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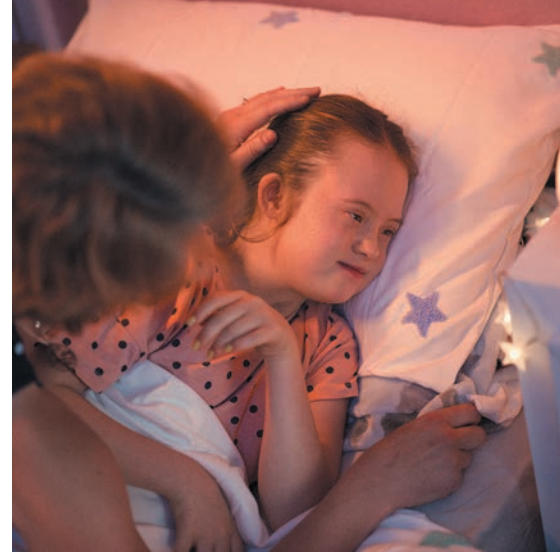
new

worlds

Punchdrunk's epic comeback leads our celebration of London's immersive obsession



Set a device bedtime



Alison and Holly (12)
Derby

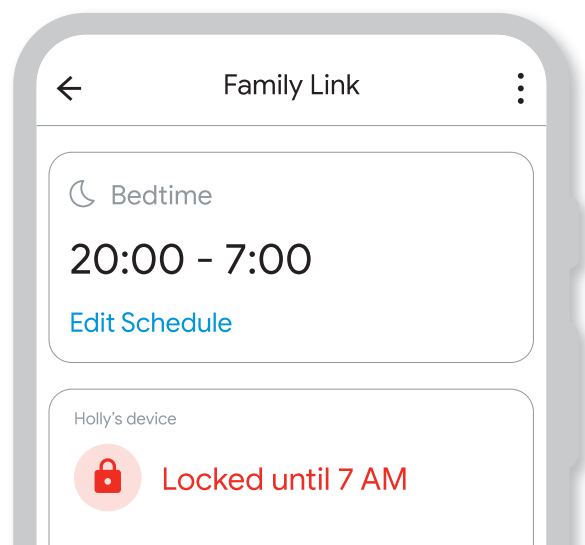
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Inside

This issue of Time Out
in no time at all

Fancy dining rooms

The swankiest salons in town where
you can feast with your eyes as well
as your, you know, teeth and stuff

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Jeremy O Harris

The most-talked-about playwright
in the world finally brings his
“Daddy” issues to London

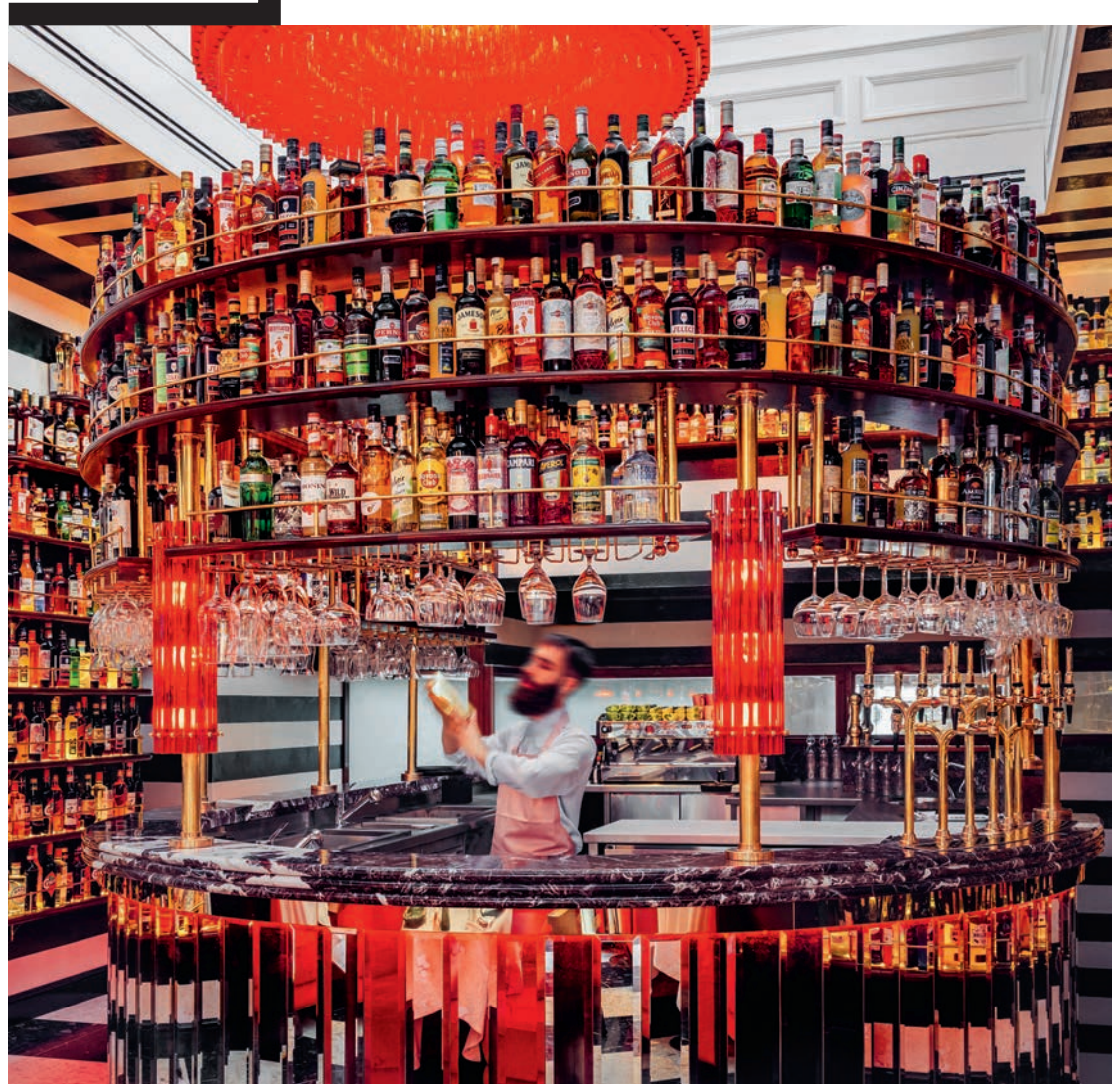
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Kids

Get your offspring crafting at the
Postal Museum in our big guide to
Easter hols ideas

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‘True Things’

Harry Wootliff’s heartbreaking sort-of
romance has two great performances
from Tom Burke and Ruth Wilson

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Extra Bacon

Not only do we currently have a massive RA
show of Francis B, there’s now an exhibition
of just one painting. It’s a pope. Screaming

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Joe Mackertich
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@j_mackertich



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Advertising 7813 6000,
advertising@timeout.com
Circulation
circulation@timeout.com

Global Editor-in-Chief
Caroline McGinn
London Editor Joe Mackertich
Deputy Editor/Chief
Sub Editor Chris Waywell
Deputy Chief Sub Editor
Sarah Cohen

Executive Editor Kate Lloyd
Features & City Life
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Punchdrunk dancer Jordan Ajadi
photographed by Luis Kramer

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First Floor,
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Bottomless 'Top Boy' brunches. Augmented-reality, 1080-degree, full-body Gilbert & George experiences. Interactive, life-sized, neon Chas & Dave-themed escape rooms. All that stuff is super (and loads of it features in this issue) but London's status as an immersive city predates it.

London can overwhelm the senses. A true tube connoisseur, for example, can identify a line just by sniffing its air, as each one has its own unique bouquet. I'm partial to the tangy punch of the Bakerloo, personally. The sound inside Big Primark on a Saturday is an all-pervading cocktail of dissonant noise, comparable to any John Cage concert. And finally, there's the look of the city at night-time. A wonky, blackened splodge that's equal parts Hieronymous Bosch, Mark Rothko and that bloke who sells appalling acrylic paintings outside Hyde Park.

After the last few years, it's understandable that we'd all be desperate to immerse ourselves in worlds that aren't our own. Particularly if they contain infinite glasses of prosecco. But sometimes the jolt to the synapses provided by a slug of chip-shop vinegar is all the immersiveness a Londoner needs.

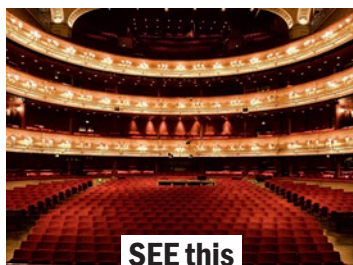
THE EDITOR'S ESSENTIALS

Three things you have to do in London



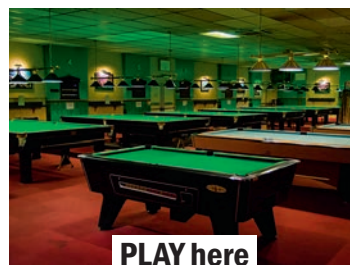
EAT this

Like a badly assembled capricciosa, the 'za scene is crowded. Do make room for **Bad Boy Pizza Society's** exceptional Grandma Slice.



SEE this

The **Royal Opera House's Concert for Ukraine** on April 15 will feature an impressive roster of international artists. Tickets start at £4.



PLAY here

Shades Snooker and Pool Club in Deptford is old-school but with modern vibes, plus ample tables, well-kept cloths and cheap rates.

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TESCO
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City life

Edited by Isabelle Aron
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The weird world of total immersion

We asked actors from London's immersive theatre shows about the strangest things audience members have done during a performance. Illustration *Rosie Barker*

Charlie Beaven

Who played Dr Alexei in Secret Cinema presents 'Stranger Things'

'The weirdest thing an audience member has done in one of our shows was when one of the actual actors from the real "Stranger Things" show turned up. I sat down in the middle of the scene next to none other than David Harbour [who plays the character of Jim Hopper]. He still knew his lines and we were able to play out parts of the scene together, much to the audience's joy.'

Allie Ho Chee

Who plays Bella in 'Mamma Mia! The Party'

'When guests come to "Mamma Mia! The Party", they expect the full holiday experience they would get on the isle of Skopelos. Sometimes my character Bella tells them that the remedy for sunburn, if they've spent too much time on the beach, is a bit of Grandma's tzatziki. One practical joker decided to smear some on his face there and then. His whole table thought it was hilarious – it was the start of a fun evening.'

Charlie Burt

Who plays Queen Elizabeth I in 'Doctor Who: Time Fracture'

'As Queen Elizabeth in "Doctor Who: Time Fracture", my fiancé goes missing – as a result, I marry a member of the audience. In one matinee, my new audience fiancé was a very enthusiastic older gentleman. So enthusiastic in fact, that when another actor arrived to 'assassinate' the queen, he threw himself on top of me and my throne, screaming "I will protect my WIFE!" and refused to move.'

Aimee Barrett

Who plays Myrtle Wilson in 'The Great Gatsby'

'One night, we were getting Daisy Buchanan ready for a pivotal moment in the show: tea with Gatsby. But we were all so caught up in the flurry of the scene, that none of us noticed that an audience member had taken one of the dresses from the set and put it on top of her jeans and jumper. She wore it for the rest of the night – it was fabulous.' ■ *Interviews by Chiara Wilkinson*

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Farewell to a London legend

After 90 years, L Manze's Walthamstow pie-and-mash shop is closing – and Londoners have strong feelings about it

LAST WEEK, LEGENDARY

Walthamstow pie shop L Manze announced that it was closing for good. The grade II-listed east London landmark had been an institution on the High Street for over 90 years, serving up pies, mash, liquor and eels to Londoners hungry for classic fare. While its legendary pies aren't totally off the menu (it still has branches in Tower Bridge, Peckham and Sutton), the news that this iconic spot is closing has provoked a wave of (mostly) fond memories and strong reactions on social media. Here's what you had to say about it.

'Was brought up on this food. Memories of me and my late mum going there every Saturday, then me with my kids and later with my grandchildren.' Lynda Crisp

'I ate there often as a student at the art school in the '60s. Love that stuff.' Mick Brownfield

'It'll probably be converted into a Pret.' Siôn Owen

'Really sad to hear. Spent many a childhood day sitting in there eating away like a pig in the proverbial.' Lee D Dunphy

'Glad to hear it. Eel, pie and mash establishments are awful, a blot on the culinary landscape. This city has so much to offer in terms of food – have never understood the appeal of these places.' Mark Edmonds

'L Manze – always a legend. End of an era. Really sad.' Sheila Foy Oconnor



For more unique looks at London life, head to [timeout.com/news](https://www.timeout.com/news)

WE HAVE QUESTIONS

What's going on with Crossrail?

Wasn't Crossrail – sorry, the Elizabeth line – supposed to open ages ago?

Well... yes. It's more than three years behind schedule. But the central section (between Paddington and Abbey Wood), is finally scheduled to open by June this year (we hope). That means the royal purple train will kick into gear just in time for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee – Her Maj must be well chuffed

All right. But what's so good about this new 'super tube', anyway?

For starters, it will be a *lot* faster. The £18.9bn project is cutting the travel time between Heathrow and Canary Wharf from an hour to just 38 minutes, compared to travelling on the tube. It also has step-free entry, making it wheelchair-friendly, plus free wifi and a solid 4G connection so Londoners can still get their Wordle fix on their travels.



Sounds pretty good, actually. So how many trains will there be?

Seventy shiny new trains will make up the Elizabeth line's fleet with 12 trains running an hour, later increasing to 24 an hour when the whole project is completed. Hopefully, that should mean more space in the carriages and fewer armpits in your face.

Why is the new line venturing so far out of London?

The Elizabeth line stretches more than 60 miles – from Reading all the way to Shenfield in Essex, overtaking the Central line as the longest on the network. The 41 stations (of which ten are newly built) will help take the strain off some of London's busiest services, especially for those commuting in. Apparently there *is* life beyond the M25. Who knew? ■ *Lottie Keys*



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HYPE DISH

Roti King's buttery, flaky and fragrant roti canai

DISSECTION

What goes into the London plates that everyone bangs on about

WHEN SUGEN GOPAL first opened his unassuming Malaysian restaurant near Euston, it was called 'Roti Stall'. But as its popularity grew, Gopal developed a reputation for his roti canai. 'The name "Roti King" was given to me by a customer,' says Gopal. 'So I changed the name of my

shop.' These days, customers queue up in droves to get in. 'People keep coming back, because we cook our food with love,' says Gopal. 'Sometimes I see the same faces three times a week.' He talks us through this cult dish. ■ *Chiara Wilkinson*
→ 40 Doric Way. £6.50.

The dahl

'We make a simple dahl, using cinnamon and mustard seeds. When I first moved here, I used to call my mum in Malaysia to talk me through how to make it just right.'

The roti

'We use a secret recipe to make our dough and then cook it on a hot plate with butter and oil, flipping it to make it really thin. It takes a lot of practice to cook it properly.'

The flavours

'The roti is both savoury and sweet. The dhal is medium to mild spice, quite creamy and fragrant. It's difficult to describe, but it's warming and satisfies your soul.'

The technique

'Folding the roti while it's cooking takes skill. When I was 14 in Malaysia, I'd come home from school and practise using leftover dough from my parents' shop.'

The texture

'The texture of the bread is fluffy, crispy and very soft. We try to make the dahl slightly thick so it can stick to the roti when you dip it in, rather than just soaking the bread.'

WORD ON THE STREET

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

'Four old blokes going cottaging for the weekend – be there!'

'They do fuck a lot, bees.'

'One man's weird is another man's wife.'

'What? Your friends had never heard of dogging?'

'Wooden forks freak me out.'

'Humans are just inherently disappointing.'

'I thought about fetching my gloves but then I thought: Nah, that's what socks are for.'

'What can I say? I've never seen an alpaca yawn before.'

'What have you changed since you've become a vicar?'

'You know, this is not the only place in London you can see a jar of moles.'

'Would you like to see me as a small boy?'

Overheard something weird? Tweet us #wordonthestreet @timeoutlondon

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Exclusive Time
Out photos from
Punchdrunk's
new show
'The Burnt City'

Welcome home

Punchdrunk, the OG of immersive theatre, talks to *Andrzej Łukowski* about its first show in eight years, 'The Burnt City'.
Photography *Luis Kramer*

Twenty-two years ago, Felix Barrett, an Exeter University student from London, staged his graduation show in a Territorial Army barracks. It was a deconstructed version of Georg Büchner's tragedy 'Woyzeck', in which the action was spread through the shadowy, candlelit army building, with the audience free to wander about but made to wear expressionless masks so that their faces fitted in with the show's haunting world. Nowadays we'd call it 'immersive theatre'; back then it was 'site-specific'

Everyone loved it, but what really persuaded him to take things further was the praise of a uni coursemate who didn't like him. Made to come and see the show, she was blown away: 'She said, "Wow, you really should do that again sometime,"' recalls Barrett. 'It was her response that made me think I should carry on.'

Barrett started a company called Punchdrunk, which he was in sole charge of for the first few years, setting up shows in found spaces and disused buildings. But he sensed that something

was missing: at a 2003 version of 'The Tempest', stunningly staged in a disused distillery in Deptford, he realised that having conventional actors just saying lines from the play was kind of lame, and played against the silent menace of the building. The one performance in it that he really rated was a spirit, played wordlessly by a dancer. It gave him inspiration for his next project, which he won a grant for by pitching 'Macbeth' as a Hitchcockian thriller with Shakespeare's language transposed into dance.

The main note he was given upon receipt of the grant was: 'You're going to need a genius choreographer to make it happen.' So he found one: persuading Maxine Doyle to leave her intensely physical touring dance company and come aboard for the ride as Punchdrunk's choreographer and associate director.

That, in a nutshell, is the origin story of Punchdrunk, probably the greatest British theatre company of the twenty-first century, and certainly the most significant immersive theatre company ever. Barrett and Doyle's first show was called 'Sleep No More' – productions of it are still on in New York and Shanghai.





'The Drowned Man'



'Sleep No More'



'The Masque of the Red Death'

A golden decade of work ensued: the hallucinatory 'Masque of the Red Death' became a London phenomenon, taking over Battersea Arts Centre for more than half a year. There were collaborations with the English National Opera ('The Changeling') and Adam Curtis ('It Felt Like a Kiss'), while Punchdrunk Enrichment, a sister company aimed at kids, got off to a stunning start with immersive Doctor Who adventure 'Crash of the Elysium'. Weird and wonderful side projects bubbled up: an immersive travel agency that was too expensive to be practical; numerous exciting freelance adventures including directing and choreographing Shakira's 2012 stadium tour. Punchdrunk seemed unstoppable. 'It was a glorious time,' reflects Barrett. 'It felt like we were able to ride the wave a bit.'

'We had a lot of momentum,' says Doyle, 'almost working at a subliminal level.'

What marked out all these shows were the hyper-detailed worlds that Punchdrunk built for their audiences: dark, menacing, fantastical, otherworldly spaces made of dozens and dozens of rooms that ticketholders could wander at will, full of silent encounters, every detail freighted with meaning. They're in many ways more like games or films or, indeed, dreams, than any sort of conventional plays or dramas. And each one got bigger and bigger, culminating in 2014's 'The Drowned Man', a vast, doomy adaptation of 'Woyzeck' (again), but many, many times bigger than Barrett's grad project, transposing the action to the golden age of Hollywood. And then... well, not a lot. A handful of Enrichment events, a TV

FIVE KEY SHOWS

2000

'Woyzeck'

The very first Punchdrunk show, seen for one night only at an old TA barracks in Exeter.

2003

'Sleep No More'

This 'Macbeth'-meets-Hitchcock show launched still-running incarnations in New York and Shanghai.

2007

'The Masque of the Red Death'

A heady adaptation of the stories of Edgar Allan Poe that took over Battersea Arts Centre in its entirety for seven months.

2013

'The Drowned Man'

This huge show, made with the National Theatre, ran for more than a year, and married 'Woyzeck' to a dark, dreamy fable set in the golden age of Hollywood.

2017

'Kaberoi'

The line that Punchdrunk has been away for eight years omits this thriller staged on the streets of Bloomsbury. It was six hours long and seen by barely 800 people.

show collaboration with Sky Arts ('The Third Day') and the launch of 'Sleep No More' in Shanghai. The only new show was 'Kaberoi', a six-hour-long outdoor odyssey through the streets of London for just two audience members at a time that was almost impossible to get tickets for, and seen by fewer than 1,000 people. 'Part of the problem was the spaces,' explains Barrett. 'We were driven by the desire to give the audience something they hadn't seen before, but it gets harder the more the audience has seen your work, so we were trying to scale up and show them the unexpected. But then we needed bigger properties and there were fewer out there.'

Although the pandemic has played a small part, a lot of the delay has come from Punchdrunk's desire to find a permanent London home after two decades of temporary squatting. A space in Holborn fell through; but eventually, they ended up with something they'd passed on almost 20 years ago.

'When I first met Max, I was ringing up every council looking for a space,' says Barrett. 'And when I rang up Greenwich they said "Have you looked at the old arsenal building in Woolwich?" Years ago, I went out to see it, took one look and said: "It's too big." It's amazing to come back.'

Punchdrunk now has its HQ and performance space in the huge former arsenal, abandoned for decades; it has the lease on the equally massive old artillery museum next door. Plus, it's built a smaller third building connecting the two.

Welcome to 'The Burnt City'

Punchdrunk's new show is, on the most straightforward level, based on the tale of the Trojan War, specifically as described in the Greek tragedies 'Agamemnon' by Aeschylus and 'Hecuba' by Euripides. One building represents Troy, the other Mycenae and the Greek army encampment. When I first went to see the site on a press tour in September 2021, there was essentially nothing there, just a pair of empty warehouses. When I came back to speak to Barrett and Doyle, the spaces were utterly transformed.

The Greek building is a huge, mournful expanse of black sand and military fortifications, in which I saw Doyle's crack team of dancers rehearsing a striking scene in which a weird, unearthly procession ominously moved down a huge staircase, soundtracked to a cacophonous drone. Lloyd Webber this most certainly ain't.

THE DROWNED MAN: JULIAN ABRAMS; SLEEP NO MORE AND MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH: STEPHEN DOBBIE



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By contrast, Troy is a bustling metropolis full of shops, cafés, bars... and a Japanese-style red-light district aesthetically inspired by Fritz Lang's seminal sci-fi film 'Metropolis'. Plus, almost every one of its many rooms is steeped in references to Greek mythology, be it the garish neon signs in the ancient Linear B script, the sake bar that turns out to be selling water from the River Styx, or the tenement building that classics nerds may determine to be a hideout for the Danaïdes, 49 sisters who murdered their husbands. Plus... is there something else going on? Why are all the flowers plastic? Why does nothing seem to be alive?

It is an unbelievably detailed world, that probably sounds baffling from my description, but basically it's very cool.

'With us everything has a story,' says Barrett. 'If you don't know the story of the 49 women who killed their husbands, it doesn't matter. But you should feel the thickness of it all. If you want to look into it, then the story's there waiting for you. If you don't, that's fine. Our commitment to every aspect of our production is like that. It's to do with an audience feeling touched and active and awake in the moment.'

EXCLUSIVE

£25 TIME OUT RUSH TICKETS FOR 'THE BURNT CITY'

Time Out and Punchdrunk have teamed up to offer £25 tickets for 'The Burnt City', which can be purchased on a Thursday for the following week's shows. For more information, head to www.timeout.com/punchdrunk or scan the QR code below.



'For me, it's about creating images that people will remember,' says Doyle, who choreographs the dancers representing everything from the Trojans to King Agamemnon. 'We look at the plays and we mine them for all we can and then we amuse ourselves imagining all the things that must have happened that aren't in the play and we create a rich backstory to what might be a minor character in the play but is a major character in one of our shows.'

Immersive theatre has become a big business in the eight years Punchdrunk has been absent, but the many fun London shows that have sprung up are so far from Punchdrunk's staggering ambition, scale and questing spirit that it's unfair to consider them as peers. Indeed, the pair – who are diplomatic about newer companies – say they don't really consider their peers to even be theatre companies.

'I think because we strive for something that almost makes it feel like you're in a movie,' says Barrett, 'then maybe our contemporaries aren't really live work, it's films. Ideally, it feels like a living movie.'

A lack of meaningful peers meant that Punchdrunk shows like 'The Drowned Man' were increasingly judged by what

had come before: fair enough, but when there was a show out every couple of years it was increasingly easy to take the buildings and atmosphere that made them so extraordinary for granted. Nobody has ever made theatre like Punchdrunk. But there would always be another Punchdrunk show around the corner. Then, for eight years, there wasn't. Even if it simply restaged an old show, it would be a pretty big deal. That 'The Burnt City' is both brand new and probably the single most ambitious piece of immersive theatre ever created is a bonus. Most exciting of all is that Punchdrunk won't be disappearing again. Its new buildings are its permanent headquarters: the follow up to 'The Burnt City' will be staged there, and Barrett talks excitedly about doing smaller shows on the local streets, or even opening a second space.

'We've always been blissfully nomadic,' he says. 'But now it's time to put down some roots. From now on we want to make sure anything we're doing is shared with our London audience.' After 22 years, Punchdrunk is finally coming home. ■

→ 'The Burnt City', One Cartridge Place, SE18 6ZR. Now booking until Aug 28.

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How London dived in to immersive culture

From theatrical brunches to virtual-reality escape rooms, the capital is crazy about getting lost in an experience. But why? *Chiara Wilkinson* investigates

Yayoi Kusama:
'Infinity Mirror Rooms'

BACK IN 2011, in a tunnel under Waterloo station, 50-year-old Vicki Prais found herself standing on piles of sand, surrounded by soldiers whispering in her ears. It looked exactly like a 1950s Algiers souq. But it wasn't. It wasn't even a film or TV set.

Prais was at Secret Cinema's immersive take on 'The Battle of Algiers', where the sounds, smells and sights of the 1966 film were recreated with actors, tech and clever set design. 'You got swept away in it,' Prais says. 'It was a real assault on the senses.' It's just one of many immersive events that Prais, a huge Secret Cinema fan, has been to. And she's not alone in her desire to be swept away. London has more immersive events than ever. There are immersive afternoon teas,



DNA VR

immersive dessert emporiums – you can even experience the inside of a popcorn machine at an immersive dopamine land, if you really want to.

But what does this beloved buzzword actually mean? Immersive events tend to promise a more 360-degree experience than traditional theatre, gaming, culture and exhibitions. They're often large-scale, hyper-sensory and super-interactive: with actors that move around the audience, projections that envelop from you head to toe in Van Gogh's 'The Starry Night', or an escape room so convincing you might start to wonder if it's real life.

It's clear that London has gone all-out gonzo for everything immersive. Google searches in the UK for the term 'immersive London' increased





'Van Gogh: The Immersive Experience'

by 83 percent between January 2017 and January 2022. Secret Cinema had 20,000 people attending each show ten years ago. In 2019, that had increased fivefold to more than 100,000. We're even dedicating a full issue of Time Out to the bloody word. But why do Londoners love it so much? Were our lives really so devoid of joy before we had the option of traumatising our kidneys at a boozy 'Mamma Mia!' brunch?

Part of the answer is good, old-fashioned escapism. Emma Wood is a professor in experience and events marketing at Leeds Beckett University and an expert in participatory events. 'Immersive events are a chance to experience something we wouldn't in our everyday life,' she says. 'They heighten our emotions – including feelings like fear and trepidation. But because we know we're safe, they're also pleasurable.'

So, when VR whisks you from the Tower of London's vaults into the Thames with Guy Fawkes as part of 'The Gunpowder Plot' immersive experience (opening on May 5), it's actually quite fun. 'The huge growth in immersive events has been partly driven by tech, but largely by audiences hungry for new experiences that are active rather than passive,' Wood says. 'We want to do more than watch; we want to be part of the story.'

That's why immersive events work so well when they're designed around character franchises: you can meet the likes of Shrek, Gatsby, Harry Potter and Sherlock Holmes, all in 'real life'. Tom Maller started at Secret Cinema in 2014 as a performer. Now he's the director of immersive 'Peaky Blinders: The Rise', which launches in July as a live theatrical experience based on the TV show. 'Immersive theatre is rising through the ranks because people get to make memories



ART

THE BLOCKBUSTER 'Van Gogh: The Immersive Experience'

From 'The Starry Night' to those joyful sunflowers, this 360-degree VR experience takes you inside some of the world's most famous paintings and gives you an insight into the artistic genius who created them.

→ 106 Commercial St. Until May 30.
From £19.90.

THE INSTA FAVE Yayoi Kusama: 'Infinity Mirror Rooms'

The global queen of immersive art returns to Tate Modern with two of her most spectacular infinity mirror rooms. Disappear into a galaxy of tiny lights before marvelling at a vast expanse of rotating crystal chandeliers.

→ Tate Modern. Until Jun 11 2023.
£10.

THE NICHE ONE 'Silent Fall'

Stretch out your hand and catch mystical dropping bubbles in this new installation from AA Murakami. 'Silent Fall' is an enclave of robotic tree-like beings for you to wander among.

→ Superblue, 6 Burlington Gardens.
Until 8 May. From £10.

BOOZE

Moonshine Saloon

The place A western-themed bar for sipping drinks with outlaws.

The drink Bootleg cocktails like the Seville Orange Old Fashioned. (Real cowboys drink whiskey.)

→ 28-30 Houndsditch.

Hackney Funhouse

The place A below-the-railway-arches bar where you get to play scientist.

The drink Molecular cocktails concocted by guests dressed in lab coats. Soak it all up with rather-less-techy sourdough pizza.

→ 18 Bohemia Place.

The Bletchley

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'Cabaret'

THEATRE

THE BLOCKBUSTER 'Cabaret'

Take a trip to The Kit Kat Club courtesy of Rebecca Frecknall's decadent and delicious new 'Cabaret'.

Nominated for every Olivier Award going, the show stars Fra Fee and Amy Lennox, who replaced the much-lauded Eddie Redmayne and Jessie Buckley.

→ Playhouse Theatre. Until Oct 1. From £30.

THE INSTA FAVE 'The Great Gatsby'

Party like it's Prohibition with a visit to the immersive version of F Scott Fitzgerald's novel. Guests are encouraged to fully embrace the 1920s vibe with flapper-style clothing and plenty of bootleg booze. Pre-show dining options available.

→ Immersive LDN. Until Oct 30. From £41.

THE NICHE ONE 'Mulan Rouge'

Smashing together Disney's 'Mulan' and Baz Luhrmann's 'Moulin Rouge!', this dreamy bit of queer cabaret returns to The Vaults following a triumphant run. Dress up, book a dining ticket and luxuriate in comedy, burlesque and drag.

→ The Vaults. Mar 30-Aug 28. From £20.

within the scenes of their favourite films,' Maller says. 'They become complicit in the reason why an iconic character chooses a certain action.' Add a couple of cocktails and some punchy adult jokes and you're basically in a grown-up version of Disneyland. 'Fundamentally, people want to have a good night out,' says Maller. 'I think allowing the audience to have a few in-world drinks helps these people as performers [within the immersive story].'

Even immersive art – which tends to be more restrained than its all-singing theatrical counterpart – will try to insert you into the story. The Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera immersive experience, with London tickets available from June, uses projections of the artists' works to 'create multiple small stories building into a larger one', according to creative director Philippe Amad. Rather than displaying authentic works,

the experience is a quickfire art-history lesson that can make it look (through your phone camera, at least) like you've walked right into the famous paintings – all the while providing that essential Instagram story aesthetic.

So, does London love immersive events because we're all just bored AF? Chris Rojek, professor of sociology at City, University of London, thinks so. 'It's a reaction against routine,' he says. 'Levels of dissatisfaction are very high in people's lives – you can go to an immersive event and it stops you from thinking about how your life isn't as great as you want it to be. The lockdowns from the past two years have intensified this.' For Prais, the immersive enthusiast, escapism is a huge part of the appeal. 'It transports you in the most profound way,' she says. 'Instead of being a viewer you become a participant. It's a bit of escapism, which we all need.'

CABARET: AMY LENNOX AS SALLY BOWLES; PHOTO: MARC BRENNER



FOOD

THE BLOCKBUSTER 'Mamma Mia! The Party'

Pay a visit to Nikos Taverna, the Greek café on Skopelos where 'Mamma Mia!' was filmed, for sunshine and singalong hits.

→ The O2. Until Oct 2. From £99.

THE INSTA FAVE Supperclub Tube

A six course Latin-inspired tasting menu and a disused Victoria line tube carriage from the 1960s. Two totally different concepts that, smashed together, somehow make sense.

→ Walthamstow Pumphouse Museum. Until Jul 30. From £49.

THE NICHE ONE Kitchen Theory

Kitchen Theory's bespoke events immerse you in a multi-sensory experience. Previous events have featured jellyfish and mushroom sponge.

→ Unit 9a Alston Works, Falkland Rd. Ongoing. £190 per person.

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Immersive London



Backyard Cinema

While it seems like London has suddenly exploded with all things immersive, Rojek says that these events go hand in hand with urban life: we're still seeking the same sort of escapism as people did when they went to the theatre in Shakespeare's day. 'You can think of a football match as being immersive, in that you lose yourself in the crowd,' he says. 'It's true that the technology of some immersive experiences [now] is quite different, but the mother and father of that are just big crowd experiences.'

There's no doubt that the tech these days helps these events to become next-level. 'The Gunpowder Plot' has VR rooms,' says director Hannah Price. 'Projection mapping and sonic sound design, allowing us to build layers of immersion including smells, airflow and temperature – everything to let our audience feel like they are actually there.'

But Wood isn't so fully convinced about this being the future. 'I'm sceptical about the growth in AR and VR,' she says. 'These tend to detract from the social side of immersive events. Going forward, I expect to see greater degrees of personalisation. More events that are – or feel – created just for you and your group.'

Whatever your take on immersive, it's not going anywhere. As culture looks for new ways to stay relevant to an audience consuming everything through their TikTok 'For You' page – not to mention a craving to feel something after being locked up for the best part of two years – 'immersive' is an antidote. Our best guess at what's next? Two words: immersive commutes. ■

Find the latest events at [timeout.com/theatre](https://www.timeout.com/theatre)

GAMES

THE BLOCKBUSTER 'Sherlock': The Official Live Game

Created by the makers of the BBC's 'Sherlock', this escape room challenges you to crack puzzles as the clock ticks down.

→ West 12 Shopping Centre. Until Dec 31. From £35.

THE INSTA FAVE Dopamine Land

In this brand-new multisensory immersive experience, play around with mirrors, bubbles and a giant popcorn machine before collapsing in a happy heap of fizzing endorphins.

→ 79-85 Old Brompton Rd. Apr 16-Jun 12. From £17.50.

THE NICHE ONE DNA VR

DNA VR combines arcade game and escape room in one nerdy package. Defend an orc invasion or fend off the impending zombie apocalypse.

→ Various locations. Ongoing. From £22 per person.



THE BLOCKBUSTER Secret Cinema

No one does immersive like Secret Cinema. For its next extravaganza, it's taking audiences inside 'Guardians of the Galaxy'.

Take a side seat and watch the action unfold, or step right into the heart of it like the comic-book hero you are.

→ Secret location. Aug 31-Oct 23. From £47.

THE INSTA FAVE Backyard Cinema

Go kitsch or go home with a visit to Backyard Cinema, specialist in Insta-perfect filmgoing experiences. This spring, it's back at its Wandsworth home with two retro settings: LA Nights and Miami Beach. Knot your Hawaiian shirt, sip a cocktail and enjoy a classic movie.

→ Capital Studios. Until May 1. From £20.

THE NICHE ONE Taste Film

Ever wondered what 'True Romance' would taste like if it were a pie? Neither did we until Taste Film came along. It pairs food with cult-classic movies, in a multi-sensory experience that's both witty and delicious.

→ Various venues. Various dates. From £60.

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Wait, how much? Can you put a price on otherworldly serenity? Sure can. Tickets from £16.

→ St James's Church Piccadilly.

www.timeout.com/tooriginals2022



'Bob Marley: One Love Experience'

What is it? An immersive Marley mecca.

Why go? Filled with super-rare photos and personal accounts, 'One Love Experience' is the big dog of immersive art shows. It's huge. If you're a Marley fan (heck, even if you haven't got a reggae bone in your body), lively up yourself.

Wait, how much? From £19.20, saving you a fiver on each ticket.

→ Saatchi Gallery. www.timeout.com/onelove22

Goldfish

What is it? A snazzy AF tasting menu... and a kind of fish, obv.

Why go? Because pan-Asian paradise Goldfish's eight-course tasting menu is unmissable. Think truffle lobster, tender sirloin beef, rotundas of tofu and much more. Mmm...delish. A glass of fizz is included, too.

Wait, how much? £39, which is 50 percent off. That's right, *half price*.

→ 16 Hampstead High St.

www.timeout.com/goldfish22

Leong's Legend

What is it? A frankly ridiculous amount of dim sum.

Why go? No matter how shit the world may be, there's always dim sum. You can practically drown in the stuff at Leong's Legend in Chinatown, which is offering bottomless dumplings, buns and bao. And if that wasn't enough, it's also chucking in a glass of bubbly.

Wait, how much? Only £22 per head, which is just below half price.

→ 39 Gerrard St. www.timeout.com/leongslegend

Jay P Beauty

What is it? A Swedish aromatherapy or CBD massage at a bougie Harley Street spa.

Why go? Because there's only so much self-care you can achieve with pizza and 'Below Deck'. You need expert hands (and maybe some CBD oil? Why not?) massaging all your cares away.

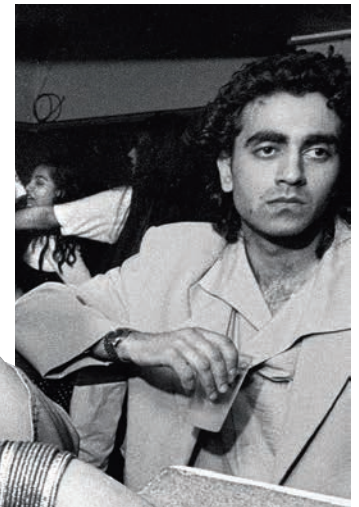
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→ 1 Harley St. www.timeout.com/jpbeauty

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Things to Do

Edited by Rosie Hewitson
timeout.com/thingstodo @timeoutlondon



'Taking Care of Business: Migrant Entrepreneurs and the Making of Britain'

Big new exhibitions

S 'Taking Care of Business: Migrant Entrepreneurs and the Making of Britain'

Wander down an immersive high street filled with migrant-owned businesses in this new exhibition, co-curated by Time Out's very own Angela Hui. You'll find video installations, interactive artwork and personal accounts from well-known entrepreneurs including Reggae Reggae Sauce owner Levi Roots and Darjeeling Express's Asma Khan. The museum shop has been transformed into a Migrant Makers' Market championing Lewisham's diverse businesses. → Migration Museum. Apr 9-Nov. Free.

W 'Football: Designing the Beautiful Game'

Hyped for the Women's Euros and the World Cup later this year? This exhibition at the Design Museum is sure to take you to fever pitch.

Through more than 500 objects, films and interviews, it explores how design has shaped the world's most popular sport, touching on kit development, stadium construction and how technology helps elite footballers perform at their best. → Design Museum. Apr 8-Aug 29. £18.50.

C 'Sorting Britain: The Power of Postcodes'

The Postal Museum's latest exhibition is a deep dive into the fascinating history and function of postcodes. Learn how they're used to sort and deliver mail, and delve into the social history of postcodes, beginning with their 1959 trial in Norwich and examining how they have impacted life in the UK since, from affecting what services we can access to defining how we perceive ourselves and

others. Along the way you'll get to check out beautiful unseen maps of nineteenth-century London and some hilarious promo materials featuring Poco, the Postcode Elephant, who never forgets anyone's address (below). → Postal Museum. Mar 30-Jan 2023. Free with entry.

C 'Japan: Courts and Culture'

Highlights from the Royal Collection's vast array of beautiful Japanese paintings and rare artefacts will be on view in the latest exhibition at the

Queen's gaff. From the earliest samurai armour to ever arrive in Britain to a cosmetics box gifted to our Lizzie by Emperor Shōwa for her coronation in 1953, via woodcut prints, delicate fans, stunning embroidered screens, porcelain and weaponry, expect to see some

incredible examples of traditional Japanese craftsmanship, many of which are on public display for the first time. You simply don't get stuff like this in the Covent Garden branch of Muji.

→ The Queen's Gallery, Buckingham Palace. Apr 8-Mar 12 2023. £17.

C 'Superheroes, Orphans & Origins: 125 Years in Comics'

Comic books are filled with depictions of orphans, adoptees, foster children and foundlings. You've got Black Panther, 'the Orphan King'. There's Superman, who is a founding, and Spider-Man, who is raised by his aunt and uncle after his parents die in a plane crash. Batman is famously orphaned when his parents are murdered in a Gotham street robbery. These stories and plenty more are explored in the Foundling Museum's new exhibition, which examines the frequent depictions of orphans in comics, graphic novels and sequential art from all over the world.

→ Foundling Museum. Apr 1-Aug 28. Free with entry.



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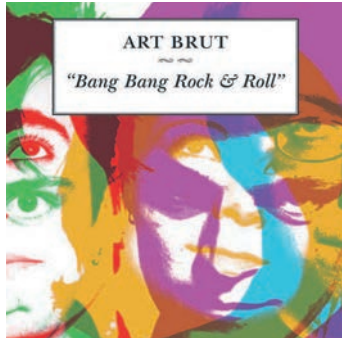
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Music fests

E Risen Festival

The under-representation of women and minorities on the average festival line-up has come up time and time again in recent years. This new one-day dance music festival is doing something about it. Curated by female DJs from the Percolate collective and spread over 16 warehouse venues, its non-male line-up features Girls Don't Sync, Club Fitness, Ifeoluwa, Ambient Babestation Meltdown and Luxe.
→ Queen's Yard. Apr 9.
From £31.50.



E Dialed In

Headed up by London-based South Asian club night No ID and creative collective Daytimers, the sophomore edition of this South Asian music festival arrives at Earth with a line-up of 30 acts, including the likes of Yung Singh, Anish Kumar, Anoushka Shankar, GoldTooth and Mixtress, plus queer parties Hungama and Pxxsy Palace. We've implored you to grab tickets several times on these pages over the last few months. This is your final chance!
→ Earth. Apr 9. From £40.20.

Drinks fests

E The London Coffee Festival

Reckon you can tell your Square Mile from your Allpress? Got some serious opinions on microfoam? You'll love this four-day festival dedicated to the black medicine. From latte art classes and plant-milk pairing sessions to a barista tournament and even a coffee-themed art exhibition, the packed programme of demonstrations, workshops, talks and tastings has something new to teach even the most avid bean connoisseurs.
→ Old Truman Brewery.
Mar 31-Apr 3. From £24.

S Croydon Whisky Festival

Croydon's inaugural festival dedicated to the water of life will feature more than 20 distillers from the UK and further afield, like East London Liquor Co and Battersea's Doghouse Distillery, which will be serving up a huge range of craft whiskies, including plenty of new releases. Tickets include a bottle of botanical mixer, plus all the wee drams you can manage. That's not a challenge.
→ The Venue on Middle Street. Apr 2. £35.

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Games galore

🎮👤👤 London Games Festival Trafalgar Square Exhibition

London's ten-day citywide celebration of video games is back this spring after a brief hiatus, kicking off with this free festival in Trafalgar Square. Visitors can check out a host of artworks and installations, as well as the festival's official selection of 40 cracking new video games from across the globe, and 'Ensemble', an exhibition focusing on Black and minority ethnic gaming industry professionals curated by bestselling children's author Sharna Jackson.

→ Trafalgar Square. Apr 1-3. Free.

🎮 Power Up

Play five decades' worth of popular video games at this event featuring more than 160 consoles. From 'Pong' and 'Pacman' to the latest VR experiences, there's something for everyone in this giant arcade. Visit during the daytime to school your kids on 'Mario Kart', or book for one of the adults-only games nights if you're prone to profanities when you mess up on 'Guitar Hero', or want to feel more sophisticated while flossing in 'Fortnite.'

→ Science Museum. Apr 2-19. From £8.

🎮 Now Play This

The programme of this annual festival of experimental video games is themed around democracy and game design. Alongside a fascinating programme of talks and screenings, visitors can check out more than 20 titles from across the globe in a playable exhibition. Highlights include 'The Redistricting Game' which explores how the shape of voting districts can influence elections, 'Playing Democracy', where participants can change the rules mid-game, and playable documentary 'Out for Delivery', which tracks a Beijing food courier making deliveries during the pandemic.

→ Somerset House. Apr 8-10. From £9.

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Eve Riot Grrrls of Wrestling

The Big Mercato Spring Festival

Hosted in collaboration with German Kraft Brewery, this four-day party is a bit like Oktoberfest in April. Head there to wash down German sausage platters with spring beers and summer cocktails, then dance it all off to a DJ set. Best of all, the weather should be warm enough for lederhosen!

→ Mercato Metropolitano. Apr 7-10. Free entry.



Big nights out

JME presents Grime MC FM

Legendary north London MC JME brings his new live grime night to the main space at Dalston venue Earth this Thursday. The line-up always remains completely hush hush, but previous special guests have included D Double E, Novelist and JME's big bro Skepta, so you know you're likely to see some of grime's top talents gracing the stage at this lively pirate radio-inspired night.

→ Earth. Mar 31. £30.

Ceilidh at Truman's

Funky London-based Scottish dance band The Sassenachs will be supplying the music at this ceilidh night in the cavernous beer hall of Walthamstow social club Truman's. No experience is necessary, just wear your dancing shoes and get ready to 'strip the willow' like your life depends on it. There'll be plenty of time to raise a few drams in between reels too.

→ Truman's Social Club. Apr 1. £20.

Quirky competitions

Kiss My Art: Make Art Not War Ukraine Fundraiser

Ten top life-drawing artists will be battling it out at this lively Ukraine fundraiser organised by Kiss My Art and London Drawing. Enjoy 'ambient pop-art beats' and performances from the likes of Moby-winning songwriter Pat 'Have Mercy' Leacock, spoken-word artist Kirsty Allison and comedian Dee Gruselle-Allum, while the competitors work on their masterpieces. Once they're done, you get to vote for who deserves to take home the highly coveted Golden Paintbrush award.

→ Basing House. Mar 31. From £7.

The Grand Annual Lying Contest

Billed as a 'riotously comedic celebration of spurious poppycock',

this tongue-in-cheek spoken-word evening is all about the gift of the gab, with a host of top performers slamming down falsehood after falsehood in an attempt to impress you and a panel of supposedly incorruptible judges. If you say something eloquently enough, it has to be true, right? Judge for yourself at an event that definitely won't feature any lie-detector tests, but does promise plenty of 'gold-plated balderdash'.

→ Rich Mix. Apr 1. £10.

Eve Riot Grrrls of Wrestling: Piledrivers and Pints

Punk feminist pro-wrestling crew Eve return with a live-action stunt show at Signature Brew's Blackhorse Road bar. Expect gender stereotypes to be smashed to smithereens by a feisty crew of spandex-wearing women who really know how to body-slam. This full-throttle night out will pack in seriously fruity language, a healthy dose of female empowerment and more drama than an entire series of 'Glow'.

→ Signature Brew. Apr 1. £20.

Big days out

Record Store Day Live

London craft brewer Meantime is hosting this raucous Record Store Day party at its Greenwich brewery in aid of War Child. It's brewed a limited-edition IPA called B-Side for the occasion, which you can sample while browsing loads of gorgeous vinyl releases from local record stores and taking in live sets from the likes of south London 'G-folk' artist Hak Baker and post-punk quartet Do Nothing.

→ Meantime Brewery. Apr 9. £12.50.

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Things to Do

Markets and more

S Woolwich Makers' Market

Browse handmade jewellery, beautifully restored vintage utensils, illustrated greetings cards, perfume and ceramics made by local craftspeople at this regular makers' market popping up in a grand old Woolwich pub.

→ Woolwich Equitable. Apr 2. Free entry.

C G(end)er Swap

London's new pop-up LGBTQ+ Community Centre hosts this gender-affirming clothes swap raising money for social enterprise G(end)er Swap, which supports non-binary people and those undergoing gender transition. Take along old clothes you'd like to pass on, and swap them for other donated items you like the look of.

→ LGBTQ+ Community Centre. Apr 2. £5.



Fragments

Gustav Metzger's 'Liquid Crystal Environment' in 'Postwar Modern'

Culture highlights

C Fragments

Any student of modern literature knows that April is the cruellest month, which is why the TS Eliot Foundation has chosen it to mark the centenary of the writer's seminal 1922 poem 'The Waste Land' via this week-long festival. The City of London's 22 churches – many of which are named in the poem – will play host to a varied programme of talks and performances celebrating the unreal city. Don't miss Jeanette Winterson's secular sermon at Southwark Cathedral or a poetry reading by TS Eliot Prize-winner Joelle Taylor at St Olave's.

→ Various venues. Apr 7-12. £20.

C 'Postwar Modern' curator tour with Jane Alison

The Barbican's head of visual arts, Jane Alison, will be leading this captivating tour of the arts centre's fabulous new exhibition on modernism after the Second World War. It recently received a rare five-star review from our very discerning art critic Eddy Frankel, so seize this chance to get the inside scoop from its curator.

→ Barbican. Mar 31 and Apr 7. £18.

C The Primadonna Prize

Sandi Toksvig hosts the award ceremony for this prize designed to help unsigned writing talent to break into the publishing industry. The evening will feature

a conversation between Lenny Henry and Kit de Waal, who are working together on a BBC adaptation of de Waal's novel 'My Name Is Leon', live comedy and spoken-word performances, plus a bar and Waterstones bookshop.

→ Conway Hall. Mar 31. £15.

E The Front Room: Diaspora Migrant Aesthetics in the Home

British-Caribbean playwright and artist Michael McMillan will be delivering this fascinating free lecture at the Museum of the Home, having previously curated the museum's incredibly popular 1970s-era exhibit 'The West Indian Front Room'. After the lecture there'll be a chance to see the room and ask questions over a drink.

→ Museum of the Home. Apr 6. Free.

C Ceramic Art London

Europe's largest showcase for contemporary ceramicists will this year feature 92 leading artists from 11 different countries exhibiting and selling their work. Prices for their wares start from as little as £20. Visitors can also check out Claytalks, a programme of lectures curated by CSM teacher Duncan Hooson, and 'On Air', a satellite exhibition and series of live events where ceramic artists respond to the urgent topic of air pollution.

→ Central Saint Martins. Apr 8-10. £16.



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Kids

Edited by Annette Richardson
timeout.com/thingstodo @meoutlondon



'That's him! That's the kid who ate my Wotsits!' Dino Kingdom

Outdoor activities

W 🍷 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' Trail

Kew has taken a cue (no pun intended) from the Eric Carle picture book classic and created an interactive 3D family adventure trail recreating one of nature's most dramatic transformations – caterpillar to chrysalis to butterfly. Along the way families can find all the food that a caterpillar needs, explore fruit sculptures and discover how to make their own minibeast haven at home.

→ Kew Gardens. Apr 2-18. Free with entry.

W 🍷 Easter Duck Trail

Not all Easter hunts have to involve chocolate eggs – some of them are much less likely to give you (or the kids) a cavity. The London Wetland Centre is holding an Easter duck trail, where you and the little ones can wander the site and track down bright yellow ducks hidden in

reeds and perched up in the trees. There'll also be some much more lively ducks of multiple species floating around to gaze at as you try and find their inanimate cousins, plus pond-dipping sessions, otter feeding and indoor and outdoor play areas to clamber around.

→ London Wetland Centre. Apr 2-24.

Free with entry.

W 🍷 Dino Kingdom

Getting up close and personal with dinosaurs is a perennial crowdpleaser with kids. This family-friendly adventure features a host of projections, holograms, fossils, dino babies and, best of all, a number of fearsome lifelike moving dinosaurs, including a 16-metre-high T-rex ready to roar at those brave enough to say hello.

→ Gunnersbury Park. Apr 1-18. £14, £12 child.

Storytelling sessions

C 🍷 Lost and Found

Blame it on Paddington Bear if you like, but children have a fascination with lost property.

Indulge them with these interactive storytelling sessions, where kids' author Emily Rand will read from her book 'The Lost Property Office', and youngsters will get a chance to collage their own weird and wonderful objects to add to a lost property installation.

There's also a SEND Early Explorer Morning with writer Kate Wilkinson on Saturday April 9 when the gallery is quieter.

→ London Transport Museum. Apr 2-18.

Free with entry.



Lost and Found

C 🍷 Stories in Stone

If your kids hate being stuck indoors but love history and magic then the free 'Stories in Stone' time-travelling family tour for children aged seven or older strikes the right note. Led by storyteller Olivia Armstrong between the museum's current home and its new site in West Smithfield, the walk takes about 45 minutes and reveals some of the magical creatures and everyday heroes of our capital.

→ Museum of London. Apr 4-12. Free.

E Journey Through Tomorrowland

Hackney 2050 is the destination of the Museum of the Home's creative 'Tomorrowland' Easter sessions, delivered by Artburst, blending future-proof design, storytelling and drama. Kids are invited to imagine what their utopian futures might look like – including how they might whizz around getting from London Fields to the Hackney Empire. We're betting that a DeLorean won't even get a look in.

→ Museum of the Home. Apr 5, 7, 12 and 14. Free.

THREE OF THE BEST

Adventure playgrounds



Diana Memorial Playground

Avast! The star attraction of this big-budget playground is a gorgeous wooden pirate ship, complete with rope rigging and surrounded by palm trees. But there's more fun afoot: check out the wooden walkways, wigwams and sculptures galore.

→ Kensington Gardens. Free.



Biodiversity Playground

Bribe the kids to go on a shopping expedition at Westfield Stratford with the promise of a trip to this fantastic play park. The theme is nature, so there are artfully designed animal structures to clamber over, plus slides and climbing walls.

→ Westfield Stratford City. Free.



Holland Park Adventure Playground

Kids can play king or queen of the castle at this action-packed adventure playground filled with wooden towers and extensive opportunities for climbing. Daredevils will be fully satisfied by its zip wire, tyre swing, and gigantic see-saw. ■ Alice Saville

→ Holland Park. Free.



Dare skywalk

Active antics

📅 🧐 Skate Camp Easter

At these intensive day sessions, seasoned instructors can help aspiring junior skateboarders learn the basics with confidence, while those with a bit more experience can join the pro-skater-run workshops to improve their skills. There will also be the chance to visit other skate parks to try different terrains. If your offspring are just dipping their toes in the water, all the kit they'll need can be hired on the day. And everyone gets a goody bag at the end.

→ BaySixty6 Skate Park. Apr 4-8, 11-14. £50.

📅 🎧 Fly-Kid x Family Hip Hop and R&B Party Easter Special

If the thought of gathering your brood together for Easter Sunday lunch fills you with horror, then here's an alternative from the creators of long-running London club night Supa Dupa Fly. It's basically a daytime party playing all your favourite hip hop and R&B tunes from the '90s and '00s, so you can enjoy them AND inflict them on your kids. Expect dynamite playlists featuring Mary J Blige, Aaliyah and Tupac. There will also be street-dance lessons, competitions and face painting.

→ Bloomsbury Lanes. Apr 17. From £10, £5 child.

Find more outdoor thrills at [timeout.com/playgrounds](https://www.timeout.com/playgrounds)



Chocolatey fun

E 🐰 **The Great Easter Eggstravaganza**

Take the small animal lovers in your life to Lee Valley Adventure Park during the school hols. Not only will there be an Easter egg trail with chocolate treats and a 'bunny academy' (whatever that is) but kids can also meet exotic animals including meerkats in 'Critter Corner', and farmyard favourites such as goats and pigs.

→ Lee Valley Animal Adventure Park. Apr 2-18. Free with entry.

W 🐰 **Lindt Gold Bunny Hunt**

If you fancy being a bit bougie, then why not take your little darlings to an Easter bunny hunt in an actual palace? Both Hampton Court and Kensington Palace have Lindt Gold Bunny Hunts this Easter. The trails take place in the palace gardens and you need to find the Lindt statues that are hiding. At each location there's a story about the characters who have lived and worked at the palace, with a chocolate reward at the end.

→ Hampton Court Palace and Kensington Gardens. Apr 2-18. Free with entry.

W 🍫 **Easter Chocolate Making**

Can't be doing with the faff of looking for chocolate? You are not alone. Let the chocolate come to you at an Easter culinary workshop. You'll learn about the history of chocolate, but let's be honest, probably with only half an ear, as you'll be busy shaping and decorating your own sweet treats to take home. Workshops last for 90 minutes, the sugar high for several further hours.

→ National Army Museum. Apr 6-7. £5.

W 🐰 **Easter at Chelsea Physic Garden**

Cunningly combining the twin child-friendly lures of chocolate and nature, Chelsea Physic Garden has a trail across its four-acre site running over the Easter weekend. Kids can discover the properties of plants on the way to finding a chocolate prize. If you're more interested in the glories of cacao beans, go to the chocolate

workshop for ages five and upwards, where you'll learn how they're transformed into the brown stuff and design chocolate items with herbs and spices.

→ Chelsea Physic Garden. Apr 7, 12, 15, 17 and 18. Prices vary.

N 🐰 **The Big Easter Kick Off**

During the holidays there's a host of family activities at Spurs HQ, including an Easter egg hunt around the stadium, movies including 'Sing' and 'Zootropolis', face painting, kickabouts with the club's football freestylers, magicians, quizzes and games. Live music acts will perform during sessions on the Dare Skywalk - where kids aged eight and older can climb up on to the stadium roof to enjoy panoramic views of the capital a dizzying 46.8 metres above the pitch.

→ Tottenham Hotspur Stadium. Apr 2-18. £31.50, £19.50 child.



LINDT BUNNY © HISTORIC ROYAL PALACES

'SUBLIMELY GOOD FUN'

TIME OUT

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South Kensington

Kids' theatre

C 'Zog and the Flying Doctors'

Fans of the dynamic duo Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler will be delighted to discover this family show adapted from their original book. This modern-day fairytale features Zog, a dragon turned air-ambulance, who still has problems with his landings, together with his Flying Doctor crew, Princess Pearl and Sir Gadabout. Mermaids, unicorns and feminist fables combine in raucous family fun.

→ Queen Elizabeth Hall. Apr 8-10. From £24.

N 'Easter Planet Play'

Little ones aged three and under will delight in this sensory theatre experience developed to encourage early-years development. Lasting about 45 minutes, it's the perfect length to grab their attention and introduce your babes to Easter as a time of play through movement, puppets, games and music.

→ Chickenshed Theatre. Apr 14. £7.50, children free.

C 'How to Hide a Lion'

Iris has a brand new friend, but she knows her family and friends won't love him quite as much as she does. This story of a girl trying to hide a lion in all sorts of devious ways is adapted by Peter Glanville from Helen Stephens's children's story, and features songs by singer-songwriter Barb Jungr.

→ Polka Theatre. Until Apr 24. From £10.

N 'Handa's Surprise'

This puppetry show for tots is based on Eileen Browne's popular picture book. Incorporating Swahili rhythms, it follows a young Kenyan girl who happens upon seven different animals while taking exotic fruits to a friend.

→ Little Angel Theatre. Until Apr 15. £13.50, £11.50 child.



'Gulliver's Travels'



THIS WILDLY INNOVATIVE, extremely fun reimagining of Jonathan Swift's classic, for ages seven-plus, uses live video and other lo-fi camerawork to create clever forced perspectives that make Mae Munuo's Gulliver look tiny or huge on the screens around the stage, depending on whether she's surrounded by pint-sized Lilliputians or giant Brobdingnagians.

There's a palpable glee to every second of the show, from the way the four actors have a boogie on stage before it starts, to the deployment of amusingly random pop songs throughout (most memorably Lionel Richie's 'All Night Long'). Right until the end they're still finding fresh, funny new ways to bring Swift's imaginary countries to life – the flying island of Laputa is a hoot.

This show's Gulliver is actually a young girl, living in the modern world, who has a hospital-bound mum and an exhausting, chore-heavy homelife. Her voyages are forays into an escapist world of imagination as she tries to forget about the draining reality of her life. It's not really in the spirit of Swift's grand social satire, but being aimed at kids, it ducks the expectation that it needs to be entirely true to the source.

And 'Gulliver's Travels' has endured for almost 300 years not because it's a superb satire (though it is), but because it's a ripping yarn full of fantasy realms that have never been surpassed in the popular imagination. This stage version embraces that brilliantly, rising to match Swift's dazzling inventiveness with its own. ■ *Andrzej Lukowski*

WHAT IS IT...

An audacious, family-friendly version of a classic.

WHY GO...

This 'Gulliver' is like nothing you've seen before.

→ Unicorn Theatre. Until Apr 16. From £14, £8 child.

Kids' dance

N Let's All Dance's 'Teddy Bears' Picnic'

If your little ones are driving you round and round the garden one too many times, Let's All Dance ballet company's 'Teddy Bears' Picnic' will offer you the chance to hand them over to the professionals for a cuddly bear performance and family play. The picnic is a mash-up of ballet, physical theatre



Sadler's Wells

and storytelling. It's particularly suitable for under-eights and SEN kids, but all ages will have plenty of fun singing and clapping along, and even having a selfie moment with the titular bears.

→ Lilian Baylis Studio. Apr 7. From £14.

N Sadler's Wells Family Weekend

For the Easter weekend, Sadler's Wells has come up with a great line-up of fresh takes on family-friendly performances, including 'The Lost Happy

Endings', an original story by Carol Ann Duffy, narrated by Joanna Lumley and produced by BalletLORENT, which ponders what happens when fairytale go off the rails and Little Red Riding Hood gets unfortunately eaten by the wolf. This delightfully anarchic family show is the result. The weekend also features 'Underwater' – a hypnotic multi-sensory dance performance for babies – plus some intriguing-looking family dance workshops and arts and crafts in the foyers.

→ Sadler's Wells. Apr 15-16. Prices vary.

london transport museum 

Lost and Found

Easter Holidays
2-18 April

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 ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

Kids

Arts and crafts

C Easter at The Postal Museum

Nestled in Farringdon, The Postal Museum hosts interactive exhibitions suitable for the Postman Pat obsessive in your life along with the speedy Mail Rail ride. This Easter there are a number of family-friendly workshops, including an elephant trail and arts and crafts, and creative map-making for aspiring cartologists.
→ The Postal Museum. Apr 2-18. Free with entry.

S Actions for Earth

Global-warming warriors will relish these free Easter workshops at the National Maritime Museum. From making kites, or a wildflower seed bomb, to repurposing clothes and accessories there is plenty to do to mark Earth Day and take small but positive actions to protect the planet.
→ National Maritime Museum. Apr 3-17. Free with entry.

C Easter at Sir John Soane's Museum

One of London's most beautiful museums has themed Easter workshops that budding history buffs will adore. On April 6 families with children aged four or older can try their hand at hand-painting Regency-themed egg decorations to take home – thankfully using craft eggs and not the hardboiled variety to avoid tears before bedtime. Older crafters can try their hand at making a version of an illuminated manuscript on April 7.
→ Sir John Soane's Museum. Apr 6-7. Prices vary.

C Family Make and Create Salon

Drawing on inspiration from the National Gallery's impressive collection – including such painters as Goya, Degas, Titian and Caravaggio – these Easter holiday workshops offer families a chance to look at art through a creative lens and understand the world in which they were made. An artist-led introduction and then a practical exploration and interpretation of techniques and artists through making means that junior art lovers get to learn as they create.
→ National Gallery. Apr 5, 6, 12 and 13. Free.

C Easter Workshops

Coram Fields' fascinating museum devoted to London's orphans is



Easter at The Postal Museum

celebrating the opening of its exhibition 'Superheroes, Orphans & Origins: 125 years in comics' with a host of free creative workshops each day suitable for ages five and older. Choose from designing a catwalk-ready costume for a superhero alter-ego, doing some claymation animations, and creating life-sized comic strips of your favourite caped crusader.
→ Foundling Museum. Apr 5-8. Free.

W Easter Egg Hunt and Crafts

The Mulberry Garden at Hogarth's House is the location of an Easter egg hunt with a twist. Once the eggs are found, the participants can head back indoors to the learning studio to decorate them and then put all of their eggs in one basket – personally crafted from recycled materials of course – in this artist-led workshop.
→ Hogarth's House. Apr 9. £15.





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For older kids

W Easter at the Design Museum

The Design Museum has a couple of creative all-day holiday workshops ideal for kids aged 11 to 14. The first is Robot Olympics, where participants learn how to create cyborgs to compete in various games using the BBC micro:bit pocket-sized computer. The second is for teens who love their 2D design and printmaking, as they'll be creating a lino print vintage football poster.

→ Design Museum. Apr 6 and 12. Prices vary.

E Young Musicians World Music and Jazz Ensemble

While there's not a specific age range listed for this Rich Mix event, music-loving older kids will probably get the most out of this session led by Andres Lafone conjuring up the spirit of Carnival

and Easter in Latin America, and learning about world music first hand, by working alongside leading professional musicians, discovering new instruments, and developing improvisation skills.

→ Rich Mix. Apr 10. Free.

S Cutty Sark Rig Climb Experience

Aspiring powder monkeys alert! Unleash your tween's inner salty sea dog by sending them up the rigging – or the 'ratlines' to use the evocative parlance – of the iconic Cutty Sark, berthed in the historic maritime setting of the Royal Borough of Greenwich. Not content with climbing up the masts, kids will enjoy a speedy descent courtesy of a zipwire, which sounds a lot more fun than walking the plank. There are two climbs available, but it's safe to say these range from 'high' to 'really, really high'.

→ Cutty Sark. Apr 2-18. From £26.

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Film

Edited by Phil de Semlyen
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FILM OF THE WEEK

A toxic love story

'True Things'



ONE OF THOSE actors who is equally convincing playing vulnerable ('Dark River') and commanding ('Luther') – as well as everything in between ('The Affair') – Ruth Wilson inhabits the coming-undone end of the spectrum in Harry Wootliff's empathetic portrait of a struggling single woman who falls hard for a wrong 'un.

Wilson is Kate, a depressed young woman sleepwalking through a crappy job at an employment centre in Ramsgate. Her love life is as bare as the cupboards in her flat. Her well-meaning parents ply her

with veggies from the garden and gentle concern. A supposed friend at work (Hayles Squires) gives her condescending advice about finding a good man and settling down.

Wootliff, who co-writes with playwright Molly Davies and adapts a 2010 novel by Deborah Kay Davies, showed the pitfalls of that route in her debut, the wonderful, raw fertility drama 'Only You'. Here, she shows how biting



loneliness, boiling desire, deep-rooted insecurity and struggles with mental health are a recipe for damaging choices. Because if you're looking for a dream man, Tom Burke's shifty, peroxide-haired ex-con, Blond, is a fair few rungs below Mr Darcy.

But then, as the film's gauzy daydream sequences remind us, desire can just make our decisions for us.

Burke brings a distracted broodiness and a slight tang of menace as Blond – he's a live wire that Kate

WHAT IS IT...

A woman finding love in all the wrong places.

WHY GO...

Ruth Wilson as terrific as a thirtysomething in too deep.

→ Harry Wootliff (15) 102 mins. Out Apr 1.



is happy to plug herself into – and Wilson marshals a kind of tentative daring to communicate how this woman is content to risk everything for the chance to feel that charge. The pair summon a believable, syncopated rhythm in their scenes together that makes you wish there were just a few more of them.

'True Things' is really good at building the walls of Kate's prison – the job that doesn't allow for a proper lunchbreak, unsupportive bosses, the small flat, the beat-up car that gets her to work ten minutes late – and showing how that, far from offering a romantic escape, Blond's

gaslighting and manipulation just usher her into another kind of cage.

What 'True Things' is less sure on is signposting a way out. Kate's half-formed ideas of going travelling give expression to a screaming voice inside that demands she escape all this. But how? The ending offers a clichéd vision of emancipation that leaves the picture not much clearer. After showing how hard life can be, it feels a little bit too easy. ■



By Phil de Semlyen
Who thinks Ruth Wilson should really be in all films.



Compartment No 6



THE CHARMS OF 'Compartment No 6' keep growing the closer we travel to the Arctic Circle. This seductive film from Juho Kuosmanen ('The Happiest Day in the Life of Olli Maki') sees a Finnish woman, Laura (Seidi Haarla) take a train alone from Moscow to the arse end of nowhere to see some ancient stone carvings.

Once she's on the train, Laura's sleeper cabin companion, Ljoha (Yuriy Borisov), is the stuff of nightmares. A miner off to seek work in Murmansk, the same place Laura is heading, he's drunk, aggressive and unpredictable, so much so that Laura hangs around other bits of the train just to avoid him. 'All humans should be killed,' he declares at one point. What a find.

It's only after Laura has a sour experience with a fellow Finn – a man superficially more trustworthy and more polished – that she and Ljoha begin to thaw. An understanding begins to emerge, that

they might both benefit from seeing the world a little differently. It's part road movie, part opposites-attract sort-of-romance, part a portrait of Russia in the early post-Soviet days. The period details and atmosphere have an immersive feel, from the babushkas we see through Laura's treasured video camera and the gruff female train guard to the unforgiving landscapes of the north.

A lot of the story beats are familiar from similar tales: the need to hit the road to rediscover yourself; the surly stranger who offers more than you first imagine; the journey being the point not the destination. But the performances, the writing and the direction all make it fresh and specific, with a delicious black comic streak. It shares the buzz of personal reawakening without ever feeling obvious – a beacon of warmth in a frozen wasteland. ■ *Dave Calhoun*

WHAT IS IT...

A strangers-on-a-train journey to the Arctic Circle.

WHY GO...

It's an anti-romance that's full of surprises.

→ Director Juho Kuosmanen (15). 108 mins. Out Apr 8.

Film

FIVE OF THE BEST

Things to see in April

1 'Fantastic Beasts: The Secrets of Dumbledore'

Things to recommend this 1930s-set third helping of magizoology include more of Jude Law's enigmatic wizard and the ever-watchable Mads Mikkelsen replacing Johnny Depp as supervillain Grindelwald. Fans will not need much persuading.

→ Out Apr 8.

2 'The Northman'

If you prefer your period fare to feature axe-swinging, disembowelment and hairy people with no respect for boundaries, Robert Eggers' Viking odyssey is for you. Alexander Skarsgård is a beefy Norseman on a quest for revenge against the man who killed his dad and stole his mum – and his kingdom.

→ Out Apr 15.

3 'The Unbearable Weight of Massive Talent'

Making his two bonkers roles in 'Adaptation' seem standard, this deeply meta comedy finds Nicolas Cage playing Nicolas Cage, a Cagier version of himself, and re-assuming



some of his classic characters to help the CIA take down a villainous superfan. His late-career revival continues in fine style.

→ Out Apr 22.

4 'Downton Abbey: A New Era'

Triiiiiing! The Dowager Countess requests your presence for another big-screen trip to Downton. Maggie Smith's no-nonsense matriarch is setting the Crawley clan, their servants, the people who carry their luggage and probably several bemused French people on a mysterious mission to the Riviera. It'll be the best kind of April-improving fluff.

→ Out Apr 29.

5 BFI Anime season

The BFI's blockbuster anime season gets into full swing in April with a programme curated for completists and newbies alike, featuring all the Studio Ghibli fare you'd expect to find rubbing cuddly Totoro-shaped shoulders with deeper cuts and new talent. Head to the South Bank and get anime-ted. ■

→ BFI Southbank. Until May 31.

The Bad Guys



WHAT IS IT...
'Ocean's 11'... for kids.

WHY GO...
The cartoony animation style really pops.

→ Director Pierre Perifel (U)
100 mins. Out Apr 1.

IT'S BILLED AS a U, but the wee 'uns might struggle with the twisty-turny plotting in this frenetic adaptation of Aaron Blabey's book series. It's about a group of anthropomorphic animal villains becoming goodies, and there are enough unmaskings and surprising reveals to seriously confound the unfocused.

The bad guys are a posse of bank robbers led by Danny Ocean-alike Mr Wolf (Sam Rockwell). Also in the posse? A master-of-disguises shark, a safe-cracking snake, a hacker tarantula and a piranha with gas. Outsmarted by the cunning fox (literally) who runs the town, they're forced to undergo reconditioning by moralising guinea pig Professor Marmalade (Richard Ayoade).

After 'Holmes & Watson' and 'Get Hard', an Etan Cohen screenwriting credit feels a bit like a red flag, and there's nothing especially witty in this script he co-wrote. 'The Bad Guys' will work better for kids than adults: the comedy is broad, with farting not just a major source of laughs but an entire plot device, and the characters aren't quite as lovable as the movie thinks they are, despite a winning voice cast that also boasts Marc Maron, Zazie Beetz and Awkwafina.

But there's a fizzy energy to the action, particular in the helter-skelter chase scenes, that stops those flaws bursting its bubble. And the cartoony animation style is pretty cool, elevating it above CG fare like 'Despicable Me' et al. Smug Professor Marmalade is right after all: there is some good in these bad guys. ■ *Phil de Semlyen*



One of These Days



WHAT IS IT...
The true story of a man enduring a bizarre competition.

WHY GO...
Londoner Joe Cole is great as a blue-collar Texan.

→ Director Bastian Günther
(15) 121 mins. Out Mar 18.

THERE'S SOMETHING MORBIDLY fascinating about the marathon car-touching contest in German filmmaker Bastian Günther's bleak true-life drama. It follows a group of locals in a southern US town who compete to win a brand new pick-up. The last person standing with at least one hand on the vehicle takes the truck home.

Questions soon spring to mind: how long can the average person actually go without sleep? Is anyone here desperate enough to publicly wet themselves for this truck? Haven't people died doing this? And, most of all, what kind of sick bastard came up with the idea in the first place?

'One of These Days' positions us as bemused onlookers of these sleep-deprived contestants: barely clinging on after 40 hours standing on an unbearably hot, mozzie-infested forecourt.

Among them is fast-food employee Kyle (Joe Cole from 'Peaky Blinders'), who believes that winning the contest will prove himself a worthy provider for his partner Marie (Callie Hernandez) and their infant son. Cole does an exceptional job portraying this desperate man. But there's a missed opportunity here to highlight both the absurdity of such a competition and the ugly truths it tells about capitalism. 'One of These Days' doesn't quite nail the social commentary you sense it sets out to provide. ■ *Emma Steen*



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Theatre & Dance

Edited by Andrzej Lukowski
timeout.com/theatre

WHAT IS IT...

Ralph Fiennes stars in a drama about New York city planner Robert Moses.

WHY GO...

Moses was a fascinating figure and Fiennes's performance is great.

→ Bridge Theatre.
Until Jun 18. £15-£95.

SHOW OF THE WEEK

King of the road 'Straight Line Crazy'



DAVID HARE HAS indubitably managed to parlay the fact that he wrote some great plays in the twentieth century into getting some truly rancid ones commissioned in the twenty-first. But if it's no masterpiece, he's definitely on to something again with 'Straight Line Crazy'.

More specifically, he's on to something in sensing that the influential New York city planner Bob Moses would make a great subject for a biographical drama.

What's particularly effective is that 'Straight Line Crazy' shuns the traditional cradle-to-grave biographical format, and instead shows the unelected Moses at just two junctures in his life, in 1926 and 1955. Star Ralph Fiennes looks virtually the same age in both. But crucially, this is a play about how much Moses doesn't change as much as how he does.

Self-important, arrogant, detached and driven, Fiennes's magnetic Moses is a case study

in the advantages and dangers of (nominally) benevolent dictatorship. 'We must advance their fortunes without having any respect for their opinions,' he declares – just one of many expressions of disdain for a working-class he sincerely wants to uplift.

Fiennes shies well clear of Voldemort territory in Nicholas Hytner's no-frills production: despite a few expository rants, his Moses simply remains removed from the humanity he wishes to help, his anger reserved for anybody holding him up. In 1926, he's the parks controller of

Long Island, and he has directed all his fanatical strength of will towards opening its beaches up to holidaymakers from the city. Moses's shit-kicking approach goes down well at first because his opponents are the unsympathetic, pampered elite who object to the great unwashed being invited out to their island.

Come '55, he's displaced some quarter of a million ordinary New Yorkers via his expressways, which have

slashed through the city mercilessly. He's facing a huge backlash as he schemes to essentially destroy Manhattan's Soho district in the name of decongestion. Has he changed and lost sight of his ideals? Or has he in fact stayed exactly the same? Fiennes's performance suggests the latter – his Moses is an autocrat, and that always ends badly.

'Straight Line Crazy' is a very effective play, but a somewhat crude one, leaning on improbably expository dialogues, static scenes and unmemorable secondary characters. Fiennes is brilliant and Moses's tale is fascinating; I'm glad this play exists to share it. But there's a frustrating underlying lack of theatricality or imagination to it: it's efficient, but it doesn't seem to even aspire to be great art. This play is Hare's own straight line, cutting through directly when meandering is often half the fun. ■



By Andrzej Lukowski

Who still doesn't really understand what an expressway is.

INTERVIEW

Who's the daddy?

Is London ready for Jeremy O Harris? The most talked-about US playwright of the moment finally debuts here this month

I DON'T THINK I've ever encountered anyone more obviously destined for stardom than playwright Jeremy O Harris. In March 2020, we met at Ottolenghi in Islington to discuss his imminent UK debut – the Almeida Theatre's production of his play “Daddy”: a Melodrama’. Black, gay, wildly clever yet unashamedly given to Twitter beefs, he radiates the sort of charisma that only an American can truly muster. He immediately launched into an anecdote about attending Kanye West's ‘Sunday Service’ the other day and proceeded to open an amusing, articulate, namedroptastic hour.

Inevitably, “Daddy” was put on ice due to the pandemic, but Harris is not a man you can keep down. The last couple of years have seen him net 12 Tony nominations for his explosive Broadway smash ‘Slave Play’, land an acting role in Netflix's ‘Emily in Paris’, sign on as a producer for another hit show, ‘Euphoria’, and score a critical smash with cult film ‘Zola’ (which he co-wrote). And now “Daddy” is back. Though Harris sent me a voice note with a couple of updates, this is essentially our 2020 chat.



Terique Jarrett and Claes Bang in “Daddy”

‘Slave Play’, then, is the most talked about US drama of the last few years, an outrageous dark comedy about three interracial American couples in which the Black partners have lost desire for their white paramours and so they turn to shocking sexual roleplay of America's slave-owning past to spice it up, with traumatic results.

We're not getting that: we're getting “Daddy”, the play Harris wrote before ‘Slave Play’ but which premiered afterwards, receiving a more tepid response.

“‘Slave Play’ closed and “Daddy” opened a week later, which was insane,’ says Harris. ‘But it's just my life; I'm a double Gemini, I'm used to things moving at a fast pace. The thing that sucks is that other people are less used to that. Some of the reviews in America around “Daddy” felt like people were trying to temper momentum.’

One enthusiastic supporter, though, was Almeida artistic director Rupert Goold. ‘Rupert asked me if he could take “Daddy” to London the day before the reviews came out,’ says Harris, ‘which was so affirming in this week when all I could hear in my head was one review

calling my play “turgid”. I thought: well, I guess they like “turgid” across the way. The UK was all I wanted when I was growing up, I had posters from the Royal Court in my bedroom.’

Hailing from Virginia, Harris was set on his path via the church: ‘A lot of working-class kids from Virginia who were Black and “performative” – which I'm putting in quotes to mean faggy or camp – were very quickly siphoned into the church. It's a safe space for effeminate boys and, if you're really smart, you can do really well. It's all about

reading comprehension: I thought maybe I'd be a preacher and then I discovered all the things I loved about church I could do in school and I could perform there.’

He trained as an actor, but it wasn't really for him. ‘I didn't love the job,’ he says, ‘and I was getting into auditions when I was tacitly rewriting the plays in my head. I'd moved to LA and identifying as an actor in LA without work is basically like identifying with a cockroach. But saying I was a playwright suggested that I had a level of intellect that



JEREMY O HARRIS: MICAHY CARTER; DADDY REHEARSALS AND



'I lied about being a playwright until it was true'

TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD: MARG BRENNER

people didn't ascribe to an out-of-work actor. So I lied until it was true.'

His experience living as a quasi-playwright informed "Daddy", which follows a young Black artist in LA who becomes the lover of an older white art collector. 'It was about seeing how I could make sense of my life in LA,' he says. 'It's about what does it mean to be a Black body that willingly enters a white space? What does it mean to be a poor body who decides to enter a wealthy space? What does that do to your morals? What does that do to how you see the world?'

Pastiche the sentimental Victorian artform melodrama, "Daddy" features a gospel choir and a working infinity pool, an exemplar of Harris's determinedly eclectic, culture-hopping aesthetic: queer, Black, left; but also ironic, provocative, humorous, embracing of kitsch. It's a mix that dumbfounded US critics still reeling from 'Slave Play' – it'll be fascinating to see if we react differently.

After "Daddy" was postponed, Harris stayed in London for months, sitting out the first lockdown in a Finsbury Park flat. But, it's only now that you can truly say Jeremy O Harris has arrived in London – and he'll be stuck in our heads for a long time to come. ■ *Andrzej Lukowski*

→ Almeida Theatre. Until Apr 30. £10-£48.50.

New openings

The best new theatre shows coming to London this week



'To Kill a Mockingbird'

Black Love

Chinonyerem Odimba's pocket musical follows sister and brother Aurora and Orion as they cling on to the memory of their parents' love to get through tough times when Orion's new white girlfriend shows she's unimpressed by Black culture.

→ Kiln Theatre. Until Apr 23. £15-£26.

David Hoyle: Ten Commandments

Scabrous performance legend David Hoyle returns to his regular stomping ground of Soho Theatre with a 'lighthearted antidote to the rat-infested dystopia in which we currently find ourselves', in which he aims to correct all the many injustices and inequalities of contemporary Britain via the medium of cabaret.

→ Soho Theatre. Until Apr 2. £17-£28.

The Handmaid's Tale

This is a juicy new opera in ENO's spring line-up: composer Poul Ruders adapts Margaret Atwood's landmark dystopia about a future United States that has become the Republic of Gilead, a misogynist, totalitarian theocracy. It follows the adventures of Offred, a 'handmaid' whose assigned role is to give birth to children of the male elite. Ruders's score is influenced by minimalism, medieval chanting and gospel music.

→ London Coliseum. Until Apr 14. £30-£160.

A Monster Calls

Following its run at the Old Vic in 2018, here's a second chance for Londoners to see Sally Cookson's deeply emotional stage adaptation of Patrick Ness's fantasy novel. In it, a boy, consumed by grief for his dying mother, is visited by a huge, angry monster who tells him a series of strange parables.

→ Rose Theatre Kingston. Until Apr 9. £15-£40.

To Kill a Mockingbird

Rafe Spall stars as iconic lawyer Atticus Finch in this extremely long-delayed UK premiere. It's 'West Wing' man Aaron Sorkin's blockbuster Broadway adaptation of Harper Lee's seminal novel of hope, injustice and civil rights in '30s Alabama. Originally due to run two years ago with Rhys Ifans in the lead, it has been heavily delayed by the pandemic.

→ Gielgud Theatre. Until Aug 13. £40-£152.50.

Traplord

Ivan Michael Blackstock's new dance show for Sadler's Wells and 180 Studios is a meditation on life, death and rebirth that uses dance, theatre and spoken word to question stereotypical depictions of Black masculinity. It comes with a lavish immersive production courtesy of co-designers Chloe Lamford and Shankho Chaudhuri.

→ 180 Studios. Until Apr 16. £25.



Art

Edited by Eddy Frankel
timeout.com/art @timeoutart

EXHIBITION OF THE WEEK

A carnival atmosphere Hew Locke: 'The Procession'



THERE'S A POST-COLONIAL, anti-capitalist carnival happening at Tate Britain. And if that doesn't sound like much fun, that's because it isn't. It's serious.

The colourful procession is British-Guyanese artist Hew Locke's big new commission for the grand neo-classical central gallery of this old building. There are hundreds of life-size models here. You're greeted by brightly dressed kids banging drums, flanked by people on horseback draped in flowers, then figures in skull masks dripping with jewels and pearls. The parade courses the length of the gallery, with dozens of faces, figures, outfits and masks. It nods to carnivals, sure, but also to protests, to refugees, to the fleeing of migrants.

The flags and banners being brandished are old currency and share certificates from colonial Panama and Nigeria; the skins of the drums are marked with the insignia of the Russian General Oil Corporation; the dresses are cut from old paintings of Black soldiers and slaves; the horses are wearing images of colonial buildings; there are photos of ships, maps of Africa. This is part celebration, part protest, part funeral march.

Locke is partly trying to draw

attention to the history of the Tate. The museum was founded by sugar magnate Henry Tate, who created this place, as the gallery itself says, 'from wealth derived from an

industry previously built on the labour of enslaved African people', which is a mealy-mouthed, half-arsed way of putting it. But this is the weakest conceptual part of the show. Tate Britain has been hellbent on self-flagellation lately and, although it's right to admit its guilt and complicity, I think it has vastly overestimated how

interested people are in watching an art institution tell itself off.

Way better is when you start to see this big, kaleidoscopic installation as a carnival of reclamation, as a hundred figures not throwing off the weight of the past, but owning it, celebrating its cultural and physical endurance against brutal odds. In a world of old debts, exploitation, oppression, greed and transactions paid for in blood, this is about survival. It's about embracing history, powerfully and beautifully. It's a defiant, strong and totally technicolour up yours. ■

WHAT IS IT...

A wild march through the middle of Tate Britain.

WHY GO...

It's full of history, life and power.

→ Tate Britain. Until Jan 22 2023. Free.



By Eddy Frankel
Who looks infinitely better when he's wearing a mask.

'Francis Bacon: The First Pope'



THE MAN ON the dais screams his invective. The microphone in front of him shakes with the volume of his speech. His mouth is wide, his teeth are bared, the anger and viciousness of his rhetoric is almost real, physical, like you can feel it in your chest.

This is Francis Bacon's first pope painting. He painted it in 1946, based on a Velázquez image of Pope Innocent X. It would lead to more pope paintings, images full of aggression and tyrannical hate, but this first one hasn't been seen in public since it was sold in 1967.

And now it's here, presented all on its own, with no other works around it, in a pitch-black room. It's like entering a tiny private chapel. The air conditioner hums, but otherwise the space is silent. You are alone with this one single, beautiful, awful, violent painting.

The pope in his shirt and tie is part religious leader, part tyrannical

WHAT IS IT...

One single Francis Bacon painting.

WHY GO...

It's powerful, meditative and totally brilliant.

→ Gagosian Davies Street. Until Apr 23. Free.



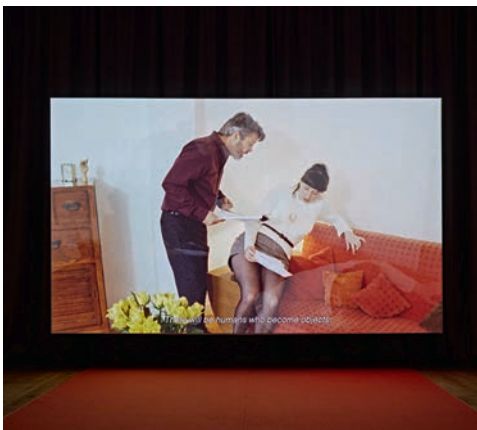
despot. He stands in front of a neo-classical Nazi colonnade, spewing his bile at a crowd of violet cyclamen flowers. It's a stunning, powerful work.

If the giant Royal Academy exhibition of Bacon's art that's

on show now is an overwhelming celebration of his art, this is a tiny, private, personal meditation. It's a chance to be one on one with his painting, eyeball to eyeball with his first pope, and it's truly amazing. ■ Eddy Frankel

FREE ART

The best gratis exhibitions you have to see in London right now



Alice Theobald: 'Il y Aura (There Will Be)'

An almost unbearably tense video installation all about a French lesson gone wrong. Bonus: it features an actor from the brilliant 'Call My Agent!'

→ South London Gallery. Until Jun 5. Free.



Rachel Jones: 'Say Cheeeeeeese'

Jones paints beautiful abstract canvases, all based on teeth and mouths, and has quietly become one of the best young painters working today.

→ Chisenhale Gallery. Until Jun 12. Free.



'Testament'

This is your last chance to see 47 proposals for new UK monuments from 47 new artists. This is a show full of big ideas, big laughs and clever art.

→ Goldsmiths Centre for Contemporary Art. Until Apr 3. Free.

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Food & Drink

Edited by Angela Hui
timeout.com/eatdrink @timeouteatdrink

London's most jawdropping dining rooms

FOOD ISN'T THE only factor to consider when picking a place to eat these days: interiors are just as crucial to the restaurant experience. Although attractive furnishings and stylish aesthetics aren't a new thing, eateries and chefs have never been more aware of how crucial they are to the powerful (and profitable) business of going viral on social media. Sessions Art Club's grand eighteenth-century ex-courthouse room and Ave Mario's neon-lit toilet cubicles, for example, have been snapped countless times and lured thousands of punters through the door. So, here are seven dining rooms that will seriously impress.

The distressed Sicilian palazzo Sessions Arts Club

What is it? Florence Knight's elegant British-Mediterranean place, set in a Grade II-listed former courthouse. **Why go?** Arched doorways and windows, ornate ceilings, stripped wooden floors, patchwork walls, brushed velvet, flickering candles:

Sessions Arts Club is the epitome of shabby chic, with an aesthetic that mixes traditional Palermo townhouse and the set of 'Beauty and the Beast'. The seasonal plates are for sharing, though you could easily finish off the much-hyped eel-and-potato dish solo.

→ 24 Clerkenwell Green, EC1R 0NA.

The decadent underground dining hall Sucre

What is it? A sophisticated pan-South American restaurant imported from Buenos Aires.

Why go? When Argentinian chef Fernando Trocca brought Sucre to London, he bagged the cavernous basement of a 300-year-old townhouse and enlisted Japanese architect Noriyoshi Muramatsu (whose CV includes Zuma and Roka) to help match the building's traditional beauty with modern flair. The result is a vast but seductively lit restaurant, with corniced ceilings, mirror panelling and chandeliers constructed from glass decanters.

→ 47b Great Marlborough St, W1F 7JP.



Ave Mario

The OTT Florentine trattoria Ave Mario

What is it? A fabulously flamboyant Italian hotspot.

Why go? The third London venue from out-there restaurant group Big Mamma is split into three distinct styles. Enter Ave Mario through its very phallic neon arches and you'll be hit with monochrome striped walls (supposedly inspired by Siena's 'zebra' cathedral), blood-red banquettes and a bottle-lined curved bar. Drop down a level and the vibe is more traditional, with chequered tablecloths, rustic tiles and vintage magazine covers hanging on the walls. Head into the basement and you'll find the



The Wolseley

pièce de résistance: the toilets. Each darkened cubicle is lit with a rainbow of coloured neon strips and has its own infinity mirror. Never before have bogs been the location of so many selfies.

→ 15 Henrietta St, WC2E 8QG.

The opulent Indian dining cart Bibi

What is it? A small but very smart Mayfair spot that specialises in top-level Indian chaat and grills.

Why go? Chef Chet Sharma showcases his Indian heritage with delectable sharing plates as well as considered decor. Interiors nuts will fall in love with the tribal artwork, mustard-and-white marble tiled floor, grasscloth-lined walls and paisley-patterned bar stools that replicate the design of Sharma's grandmother's shawls. Warmly lit, utterly inviting and using its limited space brilliantly, Bibi will definitely provide inspo for your own dining area.

→ 42 North Audley St, W1K 6ZP.

The verdant terrace Luca

What is it? Seasonal British ingredients and stylish Italian cooking in the chicest of settings.

Why go? This Clerkenwell restaurant offers better surroundings for slurping down spaghetti and spritzes than most. Interior designer Alexander Waterworth wanted to 'honour' Luca's British-meets-Italian philosophy, nowhere more so than on the secluded terrace. Exposed brickwork

conceals a cobbled patio, an imposing concrete fireplace, verdant olive trees, spiralling jasmine and leafy planters, all of which look straight out of the Med.

→ 88 St John St, EC1M 4EH.



Sessions Arts Club

The Parisian café with Catalan flair

Maison François

What is it? A resplendent all-day venue serving classic Gallic dishes.

Why go? At Maison François, you'll get all the elements of a brilliant French brasserie, but you'll also get a dollop of Spanish-influenced

More beautiful restaurants at [timeout.com/eatwithaview](https://www.timeout.com/eatwithaview)

design. Creative director John Whelan drew inspiration from La Fàbrica, a former cement factory near Barcelona that the late architect Ricardo Bofill turned into his home and headquarters. Maison François's tall, terracotta-coloured arches with mirrored insets mimic the windows of La Fàbrica, while the high ceilings are slapped with rustic faux cement. Walnut booths, white linens and sunny art-deco lighting add to the Mediterranean colour palette, though the dining room's centrepiece is a proper nod to SW1. The imposing, overhead metal clock is said to be inspired by the grilles of the many Rolls Royces you'll find parked up outside.

→ 34 Duke St, SW1Y 6DF.

The elegant Viennese-style salon The Wolseley

What is it? The capital's most famous European grand café and London bucket-list perennial.

Why go? The Wolseley was designed by English architect William Curtis Green in 1921 as a car showroom for the aspiring Wolseley Motors Limited. Barclays Bank took over the site in 1927, adding a banking counter and managers' offices (today used as the bar and tea salon). Only in 2003, when restaurateurs Chris Corbin and Jeremy King acquired it, did this place become the bustling, stately café that it is today. With its original domed ceiling, black marble pillars, geometric monochrome floor and suited-and-booted waitstaff, the vibe is very much Tim Burton-does-'Downton Abbey'. And while the photo op may beckon you, the prices will likely make you wince – this is Mayfair after all, darling. ■

→ 160 Piccadilly, W1J 9EB.



By Liz Darke
Who is going to pimp her loo with neon lights. #toiletporn.

The Aubrey



THE AUBREY, WHICH takes its name from darkly decadent illustrator Aubrey Beardsley, a contemporary of Oscar Wilde, delivers a strong whiff of Victoriana with its maximalist interior of fringed lamps, ginger jars in curio cabinets and gold-framed Ukiyo-e prints. But the food – earthenware sharing plates of deep-fried karaage chicken with zingy yuzu mayo, soy-licked edomae nigiri sprinkled with edible ants and charcoal-charred meats, pulled straight off the robata – is supposed to be inspired by an ‘eccentric Japanese izakaya’.

Roughly described as after-work drinking dens serving sharing snacks, the izakayas of Japan are often pub-like and casual. The Aubrey, housed within the Mandarin Oriental, a Hyde Park hotel in Knightsbridge, is decidedly not, as evidenced by the house caviar served with shokupan (Japanese milk bread), umami-packed A4



WHAT IS IT...
A high-end Japanese izakaya inside the Mandarin Oriental.

WHY GO...
For anything off the robata grill.

→ 66 Knightsbridge, SW1X 7LA.

wagyu (which has more of a bite than the ultra-intense A5) and creative cocktails with prices that start with the number two.

Anything from the robata charcoal grill gets my vote. You could taste the fire on the silky, skin-on sablefish, glossed in sweet saikyo miso paste. And the secret is out

about the Iberico secreto pork: exterior slashed in grill marks, centre as tender and pink as a cherry blossom. The wagyu oxtail and bone-marrow fried rice, ostentatiously presented with a bisected bone sticking out of it, like a feather in a hat, was embarrassingly rich and excessively indulgent.

The sushi and sashimi were clearly high quality, but I'd say there's better to be had in London. However, make sure you don't sleep on dessert, especially the pillowy white-miso soufflé, which was as fragile and overinflated as the ego of a recent American president. ■
Nicole Trillivas

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EMBANKMENT

THAMESJET SAYS:

Have a thrilling day out on a Thamesjet high-speed boat ride down the Thames. On the 50-minute trip, you'll see the sights of London, from Westminster to Tower Bridge, and enjoy zippy twists and turns on your way to Canary Wharf. *Westminster Pier, Victoria Embankment, SW1A 2JH.*



PICCADILLY

WEE TOAST TOURS SAYS:

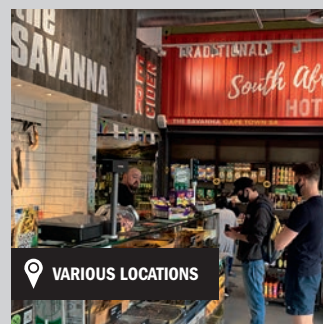
Experience the magic of London on the one-and-only Wee Toast Tours, as featured on Unilad and 'The Late Late show with James Corden'. You'll soak up the sights and sounds of the city with an on-board guide and barista, so grab some friends and start pedalling. *Glasshouse Street, W1B 5DP.*



SHOREDITCH

SAGARDI BASQUE COUNTRY CHEFS SAYS:

If you take your steak seriously like the Basque people do, you will relish this restaurant's premium txuletón Basque beef: enormous rib steaks from fattened old cows that have lived in complete freedom and been fed a 100 percent natural diet. *Cordy House, 95 Curtain Rd, EC2A 3BS.*



VARIOUS LOCATIONS

THE SAVANNA SAYS:

The kitchen is now open at our London Bridge shop, serving boerewors rolls daily. Also, our newest shop can be found inside Canary Wharf station and there's one at King Cross too. Visit us at one of our ten London locations or online at www.thesavanna.co.uk *Various locations.*



The Flying Frenchman



THIS IDIOSYNCRATIC

corner-site bistro on Newington Green isn't concerned with superficial stuff, social-media clout or whether its starters are sufficiently on-trend. This is a lively, lovely communal dining room for locals. And the man who's slaving away in the kitchen, greeting people at the door, dispensing hard-won Gallic wisdom, sending you away satisfied and tipsy, is owner and head chef Guillaume Desmurs.

Reviewing this place without talking about Desmurs would be like trying to explain Buckingham Palace without mentioning the Queen. Unlike the Queen (as far as I know), Desmurs is passionate about sausage meat. The Flying Frenchman's homely, informal setting is an extension of his personality, as is the menu, which revolves around old-school but deftly assembled French classics.

WHAT IS IT...

A bistro run by the city's most hospitable sausage-maker.

WHY GO...

For excellent French comfort food with a side of cheerful chat.

→ 11 Albion Rd, N16 9PS.

Things Desmurs may bring you: a soulful and cheesy french onion soup (with croutons as big as rocks); anecdotes about living and cooking all over the world; wine; rare-breed pork belly (butter-soft and smoked in-house); opinions about industrial food (it's shit); merguez shepherd's pie (a chunky-spicy, Anglo-Maghrebi mash-up you didn't know you needed); more wine; sausage cassoulet (rustic and rich, like a farm-dwelling Kardashian); crème brûlée (we stan a perfectly caramelised king); wine. Lots of wine.

Sometimes you just want to go somewhere friendly, drink wine and get fed God-tier sausages.

This is rewarding, substantial grub. Go for a massive walk first. A punishing trek, in the pouring rain, if possible. Desmurs, a napkin over one shoulder, will be there at the end to ferry you into his gratifyingly wonky paradise. ■
Joe Mackertich



A guide to finding the lesser-spotted Taylor's beers

Whether you're an avid enthusiast or have more of a general interest in the species, our brewery webshop, timothytaylorshop.co.uk makes it easy to locate our beers roaming wild in their natural habitat. You can order all of our bottled varieties, our classic and award-winning *Landlord* pale ale, our well-balanced genuine Yorkshire bitter, *Boltmaker*, *Knowle Spring*, the full-bodied and refreshing blonde beer; *Landlord Dark*, the rich yet light dark ale; *Hopical Storm* a modern dry-hopped pale ale, the aromatic and hoppy *Cook Lane IPA*, and the dark and warming *Poulter's Porter*. And they'll wing their way to you with free delivery anywhere in the UK.

All for that taste of Taylor's



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Downtown San Francisco

3 For its incredible culinary landscape

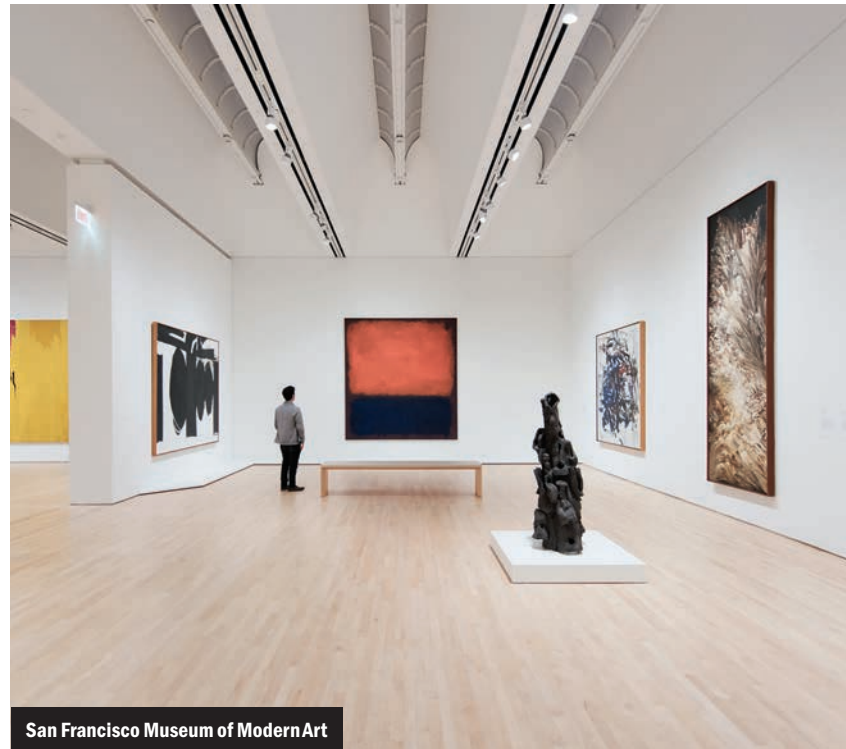
San Francisco and the greater Bay Area is, hands down, California's culinary epicentre, with more three-starred Michelin restaurants here than any other US city. Farm-to-table is a way of life in San Fran and its interpretations are myriad, showing up everywhere from food trucks like Cochinita and Rasa Rasa and casual eateries like La Cocina Municipal Marketplace and Beit Rima to fine dining restaurants like The Anchovy Bar and Californios.

4 For its celebration of the LGBTQ+ community

Pride is woven into the very fabric of San Francisco, the home of pioneering LGBTQ+ rights leader Harvey Milk. In addition to the buzzing Castro District and the historic Leather & LGBTQ Cultural District, the rainbow flag flies high throughout the city at institutions like Oasis and El Rio.

5 For its world-class art and culture

Pocket-sized museums hobnob with top-notch institutions on the streets of San Francisco. Among the latter are SFMOMA, the city's bastion of modern art, the expansive Asian Art Museum and fine arts destination the de Young Museum. Meanwhile, smaller museums like the Contemporary Jewish Museum and the Museum of African Diaspora showcase art through the lens of some of the city's most vibrant communities.



San Francisco Museum of Modern Art



San Francisco Pride

Golden Gate Bridge



6 For experiences the whole family will love

The unique cityscape, vast green spaces and stunning views of San Francisco will delight all kinds of families. See the barking sea lions on the carnival-like Pier 39, get hands-on at the Exploratorium and the California Academy of Sciences, or take a bike ride across the iconic Golden Gate Bridge.

7 For its rich history

From its founding as a Spanish Mission to the Gold Rush to the Summer of Love, San Francisco has long been a flashpoint for American history. Today, the remnants of those bygone eras give the city a texture all its own. Visit the prison on Alcatraz Island, take a scenic cable car trip or parade down the streets of Haight-Ashbury. Peace!

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Why San Francisco should be at the top of your 2022 travel list

With its first-rate airport, San Francisco International (SFO), and a new city-wide Welcome Ambassadors Program created to help travellers get their bearings, it's never been easier to visit San Fran. Why should it be at the top of your 2022 travel list? We've got seven reasons for you.

1 For its scenic beauty

San Francisco's hilly topography offers some pretty spectacular views, from the Bay to Ocean Beach on the western edge. Some of its most famous sights include the Golden Gate Bridge, Coit Tower, Alcatraz Island and the architectural marvel of 'painted ladies' (rows of stunning, colourful houses), making it one of the most photogenic places in the US.

2 For its cultural diversity

Diverse communities have made a home in the city for more than two centuries. Along with a greater number of Michelin-starred restaurants than anywhere else in America, San Fran has the largest Chinatown outside Asia, a Latinx neighbourhood with mural alleys and taquerias (the Mission), and the renowned Filipino Cultural Heritage District.



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