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JULIA CHILD

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ROCK 'N' ROLL
FINDS ITS
FUNNY SIDE

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April 2022



ACTION

From darling
to daring - why
Dan Stevens
can do anything
he wants

DAN

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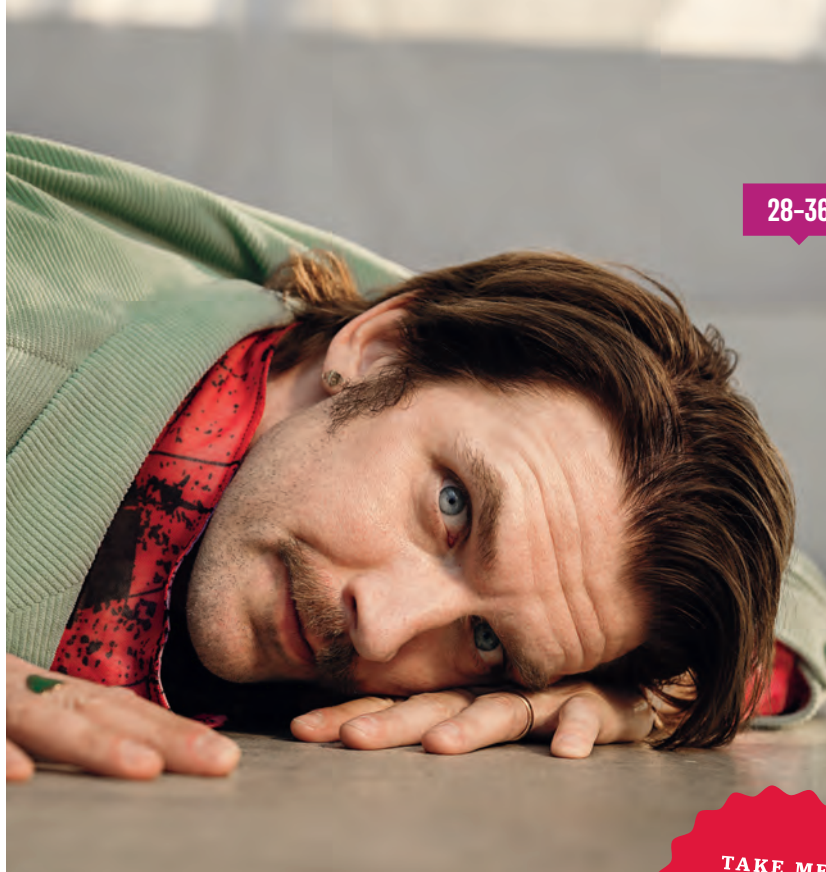
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Our new section highlights a variety of smart and innovative products aimed at helping everyone to live a little more sustainably – everything from recyclable electric toothbrushes and shampoo bars, to vodka distilled from cows’ milk. It’s about reducing our impact, while still enjoying small luxuries.

See pages 55–59



TAKE ME, I'M YOURS
Enjoy this magazine onboard and at home

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Vera is published on behalf of Virgin Atlantic by Ink. All correspondence should be addressed to: Vera, Ink, Blackburn House, Blackburn Road, London, NW6 1RZ. ink-global.com

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THINGS TO GET OBSESSED
WITH RIGHT NOW

Red Hot



NOW SHOWING

A BIG FAT GREEK PLAY IN LONDON

After 10 years of development, immersive theatre gurus Punchdrunk have finally launched their biggest production yet. *The Burnt City* is a retelling of the Trojan War legend and is currently being staged in a vast site at London's Royal Arsenal, a former munitions factory. Around 600 theatregoers can roam freely through the palaces, inns and gardens of Troy and Mycenae, recreated in "future noir" style as dystopian playgrounds full of eerie theatrical goings-on. Not bad for horsing around,

✂ Fly to London

FIRST TAKE

THE RISE OF THE META MOVIE

From *The Matrix* to *Scream*, the latest blockbusters are getting all self-referential, finds **Al Horner**

Things can only get meta, as 90s pop sensations D:Ream so nearly sang. If you've been to your local multiplex recently, you may have noticed that mainstream movies have taken a trippy turn towards the knowing. From *Scream* through *Spider-Man* to *The Matrix Resurrections*, blockbusters have been playing on their audience's knowledge of the franchise as part of the viewing experience - with intriguing results. In *The Matrix Resurrections* (available now on Vera), Keanu Reeves plays the inventor of a video game called *The Matrix*, tasked with creating a follow-up to that mind-bending sci-fi tale because his company's parent company, Warner Bros, is making him. *Scream*, meanwhile, sees characters openly discussing the fact they're in a soft reboot of the beloved slasher series, while everyone's favourite web-slinger was joined by a host of familiar faces in

the box-office-breaking *Spider-Man: No Way Home*, getting meta in ways it'd be too spoilery to outline here.

This sort of twisty storytelling used to be the preserve of indie movies like Spike Jonze's *Being John Malkovich*, but has now spilled over into billion-dollar franchises. It's a trend that seems set to stay: later this month, Nicolas Cage will play himself in *The Unbearable Weight of Massive Talent*, riffing on his reputation as a screaming madman, thanks to YouTube compilations like "Nicolas Cage Losing His S**t" (five million views and counting, at least three million of which this writer is personally responsible for). Also on the horizon in 2022 are *Doctor Strange in the*

The MULTI Multiplex



"Nicolas Cage Losing His Shit" features stand-out clips from *Bad Lieutenant* to 2006's *The Wicker Man*.

Multiverse of Madness and *Spider-Man: Across The Spider-Verse*, which promise to be similarly self-referential and loopy.

So where did this trend come from? Well, it's actually been bubbling to the surface in Hollywood for a number of years. The Black List – an annual compendium of the buzziest scripts in Tinseltown, and a good indication of emerging trends in the movie biz – has been increasingly full of meta movies in recent years. One recent winner was an as-yet-unproduced film about the real-life actor who lost out to Michael J Fox for the part of Marty McFly in *Back to the Future* travelling back in time to assassinate him, for example. Some may argue it's illustrative of Hollywood running out of ideas – the snake eating its tail. The arrival of *The Matrix Resurrections*, *Scream* and *Spider-Man: No Way Home*, however, suggests it might in fact be a new form of storytelling. Are we in for more outlandish tales of this sort, blending the border between fact and fiction? Like Neo, we're about to find out how deep the rabbit hole goes.

 Watch *The Matrix Resurrections*

ILLUSTRATION: DALE COLLINANE PHOTOS: ALAMY

DOING BUSINESS

Celebs are changing diapers



Jessica Alba's The Honest Company makes eco-friendly diapers which are less bulky, saving 7,000 trees a year. A good idea on paper.

Poop rating: 🍌 🍌 🍌



Founded by actress and mum-of-three **Hilary Duff**, Happy Little Camper diapers use natural wood pulp, and are free of chlorine and latex, plus they're compostable.

Poop rating: 🍌 🍌 🍌



Kristen Bell – aka Anna from *Frozen* – created Hello Bello. Its diapers use corn-derived materials that lock in extra moisture for when your little ones really let it go.

Poop rating: 🍌 🍌 🍌

HA HA LAND

Netflix puts it all on the line

THE NEW "NETFLIX IS A JOKE" FEST IN LA IS PERHAPS THE WORLD'S BIGGEST EVER COMEDY EVENT, BUT IS IT ALSO THE MOST CONTROVERSIAL? **ANDY HILL** ASSESSES THE EXPLOSIVE LINE-UP



PETE DAVIDSON The *Saturday Night Live* star is as famous for his celeb roasts as his eventful love life – at the time of writing, he’s dating Kim Kardashian. Famous ex Ariana Grande trolled Davidson, he says, by telling the world how well-endowed he is. Now every partner who sees him naked, he admits, “is disappointed”.

THE PROVERBIAL “LINE”

BILL BURR During a recent *Saturday Night Live* monologue the veteran stand-up turned on Covid-sceptics. “I don’t care,” he told mask refuseniks heading out to have fun in NYC. “Take out your grandparents. Take out your weak cousin with asthma.”



ALI WONG The star performed not one but two smash-hit comedy specials while seven-months pregnant – each with a different child – fusing edgy mom gags with incongruous glamour. “When you’re a mom,” says Wong, “you need sparkle to compensate for the light inside you that has died.”

ANTHONY JESELNİK

Jeselnik has a pet theory that he only gets away with iffy gags because he’s now in his mid-forties. Doesn’t hurt that he’s a dreamboat. “I have a rare form of body dysmorphia,” he jokes, “in which I can’t stand how good I look.”



PATTI HARRISON This cult comic is known for her bizzaro social media persona (she got kicked off Twitter for impersonating the account of snack brand Nilla Wafers). Her exquisite parody pop songs include a note-perfect impersonation of indie diva Joanna Newsom harping on about Steve Bannon, of all people.

MICHELLE WOLF Famous for roasting the Trump administration at 2019’s White House Correspondents’ Dinner – in particular then-press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders – Wolf has since pivoted to surreal jokes about the sex lives of seals. Without even referencing the clap.



✗ Netflix Is A Joke Fest runs from 28 April to 8 May. Fly to Los Angeles

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RISING STAR

Friend in need Natti Shiner

AFTER A TOUGH BREAK-UP, THE LEAD SINGER OF BRIGHTON BAND FICKLE FRIENDS HAS A LOT TO GET OFF HER CHEST, SHE TELLS **CHARLOTTE GUNN**

IT'S BEEN ALMOST a decade since Natti Shiner formed indie-pop group Fickle Friends. She got together with mates Sam Morris, Jack Wilson and Harry Herrington in Brighton in 2013, when they were all university students. "I have such fond memories of those formative years," she says. "Booking support tours, staying on people's floors, hustling so hard. I can't believe I've been able to do music as my full-time job since then, making my art and seeing it resonate with people. That's what music was always about for me, rather than headlining Glastonbury or selling out arenas."

A regular on festival bills all over Europe since, Fickle Friends have just released their new album *Are We Gonna Be Alright?* It's a powerhouse record that's helping make indie-pop cool again, while also tackling themes of mental health, friendship and relationship breakdowns through a blend of anthemic grunge choruses and 80s synth-pop melodies. We caught up with her to hear more.

You'd been through a bad break-up when writing this record. How are you doing now and is it hard to listen back to some of these tracks?

I haven't struggled too much listening back to the songs because I found the whole process so therapeutic. But the break-up was horrendous, I really suffered. I'm such a creative person, I feel things so deeply. So I'm proud when I listen back: I'm proud of songs like *Not Okay* which are just so passionate. Compared to the first album [2018's *You Are Someone Else*], it's just so much more honest.

This album seems to move away a little from the indie-pop of your early years. Why the change?

I feel we exhausted the indie-pop stuff. I knew that was what people expect, but I wanted to





Natti Shiner with bandmates (from left) bassist Harry Herrington, Sam Morris (drums) and Jack Wilson (keyboards)

PHOTOS: DANIEL ALEXANDER HARRIS, ALAMY

explore a bit more. My favourite part of writing was when we would sit down and play each other all the songs we'd listened to that week. We were listening a lot to *Around the World in a Day* by Prince. That album is nuts! It's so intricate but also sounds like there's no thought gone into it! Loads of country music, like Sheryl Crow. Some 90s stuff, a lot of Garbage and – I know it sounds silly – that last Justin Bieber album has been one of our favourites.

You released *Are We Gonna Be Alright?* on cassette – why do you think these old formats are having a resurgence?

I've always loved physical mementos of things.

“BEING A MUSICIAN IS ABOUT CONNECTION. THE MAIN ADVICE FOR ALL SONGWRITERS IS ALWAYS BE AS OPEN AND HONEST AS YOU CAN”

We live in this world where music is this digital thing, but with tapes, you can have them stacked up on your shelf and when I'm old, I can look back on them all. It's a nice way to support music, rather than just to say, “Yeah, I streamed that once.”

Why is it important for you to sing about mental health in your music?

Being a musician is about connection. The main advice for all songwriters is always be as open and honest as you possibly can. The songs that resonate the most with me are the ones that make me say, “I feel so seen by this,” so why not be honest about your brain being an absolute s**tshow?

What's next for *Fickle Friends*?

We're writing a lot for other people at the moment, which is super fun. Our bassist is about to have a baby so we're trying to figure out what we're doing this summer and how to navigate that. Because it's been nine years, I'm interested in doing slightly different things. You can play [UK music festivals] Reading and Leeds a hundred times, which we've done and it's great, but we're booked for Rock for People in the Czech Republic this year, which we've never done before so that's cool. Being able to go to places we've never been to before is high on the priority list.



 Listen to *Are We Gonna Be Alright?*



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EVEN SUAVE SECRET agents need a holiday. And where better to hit the snooze button on your tricked-out spy watch than the idyllic spot where Ian Fleming wrote the first 14 James Bond books? The plush 21-hectare GoldenEye resort is centred around the original villa designed by Fleming himself in 1946 on the site of an old donkey racing track. Over the years, the author's secluded coastal lair has hosted prime ministers and stars of stage and screen. Michael Caine, Kate Moss and Quincy Jones have all planted trees onsite, and Bono wrote the theme for 1995 Bond movie *GoldenEye* for Tina Turner here.



dip. Or stay in bed all day with your sassy sidekick – after all, you're undercover.

✈ Fly to Jamaica

3 MORE 007 STAYS



THE OCEAN CLUB, BAHAMAS

This swish Nassau beach retreat features extensively in 2006's *Casino Royale*. Stay in Bond's villa 108, enjoy the Vesper Martini cocktail or even try to emulate Daniel Craig emerging from the sea. Yeah, right.



THE RITZ, LONDON

The grande dame of London luxury hotels is namechecked in both *The Man with the Golden Gun* and *Diamonds Are Forever*. The Suite Indulgence package includes champagne on arrival.



FONTAINEBLEAU, MIAMI

Architect Morris Lapidus's curvaceous contemporary crucible is where Sean Connery's 007 first crosses paths with his nemesis Goldfinger. Book a cabana with butler to enjoy the poolside.



FIVE REASONS WHY

PEOPLE ARE FALLING IN LOVE WITH THIS AMERICAN WHISKEY

HOW KENTUCKY-BASED DISTILLER WOODFORD RESERVE CREATES LOVE AT FIRST SIP

AMERICAN WHISKEY IS booming and it has brands like Woodford Reserve to thank for it. In a market brimming with ambers from around the globe, the distiller is pioneering a movement that's seen bourbon become the world's go-to top-shelf choice. Here are five reasons why.

1. THE PERCEPTION IS CHANGING

For decades, American whiskey suffered from an image problem. It was seen as a bit samey, a bit sweet and nowhere near as varied or sophisticated as Scotch. This wasn't completely fair, but perceptions are hard to change. What it needed was something different, and that's where Woodford

Reserve came in when it launched in 1996. This bourbon has 212 detectable flavours, ranging from fruity to spicy to sweet, giving it a universal appeal that's gone from strength to strength.

2. DISCERNING DRINKERS LOVE IT

It's fair to say that people are taking what they drink more seriously these days. Whether it's whiskey, gin, wine or beer, they want to know the process used to make it and the quality of the ingredients. Most importantly, however, they want complexity of flavour, something Woodford Reserve has by the barrel load. The brand has become the US's number one super premium whiskey thanks to its craft

methods, which include making and charring its own oak barrels and adopting one of the longest fermentation processes in the industry, all done from its 210-year-old distillery.

3. IT'S MORE THAN A BOURBON

If variety is the spice of life, then Woodford Reserve certainly got the memo. The Kentucky distillery followed up its first release with its award-winning double-oaked bourbon, unique for its twice-barrelled finish. However, the brand refused to stop innovating, and shortly after, it unveiled its first Rye and Malt whiskeys. The brand now produces eight bottles, with each feeling equally at home poured over ice or stirred in a cocktail. So, if you wanted to spend an evening working through the Woodford Reserve portfolio, you could do it and still taste something new and refreshing with each glass.

4. YOU CAN FIND IT IN THE WORLD'S BEST BARS

Cocktail culture has never been so healthy and American whiskey is a big part of that. Woodford Reserve's perfect balance makes it ideal for making a classic Old Fashioned or a Manhattan, which is why you can find its entire range in the swankiest bars around, from the Connaught Bar in London to Dante in New York to Sober Company in Shanghai, mixed by the biggest talents in the cocktail world.

5. IT LOOKS GREAT, TOO

As mentioned, American whiskey's image was a bit dated and one-dimensional, so when Woodford Reserve came along, it decided to do things differently. The brand wanted to embody the more playful nature of the drink, creating an alluring aesthetic that would capture the attention of bartenders and consumers alike. This courageous marketing led to its iconic cognac-inspired bottle, which was designed to look great on the shelf of a bar or in your cabinet at home. It certainly appealed to those fun, yet discerning, drinkers.

Drink responsibly woodfordreserve.com



Clockwise from above: An excellent addition to an Old Fashioned; goes great over ice, too; the brand's flagship bourbon

Three Woodford Reserve whiskeys you need to try

Woodford Reserve brand ambassador Thomas Vernon (*above*) describes three of the distillery's best and how to enjoy them.

DISTILLER'S SELECT

"A classic and the whiskey of choice for an Old Fashioned in bars all over the world. The flavour profile provides a full bodied and rounded drink accentuated by the addition of sugar, bitters and citrus oils."

DOUBLE OAKED

"This is absolute decadence, with tropical fruit, spice, cognac notes and resounding sweet aromatics. A truly celebratory whiskey. Best enjoyed neat or over ice, but delicious in a mixed drink, too."

RYE

"Dry, spicy, but with lashings of fruit. Perfectly accompanied with sweet vermouth and bitters in a Manhattan, this iconic drink encapsulates modernity and history in equal measures."

GOT A SPOT?

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DRINKS



Cocktails are getting cheesy

Those working at the cutting edge of mixology love seeing what they can slip into fancy drinks next, but can they make us fall for cheese? Turns out they can. The LA outpost of lauded NYC bar Apotheke incorporates cheese into its feisty Caught in the Nightshade sour along with gin, black pepper, amaro and cherry tomatoes.

Elsewhere, the Lemongrass and Cacao Gimlet at Publiq in London rocks parmesan-infused gin, while iconic New York restaurant Murray's Cheese combines rich Shropshire blue with tomato juice and vodka for – what else – a “Bloody Murray”.

✈ Fly to New York



SNACKS

HYPERREAL FRUIT CAKES IN LONDON

New patisserie Cédric Grolet at The Berkeley is the trickster pastry chef's first location outside Paris

“DON'T YOU HATE it when you bite into an apple to find that it's filled with creamy ganache?” said no one ever. It may not count towards your five a day, but master pastry chef Cédric Grolet's (left) fruit-shaped cakes are deceptively delicious:

- photorealistic mangoes ooze with fresh stone-fruit purée;
- leaf-tipped lemons hide minty citrus gel; and
- glistening cherries are brimful of, well, cherry.

But Grolet's sweet subterfuge doesn't stop at fruit: the rose-shaped “vanilla flower” is made with vanilla praline petals and an almond biscuit base. You can even see how the trickery is done in the bakery's “pastry theatre” or just head straight to the counter at the patisserie in The Berkeley hotel, Grolet's first outside Paris. Be warned: one of the crafty cakes will set you back £25. Money, another thing that doesn't grow on trees.

✈ Fly to London



LOCATION SCOUT

NEW-WAVE CINEMA IN LAGOS

Nigeria's biggest city is also home to the continent's largest film industry. **Pelu Awofeso** turns the lens on his city's big-screen haunts

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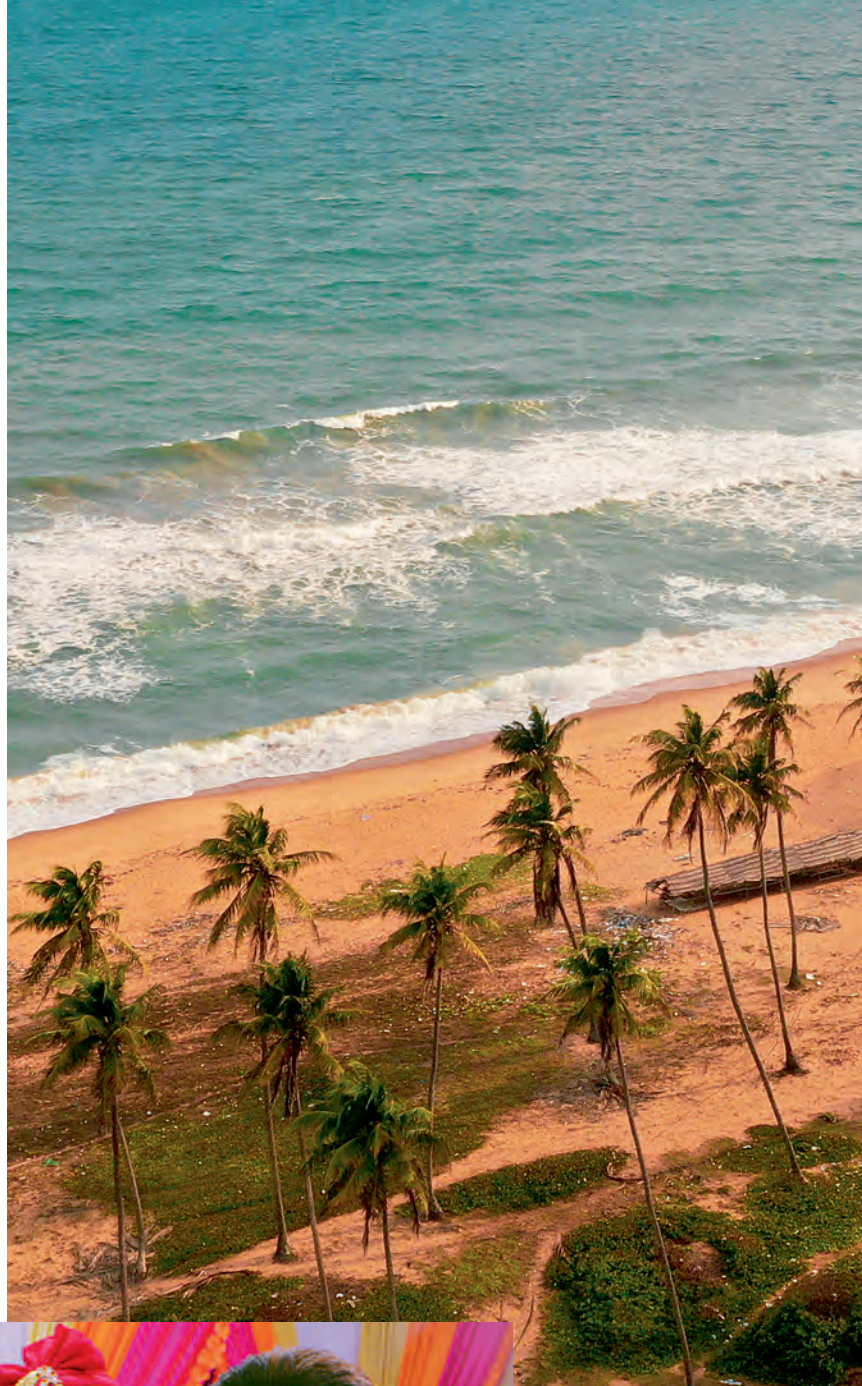
his month, the Pan African Film & Arts Festival (PAFF) – the largest celebration of African film from both the continent and the diaspora – will be marking its 30th year with a

stacked programme of virtual screenings and in-person events in Los Angeles. In a pleasing piece of historical symmetry, Nollywood is also in its 30th year, since most critics peg the birth of Nigeria's film industry to the 1992 release of Ken Nnebue's film *Living in Bondage*. Nollywood's impressive output means it always has one of the strongest showings at PAFF – last year Nigeria produced more than 400 films, placing it second only to Bollywood in the world rankings.

Nigeria's films are a window into the country; it's commonplace to hear Africans – from Sierra Leone to South Africa – talk about how Nollywood has shaped their perception of Nigeria and Nigerians. And while Nollywood's catalogue is a great introduction to the country as a whole, the industry's centre is



Above: A short boat ride away, Badagry is home to beaches and searing history
Left: Romcom *Namaste Wahala* (2020) was the first big partnership between Nollywood and Bollywood



“It’s commonplace to hear Africans talk about how Nollywood has shaped their perception of Nigeria and Nigerians”



no doubt Lagos, where most local films are shot. A city of 20 million-plus, Lagos can be a hectic, high-pressure place, buzzing at all hours with its enterprising residents who rarely take a break and never sleep in. Most Nollywood films mirror the city’s frenetic spirit, pulsating with colourful wardrobes, hip-shaking soundtracks and larger-than-life characters. Of course, Lagos is also the best place to spot the industry’s glamorous stars, who hang out at swish haunts like the waterside **Sailors Lounge** or the **Túraká Rooftop Bar & Lounge**, with its stunning 360° views.

As an island city, Lagos’s coastline stretches for more than 100km, and is dotted with privately managed beaches that have backdropped many films over the years, from *Bar Beach Blues* (2004) to *Tango with Me* (2010) and *The Eve* (2018). Most are accessible by public transport, including **Landmark Leisure Beach** – the best beach on Lagos Island for its lush white sand and lively bar scene.

Recently, Nollywood has been fixated on the **Lekki-Ikoyi Link Bridge** – constructed in 2013, it links Lagos’s affluent Ikoyi neighbourhood with the southern city of Lekki and has already made quite ▶



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1

the outing: you'll find it in the background of *Fifty* (2015), *Alter Ego* (2018), *2 Weeks in Lagos* (2019) and *Namaste Wahala* (2020). West of Lekki, Victoria Island is home to another frequent Nollywood star: **1004 Estates**, an ex-public development built to house local dignitaries in 1979, often used as a place marker in Lagos-set films. If you're paying a visit to this colourful estate, be sure to drop in at nearby restaurant **NOK by Alara (1)**, another preferred venue for Nollywood's stars, serving the city's best pan-African food.

Back on Lagos Island, the modernist **City Hall** is a must-visit for architecture fans. Though the building that stands today was constructed in the 1960s, the secretariat was established during colonial rule in 1900, making it the oldest local government in Nigeria. You'll spot its distinctive, pillar-lined facade in *The Tribunal* (2017), which was also partly shot at **Freedom Park**, a former colonial prison-turned-leisure park two streets away.

North of Lagos Island and across the lagoon, the mainland is where, in the 1990s, the city's creative scene first gave rise to the now-multimillion-dollar film industry. Two landmarks stand out in that part of town: the **National Stadium** and **National Theatre (2)**, both built in the 1970s when Nigeria was awash with petrodollars. The latter was the set for short film *Rehearsal* (2021). Stop over at the **Tea and Coffee Spot Café (3)** on Adeniran Ogunsanya Street, where you'll find creatives hunched over laptops.



2

The National Theatre is a copy of Varna's Palace of Culture and Sports in Bulgaria.



3

Above right: Actress-writer-director Genevieve Nnaji was behind the first Netflix film from Nigeria: *Lionheart*

Though most Nollywood movies take place in the present day, occasionally some hark back to the colonial era – and you're guaranteed to find the striking **Jaekel House** in any Nollywood period piece. Built in 1898 as the residence of former Nigerian Railway Corporation superintendent Francis Jaekel, the mansion acted as the main filming location for both *October 1* (2014) and *The Herbert Macaulay Affair* (2019).

If you're after a bit of quiet, then hop on a boat to **Badagry**, some 70km away from the capital. It's a town of two halves: both a historic centre for the transatlantic slave trade and chilled-out coastal village with peaceful resorts. Spend the day learning about the area's troubled history at the **Badagry Slave Museum** and the **Badagry Heritage Museum**. If you're staying for the weekend, bed down at the **Whispering Palms Resort**, which acted as the setting for 2016 romcom *Hire a Man*. Sunset at the resort's palm-shaded private beach? Nothing short of cinematic.

✈ Fly to Lagos

3 MORE LOCAL CINEMA HEROES



CHUNGKING MANSIONS, HONG KONG

The escalators in this shopping complex are used as a key visual device in Kar-Wai Wong's *Chungking Express* (1994).



CHHATRAPATI SHIVAJI TERMINUS, MUMBAI

One of the world's busiest train stations is also a frequent Bollywood star, instantly recognisable in films like *Aar Paar* (1954).



PRINCES STREET, EDINBURGH

Trainspotting (1996) famously opens with a chase down the city's busiest shopping street – from Princes Street Renton and Spud make towards Waverley station.

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TRAILERS

#VANLIFE GOES GLAM

A new book by Airstream devotee Kate Oliver chronicles the next evolution in four-wheeled living



S

ince the #vanlife trend popped up online a few years ago, itinerant van dwellers have been stoking a lot of envy online. Videos tagged with the hashtag have been viewed over

8.3 billion times on TikTok – mostly by antsy, desk-bound city folk, no doubt.

A word of warning to those sedentary #vanlife voyeurs – photographer, writer and designer Kate Oliver's new book may make you explode with jealousy. *The Modern Caravan* showcases the next chapter in van living: super glam interiors that could stand up to any *Architectural Digest* spread.

Oliver is a proud caravan owner herself, and has been travelling full time for six years with her wife, Ellen Prasse, and daughter. After the couple set up

Clockwise from above: This velvet sofa wraps round the front of the trailer; parked amid the pines in the Cascade Range of Washington; kitchens can be surprisingly homely; simple touches expand the outdoor space





a van renovation company, Oliver was inspired to pick up her camera to capture the lives and homes of her fellow nomads. The resulting photographs prove that you don't need very much space to live beautifully: meticulously designed homes are squeezed into 20m² and backdropped by burnished desert cliffs or pine-crowded forest.

As for those itching for a big escape, the book also includes plenty of practical tips for decking out your own dream van. Well, you can't hit the road without your own set of hot wheels, can you?



■ **The Modern Caravan: Stories of Love, Beauty, and Adventure on the Open Road** is out now, published by Chronicle Books

WORDS: JESSICA BRIDGAL. PHOTOS: REPRINTED FROM THE MODERN CARAVAN: STORIES OF LOVE, BEAUTY, AND ADVENTURE ON THE OPEN ROAD BY KATE OLIVER WITH PERMISSION FROM CHRONICLE BOOKS, 2022. PHOTOGRAPHS © KATE OLIVER



SET VISIT

Stepping out in Brooklyn

Most of the musical numbers in Steven Spielberg's *West Side Story* remake are stompers – but the climax, where the rival Jets and Sharks face off in a deadly whirlwind of dance, is the film's emotional apogee. It's performed with the military precision you'd expect, given that it's filmed in the historic Brooklyn Navy Yard, an ex-shipyard-turned-industrial complex in the borough's north-east corner. Formerly a Civil War-era military manufacturing site, these days you'll find more than 500 businesses headquartered here, plus loads of dining options. So don't worry: the only rumble getting settled is the tummy kind.

✈ Fly to New York

SCREEN TEST

How many times can a man get hit in the groin?

THE RELEASE OF A FOURTH INSTALMENT IN THE JACKASS MOVIE FRANCHISE PROMPTS RALPH JONES TO ASK THE EXPERTS HOW MUCH PUMMELING HIS JIBBLIES CAN TAKE

If you were a rhino we probably wouldn't be having this conversation. When it comes to private organs, men's bodies are spectacularly badly made: their baby-making equipment is exposed on the outside of their bodies because humans have learned to walk on two legs. Rhinos and other quadrupeds, by contrast, don't share stories down the pub about being kicked in the nardledanglers because, walking around on four legs, their bodies naturally protect them from genital disaster.

Most of us, therefore, do our utmost to avoid exposing our groin to pointless unnecessary harm. This is the polar opposite of the *Jackass* ethos, where "pointless unnecessary harm" is deliberately sought out. The gang's new film, *Jackass Forever*, is a catalogue of self-inflicted (sometimes bull-inflicted) pain. One of these injuries involves Ehren McGhehey being pummelled in the plums by reigning UFC heavyweight champion Francis

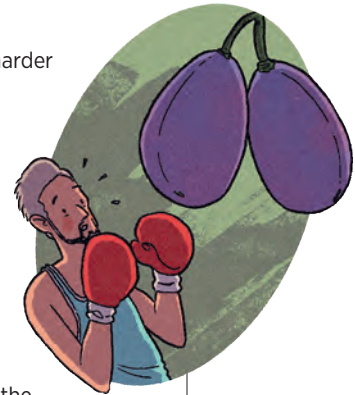
Ngannou, who can officially punch harder than anyone else on this planet (and possibly others). So – how unwise was McGhehey? How often can a man get hit in the nads without sustaining permanent harm?

Most punches don't really cause any damage, says men's health expert Dr Jeff Foster – though of course they hurt. The reason that men feel a nauseous pain in their stomach, says Dr Foster, is because in the womb the testicles develop in the abdomen, before gradually descending and ending up outside the body.

In the dangerous world of sport between 2% and 5% of injuries are groin-centric, and the sports in which your groin is at most risk are ice hockey, American football and soccer, where the percentage rises a little. When something collides with your genitals at high speed, says Dr Foster, there are several genuinely serious injuries to watch out for – the details of which you might like to be spared, but I can reveal they include the word "rupture". Though Dr Foster doesn't downplay the risk of Ngannou's punch – "The simple answer is he could kill you" – he says that you don't need to open your legs to a UFC champion in order to sustain a rupture. "If a child hits you at the wrong angle and hits your testicle hard enough, you can still rupture the capsule." Good to know.

Dr Foster's answer is that it doesn't actually matter how many times you subject your bojangles to punches, if they're low-velocity you can do it "indefinitely". What matters is the amount of force. And, as if it wasn't clear enough, another expert, pharmacist Giulia Guerrini, says, "My medical advice is to avoid being punched in the testicles by a UFC champion as much as possible." At last, something we can all agree on.

 Watch *Jackass Forever*



THE VERDICT

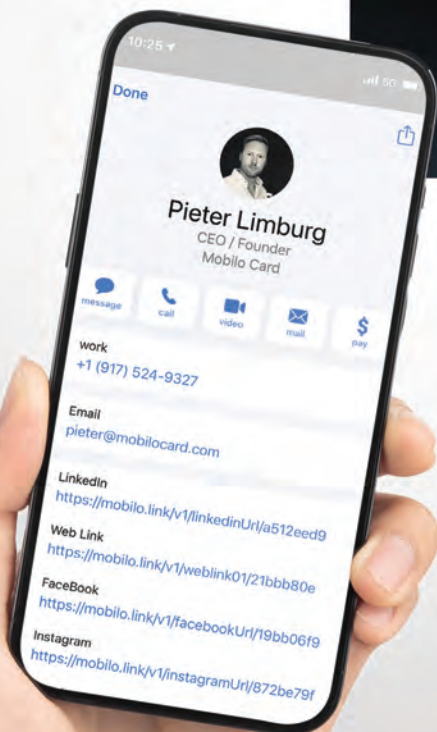
A few knocks to your groin, no biggie, but one huge one and your obituary could be deeply embarrassing.

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Dan Stevens

JUST



FOR KICKS

DONE WITH PLAYING
A POSH HEARTTHROB,
DOWNTON ABBEY STAR
DAN STEVENS MOVED
TO THE UNITED STATES
10 YEARS AGO, WHERE
HE'S BEEN ENJOYING
SHOWING HIS UGLY SIDE
- INCLUDING TO JULIA
ROBERTS IN MAJOR
NEW DRAMA GASLIT.
DOES HE JUST NOT
CARE ANY MORE, ASKS
MARTHA HAYES?

PHOTOGRAPHS: DYLAN COULTER

DAN STEVENS HAS GROWN AN IMPRESSIVE MOUSTACHE.



Previous page:
Jacket and trousers:
Dzójchen
Shirt: King & Tuckfield
Boots: Collini
Left:
Shirt and trousers:
Greyscale
Shoes: H&M
Jewellery:
Loren Stewart

It's not the fuzzy kind of facial hair you'd expect from a meek British actor looking to rough up his image. This is serious growth. This is aspiring to be Tom Selleck. This is a full-fat, all-American moustache.

Yes, it's for a role, but it also suits him. Stevens is famous for playing Edwardian dreamboat Matthew Crawley in stately juggernaut *Downton Abbey*, which required a stiff but largely hairless upper lip. When his character was killed off in dramatic and controversial fashion 10 years ago, it was a watershed moment, for the series and the actor. A career playing other affable, good-looking British people beckoned, but instead he chose to uproot his life and move Stateside.

This was a gamble. Many Brits before him have taken the same step and returned to the UK with their tails between their legs. But, like his good pals Benedict Cumberbatch and Eddie Redmayne – both veterans of British period dramas – he's found his own kind of flex. There's been unnerving indie thriller *The Guest* (2014), Disney's live-action remake of *Beauty and the Beast* (2017), and a memorable turn as a closeted Russian star in Netflix's *Eurovision Song Contest* comedy – a pandemic hit in 2020. Why take on these roles in particular?

"It was never a grand game plan," he says, between sips of coffee. "When I left *Downton*,

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Shirt: Ramzen
Trousers: Greyscale
Jewellery:
Loren Stewart

people thought I had everything lined up and it was like, 'Oh right, you're going to do this,' but it was more, 'Well, no, actually, I just fancy exploring a bit.'"

It was a particularly bold move to depart *Downton* at its height, with the show drawing an estimated global audience of 120 million. "I felt like I hadn't really kicked the tyres of what I was about, and the things that I wanted to do," he reflects. "Not everything in the last 10 years has been wildly successful, but they've all had a nice lesson attached to them, and I feel like each thing has added on to the shape of things in an interesting way."

Stevens is sat on the deck of the home he shares with his wife and three children in LA's Eastside. He's wearing a casual floral shirt and seems extremely relaxed. I was expecting him to be more intense, more English (British actors in Hollywood can be quite earnest). But instead, he's laid-back and at peace with the world.

This is despite delving deep into one of the messiest, and still most prescient, parts of American political history for his latest role. *Gaslit* is a major new drama series, based on the hit podcast *Slow Burn*, that goes behind the story of the 1970s Watergate scandal to reveal the histories of some

"I FELT LIKE I HADN'T REALLY KICKED THE TYRES OF WHAT I WAS ABOUT, AND THE THINGS THAT I WANTED TO EXPLORE AND DO"

lesser-known players. These include Martha Mitchell, the wife of the then attorney general, whose knowledge of events, and willingness to speak out, led to her being kidnapped and assaulted. Mitchell is played by Julia Roberts, and her husband, John, is played by Sean Penn. "There are certain people where you just think, 'That sounds great, I don't need to know much more than that,'" Stevens says of his heavyweight co-stars.

The eight-part series "looks at things that were traditionally footnotes and blows them up", explains Stevens, who plays "hugely ambitious young upstart" and White House counsel John Dean, a man who "gets in way over his head and realises too late what he's got himself into".

The story is so bonkers, he says, that, "if you were to write it into a political thriller, people would be like, 'I don't believe that at all.' The truth is regularly stranger than fiction, especially these days. I enjoy surprising an audience, whether it's with a project itself or something within the story, and I can't wait to see people's reactions. It's cool to be a part of something that makes people go, 'What?!'"

The very 70s moustache that Stevens is sporting was not grown for *Gaslit*, however, but for ▶



his upcoming role in *Immigrant*, a darkly comic US series from the creators of *Pam & Tommy*. Stevens will play Paul Snider, the club promoter who notoriously killed his estranged Playboy model wife Dorothy Stratten in 1980, before killing himself.

Although the two projects sound very different, both involve real-life subjects, and both examine toxic masculinity, which Stevens is fascinated by. “We look at the role of masculinity in society now and where that’s come from and a lot of stories [around men] have come up from our parents’ generation,” he considers. “Snider, in particular, represents a certain kind of aspirational masculinity of that time, which was extremely destructive... He’s a real piece of work. Not a nice man. As a character to inhabit he’s not someone I want to live with for very long!”

There’s an old Hollywood cliché that British actors make the best villains, and undoubtedly

Dan the man

DAN STEVENS' CV

Born

Dan Stevens was born in Croydon, England, on 10 October 1982, and was brought up by his adoptive parents in Wales and Essex.



Education

Stevens spent his formative years at the private Tonbridge School and learned his craft at the National Youth Theatre in London. While studying English at Cambridge, he was a member of the university’s famed Footlights amateur dramatic club.

Legion (2017-19)

Stevens starred as the titular superhero in this complex and ambitious Marvel Comics TV series, playing a “mutant” with psychic abilities and proving his skills at flipping between “posh English” and “gruff American”.

Gaslit (2022)

Proving that the inner workings of government will never not make arresting drama, this upcoming TV series is based on the Watergate scandal. Stevens is taking on attorney John Dean, who flipped sides.

Fun fact

In 2012 he was one of the five judges of the Booker Prize, British literature’s most coveted prize. The panel plumped for Hilary Mantel’s hefty *Bring Up the Bodies*, part of the *Wolf Hall* trilogy.

Key work

Downton Abbey (2010-15)

Stevens’ character Matthew Crawley (*top*), a lawyer from Manchester, inherited the most famous fictional stately pile in Britain following the death of the Earl of Grantham. Despite an ignominious end, the role put Stevens in the spotlight.



INSET PHOTO: ALLAMY



Jacket and
trousers: Dzojchen
Shirt: Bossi
Shoes: Iceberg
Jewellery:
Loren Stewart

Sweater:
JW Anderson
Jewellery:
Loren Stewart

there's something about an Oxbridge-educated Englishman that pairs well with icy malevolence. Stevens is fast friends with Tom Hiddleston, for example, whose simmering inner conflicts have made the role of Loki, in the Marvel Cinematic Universe, a fan favourite.

However, it was Stevens who really paved the way for Marvel's conflicted heroes, and for the far-out TV shows and movies that now dominate all screens, big and small. Between 2017-19 he played schizophrenic mutant David Haller in Marvel's cult show *Legion*.

"The fact that we got to make *Legion* at all was a delight because it was so different and so challenging," he explains with almost geeky enthusiasm. "There was no precedent for a show that strange. Every single member of the cast was going, 'What is happening? What is this?' And after a time we got into a groove of, 'This is one of the weirdest shows on television, let's just enjoy that.'"

For Stevens, that role – like all others – was an opportunity for exploration. "Typecasting only comes from saying yes to the same thing too many



"THE TRUTH IS REGULARLY STRANGER THAN FICTION, ESPECIALLY THESE DAYS. IT'S COOL TO BE A PART OF SOMETHING THAT MAKES PEOPLE GO, 'WHAT?!'"

times," he says. "But that's not to say I won't revisit certain genres occasionally."

Case in point, his leading role in the 2020 adaptation of Noël Coward's *Blithe Spirit* – a return to period hijinks. "If I'm entertained and stretched in new directions, I'll feel like I'm breaking new ground," he says. "And hopefully that will be received in a way that's entertaining."

As our warm and breezy chat comes to an end, Stevens lets me in on a theory: that audiences can always tell if an actor is having a good time. "I think you can read through a screen if someone is really going for it and having fun in a new field," he explains. "And I recognise that in other actors' performances; I'm like, 'Wow that person is having a great time doing something they've never been allowed to do before. This is so fun to watch.'"

It might be hard to define what "wildly successful" means, but it could just be a measure of the amount of fun you're having. In which case, Dan Stevens is at the very top of his game.

 Watch *Blithe Spirit*

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THE GULLAH AND GEECHEE PEOPLES OF THE SOUTHERN UNITED STATES HAVE DELICIOUS, BUT DISAPPEARING, FOOD TRADITIONS. **JEWEL WICKER** MEETS THE GEORGIA "CHEFARMER" PRESERVING GULLAH GEECHEE CUISINE IN MOUTHWATERING STYLE

PHOTOGRAPHS: PAPRIKA SOUTHERN



MM

Matthew Raiford is cooking. Again. When I arrived on his farm in Brunswick, Georgia, on a Monday night, he'd just wrapped a crab boil in celebration of his wife – and business partner – Tia's 50th birthday. The next morning, he's right back at it: tending to slow-cooked osso buco that has been going for two days now, falling apart with the slightest tug of a fork. The table that less than 12 hours ago held a mass of seafood now supports egg pie (a recipe Matthew got from his grandma), olive oil grits (a recipe Tia created after watching chefs add olive oil to polenta in Italy), and a sweet and savoury bacon jam. They also serve a hibiscus tea that Tia has been making using the plants they grow on the farm.

This high-level hospitality could exhaust even the most seasoned hosts, but Matthew lives to entertain: inside his mint-green home, he has fashioned a garage space into a gathering spot where he cooks for friends, family and anyone else who is lucky enough to get an invite to Gilliard Farms (the couple welcome tour groups and overnight guests), where he and Tia live and work. Matthew is a self-proclaimed "chefarmer" – that's a chef-and-farmer. He is also Gullah Geechee, belonging to a group of people whose ancestors were brought from West Africa and enslaved in North and South Carolina, Georgia and Florida. The uniqueness of the group – which grew rice, cotton and indigo – lies in the fact that, as a result of their isolation along the coast and on barrier islands, they've

Opposite: In 2011 Matthew Raiford returned to his great-great-great grandfather's land, where he pursues the traditions of his Gullah Geechee heritage





been able to preserve much of their African heritage, passing language and other traditions down through the generations.

But, as with many indigenous groups, some things are in danger of disappearing. The Gullah Geechee are known for their unique cuisine, which is informed by traditional food practices like subsistence fishing and small-scale agriculture. But as more and more Gullah Geechee are displaced or willingly move to different regions, this cultural knowledge is facing an uncertain future, which is why the Raifords feel a duty to preserve it.

“We have an opportunity to shape a story,” Tia, who is also a chef, tells me. “This is an overdue conversation. When assimilation was the priority in this country, what was lost?”

So far, it seems that the Raifords are managing to bring this conversation to the mainstream: Matthew was a James Beard Award semi-finalist in 2018 (Best Chef: Southeast), and last year he released a cookbook with Tia’s help called *Bress ‘n’*

Lowcountry oysters lightly steamed on hot tin are particularly emblematic of Gullah Geechee cuisine



“We have an opportunity to shape a story. This is an overdue conversation. When assimilation was the priority in this country, what was lost?”



Nyam (a Gullah Geechee phrase that translates as “bless and eat”). But, there’s still way more they want to do. During my visit to the farm, a camera crew lurks around, hoping to turn the Raifords’ everyday life into the next popular culinary docuseries (think Netflix’s *High on the Hog*).

I get a glimpse at the vast property and the things that grow here, including some of the plants Matthew nurtures each year – rice, hibiscus, tomatoes, ginger, turmeric. He grew up here, visiting his grandma in the same house he now lives in. Since he returned 11 years ago to farm the land and manage the property with his sister, he’s been relearning it all.

That Matthew and his sister are the sixth generation of farmers on this family-owned plot is no small feat, especially in a time and place where many people who look like them are losing their property. In the case of Matthew’s family, his great-great-grandfather purchased more than 400 acres for the price of \$9 in property tax in 1874. Today, the two Raiford siblings own about 40 acres (16 hectares) of this, although Matthew says they hope to eventually repurchase some of the land they’ve lost. These days, Gullah Geechee face more barriers to cultural preservation than their exodus to cities: their traditional Lowcountry home means they’re particularly susceptible to the ravages of climate change and rising property taxes mean owning swathes of farmland is becoming increasingly unsustainable. That’s why being in Brunswick and growing their ancestor’s traditional crops is a big deal for the Raifords.

“It feels monumental,” says Tia. “Rice has as much of a significance with African-American ancestry as cotton.” ▶

EFFIE'S SHRIMP CREOLE

MATTHEW'S MOM'S RECIPE. SERVES 4

1 Melt two tablespoons of butter, and stir in a diced onion and three minced garlic cloves. Sauté everything until golden brown, which will take about five minutes.

2 Add chopped green, orange and red bell peppers (one of each); 16oz (450g) of tomato puree; a tablespoon of red pepper flakes; and two cups of rice, stirring until well combined.

3 Pour one quart (one litre) of stock in slowly, then bring the creole to a boil. Once boiling, stir, cover, then reduce the heat to low and simmer for 15 minutes.

4 Remove the cover, add two pounds (900g) of large shrimp and give the rice a good stir.



5 Cook for five to seven minutes more, until all the liquid is absorbed and the shrimp have pinked and curled.

6 Season to your liking with salt and pepper, serve – and enjoy.



MESS O' GREENS

SERVES 4 TO 6

1 In a large stockpot, heat two tablespoons of olive oil over medium-high heat. Add two diced onions and sauté until translucent.

2 Add three garlic cloves and caramelize. Add red, orange, and yellow bell peppers (two of each). Stir around until they grow tender.

3 Add one pound of collard greens, two quarts of water, half a cup of apple cider vinegar, and some smoked paprika, steak seasoning and cayenne pepper.

4 Cook down for 15 to 20 minutes, then add another pound of greens, another half cup of vinegar and two quarts of water.

5 Just before they are done, stir in more seasoning and salt. Serve immediately, preferably with the shrimp creole featured on the previous page!



In spite of the resilient, remarkable legacy of the Black community in Brunswick, the city's racist history remains a dark cloud. Matthew left town as a teenager, swearing he'd never return to live, after he was denied access to a bathroom. Now an adult, he's concerned not much has changed. The Raifords currently live less than 10 minutes away from the place where only two years ago Ahmaud Arbery tried and failed to outrun the bullets fired at him by a group of men who felt he didn't belong.

Matthew says, even with the sense of purpose he's felt since returning to his family's farm, this is why he struggles when people refer to the region as the "New South" in an effort to distance it from its prejudiced past. "This is a reclamation," he says. "I have come home to a place that when I left was the Old South and now is being framed as the New South, and I'm doing the same things and having the same problems."

But, still, there is a sense of peace the Raifords have found here despite everything. We're not even done with walking the farm after brunch when Matthew starts thinking about what we should eat for dinner. By evening, the film crew has left, Tia has returned from a visit to the vet with the couple's puppy and Matthew begins to prepare our final



"I'm Gullah Geechee. I'm a cook. I farm. I do all of those practices the old ways. I can do it over fire, charcoal, hot brick, induction..."

meal together. Over wine, roasted chicken and vegetables, macaroni and cheese, and brussels sprouts coated with leftover bacon jam, I ask him how much of his work is created in an effort to intentionally disrupt the narrow images we often have about Black chefs.

"I'm tired of people thinking they're not going to allow my authenticity to be disruptive," he says. "I mess them up because I'm all the things. I'm Gullah Geechee. I'm a cook. I farm. I do all of those practices the old ways. I can do it over fire,

Matthew's recipes bring together the ocean, rivers and land of the coastal South

charcoal, hot brick, induction..." Matthew has disruption in mind even when he cooks Black Southern food: his recipe for fried chicken takes two days to prepare, a nod to its traditional status as a celebratory dish for Black Americans, not something they regularly ate.

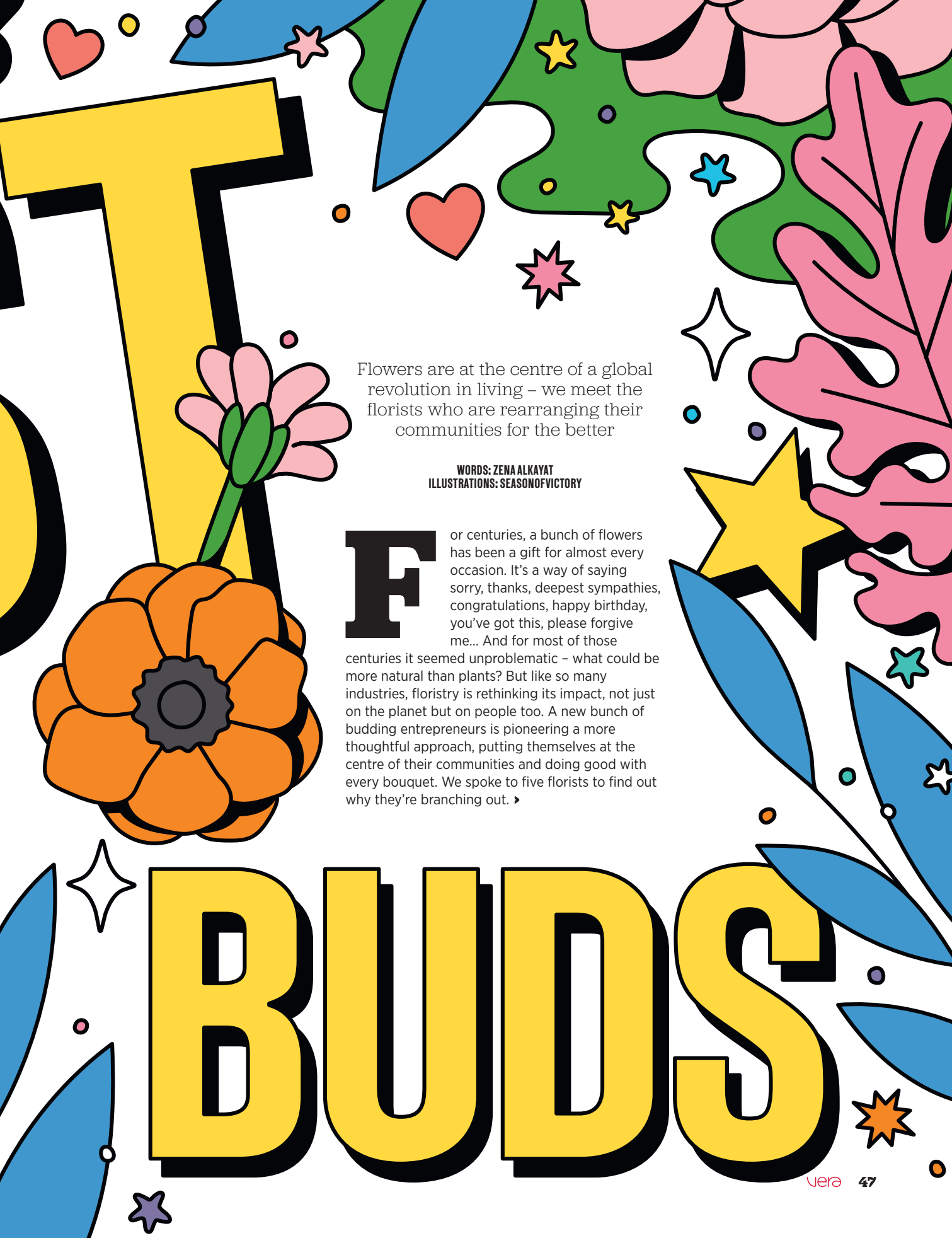
Time seems to be the theme of my trip to Gilliard Farms. It took Matthew and Tia about 25 years to reunite and eventually marry, following a brief romance in culinary school. Like this relationship, many of the projects I talk to the couple about will take a while to bear fruit.

If I were to come back to Brunswick in 90 days, I might be able to see some of the food Matthew is preparing to yield today. It'll take even longer for a docuseries on the Raifords to be completed and make its way on air. Similarly, the next cookbook that Matthew is currently outlining, which will explore how planting crops together can manipulate their flavours, is nowhere near ready to hit the shelves. Much of Matthew's work as a Gullah Geechee farmer is like this – growing, slowly, as a part of an established root system, ever-inching towards the surface.



Flower power





Flowers are at the centre of a global revolution in living – we meet the florists who are rearranging their communities for the better

WORDS: ZENA ALKAYAT
ILLUSTRATIONS: SEASONOFVICTORY

For centuries, a bunch of flowers has been a gift for almost every occasion. It's a way of saying sorry, thanks, deepest sympathies, congratulations, happy birthday, you've got this, please forgive me... And for most of those centuries it seemed unproblematic – what could be more natural than plants? But like so many industries, floristry is rethinking its impact, not just on the planet but on people too. A new bunch of budding entrepreneurs is pioneering a more thoughtful approach, putting themselves at the centre of their communities and doing good with every bouquet. We spoke to five florists to find out why they're branching out. ▶

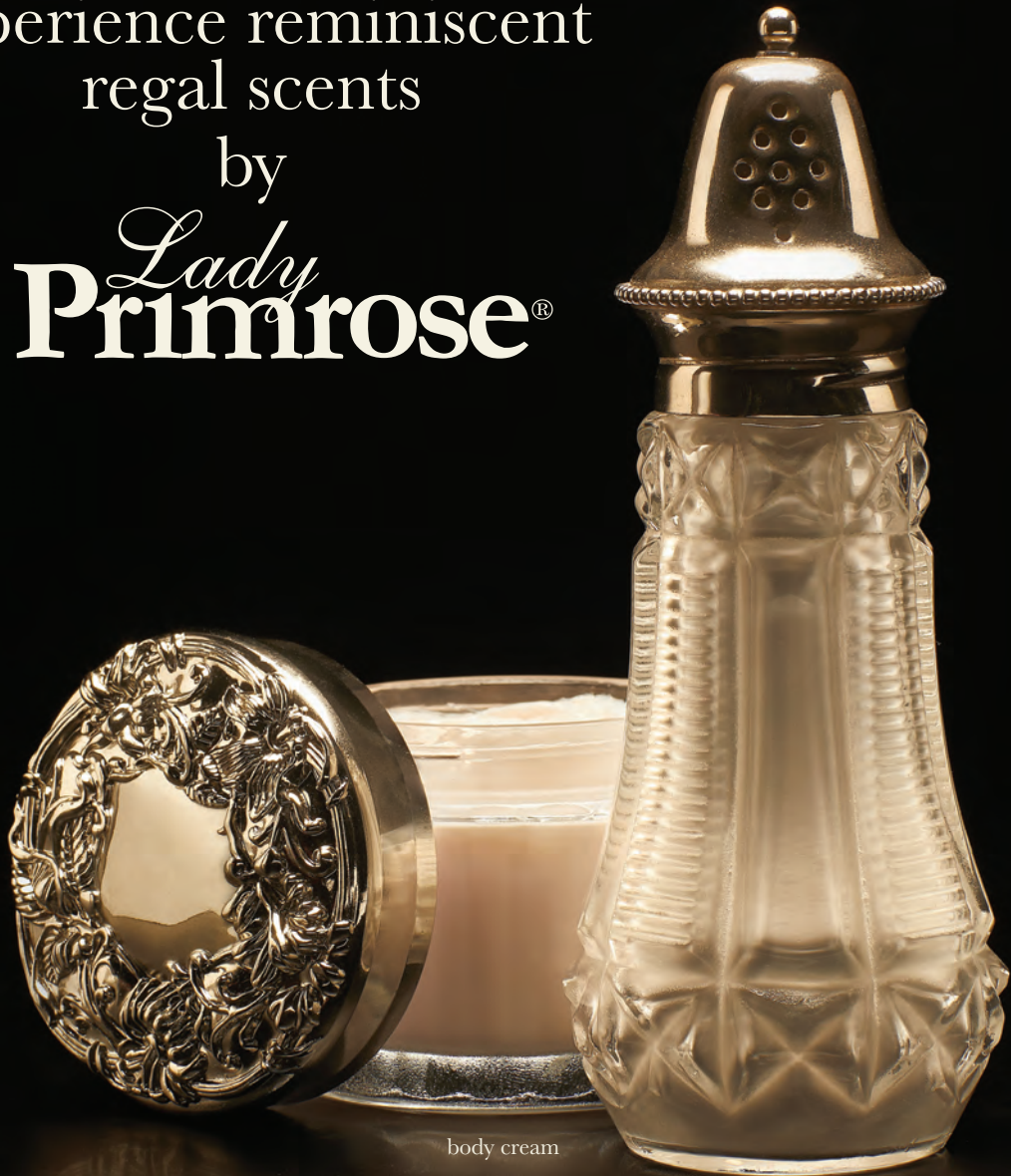
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Lewis Miller's top tip

“Clean water is essential. Make sure the vessel for your flowers is clean and free of any debris before you start. Then clean the stems and always check there are no leaves in the water.”



For random acts of kindness

LEWIS MILLER DESIGN, NEW YORK

FLORAL DESIGNER LEWIS MILLER has created bouquets and installations for some of New York's most rich and fabulous, but it's his altruistic Flower Flashes that have caught the imagination of the city. Creeping around in the middle of the night, Miller and his team use leftover flowers that would otherwise go to waste to create spectacular public installations in sites as incongruous as street dustbins and cordoned off roadworks. “Like all public street art, they are meant to bring strangers together,” says Miller. “Some people are surprised and delighted, others are confused, but everyone feels something. It is a shared experience.” These guerilla-style arrangements are usually dismantled by passers-by who take the blooms as they go, leaving little trace of the event by the end of the day. “New Yorkers can be a jaded bunch, so if we

“If we can remind New Yorkers there is beauty in this world, we’ve met our goal”

can remind them that there is beauty in this world and that they are deserving of it, we’ve met our goal!” You can only visit Miller’s floral studio by appointment, but keep your eyes peeled as you travel through the city and you may just spot something blooming lovely.

✂ Fly to New York

Flower power



For flowers with a purpose

FRIDA PICKLES, LOS ANGELES

“THRIVING THROUGH FLOWERS” is the strapline of Frida Pickles, an enterprising florists in the San Gabriel area of LA. It’s not just a marketing slogan: from the ground up, Pickles is built around a more considered model than your usual store. “It was founded to support our autistic daughter Sofia on her journey in life and ensure she is included in work and community, as all people should be,” says owner Susan Sanchez. The company works with local agencies and colleges to employ differently abled people in above-minimum wage paid positions, and tailors the workplace around them with support such as shorter shifts, lower lighting and skills development. “We are more than a florists,” says Sanchez.

“Our shop is a place where, like flowers, everyone is different and encouraged to thrive.” They also run botany classes that are open to anyone, regardless of ability.



✈ Fly to Los Angeles

“We have a totally circular system: the flowers are grown on our farm, they come to the shop, then any waste goes back to be composted”



Frida Pickles' top tip

“Tulips will continue to grow in the vase when cut. To help prevent drooping, you can prick the top of the stem just beneath the flower and also add a penny to the vase. Tulips love to drink so keep the vase full of water.”

For a masterclass in sustainability

ELECTRIC DAISY FLOWER FARM, LONDON

THIS NORTH LONDON boutique was hand-picked by the community it serves after Highgate residents campaigned against a faceless redevelopment and won the privilege of choosing the indie shops they wanted to see on the high street. "It's wonderful to have been chosen and be so tied in with the community," says founder Fiona Haser Bizony. Helping people to become aware of the environmental cost of intensively farming and importing cut flowers is one of the store's missions, and the community connections mean that they are able to deliver workshops in schools about organic growing, as well as sharing the ethos with customers. "We are the only shop in the UK that supplies all of its own flowers," she says. "It's a totally circular system: the flowers are grown organically on our Somerset farm, they come to the shop, and then any waste and trimmings go back there to be composted." How's that for zero waste?

✂ Fly to London

Electric Daisy is pretty unique: it has its own farm in Somerset, south-west England, that supplies all the shop's blooms; Fiona Haser Bizony, below



Electric Daisy's top tip

"If you're cutting flowers from a garden, do it late in the evening or very early in the morning at the coolest time of day (never in the heat of the sun). Then give them a long drink in deep, cold water and leave them to rest somewhere cool for at least three hours."





Hellebore blooms, majolica spray roses, berries and ferns feature in this crown by Terra Bella Flowers

For farm life in the city

JAFTHA'S FLOWER FARM, CAPE TOWN

THE GLOSSY CAPE TOWN suburb of Constantia is famous for its wine, but tucked away in the verdant Sillery neighbourhood is a much more attractive crop. The Jaftha family have been growing flowers for generations, and today brothers Charles and Malcolm continue the tradition their father began on this site many years ago. But the Jafthas' history isn't all rosy. Like many others, the family were forcibly moved from their farm in 1969 during the dark days of South African apartheid. Today, though, they're back and applying their enormous knowledge to cultivation. Their farm is a beacon of hope and a beautiful reminder of the importance of land and community: every

day locals pick up the freshest blooms straight from the gate.

✂ Fly to Cape Town



Jaftha's Flower Farm's top tip

"For long-lasting flowers, add a drop of bleach and sugar to the water. Some flowers can also be seared to aid the absorption of water – cut the stem down to size, then put the ends in just-boiled water for a few seconds."

For low-mileage blooms

TERRA BELLA FLOWERS, SEATTLE

YOU MIGHT NOT want to think about it as you pop a freshly bought bouquet in your favourite vase, but the flower business has a big problem with its carbon footprint. Supplies are often trucked or flown in from a long way off, but in this beautiful Phinney Ridge florist they all come from much closer to home. Founder Melissa Feveyear worked with local farmers to help found the Seattle Wholesale Growers Market Cooperative, a non-profit marketplace for local and US-grown flowers. Professionals as well as the public can stop in to pick up clean-conscience stems and Feveyear gets all the materials for her shop there, so her daring bouquets are as beautiful as they are sustainable. Terra Bella's becoming a real community hub too, offering workshops (like the jolly-sounding Peonies & Prosecco), as well as Northwest US wines and locally made gifts.

✂ Fly to Seattle



Terra Bella Flowers' top tip

"Replace the water in the vase and recut stems every couple of days. Bacterial growth in water slows water intake, which will cause the blooms to wilt prematurely."



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PROMOTIONAL FEATURE

SWITCH IT UP

Sustainable choices for life



RECYCLABLE ELECTRIC TOOTHBRUSH

GOOD VIBRATIONS

Bristling with smart sustainable touches, this electronic toothbrush by British start-up SUR1 gives us plenty to smile about...

[See over](#)



CODEX SOAPS

RAISING THE BAR

When it comes to saving the planet, we all have skin in the game. But did you know liquid soap takes five times more energy to produce than soap bars? Fear not – you can now clean up your bathroom act with these luxurious, aromatic and totally vegan Codex soap bars. They're specially formulated to clean without stripping moisture or disrupting the delicate balance of your skin's natural microbiome. These zero-waste indulgences will leave you with a face as clear as your conscience.

codexbeauty.com



GIN D'AZUR

THE SUSTAINABLE SPIRIT

Raise a glass to a more environmentally conscious world with Gin d'Azur. It's a premium gin inspired by long summer days spent at the beach in the South of France, but with one eye fixed on the future. How? Through sustainable supply chains for its crop of heady

botanicals like rosemary, thyme and citron de Menton – topped off with an inspired dash of Camargue salt. Gin d'Azur's fashion-forward bottle is plastic-free, and some proceeds go towards maintaining marine habitats in the Med and beyond.

Follow @gindazur on IG or go to gindazur.com

SIX ECO-KIND ALTER

It's easy being green with

SURI ELECTRONIC TOOTHBRUSH

SCRUBS UP BEAUTIFULLY

How's this for an inconvenient truth – every single toothbrush you've ever owned is still out there. In fact, it's reckoned we throw away about four billion of them every year. That's enough to encircle the Earth a dozen times. Sure, bamboo is better than plastic. But dentists insist electric brushes are still best. What to do? SURI – "Sustainable Rituals" – is a UK start-up that's gone back to first principles to create a carbon-neutral, recyclable electric toothbrush. Its chic, slender body is manufactured from aluminium. The bristles are fashioned from naturally biodegradable castor oil. Those replaceable heads? Corn starch. Its toothbrush charges off a sleek base via USB-C, so it's perfect for travelling. The brush's powerful MicroSonic motor is finely calibrated to generate 33,000 sonic vibrations per minute, the frequency recommended by dentists. If the mechanism breaks, post it back to SURI and they'll fix or recycle it. Isn't it time you put your eco-conscious credentials where your mouth is? trysuri.com





PURE BLUE BOTTLED WATER

NORWEGIAN GOOD

One of the great ironies of the 21st century is the clash between conventional health and wellness wisdom – drink more water! – and the earnest cries of the sustainability movement – bottled water is evil! But maybe there’s another way. Pure Blue is a bottled water company from Norway that does things a little bit differently. The bottle itself, for one thing – it’s made from paper and sugarcane. That means it’s recyclable. The contents taste as crystal clear, zingy and refreshing as you’d expect coming from a spring renowned for its purity out in the pristine wilds of Norway. The company isn’t done there, though. Pure Blue’s mission extends to providing safe drinking water to those currently unable to access it. Through the company’s partnership with charity WaterIsLife.com, Pure Blue has pledged to fund 28 days’ access to clean water for a child in the developing world for each bottle sold. Staying hydrated sustainably while helping others? Pure genius.

pureblueofnorway.com

NATIVE INDULGENCES

these smart self-care buys



L'OCCITANE SOLID SHAMPOO

A SOLID OPTION

This Provençal brand has had sustainability at its core since founder Olivier Baussan asked his customers back in 1976 to return product bottles to be refilled or recycled. Today, L'OCCITANE remains at the forefront of green cosmetics, with their innovative Solid Shampoos that each contain 5 Essential Oils. Why is Solid Shampoo a thing? They're liquid-free, so great for flying, plus they're plastic, sulphate and silicone-free, and packaged in paper. They are kind to hair too, containing lavender, ylang-ylang, geranium and camomile.

uk.loccitane.com

NEREUS LONDON

PACK LEADERS

This smart beauty brand from London certainly has a lot of bottle. Aluminium bottles, that is – all their packaging is 100% recyclable, even the cap. Nereus' line of nourishing, detoxifying shampoos, conditioners and body washes use 100% sustainably sourced natural extracts, botanicals and organic

essential oils, with none of the harsh chemicals or other ugliness relied on by rival brands. It's also vegan and free from parabens, sulphates and gluten. Best of all, for every bottle sold, Nereus works with social enterprise Plastic Bank to recover and properly recycle 1kg of ocean-bound plastic. They're the complete, fragrant, hair-loving package.

nereus.uk





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FROM ZERO WASTE TO WONDERFUL TASTE

Discover Black Cow vodka – and be in with a chance to visit this unique Dorset distillery

Like all the best ideas, Black Cow vodka was cooked up one night after a few drinks. Dorset neighbours and friends Archie, an artist, and dairy farmer Jason were enjoying the evening when conversation turned to the leftovers from Jason's family's cheesemaking business. Could whey – typically separated from valuable curds as a milk by-product, and often thrown away – be distilled into vodka? Turns out yes. More than a decade later, the pair's smooth, creamy, single-ingredient



vodka is the toast of upscale establishments the world over. Variations include Black Cow & English Strawberries, Black Cow Vodka Negroni and a seasonal Christmas pudding vodka.

Diamond-clear in appearance, with an invigorating whiff of forsythia, fudge and vanilla, Black Cow vodka goes down smooth with a warming peppery afterglow and spicy aura of cinnamon. Using milk as its only source ingredient is what makes Black Cow vodka so uniquely smooth.

blackcow.co.uk

WIN! Lunch for two prepared by Mark Hix and a tour of the Black Cow distillery in west Dorset, with overnight stay at The Ollerod boutique hotel and UK travel included. To enter the draw email your name and contact info to virgincompetition@blackcow.co.uk Deadline 15 May 2022. Over 18s only. Scan QR code for recipes, to sign up to Black Cow's newsletter for 15% off your first order and to review our full terms & conditions.



A WORLD OF ENTERTAINMENT
AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

What's On

NEO-BAROQUE

For a film with such a distinctive look (based on Caravaggio and Rembrandt, apparently) it's perhaps not surprising the fourth *Matrix* movie boasts not one but two directors of photography. Veteran John Toll (*Braveheart*, *The Thin Red Line*) kicked things off before camera operator Daniele Massaccesi - another Wachowski regular - stepped up after a Covid-enforced break.

 Watch *The Matrix Resurrections*



THE BEST OF WHAT'S ONBOARD

63-68

Movies

Oscar-nominated films showing onboard this month include *Belfast* and *The Lost Daughter*.

70-73

TV

Meet the inspiring Julia Child, Jackie Collins and Amy Winehouse, and let Awkwafina make you laugh.

75-77

Audio

New albums from Yard Act, Cate Le Bon, Aurora and The Weeknd, plus music to keep the kids happy.

VERA LOVES

We're one of the few airlines that selects their own movies and TV, with lots of new content onboard each month.

Look out for anything labelled with a heart – that means we think it's the best of the best. We champion big blockbusters, quirky shorts, binge-worthy box sets and ace docs. Read on for our top picks for April.

THE CHOICE IS YOURS

Tune into **Vera**, our award-winning world of entertainment

SCREEN TIME

Onboard this month we have

123

Movies

480+

Albums, podcasts & playlists

330

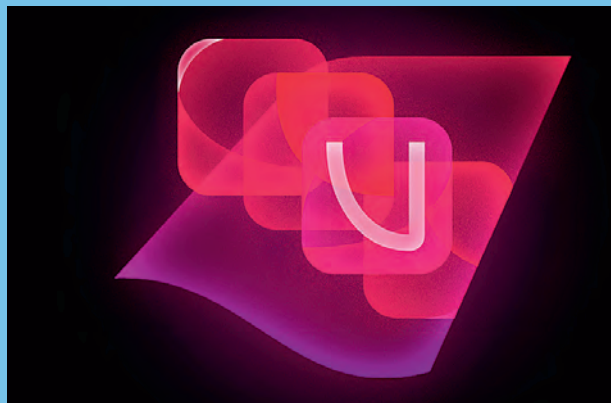
Hours of TV shows

28

Destination guides

58+

Hours of kids' content



ARE YOU A fan of grime, rock, pop or classical music? Do you like dark movie thrillers or light-hearted comedies? Whatever you're into, we have it onboard. But what if you've got eclectic taste and you like all these things – and more?

Well, on our aircraft you can create your own bespoke playlists for music and watchlists for TV and movies. Here's how:


- Select an album from Music, a TV show from TV or a movie from Movies.
- For Music, click on the star symbol next to your chosen track or album.
- For Movies and TV click Save Show/Movie for Later.
- Depending on which aircraft you are on, you'll see a tab or star at the top of your screen.
- Click on it and you'll see the items you've selected.
- Select Music, Movies or TV. Now you can work through your personally curated list of top entertainment at 30,000ft.


SEATBACK CHAT
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Parental blocking
If you want to block by rating or specific content, please talk to a member of the cabin crew.

Headphones
Using your headphones? Our PAs are recorded at levels that work with the headphones we provide onboard, so be prepared if you use your own.

Viewing guide

 Not suitable for nervous flyers

 Unsuitable for children

 Vera Loves

Languages

Most movies have several language options available. To find them, pick a movie, select the dropdown language box, choose your language and enjoy! We also have a selection of Hindi and Chinese movies onboard.

Subtitled

Subtitles and audio descriptive titles (AD) are available on a selection of movies onboard.



Pair your device

The entertainment screens on our sleek new A350 aircraft are all touchscreen, but you

can also choose to navigate our awesome selection of movies, TV and music with your own device too. All you need to do is pair your phone or tablet and, hey presto, it turns into a remote control. Here's how:

- On your entertainment screen, select the pairing button (see left) to get your four-digit code.
- On your personal device, select the "Virgin-Atlantic" WiFi network.
- Your device will

automatically take you to our WiFi page.

- Select Control Your Screen.
- Select the pairing button and enter your four-digit code when it asks you.
- Ta-da! You can now use your device as a remote.

GEN UP ON YOUR GENRES WITH OUR SUPER SELECTION

Movies

A 1930s setting

Filmmaker Guillermo del Toro's *Nightmare Alley* is a glorious celebration of the classic film noir. It's the story of shifty Stanton Carlisle (Bradley Cooper), who joins a travelling carnival and learns to become a "psychic" with the help of clairvoyant Madame Zeena (Toni Collette).

Lots of smoking

Cooper's inscrutable and moustachioed Stan smokes cigarettes. Willem Dafoe's cruel and moustachioed carnival barker Clem smokes cigarettes. The crowd in the New York cabaret in which Stan showcases his mind-reading act all smoke. Film noir does not care that smoking kills.

A femme fatale

She crosses her legs. She smokes. She pours stiff drinks from a decanter. She has electric blonde hair and blood-red lips. Lilith Ritter (Cate Blanchett) is the archetypal femme fatale – it may end badly but you can't keep your eyes off her.

KNOW YOUR NOIR

Shady and seductive, *Nightmare Alley* ticks the boxes of cinema's sultriest style

Darkness

If it's ever daytime in the world of *Nightmare Alley* then we barely get to see it. Del Toro ramps up the atmosphere by keeping everything dusky and dim. For even more noir feels, a black-and-white version is also screening in cinemas.

Innocent characters...

Oddballs, grifters, con artists, manipulators, bullies, thieves, deceivers and plain old criminals: the film noir loves a bad guy (and bad girl), and *Nightmare Alley* is no different. It's hard to find someone to root for when they're all this despicable, but you'll love them all the same.

...who all get their just rewards

A common trope of film noir is that there are no redemptions, no happy endings. Ultimately, they often leave the impression that crime doesn't pay. No spoilers, but while *Nightmare Alley* may fit the bill it's also one hell of a ride.

Watch *Nightmare Alley*

PHOTO: ADOBE STOCK



HOT RIGHT NOW



Belfast ❤️

12

Jamie Dornan,
Caitriona Balfe

98
mins

THIS LOVE LETTER to the city in which writer-director Kenneth Branagh grew up is a feast of delights, not least among them the stunning black-and-white cinematography and a storyline that gracefully balances tragedy and comedy. Young newcomer Jude Hill plays Buddy who, growing up in a working-class Belfast neighbourhood, must confront issues of torn family loyalties, sectarian violence, young love and a best friend who may not be a very good influence. Support comes in the shape of Jamie Dornan and Caitriona Balfe as his parents, while there are also superb turns from Judi Dench and Ciarán Hinds. Overall, though, this is Branagh's show all the way and his directorial hand is masterful.



American Underdog

Anna Paquin,
Zachary Levi

112
mins

Underdog just about sums up NFL quarterback Kurt Warner, who rose from being an undrafted player to claiming the "most valuable player" prize at the 2000 Super Bowl. This moving biopic tells his incredible story. *See right*



The 355

Jessica Chastain,
Diane Kruger

123
mins

Stunning action set-pieces enliven this tale of CIA agent Mace (Chastain) who must assemble a team of similarly kick-ass women agents in order to foil a terrorist plot. No, it's not especially original, but it's pulled off with so much style, you probably won't care.



Nightmare Alley ❤️

15

Bradley Cooper,
Cate Blanchett

150
mins

The latest movie from Guillermo del Toro is an atmospheric, occasionally violent film noir that features Cooper as a twisted carnival worker who hooks up with an equally dangerous female shrink (Blanchett). *See opener*



Spider-Man: No Way Home

12

Tom Holland,
Zendaya

148
mins

Woah. To say that events in the latest Spider-Man movie are huge is a gross understatement. No spoilers here, but if you've seen it before you'll want to see it again. And if you haven't seen it yet, then, boy, you're in for a treat.



The King's Man

15

Gemma Arterton,
Rhys Ifans

131
mins

This latest addition to the riotous Kingsman action franchise acts as prequel, telling the origin story of the fabled Kingsman outfit and adding Gemma Arterton in the mix. As usual, the near-the-knuckle jokes come thick and fast, and the action is wild.

MOVIE BLUFF

DON'T KNOW WHO
KURT WARNER IS?



With a name like that, I'm guessing he's from the US.

Of course. Not just that, he's the kind of all-American hero who gets legendary status stateside.

Sounds like he'd be perfect for a biopic.

You're not wrong. *American Underdog* is its name and it's got all the ingredients that folks can't get enough of: a rags-to-riches odyssey, a champion winning against all the odds and gridiron. Lots of gridiron.

So Kurt's a football player?

He was until he retired in 2010. Not only that, he was a quarterback, which even non-football fans know is *the best position*. He received the National Football League's Most Valuable Player (MVP) award twice, but what makes him extra-special is his journey: he went from undrafted (an unsigned free agent) to winning Super Bowl XXXIV with the St Louis Rams. This, my friends, is a big deal.

I'm not really into gridiron, though.

Don't worry, this movie is for everyone. You'll laugh, you'll cry, you'll be inspired to throw around an inflated pigskin as soon as you land.

Watch *American Underdog*



Sing 2



Reese Witherspoon,
Matthew McConaughey

110
mins

THE MANIFOLD PLEASURES of the first *Sing* movie revolved around a starry cast of voice actors singing beloved songs, some of them mainstream, some of them a little more niche. Only a doofus would meddle with such a winning formula, so this sequel gives us more of the same, only more so: more stars, more songs, more fuzzy feelings. The plot involves the indomitable koala Buster Moon aiming to entice the world's top rock star to join his tuneful crew, and if we were to tell you that the rock star in question is played by Bono you might reasonably expect one or two U2 songs on the tracklist. You get them, along with a new number recorded especially for the movie.



The Mitchells vs the Machines



Maya Rudolph,
Eric André

110
mins

Did you like *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse*? Did you love *The Lego Movie*? Then meet your new favourite animated action-comedy from the same minds, as the Mitchells go on a road trip and find that they're humanity's last hope in the face of a robot apocalypse.



Peter Rabbit 2



Rose Byrne,
James Corden

94
mins

The adrenalised first outing for our floppy-eared friend may have divided critics, but proved to be a delightful treat for the kid (or overgrown kid) in your life. Here's more of the same, as Peter (voiced by Corden) decides to stretch his legs and explore the big city.

FUTURE SHOCKS



The Matrix Resurrections

12

Keanu Reeves,
Carrie-Anne Moss

148
mins

IT'S BEEN A long wait for this fourth instalment of the ground-breaking *Matrix* franchise. Fortunately for all concerned (well, us, mainly), its star, Keanu Reeves, is practically ageless and if anything looks even better than he did the last time we checked into the metaverse, in 2003. His character, Neo, has fared less well, having been erased in the last episode. Thus, the beginning of this sequel finds him having resumed his former life as a bored programmer who is plagued by faint memories of another, vastly different, existence. The fun really starts when he bumps into a strangely familiar woman (that would be Carrie-Anne Moss's Trinity) – fun in the best *Matrix* tradition, that is, characterised by insanely imaginative action sequences, mind-bending virtual reality and chin-scratching philosophical interludes.



Dune

12

Timothée Chalamet,
Zendaya

149
mins

Director Denis Villeneuve knows his way around a visual. Sure enough, this tale of a clan that must protect the galaxy's most valuable asset is gorgeous to look at and boasts a great performance from Chalamet to boot.



Mother/Android

15

Algee Smith,
Chloë Grace Moretz

110
mins

Moretz gives a superb performance in this post-apocalyptic thriller, playing a pregnant woman who must embark on a perilous journey in order to save herself and her baby. Out to get her are hordes of marauding androids, natch.

LOVE AND LAUGHS



The French Dispatch

15

Benicio del Toro,
Tilda Swinton

107
mins

Wes Anderson fans will need no further prompting to watch this love letter to old-timey journalism set in the French office of a US newspaper. His quirky style is supported by fine turns from del Toro and Swinton, among many.



Marry Me

12

Owen Wilson,
Jennifer Lopez

112
mins

Time to scratch that romantic comedy itch with two giants of the genre: Lopez, who plays superstar Kat Valdez, and Wilson, who plays normal Joe Charlie, who just happens to be in the wrong place at the right time.



The Hating Game

!

Austin Stowell,
Lucy Hale

102
mins

Publishing executives Lucy and Josh can't stand one another in this romantic comedy. Or can they? After a steamy elevator ride, they must find a way to balance their burgeoning relationship with their professional rivalry.

TEAR-JERKERS



A Journal for Jordan

12

Jalon Christian, Michael B Jordan | 131 mins

Denzel Washington takes the directorial reins for this true-life tale of a soldier deployed to Iraq who writes a journal of love and advice for his infant son. The result is an unashamedly sentimental portrait of love and family.



The Lost Daughter ♥

15

Olivia Colman, Jessie Buckley | 121 mins

THE DIRECTORIAL DEBUT of Maggie Gyllenhaal, based on Elena Ferrante's novel, was rightly applauded at its world premiere in Venice. Leda (Olivia Colman) takes a holiday on a Greek island hoping for some alone-time but gradually becomes slightly obsessed with a nearby family, notably Dakota Johnson's Nina. With these scenes contrasted with vignettes from Leda's early life, the overall effect is equal parts thriller and scintillating character portrait. Gyllenhaal's direction is assured – acting's loss is directing's gain in this regard – and Buckley as the young Leda continues to demonstrate that she is a rare talent. But it is Colman who just about steals the show, turning in a mesmerising performance that has quite rightly won her award nominations from every quarter.



The Last Bus

12

Anne Kidd, Timothy Spall | 87 mins

Only an actor of Spall's calibre can pull off a film that largely involves sitting on public transport. He plays Tom, who decides to cross the country using only local buses and soon finds himself a reluctant social media celebrity.

1. CRAZY HEART 2. KICK-ASS 3. HIDEOUS KINKY 4. HE PLAYED PIANO ON THE SOUNDTRACK 5. FÉNELOPE CRUZ AND LUPITA NYONG'O PHOTO: ALAMY



MOVIE QUIZ

TAKE ON OUR FEATURED FILMS

1

Maggie Gyllenhaal has received her second Oscar nomination for her screenplay for *The Lost Daughter* but she was first nominated in 2010 for her performance alongside Jeff Bridges in which film?

2

Matthew Vaughan has developed two film franchises based on comic book series by Mark Millar, including the *Kingsman* movies and another

3

Gillies MacKinnon's new film, *The Last Bus*, features Timothy Spall as a widower who travels the length of Britain by bus. In 1998 the director made a movie with Kate Winslet as a mum who travels to Morocco with her kids – what is it called?

4

Steven Spielberg has worked with composer

starring Aaron Taylor-Johnson, but what is it?

John Williams on more than 20 movies – *Jaws* and *ET* among them – and Williams acts as consultant on the director's new version of *West Side Story*, but what is his connection to the 1961 original?

5

Female-led spy movie *The 355* fields a top-notch cast including Diane Kruger and Jessica Chastain. Who are the two female Oscar winners in the line-up?

Answers on the left



Jackass Forever

18

Steve-O,
Johnny Knoxville

96
mins

IT'S FAIR TO say that *Jackass* films have never been critic faves – yet this fourth instalment has had them mumbling somewhat begrudging compliments. Perhaps they were moved by the stunt in which Steve-O has a certain part of his anatomy used as a beehive; maybe they were impressed by the central message inherent in watching a vulture eat pieces of meat off Wee Man's body; possibly they were inspired by the committed performance of Preston Lacy, as his testicles are used as a punch bag; or maybe they felt that the final stunt, in which all of the *Jackass* crew cram onto the Vomitron, is breaking new cinematic ground. Either way, the film has been awarded the accolade of “best in the series” by practically everyone.



West Side Story

12

Ansel Elgort,
Rachel Zegler

120
mins

Spielberg has taken this stone-cold classic and made another stone-cold classic. We wouldn't go so far as to say that it improves on the original (although some critics have), but with a production this vibrant and stylish, well, let's just say that it runs a close race.



Ghostbusters: Afterlife

12

McKenna Grace,
Finn Wolfhard

137
mins

If 2016's *Ghostbusters* didn't quite hit the G-spot (G for “ghost”, that is), then this great reboot is sure to do the trick. It finds Paul Rudd leading an insanely star-studded cast as the original 'Busters swing back into business. Who ya gonna call? This lot. *See right*

TOP 5

Spooks in Ghostbusters: Afterlife

1 Muncher

This grouchy ectoplasmic blob's party trick involves eating metal, then spitting it out like bullets when it gets ticked off.



2 Mini Pufts

Like the colossal confectionary monster “Stay Puft” from 1984's *Ghostbusters*, but dinky enough to dunk in a hot drink.



3 Zuul the gatekeeper

The loyal minion of Gozer performs cute tricks like flipping cars and possessing the innocent.



4 Vinz Clortho

Another red-eyed mutt and 80s veteran, Vinz serves as quasi-sexual Keymaster to Zuul's Gatekeeper.



5 Egon Spengler

Beloved actor Harold Ramis – the brains behind the original *Ghostbusters* cast – is resurrected with the magic of CGI.



Watch *Ghostbusters: Afterlife*

PHOTO: AL JAMY

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WHIPPING UP THE BEST MIX OF SHOWS IN THE AIR

Television

JULIA CHILD: A RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

The TV chef did more than teach a generation to love French cooking, says food writer **Holly Regan**

✓ A French starter

Julia Child's love affair with food was inspired in 1948 by a childhood meal in Rouen, France, which she called "an opening up of the spirit and soul".

✓ A mix of masterful training

With her new appetite for cooking, Child studied at legendary cookery school Le Cordon Bleu in Paris and trained with master chefs like Max Bugnard.

✓ One pinch of luck

Simone Beck, who was writing a French cookery book, met Child at a Parisian women's cooking club and commissioned her to make the book appeal to US readers.

✓ A larderful of know-how

In 1951, Child, Beck and Louisette Bertholle began teaching French cooking classes at Child's Paris home.

✓ A soupçon of resilience

The first draft of *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* was rejected for being too tricky, but Alfred P Knopf published the legendary cookery book by Child, Beck and Bertholle in 1961.

✓ A few eggs

Child starred in her own award-winning television series, *The French Chef*, after demonstrating how to cook an omelette for a Boston audience.

✓ Some complicated history

She held unsavoury homophobic views in the 1970s, but became an activist for AIDS research after losing someone close to her to the disease.

✓ Enough for everyone

Child made cooking accessible and enjoyable, helping launch a modern food renaissance. As well as the documentary screening onboard there's to be a show on HBO about her later this year, starring Brit Sarah Lancashire. Yep, she's flavour of the month.

Watch Julia





ADDITIONAL PHOTOS: ADOBE STOCK



Succession ♥

15

Box set	58 mins
---------	---------

The biggest TV phenomenon of recent years is, at heart, a family drama – just that this clan are billionaires squabbling over who gets to head the company when patriarch Logan Roy steps aside from the media empire he founded.



Alma's Not Normal !

Box set	30 mins
---------	---------

Acclaimed sitcom in which director-star Sophie Willan plays the eponymous Alma, who is trying to give her life meaning while also holding her dysfunctional family together. It's funny, it's raw, it's emotional – and it's all onboard.



Fis for Family

15

5 episodes	29 mins
------------	---------

Animated series created by comedian Bill Burr in which we join the Murphy family in the 1970s – a time when kids roamed wild, tobacco was healthy and nothing came between a man and his TV. Very funny and, as a result, wildly popular.



Lady Boss: The Jackie Collins Story ♥ !

Documentary	97 mins
-------------	---------

This superb, multilayered doc shows how writer Jackie Collins emerged from the shadow of her sister, Joan, to become a bestselling author. A woman who, with her championing of female sexuality, was emblematic of the times.



Julia ♥

!

Documentary	94 mins
-------------	---------

US cookery legend Julia Child hosted TV shows and published cookbooks in the 1960s and 1970s. But, as this feature-length documentary goes to show, she was more than just a TV chef. In fact, she challenged and changed attitudes Stateside. *See left*



Why Women Kill !

!

Box set	52 mins
---------	---------

The second season of *Why Women Kill* embarks on a whole new story (so don't worry if you haven't seen season one) as we learn about Alma's plans to move up in her local garden club – plans that are hampered by her hubby, Bertram, and his terrible secrets...

PAST GLORIES



Pose

15

Drama	Up to 78 mins
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NEW YORK CITY in the 1980s was one of the most culturally fertile places in the world and this award-winning series showcases one of its most exciting scenes: ball culture, in which members of the LGBTQ+ community organised masquerade balls with vogue battles at their heart. It follows the woes and wins of a group of marginalised characters including Blanca Evangelista (played by Michaela Jaé Rodriguez), a trans woman who's just been diagnosed with HIV, and Damon (Ryan Jamaal Swain), a young dancer trying to make it in the big city. The drama is high, the dance battles are electrifying, the struggles are real. Inspiring stuff.



The North Water

Box set	57 mins
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Based on the brilliant novel, *The North Water* tells of an ex-surgeon (Jack O'Connell) who signs up to an Arctic whaling expedition, only to find himself in conflict with a psychopathic harpooner (Colin Farrell).



8 Days: To the Moon and Back

Factual	90 mins
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Apollo 11 was the first spaceflight to land man on the Moon. This feature-length documentary uses original footage as well as newly shot film and cinematic CGI, and is, quite frankly, breathtaking.

KIDS



Paw Patrol

5 episodes	22 mins
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Ryder leads a team of rescue pups who save their town from emergencies – whether it's finding missing elephants, fixing windmills or another minor mishap involving clumsy Cap'n Turbot. We've got season 7 of this perennial kids' fave.



Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles

5 episodes	23 mins
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You know the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, right? Regular shell-carriers except mutated by a mysterious alien substance. Now they must use their ninja skills to protect their city from evil forces, past and present.



SpongeBob SquarePants

5 episodes	22 mins
------------	---------

Plenty of undersea fun as SpongeBob and his pal Patrick the starfish embark on watery adventures in Bikini Bottom. Sure, it's a kid's show, but for adults who need a bit of feelgood fun, the ever-optimistic SpongeBob is your guy.

TOP 3

Pioneering jams from the USA

Box set *Hip Hop: The Songs That Shook America* features tunes that forged new ground

Rock Box
by Run-DMC

The unlikely hair-rock vibe of this 1984 tune occurred only because metal band Riot were in the studio just before Run-DMC. The result catapulted hip-hop into the middle-American mainstream.

Jesus Walks
by Kanye West

Ye's inspired fusion of a gospel hook – sung by recovering New York drug addicts – and militant mid-tempo march scandalised American radio.

Ladies First
by Queen Latifah

Latifah and Monie Love's spiky feminist anthem was a riposte to the rampant misogyny of 1980s hip-hop culture, which routinely exploited talented female MCs and pitted them against one another for sport.

Watch *Hip Hop: The Songs That Shook America*

PHOTO: JALARY



Crock of Gold: A Few Rounds with Shane MacGowan

18

Documentary

124 mins

THE POGUES' FRONTMAN Shane MacGowan is probably as famous for his fondness for booze as his musical talents, but among the many brilliant aspects of this documentary is director Julien Temple's determination to highlight not just his subject's debauched lifestyle, but also his poetic lyrics, his genius as a focus for the band and his gravel-voiced delivery. Archive material is skilfully deployed, while on hand to offer further insights are Johnny Depp, Nick Cave and Bono. The result is one of the best musical documentaries of recent years.



Hip Hop: The Songs That Shook America ▲!

Box set

43 mins

Documentary series in which classic hip-hop songs are assessed for their contribution not just to the genre but to wider American culture. Plenty of insight then, including from artists involved.

See left



Amy Winehouse: Back to Black !

Factual

60 mins

Excellent insight into the inspiration behind the late, great Amy Winehouse's bestselling *Back to Black* album. In archive footage and interviews, the troubled singer talks broken hearts, beehives, bad behaviour and, of course, blooming incredible songs.



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SW21
VILLA LOS ANGELES
SIERRA BLANCA



SW04
VILLA PARIS
GOLF VALLEY



SW06
VILLA V
GOLF VALLEY



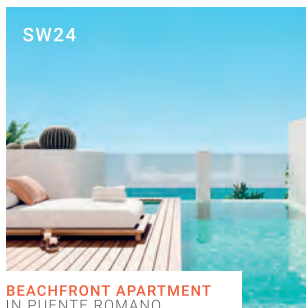
SW17
VILLA LV One
BEACHFRONT
PUENTE ROMANO



SW25
VILLA OAK
GOLF VALLEY



SW03
VILLA ANAMAYA
GOLF VALLEY



SW24
BEACHFRONT APARTMENT
IN PUENTE ROMANO



SW08
VILLA GRATITUDE
GOLDEN MILE



SW14
DUPLEX PENTHOUSE
IN PUENTE ROMANO



TUNES TO TICKLE YOUR FUNNY BONE... AND MORE

Audio



ROCK 'N' DROLL

A new wave of British bands, including wry Yorkshire punk poets Yard Act, is proving rock can be funny, says Jonny Ensall

JUST WHEN DID rock 'n' roll get so serious? All those stadium-sized bands, belting out earnest choruses. Proclaiming their "sex is on fire" while unironically wearing braces. If the "rock star" isn't a silly concept, I don't know what is.

Luckily, the Brits are here to undercut the pomposity of the guitar band and bring a bit of fun back to proceedings. Take Yard Act, for example – the Leeds upstarts whose angular post-punk guitarwork and pithy lyrics poke fun at just about everything, including what it's like to be a musician. "If you wanna make some decent money from it you'd be better off kicking that d***head singer you've got out the band," drawls James Smith, who is Yard Act's singer and who (at the time of publication at least) has not yet been kicked out of the band. That line comes from *The Overload*, which is the title track of Yard Act's first album – recently released to much hype and acclaim.

Though it comes in waves, bands being low-key funny is nothing new. Ever since the first flames of

the punk movement died down, musicians – especially ones from the north of England – have been taking a more humorous approach to the idea that everything's a bit rubbish. See: The Smiths; Pulp; The Fall. In fact, James Smith's surly half-spoken, half-sung delivery is so much like that of late-great The Fall singer Mark E Smith that it's kind of a joke in itself.

And Yard Act aren't the only Brit band causing this kind of riot. Sleaford Mods, Dry Cleaning, Idles and others all toe the line between hilarious and furious, with lyrics that are equal parts juvenile nonsense and searing polemic. It's a scene summed up by the pleasing German word *Sprechgesang*, meaning "spoken voice".

A post-pandemic, post-punk movement built around not taking anything too seriously... even the serious stuff? It makes sense. Sometimes all you can do is laugh.

Yard Act are drummer Jay Russell, Sam Shipstone on guitars, vocalist James Smith and bassist Ryan Needham

 [Listen to The Overload](#)



The Weeknd ❤️

Dawn FM

Pop

NEVER ONE TO do things by halves, the latest album from The Weeknd is an ambitious synth-pop epic that he himself has called a conceptual work describing a state of purgatory, a “journey towards the light at the end of the tunnel”. Phew. Onboard for this particular trip are the likes of Jim Carrey, who provides narration, while guest vocals come from Tyler, the Creator and Lil Wayne, and Quincy Jones and Josh Safdie provide spoken-word interludes.

And if all that sounds like terribly hard work and not much fun, the surprise is that it’s quite the opposite. Indeed, critics have hailed it as a sunny, upbeat experience that is as danceable as it is thought-provoking and very possibly the best thing to bear The Weeknd’s name to date. Which, as you might imagine, is very, very high praise indeed.



Cate Le Bon

Pompeii

Alternative

Six albums in and Le Bon continues to bemuse and enthrall. As *Pitchfork* says, “Le Bon’s creative power remains in the circuitous jaggedness with which she navigates pop and poetry, uncertainty and revelation.”



Palace ❤️

Shoals

Alternative

The kind of indie-rock purveyed by Palace may not be especially groundbreaking, but by the whiskers of Odin, it’s darn good. Think parts Radiohead, Jeff Buckley, Elbow, Travis and Doves – but mainly very good indeed.

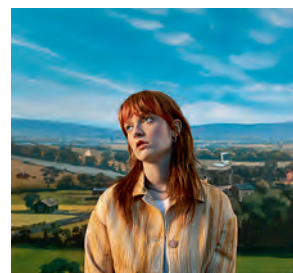


Aurora ❤️

The Gods We Can Touch

Pop

The brilliant Aurora hails from Norway and makes the kind of brainy but supremely danceable pop that takes up residence in your head and refuses to leave. Album number three is her best yet – critics love it.



Orla Gartland

Woman on the Internet

Pop

Straight outta Dublin comes Orla Gartland, who as the title of this, her debut album, suggests, made her name on YouTube. Think idiosyncratic indie-folk and you’re halfway to appreciating the magic of Orla Gartland.

TOP 3

Star stories

Unmissable nuggets from the *Celebrity Catch Up* podcast

Alan Rickman The *Ferris Bueller’s Day Off* and *Succession* star was given just days to live back in 2001 after developing a blood infection, following a dip in a dirty hot tub. He says he’s a “lucky guy” to have survived.



Dexter Fletcher After kicking off his career on stage and finding fame in movie *Bugsy Malone* and UK kids TV show *Press Gang*, the actor (left) hit hard times... But the great Alan Rickman stepped up to help out.

Parminder Nagra The star of *Bend It Like Beckham*, *Agents of SHIELD* and *ER* tells how she fell asleep while posing for a sketch now hanging in London’s National Portrait Gallery.



Listen to *Celebrity Catch Up: Life After That Thing I Did*

CHILD'S PLAY

Various Artists

Sing 2 (Original Motion Picture Soundtrack) Kids

IT WOULD TAKE a heart of stone not to be moved by the abundance of talent on display in this accompaniment to the new animated film. Given that the movie stars Bono as rock star Clay Calloway, you might expect the soundtrack to include U2 songs, and you wouldn't be wrong. He's joined by Scarlett Johansson on a new recording of *I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For* and there's even a brand-new U2 track recorded especially for the film, *Your Song Saved My Life*.



Pinkfong

Pinkfong Presents: The Best of Baby Shark, Part Two Kids

If you thought that kiddie favourites Pinkfong had reached the very apex of their talent with *The Best of Baby Shark*, well, think again.



Dora the Explorer

We Did It! Dora's Greatest Hits Kids

Fans will know Dora's catchphrase, "We did it!" Needless to say, it makes an appearance on this collection of all Dora's best bits.

PLAYLISTS



Icons: AC/DC

They don't get much more iconic than beloved hard rockers AC/DC, whose knack for an astounding riff remains undiminished after decades in the biz. Whether you're an AC amateur or a DC devotee, this playlist is for you.

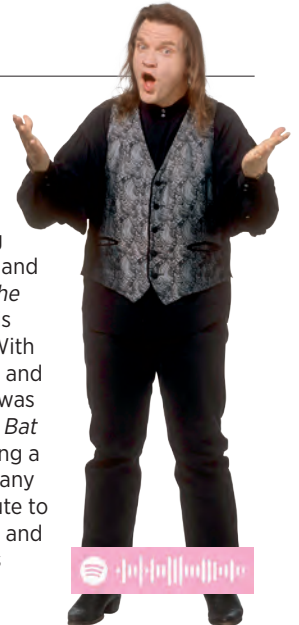


Icons: Jimi Hendrix

Jimi Hendrix is an artist revered by casual fans and rock cognoscenti alike. Why? Because nobody before or since has managed to fuse the raw sexuality, great songs and incredible, primal guitar sounds the way that he did.

Icons: Meat Loaf ❤️

THE MUSIC WORLD lost a true giant when Meat Loaf passed away in January. But what a life he led. Born bright red, his dad convinced hospital staff to label his crib "Meat" and the name stuck. Growing up, he entered music, fronted bands and made a memorable appearance in *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* before his path crossed that of Jim Steinman. With Steinman composing, Loaf on vocals and a shared desire to create music that was epic, operatic and Gothic, the album *Bat Out of Hell* was born, eventually selling a record-breaking 43 million copies. Many more albums would follow. This tribute to his incredible talent includes classics and rarities, as well as deep cuts from his non-Steinman work.



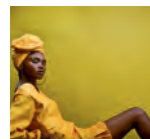
Destinations: Jamaica ❤️

Jamaica's rich musical heritage is represented on this playlist that of course includes classic reggae tunes – both old and new – as well as featuring various selections from related genres unique to the island. Tracks include *Sweet Reggae Music* and *Best You Ever Had (BYEH)*.



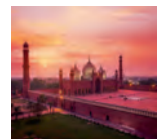
Destinations: Nigeria

With Wizkid achieving worldwide acclaim, take a look at some other up-and-coming artists from Nigeria who are leading the charge with a new sound, fresh from West Africa. Listen to the new stars shaping the country and those that helped drive the sound of a nation.



! Destinations: Pakistan

Pakistan never sounded so good as on this playlist showcasing a rich seam of talent, including Ghulam Ali (*Hungama Hai Kyon Barpa*), Nazzia Hassan (*Aap Jaisa Ko*) and loads more. From established megastars to emerging new talent, it's all here.



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■ virginholidays.co.uk/the-edits



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JOIN THE CREW IN... LOS ANGELES

Cabin Crew Member **Craig Rees** offers his top tips for a great day out in the City of Angels...

-  Start the morning by getting up early and **hike up to the Hollywood Sign**, you get an amazing view of LA from the top. Start on the Hollyridge Trail at the top of Beachwood Drive.
-  Grab brunch at a little cafe called **Met Her At A Bar** – try the Oh Wow Crispy French Toast. Or, if you have a sweet tooth, the You Make Me Wake Up Happy Waffles.
-  Head down to **Santa Monica** and relax on the beach. Bag a spot by the pier, so you're closer to the restaurants and shops.
-  Go dancing in West Hollywood – I usually head to **The Abbey** where there's always a great vibe and the cocktails are fantastic.

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