romantic to me.’

Tate Modern

‘You’ve got the river, you’ve got the nice bar and you’ve got quite a lot of other nice bars nearby. And I’d like it if someone wanted to take me to see some art.’

Gordon’s Wine Bar

‘I feel like the “Ratatouille” rat there, with all the different wines and cheeses. There’s this bit in that movie where he bites some cheese and a bit of apple and he gets fireworks in his brain. That’s me at Gordon’s.’



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Self Esteem

feel part of a secret club with her: 'I have this theory that when I feel like the rat from "Ratatouille" I feel most like myself.' Or: 'If Miley Cyrus wants to come to my flat in Hackney Wick for a chicken dinner, I'm ready.' She talks fast and loud. That is, until she lands on a painful topic.

I have to lean over the table to hear about the period of poor mental health that came before she created Self Esteem: 'I felt like I was wrong or bad and that everyone hated me.' Her speech slows down when describing a tour manager who everyone loved but who was 'a fucking sexist pig' to her. 'No one cared,' says Taylor. One particular incident stands out in her mind. He told her to put her dress on and stop complaining and said: 'You'd be working in McDonald's if you weren't doing this.' It was a turning point.

When Taylor talks about the state of the music industry, she speaks so softly I basically have to lip read. 'It's fucked,' she says. 'I make no money from the sales of my records, only from my live shows, but they cost a lot to put on. When you look at who's in the charts, it's [often] people who come from money because that's what's easier for labels. It took me years to notice. I was like: Why do I have to move in and out of London all the time in order to afford to live, when my peers don't?'

It means that, like many thirtysomething Londoners, Taylor is still flat-sharing. 'I can't do it any more,' she says. 'I want to eat cereal by the sink, no questions asked. I want to not get awkward texts about "being a bit quieter".'

Sometimes she fantasises about living in a big house in Sheffield.

'But, honestly, nothing makes me happier than putting on boots and a fucking outfit,' she says. 'Trotting to the tube and being in London.'

Shapeshifting

Given this is Time Out's *very romantic* issue, it feels only right that we move from housemates to the other great millennial bugbear – dating apps.

Taylor avoided Hinge for a long time in case she bumped into a Slow Club fan. She tried the exclusive celebrity dating app Raya, but the closest she came to a date was almost meeting someone who was in the Blue Man Group.

Her life has been one of many short relationships: 'I get asked: When are you going to stop being like this? And my question is: What if I never [want to] stop?' But Taylor's attitude has altered a bit recently. 'It's flipped from being a sort of PlayStation game of "How do I absolutely definitely get picked?" to "What do I actually want?"' Taylor realised as a teenager that she might be attracted to girls. 'I'm out as a bisexual person. But for a long time I wasn't,' she says. It's something she'd had an inkling about for while: 'It was the first time I saw two hot girls kiss at [Sheffield club night] Corporation. I was like: I've enjoyed this too much.'

Once she came out, she started to notice that she'd 'shapeshift' to appeal to the men she dates in a way she never does for women. 'With women, I love to make plans and tell them "This is where we're going"; she says. 'But when I'm with men I become this diminutive bullshit.'



'I stopped equating "being good" with being "what men wanted"'



Self-acceptance

We neck the dregs of our prosecco and head to the pub with the rest of the Time Out team. Taylor grabs a half-pint and entertains office gossip as if she's not an award-nominated pop star.

It would be easy to position her as a kind of real-talk, girlboss, empowerment-anthemist. But the reality of hanging out with her is far more fun. Taylor is a harbinger of chaos. And while, elsewhere, being a modern feminist means reading 'manifesto' books, going to panel talks and posting Instagram pictures of period bloat, she just preaches having a laugh.

'I don't want to be like a Dove advert,' she says, cackling. 'What I am trying to do is accept myself for exactly who I am. It shouldn't feel radical – all I want to do is eat while I watch the telly, get pissed if I want, have sex with who I want – but it does.' ■

→ The album 'Prioritise Pleasure' is out now. Self Esteem performs at Kentish Town Forum on Mar 24.

Find more names to watch at [timeout.com/2022artists](https://www.timeout.com/2022artists)

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This vibrant pea and leek soup is packed with veg and feeds a family of 4 for under a fiver. So make soup, a cheap and easy way to help our health and the planet, one bowl at a time.



The Greengrocer Garden Peas 850g, 52p. Sainsbury's Loose leeks (£1.90/kg, - 1 leek approx. 62p). Sainsbury's British White Potatoes 2.5kg, 91p. Vegetable Stock Cubes 10 x 10g, 50p. JS Mixed seeds 100g, 90p. Sainsbury's Fresh Packed Mint 30g, 47p. Total cost £3.92. Based on four people, cost per portion is 98p. Subject to availability. Price and product may vary in Locals. Prices correct at time of going to print. Research shows eating in line with UK dietary guidelines will be better for the planet than the current average UK diet. Find out more at <https://about.sainsburys.co.uk/helpingeveryoneeatbetter> Recipe serves 4 and can be found at: <https://recipes.sainsburys.co.uk/recipes/pea-and-leek-soup> Peas are high in protein. Source for nourish soil claim: <https://www.pgro.org/downloads/PGROBLUEPRINTFORPULSES.pdf>



Scan for recipe.



25 things that will change our cities this year

From virtual-reality gigs and ironic 'indie sleaze' nights to longer weekends and greener cities, we explore how the world will evolve in 2022. Illustrations *Hedof*

1 We'll talk to strangers in restaurants



In 2014, I launched the first **Time Out Market** in Lisbon. And in the last eight years, I've been working to open new

FOOD & DRINK

ones across the world. But no matter where I am, there's one thing I've noticed happening more and more. People sit at our communal tables and talk to other people. They're asking where they got their food from, starting conversations and making new friends. That's right, strangers talking to strangers, voluntarily.

It's something that's increased since the pandemic started. And while you might think that in the age of social distancing

we would all want to keep away from strangers, it's not the case. People are craving human interaction, so much so that they're finally starting to chat to people they don't know.

It's true that communal tables in restaurants aren't a new thing, especially in London. Breakfast joints were the first to use this trick. The purpose was functional: how can you make the most of a tiny space that depends on a short peak

moment? By seating people together, of course. But let's be honest: mornings are probably not the ideal time to strike up a new friendship. Then came the trend for chef-counters. But all they did was help customers get a good look at the chef, rather than encourage them to chat to the person sitting next to them. Communal tables have always felt like an unwelcome guest in a restaurant, with customers crammed next to strangers pretending they're not there. But I think this is the year that changes for good.

I've spoken to chefs and restaurateurs who are embracing communal tables – most of their guests don't mind sitting with people they've never met. In fact, they get more out of it. That's why many places are finally replacing small tables with two or three big ones, where individuals or small groups can connect over food.

So forget intimate corners and private booths. This is the year of the big buzzy table. Food brings people together. After the last two years, talking to strangers while you eat might seem like an unlikely trend for 2022, but actually, it's exactly what we all need right now.

→ João Cepeda, president and creative director of Time Out Market.

2 Zero-alcohol is the future

Bars and brands are falling over themselves (in a very sober kind of way) to meet the rocketing demand for new alcohol-free drinks. Think sophisticated no-ABV spirits or CBD tipples that deliver the buzz without the booze.

3 Apps won't replace local shops

Grocery delivery apps like Jiffy, Getir and Gorillas have exploded in the last few years. But can they bring us fresh pasta or orange wine? Generally not. That's why curated food-and-drink shops will continue to thrive, like new grocery store Gladwell's in Camberwell, or lockdown fave Shop Cuvée, which continues to do the Lord's work by delivering bougie wine by bike to Londoners all over the city.

4 Pop-up dining is ramping up

More people in hospitality want to be flexible, creative and experimental. Chef collabs, pop-ups and supper clubs allow home cooks and top chefs to mess about at their mates' restaurants or a rented space without committing to a permanent spot.

5 Eco eating will grow

Put down your Greggs vegan sausage roll: plant-based food is surging in sophistication, with dishes like Mallow's chocolate financier and Fatt Pundit's momos pleasing converts and long-term veggies alike.



Charity shops in the UK prevent

339k

tonnes of clothes from going to landfill every year

GREEN CITIES

6 Our cities are getting greener (literally)



Most cities are steel-and-concrete jungles. But this is slowly changing as they redesign themselves for the twenty-first century. This means going wild for greenery, fighting the climate crisis by planting stuff.

Perhaps the most ambitious form of greening are 'urban forests'. In Paris, Mayor Anne Hidalgo plans to create wooded areas next to landmarks like the Hôtel de Ville. 'The idea is to provide an urban cooling in cities that are confronted with the effects of global warming,' says Christophe Najdovski, the deputy mayor of Paris in charge of urban greening.

But finding space for trees in cities can be tricky. Italian architect Stefano Boeri came up with the revolutionary *bosco verticale* ('vertical forest') in Milan. Two shrub-covered residential blocks hold 800 trees – the same as a hectare of woodland.

Other cities are creating green space by revamping existing infrastructure. Inspired by New York's High Line, London is planning a kilometre-long green walkway on railway viaducts between Camden and King's Cross.

Smaller changes can also be powerful. A perfect example are parklets: parking spaces that have been turned into terraces or gardens. They've taken off here, thanks to the London Parklets Campaign, which is calling on Sadiq Khan to allow residents to apply to create them on their streets.

→ Julia Webster Ayuso is a freelance journalist who writes about European cities.

7 Hyperlocal living is happening

Paris's mayor Anne Hidalgo has championed the idea of the '15-minute city', where urbanites can get anything they need within a quarter of an hour's walking or cycling.

8 Pop-ups will transform shops

Mega-retailers like Topshop have been forced to axe high-street stores in the wake of Covid. Now up-and-coming artists and chefs are being handed the keys to city shopfronts.

9 Pedestrians are coming first

Glasgow recently announced a ban on traffic in the city centre, while other world cities are reimagining space to put people first, for cleaner air and happier cities.

10 Re-wear is back

With fast fashion under fire for low pay and its impact on the environment, consumers are looking for sustainable ways to refresh their look. Now stores like hip German chain PickNWeight are outfitting London in vintage finery, while charity shops are getting posher.

49%

of UK adults are either not drinking any alcohol or are planning to cut down soon



11 Immersive theatre is going to get bigger



‘When we first started, nobody used the word “immersive”,’ says Felix Barrett, artistic director of **Punchdrunk**. ‘We were a “site-specific” theatre company. “Immersive” is something that’s come along in the last ten years.’

If 2022 is going to be a big year for what we now call immersive theatre, there is little question as to who is responsible. Punchdrunk is by far the most popular and successful practitioner of it. This spring, its first new show since 2014, ‘The Burnt City’, premieres in its new home of Woolwich. ‘It’s a bit like a comeback album!’ says Barrett. ‘There’s a whole new generation of theatregoers to entice in.’

Punchdrunk is returning to a scene much busier than when it left it, with

ART & CULTURE

The most expensive NFT artwork (*‘Everydays – The First 5000 Days’* by Beeple) sold at a Christie’s auction for more than **\$69m**

several long-running immersive shows: ‘The Great Gatsby’, ‘Doctor Who: Time Fracture’, ‘The War of the Worlds’, and, heck, ‘Mamma Mia! The Party’. A dramatic form that once seemed outré is now widely accepted by theatregoers. In the pipeline for 2022 is a new immersive show based on ‘Peaky Blinders’ and ‘The Gunpowder Plot’ at the Tower of London.

Housed in two vast former arsenal buildings, ‘The Burnt City’ is truly epic. Set at the end of the Trojan War, it’s based on plays by Euripides and Sophocles, plus Fritz Lang’s seminal early sci-fi film ‘Metropolis’. One building will represent Troy the night before it falls. The other a desolate Greece, drained of life by war.

Barrett doesn’t think the wait for the next Punchdrunk show will be as long: ‘We’re ready to push out. We’re going to be a lot more prolific from now on.’ That’s good news: where Punchdrunk blazes the trail, other immersive innovators follow. After a long wait, it’s finally ready to reclaim its crown.

→ Andrzej Łukowski is Time Out’s Theatre editor.

12 There’s a Korean new wave ‘Squid Game’ is just one part of a tide of Korean culture, from BTS to kimchi. Embrace it at culture exhibition ‘Hallyu!’ coming to the V&A in September.

13 Art is going immersive too Art events are going to plunge us into a brave new world of interactivity. Step into a van Gogh painting or discover multisensory contemporary works. The ‘gram pics will be truly dazzling.

14 TV fantasy will be huge HBO is returning to Westeros with its ‘Game of Thrones’ follow-up ‘House of the Dragon’. And Amazon is launching its new spin on ‘The Lord of the Rings’. With its huge budgets, telly is going to be epic.

15 NFTs are getting serious Tradeable digital artworks are set to stop being a (very expensive) gimmick in 2022. A new breed of imaginative ‘crypto-native’ artists (YDAs?) is on the rise and there’s everything to play for.

16 ABBA could change live music for ever



It's time to pull out those platform boots because – SOS! – ABBA are back! The Swedish group have released their first album in 40 years *and* will be performing live again. Well, sort of...

In May, the pop icons are launching 'ABBA Voyage', where they'll perform at a purpose-built arena near the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. In this so-called 'immersive digital concert experience', they will be appearing virtually as digital avatars (dubbed 'Abbatars', of course). 'ABBA Voyage' will digitally recreate the group as they were in their '70s prime.

The Abbatars are not holograms – condemned by many as ghoulish ever since Tupac Shakur virtually appeared on stage at Coachella in 2012. Instead, ABBA were filmed over five weeks by 160 motion-capture cameras as they performed the songs.

Could this be the future of the live stadium experience? If they were canny, artists like Madonna and Jay-Z could record themselves now for posterity: or the technology could be used to bring, say, David Bowie back from the dead.

This is all providing it works, of course. How the Abbatars will be presented is a closely kept secret. Still, even if they turn out to give concertgoers nightmares for years, ABBA's music will live on in all its cheesy, catchy joy.

→ Alim Kheraj is a freelance culture journalist.

17 It's time to crypto-party

Miami bars are already offering Bitcoin ATMs and a stockmarket ticker on the dancefloor to check your portfolio as you shake your moneymaker.

18 Clubs are embracing all

A new generation is creating club nights that centre on under-represented groups: Hackney Wick queer festival Body Movements, or Dialled In, an all-dayer inspired by the South Asian underground.

19 Parties are 24/7

The edgiest nights are running round the clock. Fabric's Continuum events run for more than 24 hours, while Adonis's NYD kicked off at 8am for a full stint of brekkie-to-break-of-dawn fun.

20 'Indie sleaze' nights are coming for your youth

You can almost hear the eldritch wails of thirtysomethings as the dark days of their past are brought screaming into the light. Yes, the mid-noughties revival is here: eyeliner, side-swept fringes and grungy hedonism.

MUSIC & NIGHTLIFE



Read more about trends for 2022 at [timeout.com](https://www.timeout.com)

21 Rail travel will get even cooler



You don't have to love trains as much as TikTok's 'Train Guy' to be thrilled about some of 2022's railway news. This is hopefully the year we start exploring again and rail travel is going to be where it's at.

Across Europe, new sleeper routes are popping up to satisfy the demand for eco-alternatives to flying. The new Stockholm-Hamburg night service will allow you to slumber your way through 670 miles of overnight rail travel. There are also plans for night services from Brussels to Prague, Zurich to Rome and Edinburgh to Paris. There's even a revival of the iconic Trans-Europe Express in the works (yep, the one from the Kraftwerk song).

Bernhard Rieder of Nightjet operator ÖBB, the largest provider of night trains in Europe, expects to 'double passenger numbers by 2026'. Among Nightjet's new offerings is a service between Paris and Vienna – in effect restoring some of the route of the famous Orient Express.

TRAVEL & LEISURE

In the UK, apart from the Elizabeth Line (aka Crossrail) *finally* opening, there's a new four-and-a-half-hour service between London and Edinburgh, with some tickets costing just £20.

New railway lines don't just appear overnight. But there are signs across Europe that things are changing. In fact, 2022 could be the year that the second golden age of rail really gets up steam.

→ Ed Jefferson is a freelance journalist who writes a lot about trains.



22 We're all into crystals now

It's little surprise that people have turned to crystals to regain a sense of control, filling their homes with rose quartz to 'life-changing' moldavite. Do they work? Well, it's... unclear.

23 The new weekend is longer

Two-day weekends? How very retro. This year, 30 companies will trial the four-day working week, to see whether employees can be just as productive on an 80 percent schedule.

24 The outdoors is here to stay

If Covid has taught us one thing, it's that alfresco socialising is actually nice (apart from graveyard tinnies in the February drizzle). London's restaurants and bars have spruced up their outdoor areas with covers, plants and (crucially) heaters. We're all so Continental now.

25 Taking a workcation has never been so popular

Tackling your inbox isn't half as bad when you're sipping sangria in Spain. The past couple of years have seen a boom in flexi-working, so mix business and leisure. Just as long as you've got a failsafe technique for getting sand out of your keyboard. ■

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Travel

Edited by Huw Oliver
timeout.com/travel

Five unexpected Euro city breaks

Odense

So you think you know the Continent? Well, here's a load of lesser-known places you should definitely, definitely hit up



DO YOU REMEMBER when you'd nip over to a foreign metropolis and just... wander? You'd order an espresso at a zinc bar, you'd hit up some museums, you'd order the local liqueur, you might even go *out* out. Above all, you'd be spontaneous.

New variants permitting, in 2022, touch wood, we reckon the city break will make its long-awaited comeback. So if you're planning a holiday and need some pointing in the right direction, we've consulted our local experts in major cities across the Continent to name the lesser-known places you should be planning a trip to this year. ■
Huw Oliver



Kaunas

The city that birthed myriad fairytales

Just 90 minutes by train from Copenhagen is dinky, charming **Odense**. The new architectural wonder that is the Hans Christian Andersen Museum is an affectionate tribute to the fairytale author. With its inventive biographical exhibits – including theatrical imaginings of his memoirs and inanimate projects that come alive (much like in his stories) – this thoroughly fun museum would no doubt have delighted the Danish master. A slick light railway is being built across the city and is due to open this spring, making the beautiful old quarters and vibrant newer neighbourhoods much easier to hop between. *Alex Hayward*





Hans Christian Andersen Museum

Germany's sunny, sustainable new tourist destination

Freiburg im Bresau is a remarkable example of how 'green living' and 'urban sprawl' can go hand in hand. The south-west German city has long championed conservation and sustainability, with several recent initiatives carrying this tradition onward, including a million-euro initiative to plant new trees and Dietenbach, a climate-neutral eco-district that is currently under construction. Revered as the sunniest (and warmest) city in Germany, Freiburg is the gateway to the Black Forest, which is a short hike from the centre and makes a breathtaking day trip. *Nathan Ma*

The low-key 'smart city' with a thing for protest music

Birthplace of hashish-inspired protest music rebetiko and home of the popular Mill of Elves Christmas market, under-the-radar **Trikala** in north-western Thessaly is Greece's first official 'smart city'. This tree-shaded spot is topped by its Byzantine castle and criss-crossed by the trout-filled Lithaios River. With a bike-sharing scheme and a load of new cycle paths, it's easy to get around – and when temperatures soar, there are pitstops where you can pick up (free) water. Go in August for a folk festival, dedicated to legendary composer Vassilis Tsitsanis. Plus, the beautiful Varlaam monastery is just a short hike away. *Heidi Fuller-Love*

The cultural capital filled with beautiful buildings

Former Lithuanian capital **Kaunas** was left to wither during the Soviet era. That could all change in 2022, as the city has been crowned European



Kaunas



Trikala



Brno

Capital of Culture. An astonishing 1,000 events are planned and visitors will be able to discover the city's existing delights, like its photogenic modernist buildings, the MK Čiurlionis Museum of Art (dedicated to the musician and symbolist painter) and the bizarre Devils' Museum. When it's dark, mingle on the terrace of Kultura Kavine and do karaoke at Dzem. *HO*

The Czech Republic's laidback second city

Although sandwiched between Prague and Vienna, self-confident **Brno** is no middle child. Once a powerhouse dubbed the 'Moravian

Manchester', the laidback Czech second city has repositioned itself as a post-industrial science and tech hub. But you'll find plenty of clues to Brno's layered past at a clutch of offbeat underground attractions, including the brick cisterns at Žlutý Kopec, communist-era nuclear bunker 10-Z and the 'Denis' bomb shelter under the cathedral. The food and drink scene is reinventing itself too, from contemporary international at Element, to Výčep na Stojáka, a modern take on a traditional pub. ■ *David Creighton*

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HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN MUSEUM: LAERNE BECK; JOHANSEN; VARLAAM MONASTERY: NEAR TRIKALA AND STURGE; KAUNAS CASTLE: SHUTTERS STOCK; BRNO: BOJOND HORVATH; SHUTTERS STOCK.COM



Orchids After Hours

Sporty stuff

🤩 The Six Nations at Boxpark

Boxpark is in the big league when it comes to screening huge national sporting events, with luminaries such as Danny Dyer and Stormzy swinging by during last year's Euros. As usual, it'll have a whole squad of former international players hosting England's Six Nations matches, so expect massive crowds, free-flowing pints and an unbeatable atmosphere.

→ Boxpark Croydon and Boxpark Wembley, Until Mar 19. Free entry.

🍷🤩 The Six Nations at Vinegar Yard

Buzzy London Bridge food court Vinegar Yard is partnering with Guinness for Six Nations screenings in its heated, covered

outdoor courtyard. During matches, it'll be offering up plenty of the black nectar, while the Bad Boy Pizza Society peddles 'England Margs'. As far as we can tell these are just regular Margheritas with a red cross of tomato sauce on top. Patriotism never tasted so good!

→ Vinegar Yard. Until Mar 19. Free or £6 for a guaranteed seat plus a pint.

🍷 Queens Winter Olympics Challenge

Get into the Winter Olympics spirit at London's icy playground, Queens, where you can battle your buds in an epic contest combining ice curling and bowling (that

famous winter sport!). Afterwards, catch up on the action from Beijing on screens throughout the venue while enjoying an Olympic-sized burger feast from MEATliquor. Better yet, if you hit a bullseye while curling, score more than 150 points in your bowling match and demolish your meal in under

50 seconds, you'll win the entire experience for free.

Worth the indigestion? Probably not!

→ Queens. Feb 10-11, 17-18, 24-25. £49.50pp.

🍷 The Super Bowl at The Blues Kitchen

Camden's late-night live music joint will be staying open till 3.30am on Super

Bowl Sunday and serving pitchers, cocktails, burgers and barbecued fare to keep you going during the marathon screening. Get down early to catch live sets from London jazz and blues musicians before the match kicks off at 11.30pm. The half-time show will pale in comparison.

→ The Blues Kitchen Camden. Feb 13. Free entry.

🍷 The Super Bowl at Signature Brew

Touchdown at Signature Brew's Walthamstow venue to witness all the action of the fifty-sixth Super Bowl on a cinema-sized screen while enjoying pitchers of freshly brewed lagers and IPAs, plus an all-American game-day menu of wings and hot dogs. You'll be shouting nonsense about 5-3 defences and wide receivers in no time at all!

→ Signature Brew Blackhorse Road. Feb 13. £6.



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LIONSGATE

Hot dates

C **Outrageous Speed Dating**

Join 'interactive entertainment duo' The Good Time Gals at this speed-dating night, where you'll form teams with other singletons and complete in an epic contest testing your music knowledge, poetry-writing prowess and clay-modelling skills. You'll probably notice if there's any spark there during 'sexy prop-making' round.
→ Tanner Warehouse. Feb 10. £22.

C **Squid Game Dating**

Bond over a mutual love for Netflix hit 'Squid Game' at this quirky dating event. On February 13, you and other singletons will compete in an online game of Red Light, Green Light, then the top 40 contestants will be invited to don turquoise trackies and meet at a secret location for the IRL contest on Valentine's Day. Nothing says romance like a brutal Korean parable about the evils of capitalism, and even if you don't find love, there's a cash prize of £100 for the last dater standing.
→ Secret location. Feb 13-14. From £10.

Galentine's

E **Dating and Relationships Therapy Comedy Show**

A palette of top stand-up talent will be roasting romance and doing deep dives into dating disasters at this raucous, relationship-themed comedy show staged at east London arts centre Rich Mix.
→ Rich Mix. Feb 13. £20.

C **Her Hustle: An Ode to Female Friendships**

Forget girlfriends, boyfriends and life partners. This Valentine's event celebrates the under-recognised romance of female friendships. A bunch of brilliant women have been invited along to share a love letter they've written to their BFF. There'll also be recitations of beautiful letters exchanged between historical female figures, and you can even bring along an ode to your own best bud to read out afterwards. It's all taking place inside the plush Punch Room cocktail bar at swanky Berners Street hotel The London Edition, where you'll be greeted with a cocktail on arrival.
→ The London Edition. Feb 14. £15.



Luisa Omielan's Valentine's Party



Outrageous Speed Dating

Valentine's

C **Valentine's at the Museum**

Enjoy a glass of wine while snooping around the Natural History Museum's galleries after hours at this Valentine's-themed late opening. The ticket price includes admission to the museum's 'Wildlife Photographer of the Year' exhibition, and there'll be plenty more happening throughout the night, including salsa classes, animal encounters and even a harpist playing by the stegosaurus. All in all, a wildly different way to celebrate the day of romance with your lovebird or significant otter.

→ Natural History Museum. Feb 12, 14. From £35.

W **Orchids After Hours**

Immerse yourself in the vibrant colours of Kew's annual orchid festival at this late opening within the botanical garden's cavernous Princess of Wales conservatory. This year's Costa Rica-inspired edition will be brought to

life with music from Latin band Diáspora and an installation from London-based Costa Rican artist Dino Urpí, which you can enjoy while sampling themed cocktails and street food. A fab date that brings a whole new meaning to the phrase

'Say it with flowers!'

→ Kew Gardens. Feb 11-12. £18.

S **Valentine's Dinner in the Painted Hall**

The Painted Hall at Greenwich's Old Royal Naval College is sometimes referred to as 'south London's answer to the Sistine Chapel', and if you've ever had the chance to visit Sir James Thornhill's baroque masterpiece you'll know exactly why. It makes an uber-romantic setting for this three-course dinner, where you and your boo will be greeted with a glass of champers and then serenaded by live piano as you eat. Like in a romcom!
→ Old Royal Naval College. Feb 12. £96.

S **PopHorror's Anti-Valentine's Ball**

Take part in a 'crap card competition', share your unfortunate anecdotes at a dating disaster confessional booth and join in with a power ballad singalong at PopHorror's annual revolt against the day of romance. The longest-standing singleton in the crowd will be crowned Queen of the Ball, while the longest-surviving couple can expect to be consigned to building some IKEA furniture in the corner of the room. The raucous show will be followed by a broken-hearted disco till late.
→ RVT. Feb 14. £15.

C **Luisa Omielan's Valentine's Party**

Comedy queen Luisa Omielan brings her annual Valentine's Day party to one of London's most party-ready venues, the Clapham Grand. After laughing until your sides split you can dance the night away at the afterparty till midnight. If it's good enough for Cinderella...
→ Clapham Grand. Feb 14. £28.50.



Valentine's Dinner in the Painted Hall

Four fabulous spring family getaways

Get outta town! With GWR's Family Tickets, an unforgettable day out from London Paddington is more affordable than ever



Roman Baths

1 A city break Cardiff

Journey time 1 hour 55 minutes
Looking for a city break? In Cardiff, you'll find endless things to do. If you've never been, Cardiff Castle is a must (challenge your kids to spot all the stone creatures on the Animal Wall!). But there are many more family attractions to choose from, including the free-to-enter St Fagan's National Museum of History (it's Wales's most popular heritage attraction for a reason!). Sporty kids will love Treetop Adventure Golf, which is also home to a great bar and café.

2 A cosy country getaway Cheltenham

Journey time 2 hours 3 minutes
If you're a big fan of bundling the kids up in beanies and wellies, packing a picnic and venturing out on a brisk country walk, then Cheltenham's a perfect place to do just that. This picturesque town on

the edge of the Cotswolds is a good base for hiking: a short bus ride takes to you to the Leckhampton Loop, which meanders through gorgeous stretches of the Cotswold Way, past Iron Age remains, Victorian quarries and lovely woodlands. Or you can stay in town and explore the elegant lakes and sweeping lawns of Pittville Park. Then cap it all off with a meal in a cosy pub. You've earned it!

3 An educational holiday Bath

Journey time 1 hour 20 minutes
Hoping to create lasting memories but also boost your kids' IQs? Look no further. Children and adults alike can't help but be fascinated by the atmospheric, ancient Roman Baths – and there's even a free audio guide and activity trails to keep them engaged. Got some bookworms on your hands? The Jane Austen Centre features actors telling her story; or, for something a bit creepier, head to Mary Shelley's



Get there with GWR

Great Western Railway's new range of Family Tickets offers great discounts for up to two adults and four children. GWR trains have toilets and baby-changing facilities, plus a great range of food and drink. And remember: as long as you don't need to reserve a seat, children aged under five travel free.

House of Frankenstein for a spookily immersive journey through her life and work (suitable for kids 12+).

4 A maritime holiday Plymouth

Journey time 3 hours 22 minutes
Who needs a European break when you have Plymouth a train ride away? Devon's historic port city is all charm, with its cobbled streets and pretty harbour – and there's loads to keep the kids entertained. Hop aboard the Cremyll Ferry for top-notch views and cross the River Tamar to Mount Edgcumbe House and Country Park. The National Marine Aquarium is also great fun: you'll find exhibitions all about the world's oceans.



Treetop Adventure Golf

→ Find more inspiration at www.gwr.com/family



Walthamstow Record Fair

Markets and more

E Walthamstow Record Fair

Crate-diggers of east London assemble! Walthamstow is getting a new regular record fair courtesy of the gang behind Hackney Flea Market, and it starts this very weekend. Head over to Truman's Social Club to browse more than 40 stalls packed with rarities, collectibles and indie gems, before having your treasured wax restored by resident record cleaners. Pure heaven for collectors.

→ Truman's Social Club. Feb 13. £1 entry.

W Zero-Emissions Arts Market

After a successful debut in November, Hammersmith's eco-friendly arts market is back. A selection of local makers and businesses will be peddling their wares, with everything arriving on site courtesy of the area's zero-emissions delivery service Parcels Not Pollution. There'll be musical entertainment throughout the day, as well as free cycle training and bike maintenance sessions on offer to encourage Londoners to travel around more sustainably.

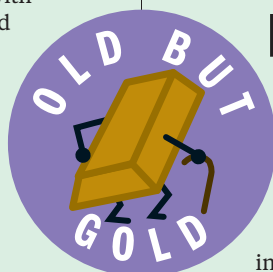
→ Hammersmith Bridge Rd (under the flyover). Feb 13. Free entry.



S So Last Century Vintage Fair

South London's travelling mid-century market is rocking up in Catford once more this weekend, with more than 50 hand-picked traders flogging everything from classic furniture pieces, textiles and homeware to '60s and '70s posters, antique books and retro records.

→ St Dunstan's College. Feb 12-13. £3 entry.



Museum extras

C A Queer Tour of Sir John Soane's Museum

From a bust of Sappho in the dining room to artefacts purchased from the notorious novelist William Beckford, there's plenty of queer history to uncover in the eclectic collections of the neoclassical London architect Sir John Soane. You'll hear about these and plenty more at this enlightening candlelit late in celebration of LGBT+ History Month.

→ Sir John Soane's Museum. Feb 16. £20.

W Beyond the Music with Mitch Winehouse

Amy Winehouse's father Mitch and music writer Lucy O'Brien will be discussing the late singer's musical influences at this talk, which coincides with the Design Museum's exhibition about the iconic Londoner, 'Amy: Beyond the Stage'.

→ Design Museum. Feb 22. £15.



ONE

UNMISSABLE THING

The Green Planet AR Experience

Wander through a living rainforest and a series of 'digitally enhanced biomes' before meeting a hologram of David Attenborough at this free immersive exhibit celebrating the release of his new BBC series.

→ 55 Regent St. Feb 11-Mar 9. Free.

TimeOut OFFERS



10% off tickets for the Bob Marley 'One Love Experience' exhibition



Discover more offers at [timeout.com/offers](https://www.timeout.com/offers)

Things to Do

Big-name club nights

S Sherelle Phonox Residency

High-tempo specialist and NTS Radio host Sherelle is the latest hyped selector to take up residency at Brixton nightclub Phonox. She'll be playing her usual idiosyncratic blend of jungle, drum 'n' bass and footwork on Friday nights throughout February, alongside a roster of special guests including Samurai Breaks and Nia Archives. → Phonox. Feb 11, 18, 25. From £10.

E DJ Boring

London-based Aussie producer DJ Boring will be bringing his infectious, synth- and bassline-heavy grooves to Shoreditch this March for a follow-up to his sold out Corsica Studios show back in November. Tickets are already on the third release, so be quick about it if you want to catch '6am Mimosa' played live. → Village Underground. Mar 11. £20.

Film fests

N Banff Mountain Film Festival

You'll find stunning cinematography, breathtaking locations and impressive feats of human endurance on display in the shorts selected for this adventure-themed travelling film festival. We like the sound of 'From My Window', in which a woman with cerebral palsy attempts to conquer the peaks of her native Colorado with her blind mentor. → Union Chapel. Mar 14-22. From £17.

C BFI Flare

Europe's largest LGBTQ+ film fest is back at BFI Southbank this March, showcasing a mega selection of shorts, feature films and documentaries from around the globe, including loads of UK and world premieres. You can

Time Out London February 8 – 21 2022



Queer cinema, pink wine – there's a do for whatever you're into!

Day. This year's programme includes an evening talk with Black Lives Matter co-founder Patrisse Cullors, a stand-up gig by Guilty Feminist host Deborah Frances-White and the launch of Warsan Shire's hotly anticipated debut full-length poetry collection. → Southbank Centre. Mar 11-13. From £12.

S Ava London

Award-winning Belfast music festival Ava is once again taking over south London megaclub Printworks for the fifth edition of its mammoth electronic music and arts conference. There'll be a jam-packed programme of masterclasses, talks and workshops before a stacked line-up of DJs take to the stage until the early hours. Highlights include a keynote by Irvine Welsh, a Q&A with DJ Carl Cox and sets by Fauzia, Carlton Doom and Maribou State. → Printworks. Mar 18. £40.

Booze fests

S Brew LDN

More than 60 UK brewers will be rocking up to this early summer posh beer fest that bills itself as 'the biggest and most diverse craft beer festival in the UK'. There'll be street food to soak up the pints, as well as DJs spinning tunes throughout your seshing. Good luck hauling yourself on to the dancefloor after all that boozing. → Printworks. May 6-7. From £22.50

W The Rosé Festival

Fond of a pink wine when the warmer weather rolls around? You'll want to check out this new three-day festival in the picturesque grounds of Fulham Palace, where you can sample the wares of more than 40 leading rosé producers. Echo Falls, begone! → Fulham Palace. May 27-29. From £25.

THE ROYAL BALLET

ROMEO AND JULIET

WATCH IN CINEMAS THIS VALENTINE'S DAY, MON 14 FEB

Shakespeare's enduring love story | Kenneth MacMillan's Classic Ballet | roh.org.uk/cinemas

ROYAL OPERA HOUSE

expect plenty of panel discussions and special events too, and previous editions have included a selection of shorts that can be streamed online for free. Tune into the BFI's social channels on February 15 to catch the programme announcement and make your picks before tickets go on sale on February 24. → BFI Southbank. Mar 16-27. Prices vary.

Sherelle Culture fests

C Wow – Women of the World

The Southbank Centre's long-running female-focused festival is back IRL, bringing a host of world-class speakers, performers and activists together over the weekend after International Women's



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Edited by Rosie Hewitson
 timeout.com/thingstodo @timeoutlondon

Kids

'Peppa Pig: My First Concert'

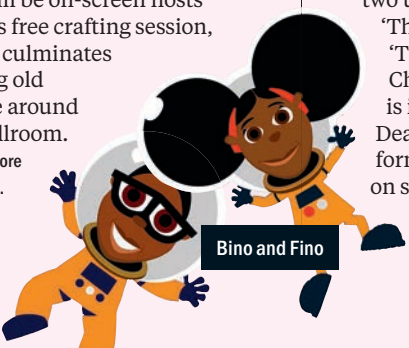
Imagine Children's Festival

Peppa Pig: My First Concert

The twentieth edition of the Southbank Centre's massive kids' festival includes an unmissable concert from everyone's favourite porcine cartoon character, Peppa Pig. She'll be joined by little brother George for an interactive introduction to the sounds of a live orchestra, featuring Mozart, muddy puddles and more. Sounds like a trotter-tapping good time!
 → Queen Elizabeth Hall. Feb 11-13. £20, £15 child.

Crafty Cartoons with Bino and Fino

Created in 2008, 'Bino and Fino' is a hugely popular educational cartoon series that has been translated into ten different African languages. The brother and sister duo will be on-screen hosts for this free crafting session, which culminates in a big old boogie around the ballroom.
 → The Clore Ballroom.
 Feb 12.
 Free.



ZooNation Youth Company's Hip-Hop Half-Term

Get poppin', lockin' and laughin' with the whole family at this day of free movement sessions themed around hip hop music. There's loads going on throughout the day, including a class where you can learn about the origins of different hip hop dance styles, a DJ-led 'dance jam' and a free kids' hip hop workshop. Be sure to head over there at lunchtime to watch a jawdropping performance from the ZooNation Youth Company
 → The Clore Ballroom. Feb 16. Free.

Escape with Jacqueline Wilson

Join bestselling children's author Dame Jacqueline Wilson for this talk on her life and career, where she'll share stories about how she created famous characters like Hetty Feather and Tracy Beaker. The prolific writer will also be revealing details of her two upcoming releases, 'The Runaway Girls' and 'The Primrose Railway Children'. The latter of these is illustrated by Rachel Dean, who will be joining the former children's laureate on stage.
 → Queen Elizabeth Hall. Feb 20.
 £12, £9 child.

PEPPA PIG: SOUTHBANK CENTRE; BINO & FINO: EICLS STUDIOS

Half Term  **london transport museum**

at London Transport Museum

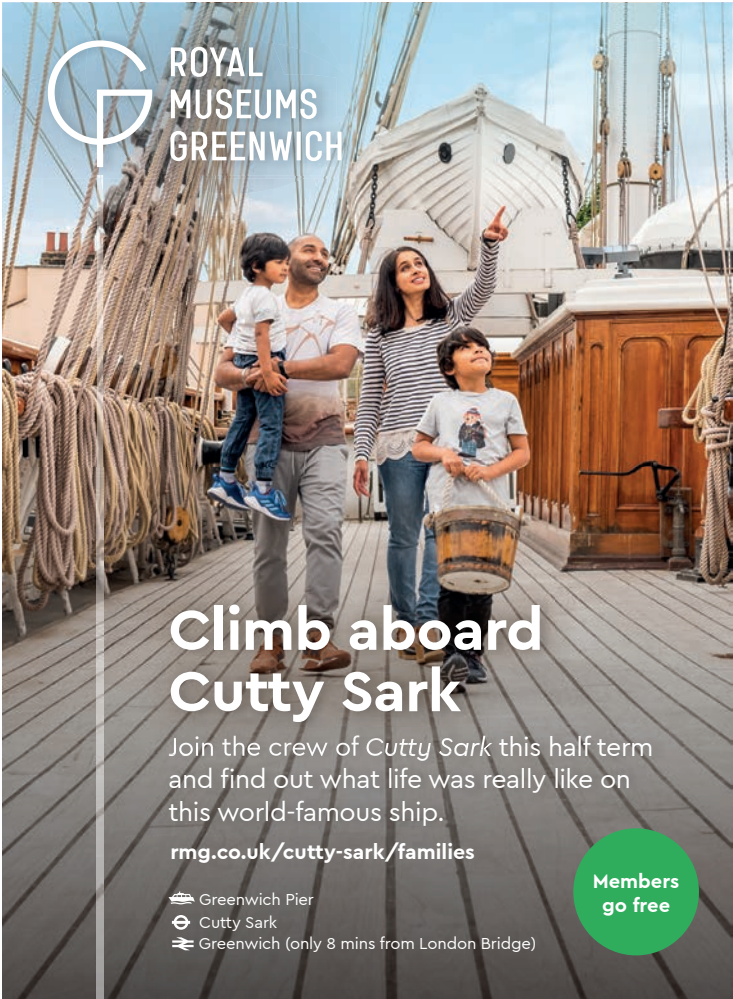
12-20 February 2022



Join activities inspired by our exciting new exhibition, **Legacies: London Transport's Caribbean Workforce** and discover the stories of the people who shaped London.

KIDS GO FREE
Book in advance online at ltmuseum.co.uk

MAYOR OF LONDON  Supported using public funding by **ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND**




 **ROYAL MUSEUMS GREENWICH**

Climb aboard Cutty Sark

Join the crew of *Cutty Sark* this half term and find out what life was really like on this world-famous ship.

rmg.co.uk/cutty-sark/families

 Greenwich Pier
 Cutty Sark
 Greenwich (only 8 mins from London Bridge)

Members go free

 **South Kensington**

WOW



N NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

We know. The natural world is pretty eye-opening.

Explore 4.6 billion years of our planet.
nhm.ac.uk



Science Museum

Half-term at the museums

Family Fun Week

Hop on the train to the London Transport Museum this half-term for a host of bus- and tube-themed activities. Alongside the permanent exhibits, there'll be storytelling sessions and poster design workshops, both of which are inspired by the museum's new 'Legacies' exhibition, which celebrates the generations of Caribbean workers who have kept London's transport systems running.
→ London Transport Museum. Feb 12-20. Free with entry.

Story Seekers

Discover thrilling tales of courage and ingenuity at the Imperial War Museum's interactive storytelling sessions where families can learn about the global impact of conflict while handling real artefacts from the museum's archives. From ingenious nurses to people braving shark-infested waters, you'll hear some surprising and moving stories about the experiences of ordinary people, from WWI up to the present day.
→ Imperial War Museum. Feb 14-18. Free.

Future Explorers

Got a kid who can't stop asking questions? They'll be in their element at these drop-in Science Museum sessions, which put inquisitive youngsters face to face with experts

in a range of disciplines. The focus is on what life's going to be like in 2050, so expect games, fun interactive exhibits and eyebrow-raising demos all about forecasting the future. Will we still use plastic? What will we eat for breakfast? And will everything take place in the metaverse? It's time to find out.
→ Science Museum. Feb 14-18. Free.

Welcome Home Friend

The freshly reopened Museum of the Home is offering a heart-warming family activity series this half-term, themed around Vietnamese culture and making people feel welcome. It's inspired by Nhung N Tran-Davies's book 'The Doll', which details the author's experience of receiving a doll from a kind stranger when her family arrived in Canada after fleeing Vietnam. Kids can hear readings of the story and take part in doll-making and origami workshops with Vietnamese creators.
→ Museum of the Home. Feb 15-19. Free.

Celebrating Peru

Yes, it's Paddington's ancestral home, but Peru's cultural history goes way, way further than marmalade-scoffing bears. Discover its stories during these free family activity sessions over the final few days of the British Museum's 'Peru' exhibition. These include storytelling sessions, a puppetry show called 'Amazon Visions' that explores the jungle's rich animal life, and embroidery workshops for older kids inspired by the rich textiles on display in the exhibition.
→ British Museum. Feb 17-18. Free.



Celebrating Peru



THE PERFECT HALF TERM TREAT



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Gaspard's foxtrot

and *Peter and the Wolf*
with the Philharmonia Orchestra

Wednesday 16 February, 1pm and 3pm
Queen Elizabeth Hall



Narrated by Gaspard the Fox
author Zeb Soanes

Part of the Southbank Centre's
Imagine Children's Festival

Recommended for ages 5+
Tickets: adults £9 / £12, children £4.50 / £6
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Vets in Action

Kids' theatre

W 'Ready, Steady, GO!'

Wimbledon's recently refurbished Polka Theatre is a great destination for parents looking to entertain their young broods during the holidays. This gentle show for ages two to five follows young Sofia, who finds a mountain bike in the shed at the bottom of her garden and embarks on an epic race with her mum. It's written and directed by Polka boss Peter Glanville.

→ Polka Theatre.
Until Mar 27. £14.

C 'Jungle Rumble'

Join ancient elephant Eeli, shy zebra Zella and cheeky monkey Boo as they set out on a fearless journey through the jungle on a tricky mission to rescue their friend Snow, the last white lion, in this family-friendly West End musical created by children's drama school Perform.

→ Fortune Theatre. Feb 14-20. From £15.

N 'Handa's Surprise'

Incorporating puppetry, physical performance, live music and Swahili rhythms, this half-hour show for under fives captures the gentle wit of Eileen Browne's popular picture book, in which young Kenyan heroine Handa goes on a journey to visit her friend Akeyo, meeting various creatures en route who try to distract her.

→ Little Angel Studios.
Feb 9-Apr 16.
£13.50, £11.50 child.

Outdoorsy fun

S 😊 It's a Wild Life

After some good clean half-term fun? Then stay away from the London Wetland Centre! Its free play offerings include a 'Mud Kitchen', where little ones can let their imaginations run riot while crafting culinary delights using pots, pans and a healthy dose of dirt. The rough-and-ready activities continue with an adventure

workshop where they can learn to tie knots, light a fire safely and build a secret den.

→ London Wetland Centre.
Feb 12-20. From free.

N 😊 Vets in Action

This action-packed activity week celebrates the brilliant work of the London Zoo's vets, with a host of talks and demonstrations showing how they take care of the 20,000 creatures that call the zoo home. Junior vets can even don masks and hairnets before helping to examine and treat soft toy versions of the zoo's animals in a mock veterinary centre. Cute!

→ London Zoo. Feb 12-20. Free with entry.

C 😊 Brilliant Birds

Grab a pair of binoculars and see if you can spot some of the feathered friends who live in Hyde Park at this discovery day in the eco-friendly learning centre nestled in the park. Activities also include bird feeder and bird box making, discovery trails and arts and crafts.

→ The LookOut, Hyde Park.

Feb 15-17. Free.



Brilliant Birds

VETS IN ACTION: ZSL LONDON ZOO; BRILLIANT BIRDS: CHRIS O'DONOVAN

Film

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

FILM OF THE WEEK

Born to run

'Flee'



DESPITE CROSSING HALF the globe, Amin Nawabi, the Afghan refugee at the heart of this deeply compassionate, mournful and strikingly original animated documentary, sees virtually none of it. His world encompasses shipping containers, the dank hulls of rickety boats, grim Estonian prison cells, barely-less-grim Moscow apartments and snatched glimpses of cities through truck windows. Always on the move, always scared, always wondering what's next, Amin lives a reality that's a bruising succession of tough choices – mostly made by other people.

It's one of the paradoxes in this gut-punch adult animation – a worthy heir to 'Waltz with Bashir' and Cartoon Saloon's 'The Breadwinner' – that the price of freedom is frequently temporary imprisonment. 'Flee' animates interviews between Amin (a pseudonym) and a Danish friend in his new home, Copenhagen. These sessions are part therapy, part gay coming-of-age memoir (a second, parallel journey Amin has made),

part haunting testimonial to a life left behind. They're recreated via hand-drawn animation, which lends a naturalistic tenor to Amin's memories of growing up in middle-class Kabul, then fleeing when the mujahideen take over: first to Russia, then the Baltics.

There's the tiniest disconnect between the voiceovers and animation, mainly because no recording studio was involved. It lends a scrappy quality that only deepens the pathos by offering a constant reminder that everything you're seeing happened. The grim mechanics of people-smuggling – and the traffickers behind it – are detailed in all their dehumanising sophistication. Here, Danish writer-director Jonas Poher Rasmussen conjures up Amin's most traumatic memories by switching to charcoal line drawings of figures on the run, blurs of panicked motion. It has a haunting effect in concert with the more traditional animation and real

WHAT IS IT...

An animation about a gay Afghan migrant striving for a new life.

WHY GO...

It's the most unique, moving doc you'll catch this year.

→ Director Jonas Poher Rasmussen (15) 89 mins. Out Feb 11.

news footage of the Afghan war and Perestroika-era Russia.

The film's smaller details make this true story buzz with life. They're Amin's mental souvenirs of his past: the Anil Kapoor cigarette card and Jean-Claude Van Damme poster that first make him question his sexuality as a boy, the flashing sneakers of a fellow migrant as they're smuggled across a border by night.

Those moments linger. But beneath their melancholy is a sense of healing. 'Flee', which was executive produced by Riz Ahmed and Nikolaj Coster-Waldau, offers a penetrating insight into the psychology of the migrant experience. Shame, Amin admits in one jawdropping encounter with an ocean liner full of snapping tourists, is a constant companion. This remarkable film will stay with you in a similar way. ■

By Phil de Semlyen

Who suggests putting a fiver on 'Flee' for an Oscar, but who has been wrong before.



HONOR
SWINTON BYRNE

JAYGANN
AYEH

RICHARD
AYOADE

ARIANE
LABED

JAMES
SPENCER ASHWORTH

CHARLIE
HEATON

JOE
ALWYN

HARRIS
DICKINSON

TILDA
AND SWINTON

THE SOUVENIR PART II

A FILM BY JOANNA HOGG



CINEVUE



THE DAILY TELEGRAPH



THE GUARDIAN



TIME OUT



INews



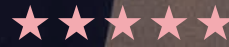
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THE UPCOMING



RADIO TIMES



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FIVE OF THE BEST

Things to do in February

1 BFI Future Film Festival
Roll up, mini Martys and wannabe Céline Sciammas, because the BFI's fest for young filmmakers is back. If you're 16 to 25, it's a chance to learn about every aspect of the business.
→ BFI Southbank and online. Feb 17-20.

2 'Paris, 13th District'
Jacques Audiard has directed a movie tailor-made for romantic urban types (which is us, right?): a mosaic of modern love stories set in the City of Light. It's out in March but is previewing on Valentine's Day.
→ Various venues. Previews on Feb 14.

3 Homeland: Films by Australian First Nations Directors
The spotlight finally falls on indigenous Australian filmmakers like Warwick Thornton and Rachel Perkins in the Barbican's excellent mini-season. Thornton's doc about the Southern Cross, 'We Don't Need a Map', is a highlight on February 22.
→ Barbican. Until Feb 23.



BFI Future Film Festival

4 'The Duke'
Jim Broadbent stars as history's most unlikely cat burglar in this spirit-lifting account of the theft of a Goya portrait from the National Gallery in 1961. Helen Mirren offers stalwart support as the wife who unwittingly harbours the fugitive. It's 'The Thomas Crown Affair' with a bus pass and exactly the kind of cheery, uplifting, socially conscious fare that late February cinema trips are all about.
→ Out Feb 25.

5 My Twisted Valentine
If you find Valentine's Day a bit mushy and saccharine, the Barbican's My Twisted Valentine strand is always on hand with some spiky counter-programming. This year, it's Neil Jordan's 1994 fang-athon 'Interview with the Vampire', which will cut through the schmaltz with its ripe cargo of bloodsucking A-listers, homoeroticism and audacious wigs. It'll go down a storm, so don't miss it. ■
→ Barbican. Sat Feb 12.

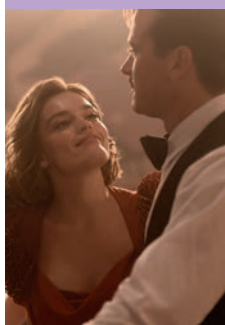
Death on the Nile



WHAT IS IT...
Another starry Hollywood outing for Agatha Christie's Hercule Poirot.

WHY GO...
Murders! Poirot! Huge moustaches!

→ Director Kenneth Branagh (12A) 127 mins. Out Feb 11.



KENNETH BRANAGH'S 2017 version of Agatha Christie's 'Murder on the Orient Express' was lavish, old-fashioned fluff. Hardly vital, but an easy watch. His second Christie is effectively the same deal, but the train is now a boat and everyone's boiling hot instead of freezing cold.

It finds detective Hercule Poirot (Branagh) in Egypt. There he gets dragged into the wedding party of millionaire Linnet Ridgeway Doyle (Gal Gadot), who has just stolen the fiancé (Armie Hammer) of an old friend (Emmy Mackey). There is a murder. No prizes for guessing the victim. All the suspects are stuck on a boat, trying to avoid death so they can get back to their champagne.

While the cast still boasts big names, they're not quite as big this time. With all due respect to their talents, Gal Gadot, Russell Brand and French and Saunders don't have the same dazzle as Michelle Pfeiffer, Penélope Cruz, Willem Dafoe and Olivia Colman – and when star-wattage is part of the sell, that matters. The performances are a mixed bag. Gadot misses the cruel edge that makes Linnet hissable. Newcomer Mackey stands out, giving full messy bitch who lives for drama as the spurned lover.

Michael Green's script needs to mix up the cast to keep things entertaining, and despite a pulpy backstory for Poirot's moustache, has little time for incidental fun. There's an innately camp, silly quality to these star-crammed murder mysteries. Embracing that would make Branagh's adaptations more of a scream. ■ *Olly Richards*

Petrov's Flu



WHAT IS IT...
A (twisted) day in the life of a Russian comic-book writer.

WHY GO...
It's an intoxicating head trip through a dystopian society.

→ Director Kirill Serebrennikov (18) 146 mins. Out Feb 11.



WE ENTER THE reveries of a feverish Russian comic-book writer in this startling, chaotic, wintry waking nightmare. It's a dense, kinetic tour through the life and mind of Petrov (Semyon Serzin), who is coughing and sneezing from a virus (no, not that one) and is pulled off a bus at the beginning of the film and forced to execute a bunch of prisoners against a wall. That's the first in a mad tumble of events and images in Russian director Kirill Serebrennikov's ('Leto') murky, theatrical, surreal, highly stylised vision.

Although 'Petrov's Flu' plays out on a single day, our perspectives shift to other characters, like Petrov's wife, a librarian who harbours a sinister supernatural side, and other time periods, such as when Petrov was a boy.

There's a funeral van with coffins containing people who are still alive. There are scenes in the editorial office of a magazine called *Hades*. There are parties in three (or maybe two) different time periods, one of which seems to be from the warmer, less corrupted perspective of Petrov as a young boy, in happier times. For one section, we slip into black and white and follow the story of a loosely connected character – a chapter entirely removed from the main run of the film.

This is some flu: it plunges us into a deeply strange and unsettling version of reality. It's undeniably confusing, but it leaves you with a powerful, if imprecise, feeling of a society that's sick from something far worse than a passing virus. ■ *Dave Calhoun*

LONDON ON SCREEN

The house from 'The Parent Trap'

The location 23 Egerton Terrace, SW3.

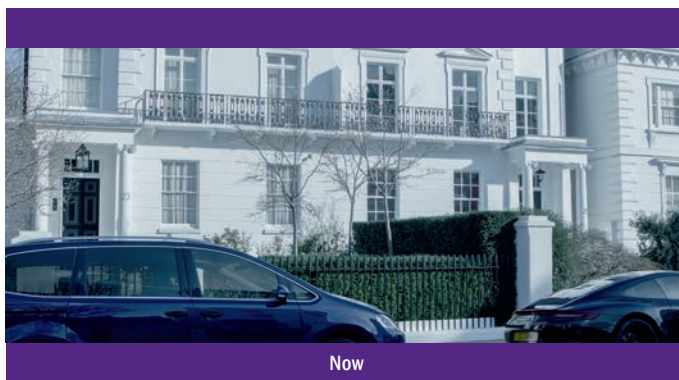
The scene Two girls (Hallie and Annie, both played by Lindsay Lohan) realise they are secret twins after meeting at summer camp, so they hatch a plan to swap places. Hallie, who has to pretend to be British, travels to London, where her mother (Natasha Richardson) and Annie live in an opulent Regency terrace house.

Then Built on the site of a Georgian mansion, Egerton Terrace has a rich history. The 1851 census shows lawyers, doctors and even an official in the queen's household lived on this exclusive street, each with live-in servants. By the time 'The Parent Trap' was remade in 1998, the road had grown to become one of Britain's most expensive streets, making No 23 (which was No 7 in the film), a Grade II-listed residence with french doors and a doric porch, the perfect location for the girls' posh mum to live.

Now The area hasn't changed much since 1998 – or even the 1800s – and maintains its Regency grandeur. In 2016, Lohan showed up at the house to take an Insta selfie, writing: 'A trip down memory lane.' If she fancies buying the place, Zoopla now has it valued at a cool £9.1m. ■ *Thomas Hobbs*



Then



Now

The Real Charlie Chaplin



WHAT IS IT...

An investigation of the genius behind the Little Tramp.

WHY GO...

For the ingenious recreations of Chaplin's private moments.

→ Directors Peter Middleton, James Spinney (TBC). TBC mins. Out Feb 18.



CHARLIE CHAPLIN WAS born in the year the Eiffel Tower opened and died in 1977. That's a lot of years to wrangle into one biography – even before you take in the rags-to-riches, zero-to-hero-to-popular-villain arc of his life – but this snappy and searching doc makes a very solid fist of it.

The film's most compelling moments surprisingly come after the laughter stopped for Chaplin. His later years, mulling over his exile from America in a Swiss mansion, get closest to revealing the contradictory man behind the icon: capable of being peevish and mean, but still possessing the grand vision of humanity that birthed the Little Tramp and his finest on-screen moments, like 'City Lights' and 'Modern Times'. His universal rallying call at the end of 'The Great Dictator' gets great play here, but so too does his on-set bullying of 'City Lights' actress Virginia Cherrill and other relationships that would never have survived a 1930s #MeToo moment.

Even though, amid all the imaginatively used archive footage, animated sepia photography and old interviews, co-directors Peter Middleton and James Spinney never quite locate the private essence of the man, no one else does either: even his children, several of whom are interviewed here, recall being kept at arm's length from a distant patriarch. And maybe, their vibrant doc hints, Charlie Chaplin lost himself a little along the way too. ■ *Phil de Semlyen*

Wheel of Fortune and Fantasy



WHAT IS IT...

A trio of thorny relationship stories from Ryūsuke Hamaguchi.

WHY GO...

To reconsider that plan to catch up with an ex.

→ Director Ryūsuke Hamaguchi (15). 121 mins. Out Feb 11.



JAPANESE AUTEUR RYŪSUKE Hamaguchi is back with another magnetic piece of slow cinema to show why he's a superstar in the making, barely a few months since the release of his last film, the Saabs-and-sorrow opus 'Drive My Car'.

Like that mix of Murakami and Chekhov, the trio of urban relationship tales that make up 'Wheel of Fortune and Fantasy' concern themselves with the heart. This time, each 30-odd-minute section takes the perspective of a different woman, each with a deeper heartache and confusion that steers them in emotionally dangerous directions.

Hamaguchi deftly hooks their stories around showier narrative devices – a love triangle, an attempted honeytrap at Toyko uni (the director's alma mater) and a case of mistaken identity in a digitally disconnected world (a surprise, and very gentle, dip into the realms of sci-fi) – and all are bewitching in their own way. But the real drama plays out on the faces of his characters, each tussling with the ghosts of their past. If it wasn't pretentious to do so, you might call it Proustian.

The writer-director's greatest gift is in wringing intense emotion from each moment, with meticulous blocking and careful camerawork that guides his characters towards – and away from – each other, and the odd sudden zoom that feels like a bomb going off. It's another intoxicating human drama – the only downside is that each chapter isn't a book in itself. ■ *Phil de Semlyen*

Edited by Chiara Wilkinson
timeout.com/music @timeoutmusic

Music & Nightlife

Club culture 2022 *The cheat sheet*

Not entirely up to speed on the latest nightlife trends in London? Here are some valuable tips on where to go and, crucially, what to say

Unorthodox

YOU MIGHT BE out of practice because of lockdown. Maybe you came of age in the past two years and you've never really, properly, actually been out in London. Perhaps you're finally emerging from your extended winter hibernation. Whatever the reason, here's what to say to make you sound like you know your gabber from your G-funk when you go out-out in 2022.

'Sunday is the new Saturday, yeah?'

Sunday seshes are now a thing, so you can wave goodbye to your day of rest. Phonox has a ten-hour set from Hunee locked in for March 6 and Fabric frequently programmes 7am-start parties. What's more, most Sunday events



Risen

finish up around 10pm, which means you can be cosy in bed with your PJs on by midnight.

'I don't listen to anything below 140bpm'

Although house, techno, and, dare I say it, tech-house have all had their moment, things are seriously speeding up. With throttling percussion and speaker-shaking bass, genres like jungle,



February 8 – 21 2022 Time Out London



Next Door Records

footwork and drum 'n' bass are back in business. As well as vital London labels like Hooversound and Rupture, there are exciting nights like Unorthodox, the UK's first queer drum 'n' bass party, and Bassment, an intimate gathering spotlighting up-and-coming DJs. You're spoilt for choice.

'An all-male line-up? Pffff'

Female and non-binary artists are dominating the scene right now, with entire nights and even festivals dedicated to their talent. All Queens, curated by Mary Anne Hobbs, is at Fabric on March 12, with an exclusively female line-up, featuring Jossy Mitsu, Laurel Halo and Nia Archives, and only female staff. Then there's Risen, a new female-led dance music festival that's taking over Hackney Wick venues on April 9.

'You can hear music better when you're sitting down'

Maybe it was all that seated partying we were forced to do over the pandemic, but going out-out doesn't have to mean sticky dancefloors any more. It can also mean sipping cocktails in nice-looking bars and pampering your ears with vinyl-only sets played from high-spec speakers. Brilliant Corners in Dalston is about to open a new Japanese-inspired music venue just down the road, and Next Door Records in Shepherd's Bush has a programme of intimate seated gigs and DJ sets.



Phonox

Jungle, footwork and drum 'n' bass are back



Sink The Pink

'Eurgh – don't take a photo!'

Fabric now has a no-photo and no-video policy. So does Fold. Abide by these rules, or you *will* be shamed.

'Remember all those nights at Bethnal Green Working Men's club?'

All good things must come to an end, including one of the capital's most iconic parties. The groundbreaking LGBTQ+ club night Sink The Pink has been going for 13 years. In that time, it's done noteworthy collaborations with the likes of Little Mix, Mel C and Pink, has gone from putting on tiny shows at BGWMC to massive venues like Wembley Arena, and has become more than a bit of an institution. But now it's time for the lights to come on. The collective will be hosting its last ever night at Printworks on April 15, and you're really not going to want to miss it. Expect trashy pop and a fair amount of glitter.

'Have you sorted what you're wearing to Crossbreed?'

Although we're waving goodbye to STP, there's a host of other LGBTQ+ nights that are dictating the capital's club scene at the moment – a fact confirmed when they came together for the first Body Movements festival last year, which is returning for 2022 on July 30. To get started clubs-wise, check out Crossbreed's sex parties, Inferno's radically fun techno raves, and Knickers Off's eclectic fashion blow-outs. There's also GGI, a new night spotlighting London's queer, trans and non-binary ESEA community. Events catering to minorities are having their moment, and we're so here for it.

'I don't even know who's playing'

Waterworks festival made its debut last year with a no-headliner bill, and Boiler Room festival has been at it for a while. Could line-up hierarchy be a thing of the past?



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Music & Nightlife



Steam Down

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'Fancy a midweek jam session?'

For a healthy dose of freestyle jazz, afrobeat, hip hop and more, get down to a jam session and experience some of the freshest musical talent that the capital has to offer. Steam Down has a weekly night at Matchstick Piehouse on Wednesdays and Colour Factory hosts Orii Jam every Monday. Places can fill up fast, though, so be sure to forward-plan and get down early.

'Had a massive one at the opera last night...'

Mendelssohn, Verdi... Skrillex?! Electronic music is kicking down the door to some of London's most prestigious venues (and then politely sitting down in the stalls). Fabric and the English National Opera are collabing to bring live performances from top DJs and producers (including Frank Wiedemann and LCY) to the London Coliseum on March 9, Overmono are performing a sell-out show at York Hall on February 25 and Bonobo is making his Royal Albert Hall debut in May. Get involved. ■



Body Movements



By Chiara Wilkinson Who definitely can't remember those nights at BGWMC.

Edited by Andrzej Lukowski
timeout.com/theatre @timeouttheatre

Theatre & Culture



The West End's dark prince is back

Director Jamie Lloyd – the most tattooed man in theatre, and possibly the nicest – had his starry 2020 season squished by the pandemic, but he's bounced back

IT WAS GOING to be such a good year: Jamie Lloyd's wildly acclaimed James McAvoy-starring 'Cyrano de Bergerac' was just about to go to New York; his production of 'The Seagull' featuring Emilia Clarke was in previews; and he had Jessica Chastain lined up for his next play. Then lockdown hit, and it all went out of the window. Two years on, 'Cyrano' and its star are back in London and 'The Seagull' is ready to fly again.

We were expecting 'The Seagull' to return but it was a nice surprise to see 'Cyrano' again...
'It just felt good to get everybody back together. We got asked to take it to BAM [in New York], but we wanted to be part of the reopening of the West End as well, to bring it back as a celebration – and create some jobs!'

It's quite a far-out 'Cyrano'.
'You could actually do a very traditional production of our text. But it was a conscious decision to cast people who were into rap or spoken word. They make it their own, which is why the language often sounds like rap or slam poetry.'

Did you have any doubts about taking out Cyrano's big nose?
'There are great teachings in these classic plays: the big spiritual and philosophical questions of our history. Then with "The Seagull", everyone is always like: have you got a samovar? And it's so funny: that's not what the play is about. With this, it's just not about having a nose on stage.'

James McAvoy is your regular star – what's so special about him?
'I just think he's a great artist. He takes such bold risks, he goes into the real

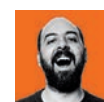
depths of human emotions, but he has this light touch. But to be honest the main thing is, he's a really good guy: look at the pandemic, all the money he gave to the NHS, and that's just the stuff that people know about. He's constantly looking out for other people and wants everybody to have a good time and be cared for. I absolutely love him.'

How was it when 'The Seagull' had to close?
'I actually wasn't there that day because I had what I assume was Covid. When Broadway got shut down, I was

thinking: I'm not sure that it's a cool thing to do, to be asking people to sit in a packed theatre. So when the decision was made, it came as a bit of a relief.'

Is there a sense of unfinished business in 'The Seagull' company?
'Yeah, for sure. But WhatsApp's amazing, isn't it? It's a way of keeping a little community together. It'll be two and a half years, and we only did a few performances: it's totally unfinished. We're all different people now.'

Will 'A Doll's House' with Jessica Chastain still happen?
'We were emailing just the other day! She's as passionate as ever about it. It's just a case of finding the dates as she's obviously very busy. Maybe this year, maybe next year, but it will happen for sure'. ■
→ 'Cyrano de Bergerac' is at the Harold Pinter Theatre. Until Mar 12. 'The Seagull' is at the Harold Pinter Theatre. Jun 29-Sep 10.



By Andrzej Lukowski
Who once got locked out of a building with James McAvoy.

Theatre & Dance

A Number



THE YEAR 2002 gave us both the regrettable Star Wars prequel 'Attack of the Clones' and Caryl Churchill's cloning drama 'A Number', and I think it's safe to say that there's not much contest over which one has stood up the better.

'A Number' is now a modern classic, and this Old Vic revival from Lyndsey Turner comes just two years after a superb Bridge Theatre version.

It stars Lennie James as Salter, a middle-aged man whom we see in a series of encounters with his sons. Except most of the sons are clones, all played by 'I May Destroy You' star Paapa Essiedu. First we meet the gentle, confused Bernard 1, who's been raised as Salter's son but has just discovered that he has numerous artificial siblings. He quizzes his dad about it, and is bewildered when Salter's blustering



Red wall Lennie James and Paapa Essiedu

reassurances collapse, and he confirms that Bernard too is a clone.

Next we meet Bernard 2: unstable and angry at discovering the existence of Bernard 1, determined to do something about it. Late on, we meet Michael Black, a third version, whose utter lack of introspection stands in ironic contrast to his anguished brothers.

The sons are a gift of a role to a young actor looking to show off his range. Essiedu is wonderful in all three, but especially as the

Bernards, two damaged young men who try to resolve their shattered sense of selves in very different ways.

Ultimately, though, 'A Number' stands or falls on its father and James – in his first stage part in aeons – nails it. There is something pitifully smalltime about his geezerish Salter, who cloned his son through a deluded desire to atone for his past mistakes, then lied about it to everyone. You keenly sense that he's a man who

has always taken the easy way out and now it's come back and bitten him.

Turner's taut production keeps things minimal, with Es Devlin's box set an apartment painted entirely in a monochromatic, womb-like red. Startling quick changes of Essiedu's clothes delineate the scenes. But it's ultimately unshowy and stark, an epic tale of a father's horrifying failure compressed into a single hour, dense and heavy as dark matter. ■ *Andrzej Łukowski*

WHAT IS IT...
Caryl Churchill's unnerving cloning drama is back again.

WHY GO...
Lennie James and Paapa Essiedu give superb performances.

→ Old Vic. Until Mar 19.
£12-£65.

Moulin Rouge! The Musical



WHAT IS IT...

The Broadway stage musical of the Baz Luhrmann classic.

WHY GO...

Because you think the pop medley is man's greatest achievement.

→ Piccadilly Theatre.
Until Jul 23. £25-£225.



THE FRIEND WHO was supposed to come with me to 'Moulin Rouge!' dropped out because of a migraine, and honestly, hard relate: director Alex Timbers's dementedly maximalist 'remix' of Baz Luhrmann's smash film is pure sensory overload.

If you can remember any of the 2001 movie's music beyond 'Lady Marmalade' you'll recall that the soundtrack largely consists of mash-ups, for example 'Sparkling Diamonds', aka 'Diamonds Are Forever' smooched into 'Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend'.

Timbers and music supervisor Justin Levine have gone nuts with the idea, pumping the story full of pop songs old and new, fragmented and whole. 'Moulin Rouge!' is now bulked into a veritable behemoth of millennial pop bangers.

There must be at least 50 songs in the mix here: it's less a jukebox musical than a frantically pressing-shuffle musical. But it's also... ridiculous? And not in a good way? More so than the film, 'Moulin Rouge! The Musical' is entirely leveraged on the idea that pop medleys are amazing. But the form is not so dizzyingly brilliant that I felt forgiving of the plot when it did finally crawl out of bed.

Beneath the songs, we're stuck with a generic plod through the romance of the club's doomed, beautiful star performer Satine (Liisi LaFontaine) and penniless American dreamer Christian (Jamie Bogyo). For all its tongue-in-cheek chutzpah, when the music stops you're not left with much. ■ *Andrzej Łukowski*

The Glow



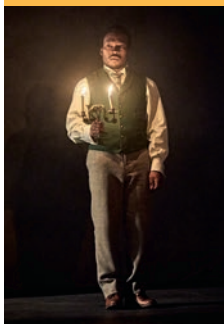
WHAT IS IT...

Alistair McDowall's new drama about a woman with unearthly powers.

WHY GO...

It's haunting and sad and unlike anything else out there.

→ Royal Court Theatre.
Until Mar 5. £12-£45.



IN VICTORIAN ENGLAND, menacing spiritual medium Mrs Lyall (Rakie Ayola) finds a nameless, virtually mute young woman (Ria Zmitrowicz) locked in an asylum. She abducts her, names her Cassie, and brings her home to act as a conduit for her rituals. Instantly, Mrs Lyall seems able to contact the dead. But what is really happening?

Alistair McDowall's brain-melting horror-dramas 'Pomona' and 'X' were quite unlike anything else on the English stage. And newbie 'The Glow' is very much in their lineage.

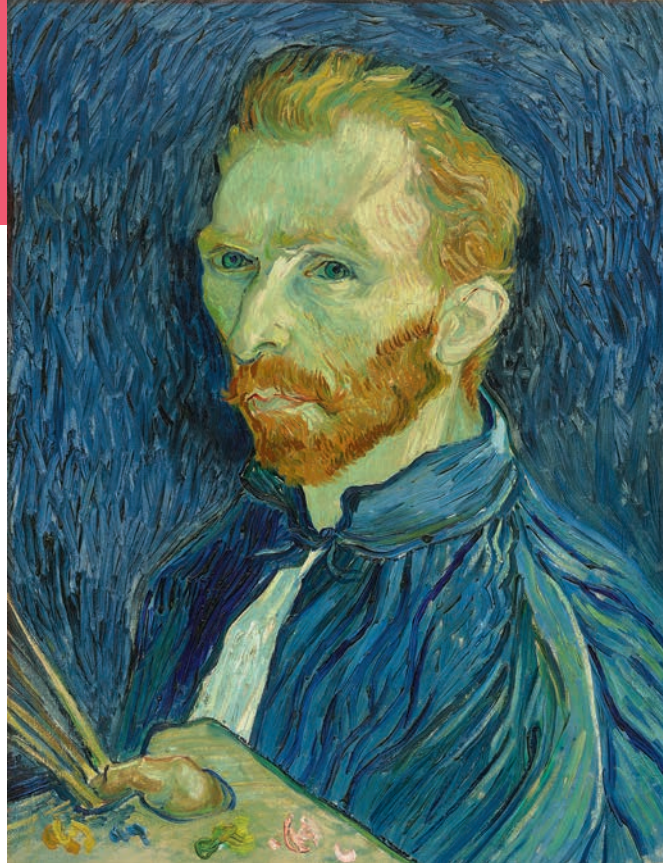
It's also tricky to write about without divulging the enormous twist that occurs at the end of the first half, which more or less blows the original premise out of the water. Trying to be restrained, let's just say that the focus switches to Zmitrowicz's intense but heartbreakingly plaintive performance as a being – also known by the names Brooke and The Woman – blessed with unfathomable powers.

Touchstones here are perhaps the more existential end of the superhero genre and the darker, sadder side of 'Doctor Who': to drop the biggest spoiler, it becomes clear that The Woman has been alive for a very long time, and suffered immensely. And yet 'The Glow' isn't really about her pain or her powers, but the connections she forges with other people along the way.

McDowall has undoubtedly come up with the goods again in this strange and beautiful play, a mix of sci-fi, folk myth and elegy for humanity. ■ *Andrzej Łukowski*

Art

Edited by Eddy Frankel
timeout.com/art @timeoutart



IT'S HARD TO look him in the eyes, Vincent Van Gogh. His gaze is deep, over-intense, rigid, unending. You'd definitely avoid eye contact with him in a bar. But in self-portrait after self-portrait in this show, he stares right out, his eyes drilling straight into you.

He painted 35 known self-portraits, and a good chunk of them are on display in this neat little exhibition; some of them are masterpieces, some of them are total duds. It starts with his first works in Paris in late 1886. The earliest painting here is dark and brooding and filled with slabs of solid ochre and black, like a very moody goth Cézanne.

But by early 1887 the colours are lighter and the brushstrokes have started splodging about in their millions. He's not an assured painter yet, though: lots of these earlier pieces are tentative, unsure, questioning – some aren't even any good. But one spring 1887 piece, made of countless orange and green marks, is the real beginning of something. Vince looks like a

creature made out of nature itself, like all the colours of the trees and flowers have coalesced into a man.

Eventually, he moves to the south of France, and it all comes to life. These are wild, personal, experimental works. In one he's sickly and pallid in a world of bodily, crappy browns. In another he's

Eye-to-eye with Vincent 'Van Gogh. Self-Portraits'



WHAT IS IT...

Piercingly intense selfies by a modern master.

WHY GO...

It's Van Gogh, it's self-portraits: you know you're going to love it.

→ The Courtauld Gallery.
Until May 8. £18, concs available.

all swirling blues and dizzying, spiralling greens.

The great paintings here are great because of their emotion. All that tumultuous paint and spinning composition: these are images of a man in various states of decay, a man in the process of exploding into emotional static. When

he's at this sickest – in an unbearably tormented August 1889 work – his gaunt, haunted face looks like it's collapsing in on itself, while his edges are fraying and shimmering.

Just a week later and he's become solid again: patches of orange and yellow in a world of blue. This is a guy going through some shit, and working it all out in paint.

That's what makes Van Gogh so special to so many. Yeah, yeah, the sunflowers and stars are nice, but in his brutal, extreme, intense honesty, he becomes a container of ours. We find beauty in the ups and downs of his emotional life because we're desperate to find understanding through art.

What the impressionists did for light – exposed it, exalted it, wallowed in it – Van Gogh did for his own emotions. His story is tragic, but we're lucky he told it, and told it so beautifully. ■



By Eddy Frankel
Who at no point said 'ear we go' while looking at this show.



Dominic Watson, 'England, Their England'

'Testament'



MONUMENTS HAVE HAD a hard time of it lately, what with getting knocked down and vandalised and being chucked in harbours. So GCCA has asked 47 artists to propose new ones more fitting for 2022 than a statue of slaver or a fountain for a princess.

Migration pops up repeatedly, as in Adham Faramawy's film about a parakeet garden, or JJ Chan's installation of rocks and sickbags. There's a lot of inversion, too: Edward Thomasson wants a sinkhole as a monument to a sinkhole and Aaron Ratajczyk wants to dig a huge cave in the middle of London, both of them trying to turn monuments inside out.

There's a lot of drawing, text and video here, but the best works are the actual models for monuments. Olu Ogunnaike's Fourth Plinth made of discarded wood veneer is sharp and smart; Dominic Watson's working fountain of a prime minister getting a booze enema is hilarious and satirical; Monster Chetwynd's giant beast's head is ridiculous;

WHAT IS IT...
Pitches for new public monuments by 47 contemporary artists.

WHY GO...
Well, they can't be any worse than Anish Kapoor's 'Orbit', can they?

→ Goldsmith's Centre for Contemporary Art. Until Apr 2. Free.

best of all is Ghislaine Leung's amazing inflatable pub, because if there's anything we can all agree should be celebrated it's the local boozie.

It's not all fun. Roger Hiorns's display of placards against the vCJD scandal is brutal and moving; Oscar Murillo's chairs covered in charred bricks is a memorial to the loss of working-class identity; Yuri Pattison's passport control desk is a great up-yours to borders everywhere.

Look, this show's a total mess. It's ramshackle, incredibly over-wordy and quite a lot of these artists have absolutely phoned it in. Some seem to have missed what a monument even is. The exhibition would be an absolute stunner if it was 15 amazing works, instead of such a huge over-ambitious mixed bag.

But it's also fun, moving, intelligent and full of ideas. We should build them all, and let future generations push them into harbours. It's what monuments are for. ■
Eddy Frankel

BEST OF THE BEST

The top exhibitions you have to see in London right now



'Francis Bacon: Man and Beast'

Vicious, visceral images by everyone's favourite painter of torment and angst. This show focuses on his animal-influenced work, and it's staggering.
→ Royal Academy of Arts. Until Apr 17. £22-£24.50.



'Helen Frankenthaler: Radical Beauty'

Mesmerisingly beautiful woodcuts by a giant of abstract expressionism, all full of soft colours and gorgeous shapes.
→ Dulwich Picture Gallery. Until Apr 18. £16.50



Allison Katz: 'Artery'

Weirdly surreal images of chickens, eggs and cabbages. This Canadian painter knows how to unsettle a viewer.
→ Camden Art Centre. Until Mar 13. Free.



Food & Drink

Edited by Angela Hui
timeout.com/eatdrink @timeouteatdrink

Circolo Popolare

How to have a non-shit meal on Valentine's Day

Whatever you think of V-Day, there's no denying that planning a special romantic dinner can be stressful. Luckily, London has many chill options for February 14

NAFF CARDS, TEDDY bears, chocolates, anything heart-shaped and – above all – an intense pressure to book somewhere *à deux* for an unforgettable special dinner have come to define Valentine's Day. But there are ways to enjoy food and drink on the prescribed day of love without succumbing to clichés, breaking the bank or developing some kind of romantic PTSD. Whether you're loved-up

with your boo, flying solo or just want to hang out with some pals, here are savvy ways to eat out – or in – this February 14 in London and make sure it's memorable for all the right reasons.

Have a really great breakfast instead of a mediocre dinner

Being 'romantic' doesn't have to mean a low-lit evening and an impossible-to-find 8pm table.

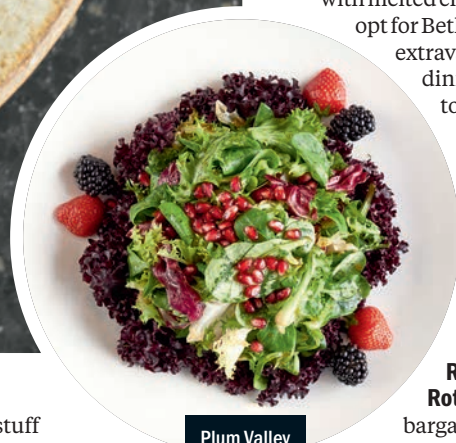
Start your day with a visit to Soho stalwart **Koya**. There are no bookings here, but if you can, try and nab a spot at the bar and order the oh-so-satisfying english-breakfast udon noodles. Slurping from the same bowl to re-enact the famous 'Lady and the Tramp' spaghetti scene is optional. For a fancier affair, Mayfair's **The Wolseley** is the place to break your fast. Opt for the fried duck egg with bubble-and-squeak

and mushrooms, or the decadent signature fishcake with poached egg and hollandaise. For a taste of the Middle East, treat yourself to a big breakfast at **Honey & Co** in Warren Street. Choose from a selection of mezze, eggs, pastries and cakes. Then show you really care and pick up one of its special Valentine's treats hampers while you're at it. (I mean, not while you're actually AT IT.)

CIRCOLO: CLERKENWELL BOY



Ombra



Plum Valley

walk-ins. For those double dating or in a big group, Shoreditch's barbecue haven **Smokestack** has indoor and outdoor seating where walk-ins are always welcome. The very unorganised can head to Chinatown and rock up to **Plum Valley**, **Four Seasons** or **Food House**: they're all open on a Monday night and usually have plenty of space.

Try a set menu that's, er, good

Valentine's Day – like the horrific Christmas work meal – is notorious for the 'special menu', designed to cause the kitchen minimum fuss, as you're regaled with 'aphrodisiac' asparagus tips and strawberries with melted chocolate. Instead,

opt for Bethnal Green's **Ombra's** extravagant seven-course dinner for £80 from 8pm to 9pm. Expect dishes such as gnocco fritto, pumpkin tortelli and aged turbot with sea urchin and artichoke. A later dinner means you'll skip the mad rush of once-a-year romantics, too. **Noble Rot Soho** and **Noble Rot Lamb's Conduit's**

bargain lunch set menus (two courses for £18, three for £22) should get a look in too. The menu features wonderful dishes like ricotta and turnip top, toast and roast sardines, or lentils and salsa verde.

Don't go out at all. Stay in

Can't be arsed to leave the house? Okay, maybe don't phrase it *exactly* like that. Impress your loved one with a delicious home-cooked dinner, ie a meal kit that will do all the hard work for you. The good people at **Hawksmoor** do a steak box containing the full works: the meat, sides, sauces, champers and the option to add more booze. All you Cyranos out there should go for the Pancakes and Poetry kit from **Where the Pancakes Are**: guaranteed to score brownie points with your significant other. Both offer nationwide delivery, so you really don't have any excuse. ■



By Angela Hui
Who is secretly a real sucker for a bit of romance.

Pretend you're on holiday

Nothing says romance like sun, sea and sand. London, sadly, generally has none of these things. But a restaurant terrace can make you feel like you've jetted off. Lambeth's **Garden Museum Café** (winner of the city's best outdoor dining spot in our 2021 Best of the City Awards, FYI) is a brilliant place for a lunch of seasonal British fare. Or get that *dolce vita* feel at **Circolo Popolare**. Yes, the interiors and food are OTT, with pasta, pizza and giant puds, but head to the garden terrace for peace and quiet, and picture yourself lounging by Lake Garda.

Skip basic chocolates and shop indie

Want some sweets for your sweet? Put down that synthetic supermarket selection and opt for something thoughtful, ethically sourced and independent. The award-winning **Pump Street** produces sublime handmade chocolate using traditional methods and all-natural ingredients. Its bestselling Ecuador 60 percent dark milk with caramelised hazelnuts



Awa Sparkling Sake

is the stuff of dreams. Hackney brand **Land Chocolate** specialises in bean-to-bar single-origin chocolate in pretty pastel packaging.

Go more original than bubbly

Broaden your fizzy horizons with alternatives that get less of a look-in. Try a crémant d'alsace from **Noble Fine Liquor**, a lively sparkling wine from north-eastern France with tangy lemon and quince notes. For something a little closer to home, English sparkling wines are having (another) moment. **Ridgeview's** organic Bloomsbury bottle has hints of peach and honey and is an ideal with seafood. If you want to go leftfield, dive into **The Sparkling Sake Brewery's** Awa, a crisp, clean, melon-and-muscat drink.

Don't book somewhere wack, try your luck at a walk-in

Left it too late to book somewhere with your beau or besties? No stress. **Noodle & Beer** near Spitalfields, which specialises in Chongqing flavours, has plenty of space for



Antillean



AS DIVERSE AS London is, Caribbean food has never been celebrated in the same way as, say, French or Japanese. Enter Antillean: London's very first fine-dining pan-Caribbean restaurant. Named after the beautiful Antilles islands, its menu reflects the diversity of dishes found there, with French, African and Chinese influences.

We started with small plates recommended by our waiter: watermelon-and-beetroot salad, scallop ceviche, grilled octopus and blue swimmer crab. All of it was bright and vibrant, made up of fuchsias, emeralds and burnt oranges – the authentic colours of the tropics on a plate. The flavours didn't disappoint either.

Next, mains. The rum-marinated ribeye steak was perfectly pink and delicately seasoned. And the Bajan staple of flying fish with cornmeal cou-cou almost brought a tear to my eye. It tasted exactly the same as the version I ate when I was growing up.

To finish, a sharing dessert platter featuring Guinness ice cream, carrot cake, chocolate torte and plantain tarte tatin. I must admit I was sceptical: traditionally, plantain is served as a savoury side, but here it is a pudding. Bizarre. Absurd. But, dare I say it, genius? Its sweet notes complemented the flaky pastry exquisitely.

It was heartwarming to see familiar Caribbean dishes served in a fine-dining environment – the sleek interiors and high ceilings reminded me of the region's coastal restaurants. I'd definitely go back – if just for that plantain tarte tatin. ■ *Emily Canegan*

WHAT IS IT...
A high-end pan-Caribbean restaurant and bar.

WHY GO...
For authentic dishes like flying fish with cou-cou.

→ 74 Blackfriars Rd, SE1 8HA.



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Din Tai Fung Selfridges



THIS CELEBRATED Taiwanese restaurant chain's arrival in Selfridges is part of the store's shiny new 'dining complex', but it felt more like a soulless food-court concession than a restaurant.

The menu here is a lighter version of the first Covent Garden branch's offering. We started with a trio of wonderful cold appetisers: wood ear mushrooms; green beans with diced pork and prawn; and Shanghainese drunken chicken.

Service was swift, but was also sometimes robotic... literally. Two 'BellaBots' – grinning cyber cats – wove between tables, helping the human waiters. Maybe this is the future: the robots aren't coming to eat us, they're coming to feed us.

Now for the main event: the dumplings. The pork xiao long bao



were faultless. I tried some of the exclusive dishes, but they didn't impress. The chicken-and-truffle soup tasted clean, but not much else. The chicken-and-vegetable wontons were a little bland.

At one point, a loud vibe-killing announcement blared out: 'Thank you for shopping at Selfridges, the store will be closing in 30 minutes.' Thankfully, this place doesn't shut

until 11pm, so there was still time for pudding. The sweet red bean and chocolate lava xiao long bao were disappointing, but the fluffy salted egg-yolk custard lava buns from the steamer underneath were pure bliss.

Would I visit again? It's probably not worth a special trip to the big yellow department store when the OG site is just down the road. ■
Angela Hui

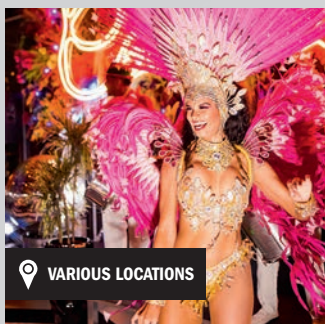
WHAT IS IT...
Department store outlet for the Taiwanese dumpling chain.

WHY GO...
For the soup dumplings, after a shopping spree.

→ 400 Oxford St, W1A 1AB.

Sponsored listing

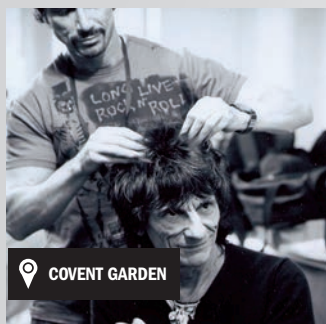
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VARIOUS LOCATIONS

SUSHISAMBA SAYS:

'SUSHISAMBA is back with its Carnival Weekender from February 24 to 27. Enjoy samba dancers, batucada drummers and DJs spinning Brazilian grooves, plus Carnival-inspired menu specials and Caipirinhas shaken tableside. For more information and to book visit www.sushisamba.com.'
Various locations.



COVENT GARDEN

STUART PHILLIPS SAYS:

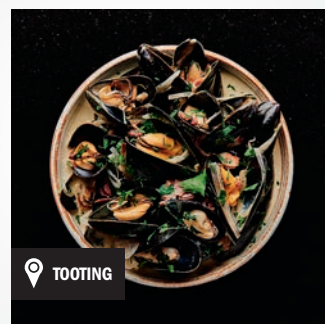
'The award-winning Stuart Phillips salon is situated in the heart of Covent Garden, on Monmouth Street, and has been established for nearly three decades. We offer style, comfort (lay back on our reclining shampoo chairs) and great client care. Our friendly team look forward to meeting you!'
25 Monmouth St, WC2H 9DD.



LEICESTER SQUARE

PANTON YOKOCHO SAYS:

'Got a curtain to catch? Try Panton Yokochō's new pre-theatre menu. Explore 1970s Tokyo and feast on a retro ramen menu, with two courses and a drink for just £17.50. Sit among hanging lanterns, noren curtains, retro lights and vintage posters, to a soundtrack of J-pop tunes from the era.'
35 Panton St, SW1Y 4EA.



TOOTING

SEA GARDEN & GRILL SAYS:

'We source the finest seafood from St Ives in Cornwall and have some great offers to help warm up these cold winter days. Try our mouth-watering cream mussels and triple-cooked chips for just £10 and, on Wednesdays, get two-for-one surf 'n' turf – simply delicious!'
99-101 Broadway Market, 29 Tooting High St, SW17 0RJ.

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