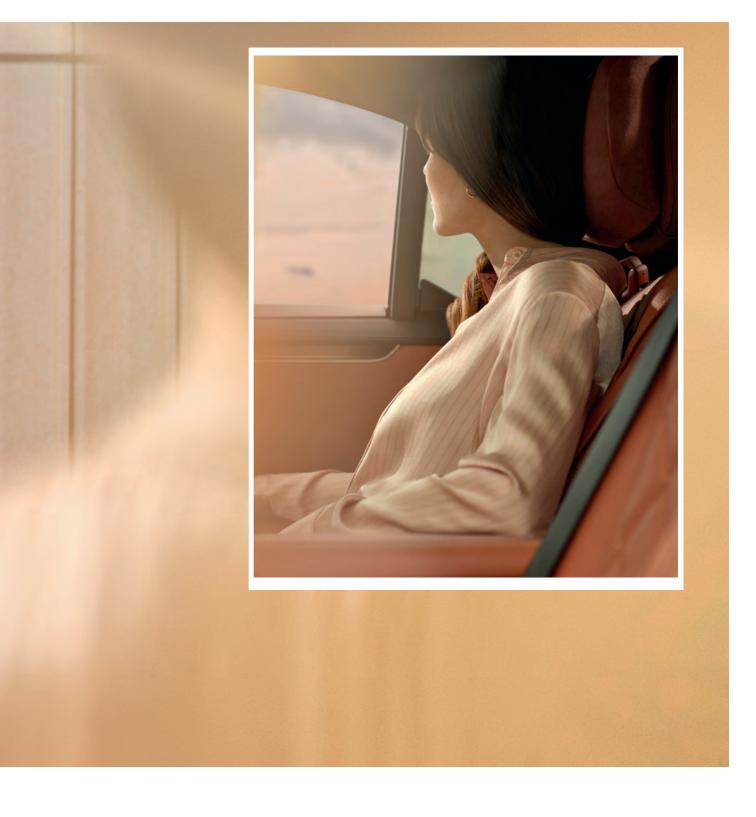




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# COUNTRY STATE OF THE STATE OF T

# uera

# 9-26// Red Hot

It's all going Wes Anderson in London, Jay Pharoah makes us laugh, find yourself in "Capital of Casual" Negril and get your claws into lobster on challah bread in Manhattan

# 60-82//

# What's On

Watch hair-raising Medusa Deluxe, see the world through a friend's eyes with comedian Chris McCausland and learn why we love King Gizzard & the Lizard Wizard.

# **87-90**// **Credits**

Celebrating Virgin Atlantic's successful transatlantic flight powered by 100% sustainable aviation fuel – and Barbados Sailing Week casts off.



**FEATURES** British TV darling Charlotte Ritchie eyes up America, we explore the new "golden age" trends of 2024 and the circus is coming to town – in the Mojave Desert.

# **CAMEOS**



British-Iranian photographer/ director Rosaline Shahnayaz

is based in London and New York. She loves capturing the spirit and joy of her subjects for clients such as Elle UK, InStyle, Nike, Adidas and more. She snapped our cover star. See p28



Nick Davis is a Jamaica-based journalist by day and chocolate maker by night.

Formerly the BBC's Caribbean correspondent, he also writes for The Guardian and The Telegraph. He sends readers on a spiritual pilgrimage to the beach town of Negril, See p22



Based in London, Zoey Goto is a journalist who has contributed to National

Geographic Traveller, Rolling Stone, GQ, Lonely Planet and more. This month, we sent her to the California-Nevada border to visit America's first-ever Circus Town, See p45



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# JANUARY JANUARY



Coming soon //

# Wes to excess in London

### NOTICED A LOT OF SYMMETRICALLY FRAMED, PASTEL-

washed photos on your feed lately? Blame it on Instagram's @accidentallywesanderson. The account – followed by 1.8 million people – curates user-submitted holiday snaps that look like they're from a Wes Anderson film, and they've kick-started a major trend for travellers to try to ape the director's aesthetic. The best of the 'gram is on show at this special exhibition in London until 17 February. It's in South Kensington – not the Isle of Dogs.

**⊗** FLY TO LONDON

NORDS: JESSICA PRUPAS PHOTO: LONDON AQUATIC CENTRE, SOO BURNELL

First take //

# FILM CREWS **ARE UNDER** THE LENS

As advancing AI and tech continue to transform the movie industry, those real, human craftspeople who make our favourite films are finally being celebrated, says Al Horner

ILLUSTRATION: BARRY FALLS

#### > THINK FOR A SECOND ABOUT

the army of unsung heroes who make your favourite films possible. It might be Keanu Reeves' name on the poster, but what good would John Wick's thrilling fight scenes be without the choreographer who plots out his each and every punishing punch and kick? Same goes for the lighting technician who ensures we can see the action going down; for the composer who provides those scenes' pulse-pounding scores; for the sound engineer capturing the assassin's trademark grunts.

Throughout its 100-year history, Hollywood has relied upon these behindthe-scenes workers whose efforts largely pass unheralded on screen. That is, until recently. A new trend of movies about moviemakers has emerged of late - by which I don't mean biopics about directors, like Steven Spielberg's The Fabelmans. I'm talking about dramas, thrillers and comedies featuring protagonists who work on film sets. In Ride On (available on today's in-flight entertainment), Jackie Chan plays a master Hong Kong stuntman who needs to karate chop away debt collectors who are after his prized horse. The hero of Damien Chazelle's 2022 epic Babylon is a runner who would race across LA acquiring camera equipment. Jordan Peele horror Nope, meanwhile, features a cinematographer and two on-set horse trainers fighting literal UFOs.

Why are filmmakers suddenly celebrating Hollywood craftspeople this way? It's possible that it's in retaliation to the way the industry is replacing these sorts of professions with tech. In an era when fight scenes can be completely

digitised - with no actors or stunt performers involved - and AI threatens many industry jobs, filmmakers who grew up loving movies made on real sets with real people are making a point of championing them in front of the camera. It's a trend that's not slowing down: in early 2024, Andrew Haigh's Oscar-tipped All of Us Strangers follows a screenwriter, before Ryan Gosling steps into the flame-retardant suit of

In other words, Hollywood's unsung heroes aren't going to be unsung anymore. As John Wick might say, "Gnnhghhhh." That's grunty assassin language for "about time".

WATCH RIDE ON

director David Leitch.





# **■ BOX OFFICE ■**

# Celebs are playfighting



**SYLVESTER STALLONE** raised eyebrows after throwing a few playful jabs at the Pope when they met recently. The Pontiff said he'd grown up watching the pugilistic star's movies.

**VERDICT: ROCKY START** 



IDRIS ELBA spent a year studying kickboxing for a role and was hoping to continue working on his combat skills - until his wife and mother both insisted he "cut that nonsense out".

**VERDICT: PICK YOUR BATTLES** 

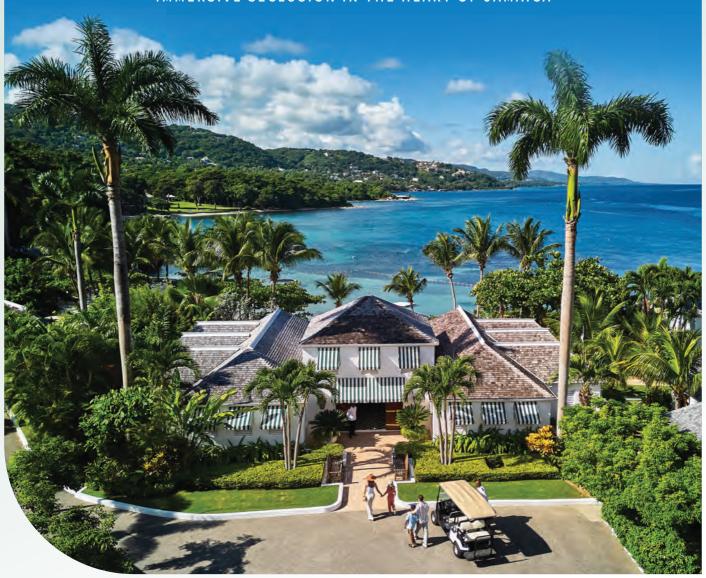


News recently emerged that actor **EWAN MCGREGOR** was reprimanded by George Lucas on the set of the Star Wars prequels for making lightsaber noises under his breath during fight scenes.

**VERDICT: SITH HAPPENS** 

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JANUARY 2024 // RED HOT



Rising star //

# "My girlfriend broke up with me before my SNL audition"

Saturday Night Live alum and stand-up JAY PHAROAH knows how to turn a bad situation into comedy gold

PORTRAIT: MATT MISISCO

### > JAY PHAROAH KNOWS

how to make a good impression. Growing up in Chesapeake. Virginia, the 36-year-old comedian and actor got his earliest laughs with his uncanny impersonation of Gilbert Gottfried's nasal squawk as the parrot lago in Disney's Aladdin. He started performing stand-up at 15. weaving in spot-on impressions of the likes of Will Smith and Denzel Washington, and by 23 he'd landed a coveted spot among the cast of Saturday Night Live. "I had always wanted to be on the show. I just never knew how to get up there," he remembers. "It turns out you've just got to believe in yourself and speak it into existence."

Since leaving Saturday Night Live in 2016, Pharoah has been busy making his mark as a film actor with roles in rom com Resort to Love and slasher spoof The Blackening. His latest turn is in music biopic Spinning Gold, which tells the story of Casablanca Records founder Neil Bogart. Pharoah plays Bogart's right-hand man Cecil Holmes, who helped the celebrated label become home to the likes of Donna Summer, Village People and make-up-caked

rockers Kiss. "They bet on themselves and that's what you've got to do," muses Pharoah. "I think that's the message of the movie. If people can see that, they'll be more willing to take risks and try out new things." With a new stand-up special and more film projects on the way, Jay Phah is definitely betting on himself.

What should we expect from your new special?

It's the culmination of where I've been in the past five or six years. I sprinkle some impressions in there, but they're literally just sprinkles. You've got to have the jokes in there,



From above: Jay Pharoah as Cecil Holmes in Spinning Gold; with his SNL castmates at the Emmus back in 2014

and you've got to have a perspective. It's a good buffet of comedy.

### How did you get so confident on stage?

When I was in fourth grade, I was Powhatan in the play *Pocahontas*. My teacher knew I didn't know my lines and he put me up anyway: "Go ahead, I'm going to let you embarrass yourself." The shock of that situation made sure I was always on point after that. Cut to 11th grade, I was in this play Damn Yankees. The lead dropped out, so I had to learn all the lines in two weeks. The same teacher who put me up there to fail came to that show. At the end he hugged me and said, "I always knew you had it in you, I was trying to pull it out." Shout out to Mr Sammons!

# Were you nervous auditioning for Saturday Night Live?

With the audition process, you can either be completely oblivious to the

heaviness of the situation or you

can just be a complete pro. I was more towards the first option. I was like: "It's a stage, and it." I remember my ex-girlfriend had just broken

I've just got to kill

up with me, so I was like: "I'm going to show you!" I made sure I nailed [it]. I got the job and my dumb ass went back to her.

### What was the highlight of your time on SNL?

Any episode with Drake was fun. I'll never forget doing Drake's first sketch. We were dressed as werewolves singing a song about bag-jacking other kids' candy. I was a Drake fan before. I said to myself. "I feel like we're similar. We've got humble beginnings but we're just oozing with talent." When I got that sketch on the show, I was so happy.

# In Spinning Gold you play real-life music executive Cecil Holmes. How much material did you have to base your performance on?

There's no audio or video footage of Cecil Holmes, so I was creating this

organic character based on the notes the director was giving me. I crafted that character, it wasn't an impression. That's what was so dope.

# Since 2022 you've been providing the voice for boxing champ Drederick Tatum on The Simpsons. What's it like working with America's most famous family?

To be given the chance to be Drederick Tatum was a big moment for me, bro. I grew up watching *The Simpsons*. Drederick Tatum was one of the funniest characters on that show when I was a kid. Besides that real tall guy that made Nelson walk down the street with his pants down. That was funny as hell.

#### What does the future hold for Jav Pharoah?

I've got this one project I'm working on with a producer from a big franchise. After my next stand-up special I'm definitely going to drop

another soon after. I'm looking

forward to keeping that gas going and having people recognise the talent! [Pitch-perfect impression of Pinky and the Brain:] "What are we gonna do tonight?" "The same thing we do every night: try to take over the world!"

(2) WATCH SPINNING GOLD





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Table read //

# IN THE PINK

Art-book publisher Assouline is jumping on the **BARBIE** buzz with a new coffee-table book exploring the iconic doll's 65-year history

### ➤ WE'RE JUST INTO 2024 AND THE BARBIE

mania of last summer – ignited by the release of Greta Gerwig's blockbuster *Barbie* (now available to watch on Vera in-flight entertainment) – shows

no sign of abating. This year marks the 65th anniversary of the figure's creation in 1959, when an unassuming – and brunette! – fashion doll named after inventor Ruth Handler's daughter hit the market.

Of course, we all know what happened next: Barbie became a phenomenon, spawning a vast empire of IP that includes TV shows, video games, movies and loads of discontinued doll friends (we're looking at you, Shaving Fun Ken). Now Assouline is hopping on the pink bandwagon

with a new coffee-table book – definitively called *Barbie* – that traces the six-and-a-half-decade history of everyone's favourite plastic doll. Written by journalist Susan Shapiro, it examines how the doll's evolution mirrors changing attitudes and tastes. From the edgy "career girl" Barbie of the 1960s – who joined a new pink-collar workforce in vocations such as airline hostess and teacher – to the more inclusive body measurements of today's dolls, the book illuminates how Barbie has always held a mirror to our culture, for better or worse.

Real Barbie-heads will get a kick out of the archival photography, plus a trove of never-before-seen

images of the doll on the job. Speaking of, she's had over 250 careers since her invention – that's what you call blonde ambition.

#### (2) WATCH BARBIE

• Barbie by Susan Shapiro is published by Assouline, assouline.com



Clockwise from right:

British fashion model Twiggy with her

Barbie doll; travel vignette from the @BarbieStyle Instagram feed; Barbie Pop Life "Christie" in a

mod-inspired geometric print ensemble, and as an astronaut in 1965



THE BOOK

**ILLUMINATES** 

**HOW BARBIE HAS** 

**ALWAYS HELD A** 

# ■ SET VISIT ■



# Cruising in Mumbai



at your heart out, Ethan Hunt - while last year's Mission: Impossible

outing (available to watch on Vera) took viewers on a whistle-stop tour of Europe and the UAE, it's got nothing on fellow spy thriller Pathaan, which counts eight countries among its filming locations. The Bollywood blockbuster follows the eponymous RAW agent (basically the Indian MI6) as he hunts down a terrorist organisation called Outfit X before they get the chance to attack India. The film's many epic backdrops could make Tom Cruise cry, but keep your eyes peeled for Mumbai's coastal, bananashaped Marine Drive in one outrageous car-top fight scene. Vroom vroom!

© WATCH PATHAAN

® FLY TO MUMBAI



VORDS: JESSICA PRUPAS PHOTOS: © MATTEL ASSOULINE.COM, ADOBE STOCK



Sleeper hit //

# **FINE COUNTRY IN HAMPSHIRE**

The newly renovated **FOUR SEASONS HAMPSHIRE** pays homage to the great British countryside



#### > THE MANICURED ESTATE THAT

houses the Four Seasons Hampshire began life as the residence of the Bishop of Bath and Wells in the year 1110, then eventually changed hands to Henry VIII in 1539 (after his brother, Prince Arthur, met wife Catherine of Aragon there for the first time). So it's safe to say the hotel comes by its commitment to aristocratic countryside pursuits honestly: the vast menu of activities here includes clay pigeon shooting, afternoon tea in the Drawing Room, horseback riding and falconry. The main house was built in 1728, so she's an old girl no doubt - but since acquiring the estate in 2005, Four Seasons has added the sprawling pool and spa, four restaurants (including brand-new Italian La Terrazza and alpine-inspired, teepee-dwelling Off Piste), and an extension with more rooms. many of which have undergone a recent spruce-up, care of iconic agency RPW Design. It's the best of the British countryside in one 200-hectare estate - bucolic, beholden to tradition and ideally suited to a Barbour.

**⊗** FLY TO LONDON





#### WILBURTON INN, **VERMONT**

Chicago industrialist Albert M Gilbert - the original owner of this rambling country mansion - is rumoured to have won it in a poker game. What a lucky hand: he got 12 hilltop hectares of Vermont countryside.



# FIFE ARMS, BRAEMAR

Swiss gallerists Manuela and Iwan Wirth opened the Fife without any hospitality experience under their belts. It's since become one of the UK's most feted hotels - which makes sense when you see its spectacular design.



#### STRAWBERRY HILL, **JAMAICA**

Carved into a hillside in Jamaica's misty Blue Mountains, this 10-hectare former coffee estate is made up of 12 Georgian-style cottages and villas, each one blessed with bounteous vistas.







Snacks //

# HERO WORSHIP IN NEW YORK CITY

This sublime lobster roll on challah bread at super-hyped **MISCHA** in Manhattan doesn't take itself too seriously

# ➤ NEXT TIME

vou're on Instagram. look up Mischa, a new spot by charismatic chef and Empellón restaurant group owner Alex Stupak. Stupak and his beverage director Noah Small post proper hilarious skits, avant garde recipes and god-tier cocktail tips. They're having a laugh and breaking new ground at this "New American" emporium. Just look at the menu. A nine-inch, \$29 hot dog that's become a viral sensation and the unlikely toast of NYC critics. A cocktail named Dude's Car Got A Little Dinged Up. And this lobster roll (left). Stupak hails from Massachusetts - his

accent is a giveaway – and his riff on the New England staple is stuffed with celery-and-mayo-tossed tail meat, while the rest of the crab is drenched in butter. The twist? It's served not on a flabby bun but on sesame-sprinkled challah bread. Why? Because that's how they roll.

**⊗** FLY TO NEW YORK

■ DRINKS ■

# Apple cocktails have got the juice



t's crunch time for apple-based cocktails. The cosy staple is currently the

pick of serious mixers everywhere, from the Pomme Reserva with Komos Añejo Reserva, Pedro Ximénez sherry and apple garnish at Rooftop LOA in Atlanta, to the Burden of Proof at Edinburgh's Lady Libertine, with Highland Park 12-yearold malt Scotch whisky, spiced apple falernum syrup and absinthe (*right*). For pure seasonality, it's hard to beat a warm Cider House with fresh apple cider, whisky, lemon and maple at brunch and cocktail spot Leland Eating & Drinking House in, where else, NYC – the Big Apple.

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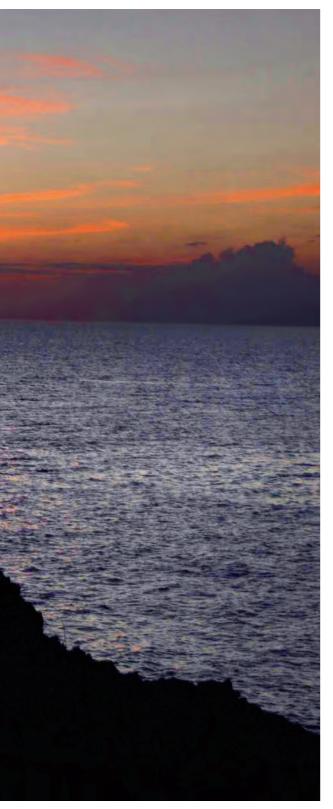








Jamaican town in search of spiritual ablution. With a cache of new wellness hotels, Negril is as enlightened as ever, says local Nick Davis



➤ NEGRIL MAY BE IN JAMAICA, BUT MANY people - both local and visitors - see this west coast

enclave as a pseudo-independent state, a belief that goes back to the early days of the so-called "Capital of Casual".

In the late 1960s, when Jamaica was moving away from being the bolthole for Hollywood's rich and famous towards mass tourism, much of Negril was still mangrove swamp. Though there were some people there: hippies, Rastafarians and musicians, practising free love and taking advantage of the llkm strip of beach. The finance and development minister Edward Seaga, who later became prime minister, visited the area and came up with a plan to turn it into a resort destination, with a stipulation that no building should go above the height of the tallest palm tree. Development dollars poured in, but the far tip of the island has always maintained that same relaxed, laid-back charm that first drew the flower children. Today. with new wellness-focused hotels and the town's

Rasta roots still strong, it's the best place to seek spiritual enlightenment on the island of Jamaica.

Many of Negril's beach shacks have been replaced with spas that cater to the mind, body and soul. Yes, you can still jump from the cliff at the iconic RICK'S CAFÉ, but you might want to also book yourself a massage at ROCKHOUSE, an oasis on the west end of Negril. The hotel's treatment cabanas overlook the Caribbean Sea, and if you're looking for plant-aided healing the hotel also offers a psilocybin sound bath. Psilocybin is legal

in Jamaica and treatments incorporating the medicinal substance are growing in popularity.

Or take refuge at RAHA'S RETREAT in the verdant hills that surround Negril. It's only 10 minutes from town, but with therapies like reiki and gigong on the menu it feels like its own little planet of spiritual wellness.

TINGALAYA'S RETREAT is close to the historic ivory lighthouse at the most westerly point of the island. Its tranquil Cottonwood Yoga Pavilion is surrounded by lush gardens, and the communal kitchen and dining area breaks down barriers between guests.

For top-shelf spa treatments, try JACKIE'S ON THE REEF, one of the original health and well-being spots in Negril. As its name suggests, it's perched on top of an old coral outcrop, and offers facials, massages and more holistic treatments like an ion cleanse or cell analysis.

Even if you're not staying at THE CLIFF HOTEL - and you should consider it, given its salubrious Left: Negril is on the westernmost coast of Jamaica and makes for the ideal getaway

WITH WELLNESS-**FOCUSED HOTELS** AND THE TOWN'S **RASTA ROOTS** STILL STRONG. **NEGRIL IS THE** BEST PLACE TO SEEK SPIRITUAL **ENLIGHTENMENT** 



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gardens and plum location teetering on the edge of a bluff - getting a massage here is a worthy detour on your spiritual pilgrimage. The KiYara Spa's open-front treatment rooms offer widescreen views of the jungle and the sea as you're gently kneaded to sleep.

Many restaurants in Negril are heavily influenced by Rastafari principles, which dictate that healthy food can connect one spiritually to the earth. Located in the jungle outside Negril, ZIMBALI **RETREAT** is a farmstead that serves Ital (a classification of food celebrated by Rastafari

people) and vegan dishes at its on-site restaurants, and offers Jamaican cooking lessons.

Thirty minutes outside Negril, you'll find the MAYFIELD FALLS RIVER WALK. The trail - a flat and breezy 2km - weaves past the 21 small cascades that make up the famous falls. Try to get a tour guide to take you along the trail - they're generally part of the local communities who live along the river, and they'll introduce you to loads of fascinating plants that can cure ills of the body and mind. Chukka is a great local tour company.

There are many natural pools along the way, but the "Washing Machine" - as the villagers call it - is the standout for its roily, Jacuzzi-like pool. Sit back, relax and let the frothy water take you to a higher plane.

€ FLY TO JAMAICA



Clockwise from below: Lobster at Zest at The Cliff Hotel, yoga at Raha's Retreat and Tingalaya's Retreat









#### **ROARING RIVER AND CAVE**

About an hour west of Negril. this nature park - on the site of a former plantation dating back to the 18th century features a series of caverns with fascinating Taíno and slave histories.



# **IVAN'S BAR AND RESTAURANT**

Of all Jamaica's cliffside restaurants, Ivan's is probably the best. Come in time for sunset to experience it on the scenic patio, where wraparound views of the sea come with just-caught lobster.



# **YS FALLS**

One of the top destinations close to Negril - with zip lines and easy walks through the beautiful gardens. The best way to dive into the natural rock pools? Leaping from a rope swing.



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RED HOT \\ JANUARY 2024

### Screen test //

# Can you steal a nuclear warhead?

In Expend4bles, Sly and his boys have to stop a terrorist from stealing a WMD. But could someone really nick a nuke? asks Ralph Jones

ILLUSTRATIONS: RUBY FRESSON



#### > NO ONE WOULD NORMALLY ACCUSE THE

Expendables movies of being weighed down by a responsibility to verisimilitude. The joy of the franchise, now four films strong, is its gleeful detachment from a world that anyone recognises. Jason Statham's character is called Lee Christmas. You know the drill.

But in its most recent iteration, *Expend4bles* (yep), there is an interesting question to explore. The story sees the Sylvester Stallone-led boys try to avert World War III by preventing a mercenary from stealing a nuclear weapon. So, over here in the real world, how hard would it be to "steal" a weapon of mass destruction?

Jim Walsh is a senior research associate at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Security Studies Program. Could someone distract a guy at a vault and stroll off with a nuclear bomb? "The challenges of walking off with a nuclear warhead are enormous," he says. "In addition to physical security measures, governments take other steps to thwart diversion. US weapons, for example, are not stored in a ready-to-fire mode and have a kind of 'lock' called a permissive action link." In the film, the terrorists successfully try to take the weapon from a cargo ship. But, even if this were plausible, they'd still be stumped as to how to use the nuke once they'd nabbed it.

Anyway, it wouldn't be a criminal attempting to steal the nuclear warhead, says Walsh, but a

government. Any state doing so would need to recognise that the act could be interpreted as an act of war in and of itself – so it would have to be worth it. Walsh says that it is difficult to assess the difficulty of pilfering various countries' nukes because of how secretive everyone is about their own arsenal. (Eight countries are known to have nuclear weapons.)

These days, a terrorist would have an easier time trying to hack into a nuclear weapons stockpile, wouldn't they? In theory one could do exactly this.

But in practice, though the tech at the heart of any computer-based system will always be vulnerable, hacking with the intent of stealing isn't a likely eventuality. "In general, the use of cyber in the military domain brings its own set of challenges and limits," says Walsh. A nuclear system could be disrupted but stealing a nuke this way? Not likely.

Though we can be assured that the *Expend4bles* plot is pure fantasy, the gravity of the nuclear situation is extremely real. "The danger is not thieves or hackers in the night," says Walsh. "It's us.

It is our amnesia about the great arms control successes of the past, our insistence that there is nothing we can do, and our willingness to look away from the one technology that could destroy everything on Earth by the end of the day, today."

### **VERDICT: No, not really.**

© WATCH EXPEND4BLES



HANDMADE IN ENGLAND

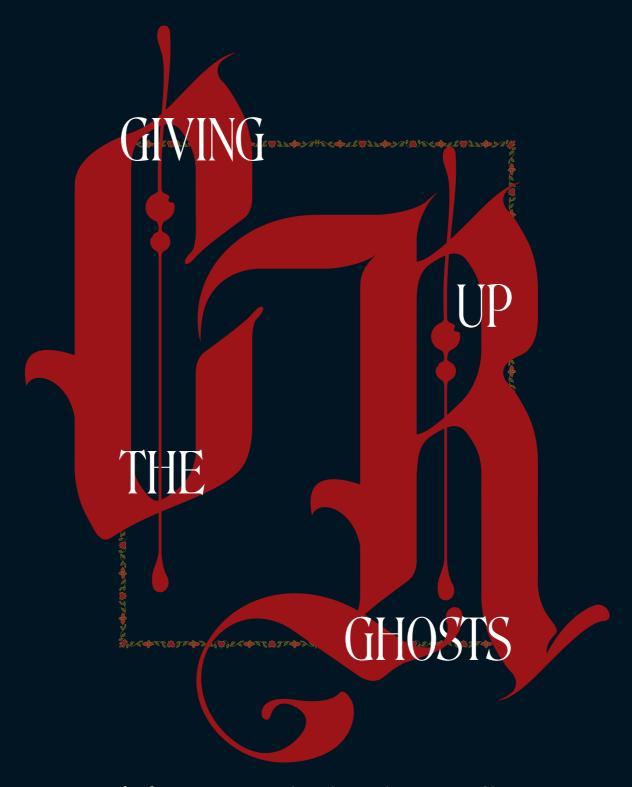




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After four seasons stewarding a haunted mansion on *Ghosts*– and over a decade lighting up the small screen in the UK,
from *Fresh Meat* to *Feel Good* – **CHARLOTTE RITCHIE** is set
to break America, thanks to her role in megahit *You*.
Ed Cumming meets TV's best asset

PHOTOGRAPHS: ROSALINE SHAHNAVAZ





The first time Charlotte Ritchie tried to break America, it did not go to plan. The actress had just finished the first series of Fresh Meat, a sitcom about a group of undergraduates at Manchester University that had been popular in the UK.

"I was 21 and I called my agent to ask if I should go to LA," she says, over cappuccino at a cafe near her home in north London. "And I had to hold the phone away from my ear because she was laughing so much."

Things didn't go much better in person.

"I had heard all these stories and seen Love Actually, so I had this idea that everyone was going to be so goddamned charmed," she says. "They asked, 'Why are you wearing a skirt?' I was like, 'Because it is hot?' They were like, 'It's November.'

"The only place I went that was a bit like that was Nashville, where they asked if I knew the Queen. I liked that."

Sitting across from me, Ritchie is unequivocally charming (referring to her day off she says she has been "bibbling around"), bright and patient. It all speaks to her deftness of touch as an actor. Over the past 10 years, she has built a reputation as one of Britain's most reliable TV stars, blessed with natural comic timing and an inclusive style

Above: Green satin embellished dress: Huishan Zhang Pink satin sleeves: E Stott Pink gold hoop earring: Repossi





that brings out the best in the ensembles around her.

Most actors are lucky if they appear in one hit TV show; Ritchie, at 34, has already had several. First there was Fresh Meat, followed by Call the Midwife, the BBC's all-conquering maternity drama. Then Ghosts, which is available to watch on Vera in-flight entertainment and came to an end after five series in December. Ritchie stars as Alison Cooper, a woman who inherits a country mansion full of historical ghosts who only she can talk to. In between all that there was Feel Good, a charming Netflix comedy-drama. Different roles, but all vaguely in the same ballpark, playing a young, more-or-less diffident middle-class English woman.

Then, most recently, came You, Netflix's smash-hit psychological drama, in which Ritchie broke from her nice girls to play an ice-queen gallerist, a role that has propelled her to a new plane.

"I felt like a bit of a challenge," she says. "It is a scarily big show and it seemed like a part I hadn't played before. It was also slightly an offer I couldn't refuse. I found it hard. The character was very cold, almost too cold. I struggled with that, because she was merciless. An error I made slightly was that I didn't like her. You have to see their humanity."

Ritchie grew up in south-west London, the youngest of three children - she has an older brother and sister, neither of whom are actors. She went to James Allen's, a private school in Dulwich, before studying English and Drama at Bristol University. She had a brush with showbusiness in her teens as part of a



Above: Charlotte Ritchie alongside Penn Badgley in series four of You

singing group, All Angels, but she had planned to be a teacher. "My parents were very encouraging that I should do what I want, but you had to start making your own money as soon as possible." Not that she was out on her own. By her own admission, she's quite posh, and always had a safety net beneath her, somewhere in London to live while she was getting started.

"It's disingenuous to not acknowledge your background," she says. "Otherwise you might be under the sort of illusion that everything's an equal playing field and the reason some people do better is simply hard work and bootstraps."

In her final year of university she was cast in Fresh Meat. Her character, Oregon, was an archetypal English student, all zany tights and eccentric haircuts. She is exposed as really being called Melissa and having had a pony when she grew up. "Watching the first series is cringey because I can see myself learning," she says. "I basically was Oregon and don't think I realised."

The series was a hit and ran for four series, praised for its honest appraisal of student life, all sex and drugs and nobody doing any academic work. Seen now it feels like a period piece, before the social awareness that came with Facebook, Instagram et al irrevocably changed the dynamics of student life.

"There are jokes in Fresh Meat that wouldn't be written now," she says. "But considering how much public dialogue has changed, and the way things like race and gender are talked about, I wonder if it might be a bit different. When we were filming, social media was only just starting."

After that came four series of Call the Midwife, as Nurse Barbara Gilbert, before *Ghosts*. Fans approach her differently depending on which of her programmes they have seen. "Fresh Meat is way more of a frosty reception, because

# **REMADE IN AMERICA**

THE BEST (AND WORST) US **ADAPTATIONS** OF BRITISH SHOWS

#### **THE GOOD**

THE OFFICE Ricky Gervais's classic comedy and its cast of business drones transferred seamlessly to the States. Almost whisper it - superior to the original. **GHOSTS** While staying true to the original premise (young couple inherits creepy

mansion haunted by quirky cast of phantoms), the US take goes in spirited new directions.

**VEEP** (top right) The glossy-haired heir to Armando Jannucci's stellar Westminster farce The Thick of It, hilarious Veep won no fewer than 17 Emmy Awards.



#### THE BAD

**SKINS** (bottom left) The edgy adolescent drama launched the careers of such stars as Dev Patel and Daniel Kaluuya. In the States its dark themes spooked advertisers. PEEP SHOW

Succession writer

Jesse Armstrona

created this flatmate sitcom that Americans have tried to copy five times now. In fairness, the premise riffs on US staple The Odd Couple. **RED DWARF** An American pilot of this interstellar sitcom failed because British audiences love to root for a loser.

they think I'm Oregon," she says. "Same with You. Whereas with Ghosts, because the character is so warm, people treat me like they know me but it's very celebratory. At heart it's about people who are really different having to get on with each other. I think that's a sweet allegory for life."

Her most personal project was Feel Good, a Netflix comedy-drama about addiction (both to love and other substances) by the stand-up Mae Martin. Ritchie played Mae's girlfriend, George. "It's a very specific and intense experience," she says "because while it was an exaggerated version - Mae is not playing themself - there's a real responsibility when it's someone's personal story. It's a real thing to be trusted with."

Successful as these were, it's You that has provided her with a second crack at America. Netflix's psychological thriller stars Penn Badgley, known to many from Gossip Girl, as Joe Goldberg, a bookshop assistant who becomes an obsessive stalker. Despite its troubling subject matter, or perhaps because of it, You has become one of the streaming service's biggest hits. Ritchie joined the cast in series four, which aired earlier last year, playing Kate Galvin, a sinister, ice-queen British gallery owner - albeit still middle-class - who becomes the object of Goldberg's dubious attention. The series received 92 million viewing hours in its first week and went top 10 in more than 90 countries.

# "In as much as *You* subverts stereotypes, it still plays on those tropes, too. But the idea was to highlight the dodgy tropes of romantic comedies"

Some have criticised You for a regressive plot, in which a handsome and obsessive killer stalks beautiful women. "In as much as it subverts stereotypes, it still plays on those tropes, too. But the idea behind it was to exaggerate and highlight the dodgy tropes of romantic comedies through history. It's this really ingrained idea of men pursuing women until they succumb. But it's so self-referential that it knows what it's doing. It's very overt. I was reading a book that cites John Berger: men look at women and women watch themselves being looked at. Audiences are smart, I think: you give credit that people understand it. There's something about the safety of an operatic melodrama with dark comedy that it can play out on the screen. You can switch off whenever you want. It's not life."

While she is grateful for the opportunities presented by the scale of her new roles - she returns for series five of You this year - she is sensitive to the risks, too. She is a friendly vet guarded interviewee, anxious about being misconstrued or speaking in haste, bright enough to second-guess how someone else might see it. I suspect this sense of perspective is the other side of a coin that lets her perform so well in big groups, being alert to what other people might be thinking.

"You has been an interesting development in terms of being more visible, because that show is so widely watched," she says. "Being known gets you more work, but for lots

**GOT THE SPIRIT** 

CHARLOTTE RITCHIE'S CV



#### BORN

On 29 August 1989 in Clapham, London. For a while, there was a rumour that the actor Richard Burton was her granddad, Ritchie added "Richard Burton is not my granddad" to the bio in her (nowdeleted) X account.

#### **EDUCATION**

James Allen's Girls School in Dulwich. London, and then Bristol University.

### **FUN FACT**

Ritchie was an uncredited student extra in Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire. The "role" appears on IMDB and she is occasionally congratulated for it by reporters.

### **KEY WORK** Siblings (2014-16)

In this underrated BBC sitcom. Ritchie plays Hannah, a fun-loving twentysomething living with her slacker brother.

### **Call the Midwife** (2015-18)

Ritchie announced herself to middle England with her role in this BBC Sunday-night period drama about midwives in the late 1950s and 60s, reflecting back the issues of those times.

# **Feel Good**

Ritchie anchored the charming Cooper, who she can see.



Above: Charlotte and Kiell Smith-Bunge in

Ghosts. Below: with

Mae Martin in Feel Good

(2020 - 21)The Canadian stand-up Mae Martin entrusted Ritchie with a key role in their heavily autobiographical series about a Canadian stand-up. Ghosts (2019-23) ensemble as Alison inherits a stately home haunted by ghosts only



of people that's a downside. You are assessed and talked about, especially as a woman. That was the thing I think I find the hardest. In my darkest moments I search myself online. That's always quite real. But it has also been amazing because you suddenly realise that there's nothing you can do about it."

Perhaps the fear comes from having mostly played parts that are more or less closely identifiable with herself. If you worry that a character might be like you, then it is understandable you might take criticism of the character to heart. But she is reaching the point in her career where people are going to have strong views about her, even if she is just bibbling about, and for better or worse it goes with the territory.

It is all part of the reason why Ritchie herself is not on social media. "If I had just landed from space and looked at [social media], I would not want to stay there. Not being on the internet

for the last few years has made my brain think differently. I haven't worked out my relationship with it, how to make the benefits outweigh the negatives for me.

"I don't think I'm very resilient," she adds. "I think I'm maybe quite sensitive. But what do you do to not feel that stuff?"

Given her wariness about celebrity, she is predictably private about her personal life. I find out that she goes to a lot of live music - when we speak she is about to see Little Simz, the rapper - and recently snuck out to go to a club alone, to dance. She lets slip that there is a boyfriend. For her birthday, he bought her a track day.

"It was going to be a Ferrari, a Lotus Elise and something else - maybe an Aston Martin. I love nice cars, but I hate what they represent - the money, the gas. I don't want the future to be so restrictive. It would be cool if we could think of green stuff that's fun, like a fast electric car. But the razzing engine is so decadent and dumb." In the end she didn't have to confront this dilemma: she was too busy to make it. The ticket expired. Still, it makes sense to discover that she is a secret speed freak: beneath the self-effacing English exterior there are flashes of steel.

Above: Mauve suit: Magda Butrym Lace gloves: Stylist's own Pink gold hoop earring: Repossi

watch ghosts





# The world's rarest diamonds born from the sky

# SKYDIAMOND



## Fly south to Boca Raton

HEARD OF THE "SNOWBIRD" PHENOMENON? BASICALLY, when the chilly northern hemisphere winter begins to bite, seniors from all over the frigid American north - New York, Canada, the Midwest - migrate south to Florida. Like birds! Florida isn't called "the Sunshine State" for nothing and as such it has all manner of cheery eyries for snowbirds to roost - particularly Boca Raton, Mecca for frost-dodging old folk. And the best game in town is the eponymous Boca Raton resort. This venerable south-Florida institution was originally erected in the 1920s by architectural bigwig Addison Mizner - his preferred Spanish Colonial style of building can be seen all over this part of the state. Better yet, The Boca Raton

has just had a \$200m spruce-up and sports 16 tennis courts, six pickleball courts, an 18-hole golf course and a vacht club. There's also an Alhambra-inspired spa designed by Colin Cowie and an outpost of buzzy NYC brunch spot Sadelle's, plus butler service in the posher rooms. Worth getting into a flap over.

**⊗** FLY TO MIAMI

## "Old 'uns get a lot of stick for watching daytime TV and game shows. But what's not to like?"

### Switch on to daytime TV

Old 'uns get a lot of stick for watching daytime TV and especially game shows. But what's not to like, really? Shiny floors, smiley presenters and simple questions that beg you to yell the answer at the telly. This summer. London is getting an immersive game show experience called Gameshow Studios from the people who brought vou Sherlock

Holmes-themed escape room The Game Is Now. Teams of four to six get to answer a bunch of general knowledge questions in a studio environment. Come on down!

**⊗** FLY TO LONDON



Below: The pool at The Boca Raton resort Bottom left: London's first live TV auiz experience at Gameshow Studios



## JOIN THE BLUE-RINSE BRIGADE

Folks of a certain age have always had a soft spot for the classic blue-rinse hairstyle. It first rose to prominence in the 1930s. when bombshell movie star Jean Harlow rinsed the very same blue chemical households used to give white linens a bit of zip through her pale tresses. Grey-haired oldies who didn't fancy dyeing their crowning glory phoney black or brown soon realised a lick of blue lent their silvery locks an arresting, otherworldly shimmer. Her Majesty the Queen Mother and Dame Helen Mirren have all been proud blue-rinsers. Nowadays even some Gen Z kids are at it, showing off their so-called "gemini hair" on TikTok - basically, a cotton candycoloured, two-tone dye job. Isn't it high time you raided grandma's medicine cabinet?

# Really dig gardening

You might think only creaky boomers can find time to potter around a pleasant plot of earth. But you'd be dead wrong. A new wave of hot younger horticulturalists is bringing the art of botany to the Insta generation. In California, Ron Finley – aka the Gangsta Gardener – has been digging up unloved concrete plots and transforming them into

fecund cornucopias, his protest against what he calls the local "food prison" of South Central Los Angeles, where you need to drive nearly an hour to get fresh veg that isn't impregnated with pesticide. On TikTok. @AlexisNikole - or the Black Forager - posts lively educational videos about how to snack on select summer flowers, or forage for citrus plants in unpromising Midwestern suburbs. Turn over a new leaf today!

Above right: One of Teresa Silva's pieces for Quilting Is My Bliss, which took a year to make. Below: Los Angeles' Gangsta Gardener, Ron Finley



## Go to bed with quilters

QUILTING HAS A REP FOR BEING old-fashioned, but in a world where your duvet at home was probably massproduced and shipped from halfway around the globe, what could be more wholesome than something handmade? Quite apart from the fact quilting is a legit form of artistic expression - with Insta accounts like @quiltingismybliss showcasing truly spectacular work - it's also very mindful, with the steady repetition and slow progress contributing to positivity and well-being. It's also a great way to make friends. The San Francisco Quilters Guild hosts inperson - or via Zoom - "sewcials", where needle stans can congregate and feel part of a community (the banter will have you in stitches). Don't sleep on quilting, is what we're saying.

® FLY TO SAN FRANCISCO





#### FLICK THROUGH A RACY NOVEL

"Romance novels" are dismissed as the trashy preserve of old dears. Yet now they're cool! The Ripped Bodice, a new bookstore dedicated to saucy fiction, opened last year in trendy Park Slope, Brooklyn, by sisters Bea and Leah Koch, with a big section for LGBTQ+, young adult and paranormal-themed romances – all with happy endings.

(x) FLY TO NEW YORK

## MAKE WAVES ON A CRUISE

Like boiled sweets and bad knees, cruising has long been synonymous with getting on a bit. But hearken, shipmates – the tide has turned. A new generation of cruise companies is out there luring young people onto the ocean waves. The GOAT is Virgin Voyages. Its natty red vessels ply their trade around Europe, the

Caribbean and elsewhere serving top-shelf food, pumping fitness classes and genuinely good entertainment (immersive club nights, campy cabaret and more). Want something a little more niche? Gothic Cruise whisks a boatload of goths and goth bands (with names like Combichrist and Die Sektor) on a seven-night jaunt out of Orlando to the Bahamas and back. Or there's a *Star Trek* cruise that goes to Aruba, with original Sulu and actual Riker on board.

(S) FLY TO ORLANDO





## Cause a stir at afternoon tea

Afternoon tea was invented by Anna. Duchess of Bedford, in around 1840. Evening meals at her gaff. apparently, were served at 8pm. Which meant an unacceptably long gap between lunch and dinner. So Anna summoned a



footman with tea and cake every day at 4pm to keep her going through the afternoon, and golden agers have loved the ritual ever since. These days, this aristocratic snack is camper than ever - take the Prêt-à-Portea at The Berkeley in London, which offers a couture stack of cakes inspired by fashion designers such as Victoria

> Beckham and Nina Ricci. The Rosewood on High Holborn serves an audacious offering by chef Mark Perkins, nodding to the work of David Hockney. Or just go full Barbiecore at Peggy Porschen up the road in Chelsea. where the cakes match the pink of the parlour.

**⊗** FLY TO LONDON

## WING IT AT BIRDWATCHING

No wonder lots of elderly people love birdwatching. It's an easy, serene gig: just take a pew, chew the fat and watch some nice birdies in flight. During the pandemic, young Londoners Nadeem Perera and Ollie Olanipekun wanted to get in on the action and launched Flock Together, a birdwatching collective made for, and by, PoC. Its whole vibe is helping city dwellers access the natural world and build community. Over in NYC, Queer Birders leads regular excursions for queer folk out into nature. You know what they say about birds of a feather.

® FLY TO NEW YORK & LONDON

## "Shuffleboard is having its time, with new bars dedicated to the game opening around the world"

#### **Pushyour luck** at shuffleboard

NEVER THE SEXIEST SPORT, SHUFFLEBOARD IS finally having its time in the sun, with new bars dedicated to the game opening around the world. Royal Palms Shuffleboard Club in Brooklyn has long been holding it

down for disc-heads, but if you can't make it to NYC, rival chain Electric Shuffle rocks two stylish venues in London, plus a new Manhattan venue and another to come in Edinburgh. Or in Manchester you can play at Boom Battle Bar, alongside other games like axe-throwing and darts, Do the shuffle!

® FLY TO MANCHESTER & EDINBURGH

Above: Prêt-à Portea at The Berkeley Right: Push it, push it real good at Boom Battle Bar





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# THE GREATEST



In the dusty Californian desert, a ghost town once favoured by Hollywood starlets is set for a second act – this time as a show-stopping carnival-themed attraction. Zoey Goto joins the circus





seated under a giant disco ball at one of Vegas' hottest new restaurants, Superfrico. The dining room is a noisy temple of kitsch, complete with zebraprint banquettes and neon artworks that can only be described as "Lisa Frank psychedelia". Just as I'm about to lift a forkful of beef cheek and shaved truffle ravioli to my lips, it's almost knocked straight out of my hand by a pirouetting acrobat in a hot-pink wig. Sat across the booth, Ross Mollison, Superfrico's owner and founder, is talking about the enduring appeal of the circus.

"People will always be fascinated by the romance and nostalgia. It's that sense of community. No one ever said let's run away and join Morgan Stanley!" He laughs. Next comes my chocolate mousse dessert, served with a side of burlesque as a dancer playfully leaps onto a nearby table and starts to peel away layers, much to the whooping delight of the Vegas diners.

Ross, who goes by the title "Impresario Extraordinaire", isn't your typical circus ringmaster. But that's the role that this middle-aged Australian business maverick has taken on since starting Spiegelworld, a live entertainment company producing spicy adult circuses across the US, two

of which - Absinthe and Atomic Saloon Show - are currently starring nearby Superfrico on the Las Vegas Strip. Although famed for his madcap ideas - his first show as a producer in the US was the risqué *Puppetry of the Penis*, in which the

performers made the most of their, ahem. assets - Spiegelworld's latest passion project still managed to raise eyebrows.

That's because, in early 2022, Mollison purchased Nipton, a tiny frontier town near the Nevada-California state line, hoping to transform it into a carnival-themed creative retreat for performers and circus fans alike - the world's first Circus Town. The finer details are still being workshopped but, much like the improvised theatre performances that have made Ross his fortune, he's confident that Circus Town will come together on the





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# B L U E W A T E R S

RESORT & SPA · ANTIGUA

night - or at least by the time it softopens to the public this summer, with a grand opening scheduled for later in the year.

"We really had no intention of buying a ghost town," Ross tells me. But the Mojave Desert landscape entices you to do weird and wonderful things, he

says, adding that he fell head over heels in love with Nipton after visiting the outpost on a teambuilding excursion. Five years later. Ross spontaneously snapped up the one-time Gold Rush boom town for \$2.5 million.

"Having a business plan gives us way too much credit. We succeed

through mismanagement," Ross jokes as a contortionist works the room, bending her body into pretzel shapes and handing out helium balloons to guests. "Here's





## "The town is the cornerstone of our circus company. In thousands of years, no matter where the shows are performed, everything will return back to Nipton"



what we do know: there will be performances and perhaps a trapeze. Guests could be dining with Nipton's artists in residence. We're also renovating some 70-year-old Spartan trailers, so you'll be able to stay in a super luxurious version of a circus trailer. And then there's the hotel - but this is not just any old hotel – I want it to be fun and different," he booms theatrically, adding that he hopes it'll be akin to a year-round Burning Man, complete with epic land art dotted throughout the 32-hectare plot.

It's a high-dollar habit fixing up a tumbledown town, where 100-year-old buildings almost always come with leaky roofs. Ross estimates that, when all is said and done, he'll have pumped at least \$20 million into his desert sanctuary. He's keen to point out that this was never an investment opportunity but instead about creating a permanent base for his beloved troupe. "The town is the cornerstone of our circus company. In thousands of years, no matter where the shows are performed, everything will return back to Nipton."

The following morning, I leave the neon symphony of Las Vegas and head an hour south to check out Nipton for myself, the casino hotels outside my window slowly melting into sage-scented desert. Tyres crunch in the sun-baked orange dirt as I pull over and disembark at my main destination. I take a stroll around the mythical town, mostly made up of a



handful of Old West buildings, including a rickety old schoolhouse and a disused diner with original scratched-leather banquette seats. It feels like the set of a rootin'-tootin' John Wayne movie.

Of the 19 residents who currently call Nipton home, the majority are miners who

live seasonally in the onsite RV park. Today, however, there's also a giggle of clowns in town. I discover them when I ease open the ancient creaky door of the former trading post to find a rehearsal taking place for a forthcoming Spiegelworld production. But these aren't your typical red-nosed, curly wig jesters - instead, the six clean-cut performers in front of me sport vintage jumpers and stylishly sensible shoes, looking no different to your typical east London thirtysomething. They belong to a new wave of underground clown artists who prize artistic expression over gotcha gags. Director and head clown Max Louis Baumgarten, a mullet-sporting former

Above: Courtney Pauroso, Bill O'Neill, Chad Damiani and Reshma Meister rehearsing their clown act; head clown Max Louis Baumgarten leads slapstick practice

stand-up comedian, takes a pause from his slapstick practice to explain why he feels there's a renewed interest in the circus arts.

"Cirque du Soleil helped to make the circus culturally relevant for a new generation, and now Spiegelworld is appealing to an adult audience through edge and danger," he says above the whistle of a freight train barrelling past the town. He tells me that he thinks clowning in particular is having a moment. "In LA, there's a fringe improvised clown scene. It draws on the old archetypes -Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton are



#### **ALL THE FUN OF THE FAIR**

**ROLL UP FOR FOUR MORE CIRCUSES** 



#### ZIPPOS CIRCUS, UK

Zippos' diverse line-up of global talent includes Mongolian warrior acrobats, female clowns tap dancing on their hands and Brazilian daredevils on motorbikes attempting the fearsome Globe of Death, all within a traditional red and white-striped tent.

• zippos.co.uk



## BIG APPLE CIRCUS, EAST COAST USA

A highlight of the holiday season, for eight weeks the Lincoln Center in NYC hosts this classic circus. Some of the performers employed by the company are proper big-top royalty and can trace their circus lineage back 250 years.

• bigapplecircus.com



#### SHANGHAI CIRCUS WORLD, SHANGHAI

This 1,638-seat venue is famed for being the "number one circus city in China". Step inside the golden-domed structure for an extravaganza that combines Chinese acrobatics with cutting-edge lighting and sound displays.

shcircusworld.com



#### RAMBO CIRCUS, INDIA

One of India's oldest circuses has moved with the times, first by replacing animals with human performers in furry costumes, then by streaming shows online during the pandemic. Expect zero-gravity trapeze and astonishing sword-swallowing acts.

• rambocircus.in

#### DESERT CIRCUS

excellent clowns in our canon - but it's more about the philosophy of the clown. Those wild and grotesque characters and their idiotic relationships with the audience."

Across the room, fellow clown Chad Damiani, a one-time member of the World Championship Wrestling world. straps on kneepads and a crash helmet, while comedian Courtney Pauroso warns that I may be sharing my guestroom at the Hotel California - the five-bedroom hotel next door, originally built in the early 1900s and currently being renovated - with a rather famous ghost tonight. "The last time I slept there,

I stayed in Clara Bow's favourite room," she says, referring to the silent film star, widely considered Hollywood's first "it girl". Bow frequented Nipton in the Roaring 20s. when it was briefly a fashionable getaway for Hollywood upper crust. "I feel like Clara sent me a very strange and vivid dream," she recalls. After bidding goodbye to the clowns, I check in and bed down for a (thankfully undisturbed) night's sleep.

At daybreak the next morning, outside his mobile home. I bump into Jim Eslinger, the self-proclaimed mayor of Nipton. The former long-haul truck





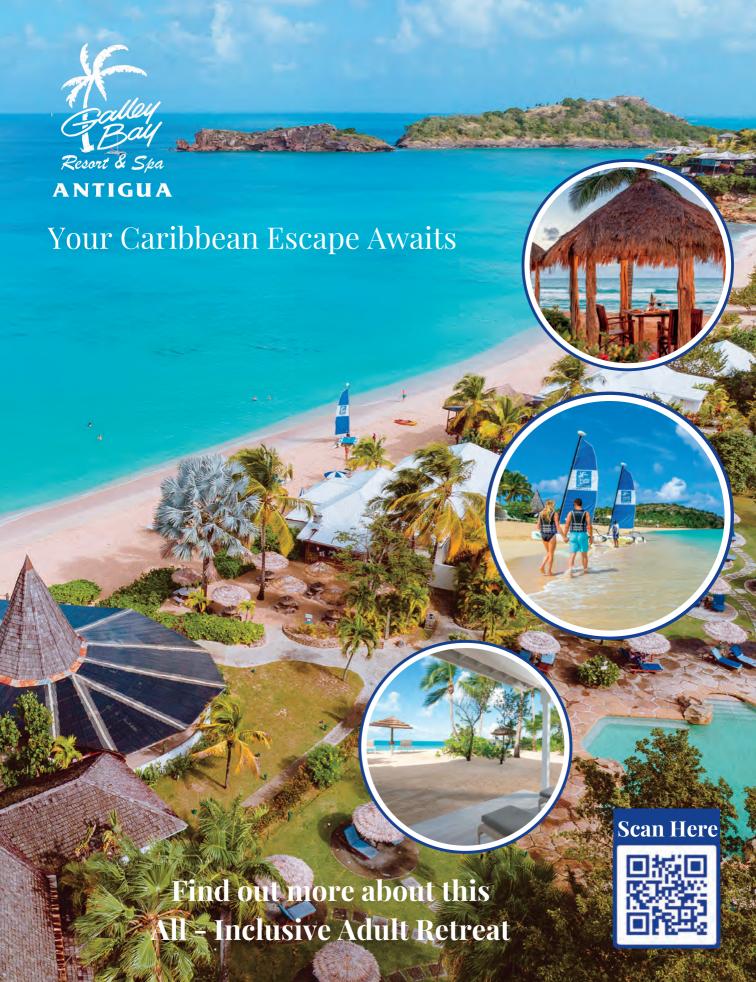
## "The spirit of the Mojave Desert lets you know what you can and cannot do here"

driver retired to Nipton 14 years ago, and "kind of like the song Hotel California, I checked in and didn't leave". He's holding a walking stick clad in scaly rattlesnake skin made from his former pet snake - which, Jim tells me, he ate after the reptile passed, sautéed respectfully in butter and garlic.

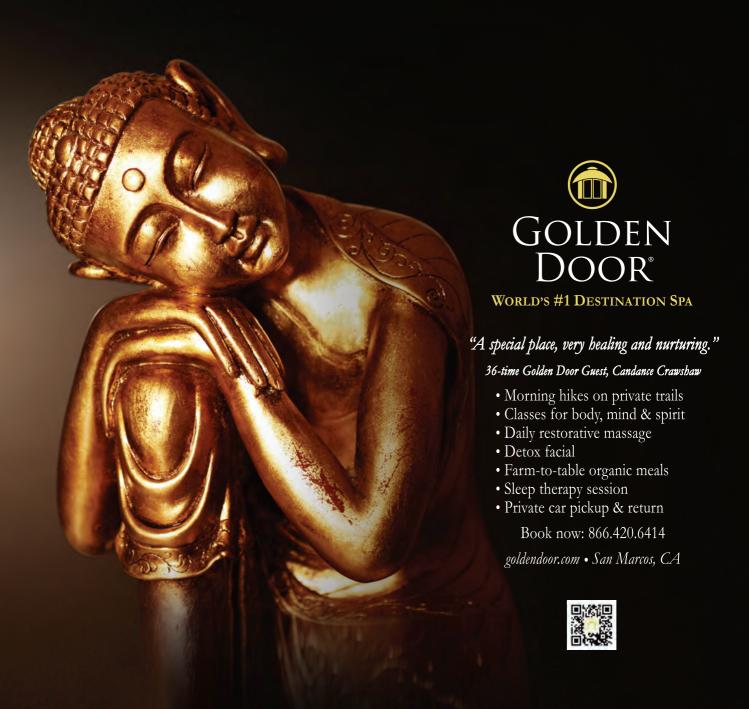
When Spiegelworld first rolled into town, Jim admits that he was initially baffled. But the troupe soon began sprucing the place up, removing 270 tonnes of garbage. "Sure, I don't want it to turn into Disneyland, but I don't feel that's really a risk. The spirit of the Mojave Desert lets you know what you can and cannot do," he says.

I finally understand why Mollison is placing his bets on this old cowboy town. Because in this little speck of desert, where freedom rings through its historic roads, he finally found a place where the circus doesn't have to leave town.

spiegelworld.com/circustown



# Travel to a different state of mind.



# GUDE

# **Breathe deeply**

As we embrace this exciting new year, it's vital we carve out time for relaxation. Self care. Sure, action-packed adventure holidays are fun. Wild city breaks with packed itineraries are great. But for now, at least, let's take things down a notch. Let's celebrate serenity. These soothing, healing resorts and retreats are tailor-made to help you find inner peace. Now relax.

the Wonka factory. chocolate fans can do no better than a getaway at the Rabot Hotel from Hotel Chocolat, Saint Lucia. Perched on a rainforest hillside with great views of Petit Piton mountain - best enjoyed from its black quartz infinity pool - it's set on Hotel Chocolat's sustainable cacao farm. The Project Chocolat experience offers guests - though anyone can book - a chance to venture over and make chocolate, from tree to bar. The spa uses local botanicals and cacao for an indulgent massage, while the restaurant does wildly imaginative things with

#### **Rabot Hotel** from Hotel Chocolat THE ONE FOR SWEET DREAMS

the local cash crop. like cacao linguine and cacao marinated pork. Before retiring to its indulgently plush rooms, walk off that chocolate on many lush trails and boardwalks that skirt through the estate. It's pretty sweet, is what we're saying.





#### **SEVEN STARS RESORT & SPA**

The one for star quality

Perched prettily on Grace Bay – consistently rated among the world's most stellar beaches - Seven Stars Resort & Spa in Providenciales,

Turks & Caicos, has lots to recommend it as a wellness destination. Generously sized rooms with four-posters and in-room L'Occitane toiletries. A next-level spa offering aromatic body candle massage, Japanese acupressure and invigorating Swedish massage. Body wraps with naturally detoxifying algae, or nourishing marine mud. A new "farm to table" restaurant that uses ingredients harvested from an onsite state-of-the-art hydroponic farm, cooked to perfection by two-time Caribbean Chef of the Year Edwin Gallardo. Private dinner in the Tasting Room is served

amid a 2,500-bottle wine cellar. Worry not - you can work it off tomorrow doing watersports, or freewheeling on the hotel's fleet of complimentary bicycles.



# GRAND PALLADIUM JAMAICA RESORT & SPA

The one for infinite indulgence



"Infinite indulgence" is the actual, trademarked tagline of this magnificent Montego Bay retreat. Fair enough. Blessed with reliable tropical sunshine – average temperatures hover round 26°C – bone-white sand and warm crystal seas, Grand Palladium Jamaica Resort & Spa is a proper sensory feast. With the Dine Around programme, access 10 restaurants, including premium steak at El Dorado, theatrical teppanyaki show cooking at Sumptuori, or time-honoured jerk favourites at Xaymaica. Fancy a drink? Fully 17 bars, from cosy lodges to sunny swim-up spots are also all inclusive. But the real star, from a wellness standpoint, has to be Zentropia Palladium Spa & Wellness. Try a Turkish spa, hydrotherapy with steam baths, hot and

cold hydro massage or a dry sauna. Then drift away on Balinese beds to soothing reggae tunes. Welcome to paradise.



#### This Southern

Californian slice of Shangri-La can legitimately claim to be the birthplace of modern, upscale wellness. It's been going since the 1950s, and over the years powerful women from Elizabeth Taylor to Oprah Winfrey have found inner peace among its citrus groves, babbling streams, wildflower meadows and Japanese gardens by legendary landscape architect Takendo Arii. Nurture your mind and spirit through a bespoke programme

of meditation. mindfulness, personal training, sports, in-room massage and hiking in some insanely pretty SoCal countryside. Dine on high-end organic goodness from executive chef Greg Frey Jr, and treat your skin to state-of-the-art wraps, hydrotherapy, gentle exfoliation. In the evening join your fellow guests in affirmational practice and return to the cosy cocoon of your single-occupancy room. It's all very enlightened.





## **ELEGANT HOTELS**

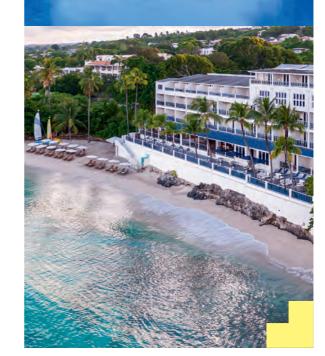
The one for precious downtime

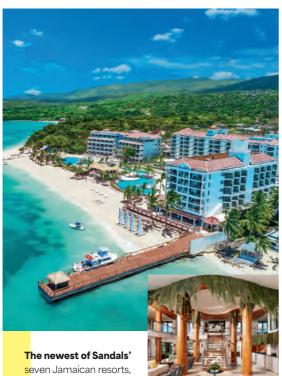
The west of Barbados is known as the "platinum coast" for good reason. Upmarket, tranquil and exclusive, it's a dreamy setting for a little well-earned serenity. Waves Hotel & Spa looks gorgeous - driftwood accents, artful pops of colour - and the food is special, too, with local flavours like Bajan fish cakes and key lime pie on site. Eat at nearby sister properties -Tamarind, Treasure Beach and Crystal Cove, accessible by free water taxi - as part of the all-inclusive by Marriott

Bonvoy programme. The real draw here, however, is the spa. Eight treatment rooms ease you into detoxifying wraps, invigorating salt scrubs and energising facials. Unwind at the

sauna and steam room, savour complimentary yoga and pilates classes, or simply marinate in the laid-back island vibes on a guided beach walk. Truly, it shines.







Sandals Dunn's River opened May last year. Sandals' signature Red Lane Spa is an experience like no other. Inspired by the beautiful traditions and natural bounty of the Caribbean. Sandals' Red Lane Spa Rejuvenation Specialists focus on treatments that revitalise mind and body, with thoughtfully curated, locallyinspired ingredients like Jamaica's Blue Mountain Coffee. Book indulgent massages, body scrubs, facials, body peels, or utilise the Red Lane Spa facilities, including a plunge pool, Jacuzzi and state-of-the-

art fitness centre. Play tennis, or find your tribe in a high-energy group class. Enjoy selected Red Lane Spa treatments outdoors overlooking the ocean, in a tranquil spa cabana or in the resort gardens, to the soothing music of flowing streams and the relaxing scent of botanicals hanging in the air. Breathe it in.

Sandals
Dunn's River,
Jamaica
THE ONE FOR
CARIBBEAN
DREAMING

#### **COWORTH PARK**

The one for upscale pampering

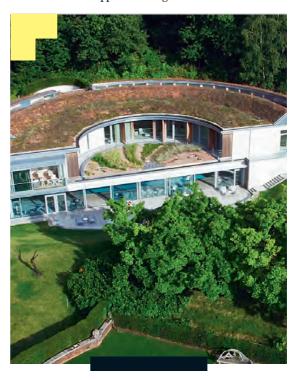


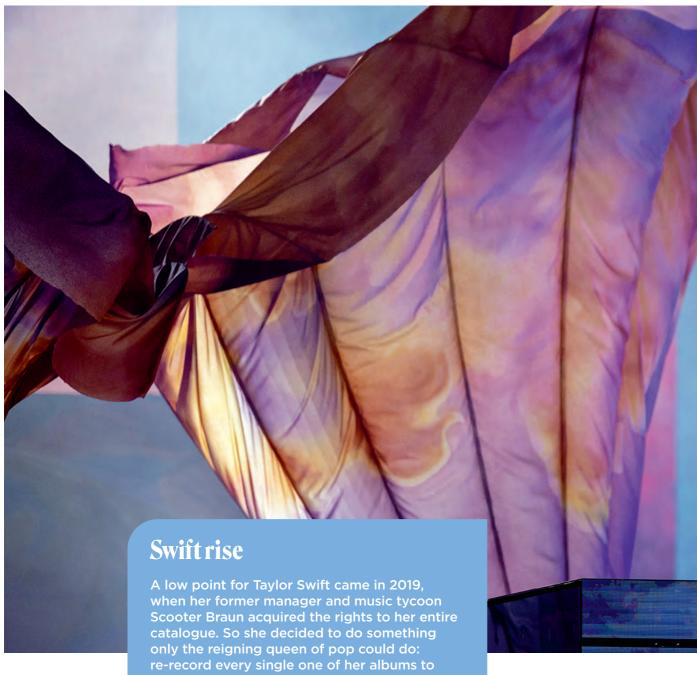
Half an hour from London,

out in the lovely
Berkshire
countryside,
Coworth Park
offers next-level
pampering with an



aristocratic accent. On the edge of Windsor Great Park, this stately pile – built in 1776 – is set in gorgeous gardens studded with pools, manicured lawns and tasteful sculpture. It's the only hotel in the country with its own polo club and horsey motifs can be spotted everywhere. The spa – set in a separate modern timber and glass building with a living roof of lavender and thyme – is bedecked with natural and organic materials, flooded throughout with natural daylight in all eight treatment rooms, and boasts a blue-lit pool with underwater music. Enjoy spa products from Germaine de Capuccini, Valmont and ishga, or a healthy salad or wrap at the on-site "spatisserie" to keep you going until your Michelin-starred supper in the big house. Pure class.





## 65-71//

#### **Movies**

Murder is perfectly coiffed in Medusa Deluxe, Seth Rogen and Paul Dano get funny in Dumb Money, and Celine Song revisits lost love in Past Lives.

take back control. Five years on, Swift is on top of the world: the first leg of her sold-out *Eras* tour grossed \$780 million last year and spawned a concert movie that had a \$123 million opening weekend. Her latest reworking is 1989 - and some say it's her best-ever work.

## 73-77//

## **Television**

Chris McCausland sees the world through the eyes of his comedy friends, and cringe with the inimitable Larry David in *Curb* Your Enthusiasm.



# 79-82// Audio

Discover why King Gizzard & the Lizard Wizard are the weirdest band ever, meet up with Joy Anonymous and catch up on the best bangers of 2023.

#### **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, bingeworthy box sets and ace docs. Read on for our top picks for January.

A WORLD OF ENTERTAINMENT AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

# THE CHOICE IS YOURS

Tune into **VERA**, our genre-busting world of entertainment

#### Welcome onboard

Are you a fan of grime, rock, pop or classical music? Do vou like dark movie thrillers or light-hearted comedies? Whatever vou'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.



## Languages & accessibility

Some of our entertainment comes with a selection of different audio languages and/or subtitles, which you can find by using the onscreen controls.

See below for more on your aircraft



On one of our A350 or A339



aircraft? Then select the media type - such as Movies - and filter from the dropdown menu at the top of the screen. Alternatively. just touch the screen while the media is playing and click on the icon above to select the desired language/ subtitles.



If you are travelling on one of our 789 or A333 aircraft. select subtitles or audio description from the dropdown menu to see what's available. Once vou have made your selection, just touch the screen while the media is playing and select the desired audio language or subtitles from the Language Settings dropdown menu. Now you're good to go - enjoy!

#### Kids'Zone

All of our aircraft feature a dedicated Kids' Zone with content just for kids. rated U or PG (suitable for children aged up to 12). For older kids, you can let them loose in the main section, but we do have parental blocking available if you need it.

#### Parental blocking

If you want to limit which content is available by BBFC rating at a particular seat, please talk to a member of the cabin crew.

#### Accessibility

Subtitles, closed captions and audio descriptive titles (AD) are available on a selection of entertainment.

#### Viewing guide



Not suitable for nervous flyers



Unsuitable for children



Vera Loves

### Headphones



Using your own headphones? Our PAs are recorded at levels that work with the headphones that we

provide, so be prepared if you use your own.



# Perpetual lunacy



The extraordinary new **C1 Moonphase** from Christopher Ward. A watch that tracks the moon for 128 years – without missing a beat. With an aventurine glass dial infused with copper oxide to represent the night sky. And a 3D 'moon' sculpted from Globolight© – a luminous ceramic – that precisely follows the real moon's journey across the sky. A watch this advanced can cost up to £45,000. But the C1 Moonphase starts from less than £2,000: the very definition of insanity. **Do your research.** 



christopherward.com



#### WHAT'S ON

# JANUARY JES

#### **SUPERFLY** FILMS IN THE SKY



# **HAIR RAISING**

Cath Clarke takes on **MEDUSA DELUXE**, arguably the most stylish whodunnit ever

#### ► IF AGATHA CHRISTIE WAS ALIVE TODAY,

you can imagine her writing a whodunnit about the cutthroat world of regional hairdressing competitions. That's the setting of this wild low-budget murder mystery: backstage at a competition, where the victim is a hairstylist. He's found covered in blood and missing his scalp – a little bit too much off the top, you might say. Welcome to *Medusa Deluxe*, a film that's been described as the most original British film of the year.

It's a whodunnit that doesn't stick to the rules. Instead of a detective, there's hairdresser's model Inez (Kae Alexander) who turns Miss Marple to solve the mystery. She pokes and prods at the rivalries between stylists, who are stuck backstage while they wait to be interviewed by the police. Paranoia and gossip spread like lice in a primary school.

And then there's the hair: silly outrageous styles that take the characters hours to perfect, from a crazy rainbow wig to a gravity-defying Georgian "fontange". All the dos are the work of renowned stylist Eugene Souleiman.

Medusa Deluxe is a surreal, high-camp movie unlike anything INSTEAD OF A DETECTIVE, MEDUSA DELUXE HAS A HAIR MODEL WHO TURNS MISS MARPLE

you'll see this year: imagine Pedro Almodóvar directing an episode of *EastEnders*. Its director is first-timer Thomas Hardiman, who shoots in real time mostly and creates what looks like a one-take movie (actually, it's a series of long takes seamlessly stitched together in the editing room).

The script falls short of delivering a first-class mystery, but there is some knock-out dialogue for the female-led cast, best of all Clare Perkins as foul-mouthed stylist Cleve. She finishes one story about an unfortunate colleague lighting up a cigarette while driving with the line: "Trainee hairstylists don't survive an exploding car." And not even Agatha Christie could have dreamed up a scene involving warring hairdressers macing each other in the face with cans of Tresemmé.

(3) WATCH MEDUSA DELUXE

#### **HOT RIGHT NOW**



# Dumb Money ♥

Paul Dano, Pete Davidson

> YOUR INTEREST IN FINANCIAL MARKETS MAY DICTATE HOW MUCH

you already know about the GameStop short squeeze of 2021. The details are too boring to relate – you'd fall asleep before the end of the sentence – but they involve the video game company GameStop and... there you go, you've gone. Why, then, are we jazzed about a film on this very subject? The answer is that although it should rightly be drier than the Gobi Desert, *Dumb Money* boasts a brilliant cast that includes Paul Dano, Pete Davidson, Nick Offerman and Seth Rogen, inspired direction from Craig Gillespie, and a script that is not only very funny but also somehow manages to make light work of the heavy financial stuff.



**LOLA** ♥

79 mins

There's never a bad time to sink into an innovative, black-and-white sci-fi movie using found footage. This one revolves around sisters who in WWII build a machine to intercept broadcasts from the future. As for what happens next, you'll have to watch. Trust us, it's worth it.



WAR PONY ♥

Jojo Bapteise Whiting, Ladainian Crazy Thunder

War Pony is the award-winning directorial debut of Riley Keough, telling the interlocking stories of two Oglala Lakota youngsters growing up in South Dakota. Keough clearly has a knack for coaxing stellar performances from her young cast as well as an eye for stunning visuals.

115 mins



MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE - DEAD RECKONING PART ONE ♥



Tom Cruise, Hayley Atwell

163 mins

Although the plot is something to do with Al and they talk about it a lot, it's basically just an excuse to watch Tom Cruise run around and perform some of the most death-defying stunts ever committed to film. See that bar? It just got raised.



BARBIE 💛



Margot Robbie, Ryan Gosling

114 mir

Barbie is a delight. With a plot that involves Barbie (Robbie) questioning her place in the world, and Ken (Gosling) following suit, the result is colourful, topical, funny – even, yes, empowering – and frankly you'd need a heart of stone not to love it.



PAW PATROL: THE MIGHTY MOVIE



Kristen Bell, Taraji P Henson

92 mins

Big-screen adventures for the kids' favourites as Ryder and the patrolling pups find themselves summoned to Adventure City. Their job? To prevent Mayor Humdinger from imposing a state of chaos on the bustling metropolis. See box right

## **Barking!** Wildest Paw

Patrol cameos



Kanye West's 10-year-old nipper plays Mini, a starstruck Pomeranian who worships the leads - geddit - in new flick Paw Patrol: The Mighty Movie



#### SERENA WILLIAMS

The tennis ace plays a yoga instructor - no doubt mostly to impress her daughter Olympia, who is apparently a big fan of the puppacked show.



#### KIM KARDASHIAN

North West's iconic mommy plays sassy influencer poodle Delores, reprising her role from the previous Paw Patrol movie, which came out just two years ago.



#### **CHRIS ROCK**

The foul-mouthed comic plays one of the mischievous Kitten Catastrophe Crew, long-term antagonists in the series who are led by calamitous Mayor Humdinger.

(C) WATCH PAW PATROL: THE MIGHTY MOVIE

#### **FUNNY GIRLS**



#### The Persian Version

Layla Mohammadi, Niousha Noor

#### > FROM ITS PLEASINGLY RHYMING TITLE ONWARD, THE PERSIAN

Version - a story closely based on the life of its writer-director Maryam Keshavarz - is a delight. It concerns a family who must gather in support of the family patriarch, who's undergoing a heart transplant. Once together, family secrets start to emerge, one of them with far-reaching consequences for everybody, but in particular the mother and daughter. The whole thing is framed by sumptuous looks and has a great comedic vibe, with the various culture clashes and generation gaps throwing up some truly memorable moments yet remaining very much its own movie - which is layered and beautifully observed.



#### **SICK GIRL**

Nina Dobrev, Brandon Mychal Smith

99 mins

In a last-ditch attempt to keep her friends from falling out, a woman tells a little white lie. Except it's not so little and not so white - and it sets off a chain of events that threaten to tear her community apart. The result is hilarious and just a little bit scary.



#### **TRIPPED UP**

Ariel Winter Vanessa Williams

96 mins

Twentysomething comedy about aspiring chef Lizzy who calls on her pals to compete in the Saucy Food Festival. Their trip quickly turns into a madcap misadventure full of food, fun and female bonding - and a fresh take on a genre you may feel you've had your fill of. Tuck in.



#### **TRUE TALES**



#### Dreamin' Wild

Casey Affleck, Zooey Deschanel

110 mins

#### > CASEY AFFLECK TAKES THE LEAD IN THIS TRUE-LIFE BIOPIC

concerning the band Dreamin' Wild. Ever heard of them? Don't worry, nor had anyone else. As teens, the sibling duo of Joe (Walter Goggins) and Donny (Casey Affleck) released an album under their band name Dreamin' Wild which sank without trace. Decades on, however, and the record has been newly discovered by hipsters and reappraised as a lost classic – with crate-digging label Light in the Attic wanting to give it a re-release. All of which sounds great, right? Well, sort of. This is a Casey Affleck movie, which means that any glad tidings must come with a side order of longface. Great music. Great performances. Great movie.



#### BLACKBERRY

15

Jay Baruchel, Glenn Howerton

119 mins

We've had a movie on how Tetris got made, so why not one on the world's first smartphone? Taking a satirical slant, it tells of how the BlackBerry company initially became a corporate giant killer.



#### A MILLION MILES AWAY



Michael Peña, Rosa Salazar

121 mins

From farmer to astronaut isn't what you'd call a conventional career path, but then neither is José M Hernández, whose path from fields to space is an uplifting tale of perseverance and sacrifice. See right

#### **FEAR FACTOR**



THE NUN II

aissa Farmiga,	110 mins
onas Bloquot	110 1111115

The Conjuring Universe splurges up yet more scary strands in this sequel-to-an-off-shoot that takes us back to 1956. The plot involves Sister Irene once again coming face-to-face with demon nun Valak.



SAW X

Tobin Bell,

118 mins

Strong stomachs required for this 10th instalment of the horror series in which unfortunates must escape horrific traps. They almost always fail, of course, such are the fiendish schemes set in store.



A HAUNTING IN VENICE

12

Kyle Allen, Kenneth Branagh

120 mins

You've got to hand it to that man Branagh. He's really hit a groove with the Agatha Christie adaptations, assembling all-star casts – this one has Jamie Dornan, Tina Fey, Michelle Yeoh and your mother in it.

#### **LOVE STORIES**



#### **PUPPY LOVE**

Lucy Hale, Grant Gustin

106 mins

If you're in the mood for a light-on-thinking rom com, cease your browsing, here it is. Rising star Hale plays Nicole, who has a disastrous date with Max. Then it turns out their dogs have fallen for each other.



#### **SANCTUARY**

Margaret Qualley, Christopher Abbott

96 mins

Margaret Qualley has consistently delivered excellent performances, but this may be her best. She plays a dominatrix whose wealthy client, Hal, wants to end the arrangement, only for things to go awry.



#### **Past Lives**

Greta Lee.

106 mins

#### > ONE THING YOU HAVE TO SAY ABOUT SOUTH KOREAN-CANADIAN

director, playwright and screenwriter Celine Song: she likes to keep things interesting. Her first play, Endings, told of three older Korean divers living with a writer in New York. While in lockdown she took to Twitch to direct a live production of Chekhov's The Seagull using The Sims 4. Now comes her directorial film debut, a gorgeously mounted production about two childhood friends who are reunited 20 years on in New York. What emerges is a superb romantic drama that if nothing else proves that Song can turn her hand to just about anything and do it with the same considerable panache.

# Rocket Who is José Hernández?

Lemme quess. another uplifting Hollywood tale? Spot on, José was born in California in 1962, to a hardscrabble family of Mexican migrant farmers in California. Through sheer grit and determination, he achieved his dream of becoming an astronaut.

Talk about reaching for the stars. With encouragement from a teacher, his family and the Latinx community, José was finally accepted to NASA's ultracompetitive astronaut programme, aged 41.



So NASA kept turning him down? But he never took no for an answer. In fact (as detailed in new movie A Million Miles Away), he earned his pilot's licence, learned scuba diving and studied the Russian language until they finally said yes.

#### accurate? Director Alejandra Marguez Abella had to leave some detail out - José also co-created an awesome cancer screening tool. But pretty much everything else is true. Including eating tacos on the International

Is the movie

(2) WATCH A MILLION MILES AWAY

Space Station.

#### **CRIME & PUNISHMENT**



#### The Retirement Plan



Nicolas Cage Ron Perlman

#### NICOLAS CAGE WILL LOOK BACK ON 2023 WITH FONDNESS, FOR IT

was the year that he not only impressed critics with Dream Scenario but also had audiences busting a gut laughing at his Dracula in Renfield. Added to which is this action-comedy in which we join Nic as a beach bum living in Florida. He's no ordinary beach bum, of course. No, he used to be a government hitman and is now kicking back, hoping to enjoy a life without the ever-present threat of death - until his estranged daughter gets in touch, that is. She's in a spot of bother with criminal types and needs his help. There are no prizes for guessing what happens next, but the laughs come as thick and fast as the bullets.



#### MEDUSA DELUXE



Clare Perkins. 101 mins Kayla Meikle

Set during a hairdressing contest, the first thing to strike you about Medusa Deluxe is its good looks and OTT hairstyles, not to mention a highwire one-take style that gives it a zippy urgency. The second thing is the fun and colourful murder-mystery that'll keep you guessing right to the end.



#### THE EQUALIZER 3



Ex-government agent Robert McCall (Washington) is supremely organised and fastidious. It's all in the way he organises his cutlery. Fortunately, the thing he's most finnicky about is dealing death to bad guys - something he does lots in this final part of the trilogy.

109 mins

## Movie quiz Take on our featured films

Lola was shot in Ireland during lockdown and features a soundtrack by which musician known for fronting band The Divine Comedy?

Dumb Money is based on author Ben Mezrich's The Antisocial Network, His book The Accidental Billionaires was adapted by Aaron Sorkin for which 2010 movie?

In A Million Miles Away - the true story of farmer José Hernández, who dreamed of being an astronaut - tacos are shown to be a NASA staple in space. How come?

Saw X is the most recent part of the fifth-highest grossing horror franchise of all time - but what sits at number one, the latest instalment of which also screens onboard this month?



Boyhood reservation drama War Pony is the directorial debut of actor-model Riley Keough eldest granddaughter of which legendary singer?

Answers on the right



WINDERS.THEL HANNON 2 THE SOCIAL NETWORK 3 COMPARED TO BREAD, TACOS ARE EASIER TO HANDLE IN REDUCED GRAVITY, THEY STAY FRESH LONGER AND THEY PRODUCE FEWER CRUMBS 4 THE CONJURING UNIVERSE; THE NUN II \$ ELVIS PRESLEY HANDER. ALAM'S, CETTY IN AGES

# OUR COMPLETE MOVIE LISTINGS

Make your choice from the A–Z of our pick of the BEST FILMS around right now

- About My Father
- Aliens Abducted My Parents and Now I Feel Kinda Left Out
- Allelujah
- All or Nothing
- Americanish
- A Million Miles Away
- The Angry Black Girl and Her Monster
- Asteroid City

#### В

- Back on the Strip
- A Bag of Trouble
- The Baker
- Bang Bang!
- Barbie
- Beau Is Afraid
- Bia George Foreman
- Billion Dollar Heist
- Blackberry



- Blue Beetle
- The Boogeyman
- Brahmastra Part One: Shiva
- Brother
- Buddy Games: Spring Awakening

#### C

- Carmen (2023)
- A Christmas Story Christmas

#### D

Daddy

- Dead Shot
- The Dive
- Dreamin' Wild
- Dumb Money



- Elemental
- The Equalizer 3
- Expend4bles

- Fast X
- The Flash
- Full Time (À Plein Temps)

#### G

- Goodbye
- Gran Turismo: Based on a True Story
- Greatest Days
- Guardians of the Galaxy Vol 3

- Haunted Mansion
- A Haunting In Venice
- Hidden Blade
- HIT: The First Case
- Honor Society
- Hotel Transylvania: Transformania

- ljakumo (Born Again Stripper)
- Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny

- Insidious: The Red Door
- It Only Takes a Night

- Jesus Revolution
- John Wick: Chapter 4
- Joy Ride
- Jules
- Jungle Beat: The Movie

- Kandahar
- Kapoor and Sons
- Kesari the King
- Knights of the Zodiac

Lego DC Comics Super Heroes: Justice League: Gotham City Breakout



#### The Little Mermaid

- Living
- I ola
- Lost in the Stars
- Love Again

#### M

- The Machine
- Mafia Mamma
- Maggie Moore(s)
- A Man Called Otto
- Maybe I Do Medusa Deluxe
- Meg 2: The Trench
- Mending the Line

- The Miracle Club
- Mission: Impossible - Dead Reckoning Part 1
- Moving On
- MS Dhoni: The **Untold Story**
- My Animal

Never Say Never



#### No Hard Feelings

- The Nun II
- 0
- Orisa

- Past Lives
- Pathaan
- Paw Patrol: The Mighty Movie
- The Persian Version
- Polite Society
- The Pope's Exorcist
- The Portable Door
- Pretty Evil
- Puffin Rock and the New Friends
- Puppy Love

Raksha Bandhan



#### Renfield

Resident Evil: Death Island

- The Retirement Plan
- Ride On
- Roald Dahl's Matilda the Musical

- Sanctuary
- Saw X
- Scooby-Doo! And Krypto, Too!
- Scooby-Doo! And the Curse of the 13th Ghost
- Scrapper
- See You on Venus
- Shaandaar
- Shortcomings Sick Girl
- Sisu
- The Sitting Duck (La Syndicaliste)
- Somewhere in
- Sound of Freedom
- Space Oddity Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse
- Spinning Gold
- Strays
- Street Dancer 3D



#### The Super Mario **Bros Movie**

- The Swan Princess: A Fairtytale is Born
- The Swan Princess: Far Longer Than Forever

TA7: Quest for Burger

- Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Mutant Mayhem
- Teen Titans Go! & DC Super Hero Girls: Mayhem in the Multiverse
- Tell It Like a
- Woman Theater Camp
- A Thousand and One
- The Three Musketeers: D'Artagnan (Les Trois Mousquetaires: D'Artagnan)
- Tom and Jerry:



### Transformers:

- Rise of the Beasts
- Tripped Up The Two Aishas

The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry

#### Vadh W

- War Pony Whitney Houston: I Wanna Dance with Somebody
- The Wrath of Becky

You're Killing Me

# WELCOME HOME

Paradise found in Turks + Caicos.









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Hummingbird Luxury specializes in providing exclusive villa rentals in Turks and Caicos, offering hand-picked properties with exceptional services and amenities.



# TELEVIS (ANUARY

# FRESH TAKES ON THE WORLD



Blind comedian **CHRIS MCCAUSLAND** tells Vera all about his new scenic travel show

# > HEY. CHRIS! WHY make a travel show?

Good question. I hate travel! Most people love the beach, all those bronzed bodies and perfect sunsets. I just get sweaty and bored. I did a bit about that in my stand-up routine and Channel 4 picked up on the idea for a travel show. But in truth I don't even like flying.

# Ah mate, flying is our thing!

Maybe because I can't see the lovely smiles on the cabin crew's faces. At home I have methods for coping with things like meal times. Travelling, I have to rely on other people. One time I put my fork in what I thought was a tomato. Turned out to be a lemon.

# Tell me about the show.

We wanted to answer the question: is there any point actually visiting the great wonders. like the Parthenon or Niagara Falls, when somebody could just describe them from a photo? So I went to Greece with Harry

Hill, Canada with Liza Tarbuck, and elsewhere with other comics.

# THE TREVI **FOUNTAIN WAS CROWDED, HOT** AND SOUNDED LIKE A TAP HAD **BEEN LEFT ON**

# Was there any point?

Sometimes. The Trevi Fountain in Rome was crowded, hot and sounded like a tap had been left on - but Tom Allen was joyful company. At Petra, in Jordan, I'm certain Guz Khan just made up facts on the spot. I loved floating in the Dead Sea. Niagara with Liza was amazing, she's lovely, and the sound of the falls is epic.

# You're on tour this year, do you tackle a big theme?

The show is called *Yonks* – I've been doing stand-up 20 years now - but there's no big theme. It's quite old-school really, like the 90s stand-up I grew up loving. No topicality, no news, just jokes on everything from turnips to Al.

# What's your relationship with AI?

It's staggering, I'm constantly amazed. Most people use it for image generation. I do the opposite: I ask it to describe pictures. Might be something online, or a photo I take on my phone, or a drawing by my daughter. It never runs out of patience, like humans tend to.

# Finally, do you have a travel bucket list?

Seattle. I love Pearl Jam, Nirvana, Frasier. And you fly there, right? Put in a good word for me.



(2) WATCH WONDERS OF THE WORLD I CAN'T SEE

# **MUST WATCH**





### RABBIT HOLE

Box set

60 mins

Anybody missing their fix of Kiefer Sutherland and 24 needs to take a trip down Rabbit Hole. Here. Sutherland plays John Weir, a spy sucked into an investigation of his pal's death. We have the whole thing onboard.



# **Ghosts**♥

Box set

## BELIEVING IN GHOSTS IS ONE THING. BELIEVING IN A COMEDY

that is both genuinely funny and family-friendly - that's quite another. Surely such a thing cannot possibly exist? Well, thanks to the team behind Horrible Histories, it does, or at least did, for five glorious seasons. The plot involves Alison and Mike who inherit a mansion that's crawling with spooks, all of whom are played by the disgustingly talented HH crew, who also write the episodes. For reasons too involved to go into here, only Alison can see the ghosts, who are of course overjoyed that they finally have a portal back into the corporeal world. We have the whole of the brilliant fifth and final season onboard.

# DOWNFALL OF THE CRYPTO KING

Documentary

Sam Bankman-Fried is the maths genius who used his gift to try to transform the world of crypto. How did Sam wind up being the currency's biggest loser? And how come his ex failed to recognise him? This investigation aims to provide answers.



# **CHANGING ENDS**



### THE FLATSHARE 🛡



Culture

**SEA OF TROUBLES** ♥

42 mins

The brilliant ballet choreographer Kenneth MacMillan created this short work in 1988 - not long before his death - using Hamlet as his inspiration. As you'll see here, what he created is a simple but immensely affecting work that is as powerful now as it was then.

Box set

30 mins

Travel back in time for this sitcom based on the childhood of TV funnyman Alan Carr. Dealing with his burgeoning sexuality, his struggles with sport (very funny) and his idiosyncratic family, it is - of course - an absolute hoot. We have the whole of the first season onboard to enjoy.

Box set

45 mins

They're young, metropolitan and nauseatingly photogenic, but Tiffany and Leon have never met. Instead, they both live in the same pad on a rota. If you can't guess what happens next then you must have failed rom com at school. Season one screens onboard in its entirety.

# **Great Scott!**

# Managerial wisdom from The Office

"Make friends first, make sales second, make love third. In no particular order."



"I'm an early bird and a night owl. So I'm wise and I have worms."

"Good managers don't fire. They hire and inspire."

"Would I rather be feared or loved? Easy. people to be afraid of how much they love me."



"I am Beyoncé, always."



"Webster's **Dictionary** defines wedding as: the fusing of two metals with a hot

"I love inside jokes. I'd love to be a part of one someday."

superstitious... but I'm a little stitious."



(3) WATCH THE OFFICE

# **BIG LAUGHS**



# **Curb Your Enthusiasm**

Box set

# > FOR OVER TWO DECADES NOW, THE CO-CREATOR OF SEINFELD, LARRY

David, has played himself in this insanely brilliant comedy - all the more impressive when you consider that it's largely improvised. A sprinkling of celebrity guest stars tend to feature, but mainly we're with Larry who, whether at work, home or around town, never fails to take a buttock-clenchingly embarrassing situation and turn it into an even more buttock-clenchingly embarrassing situation. As we join Larry in this 11th season (the whole season is onboard) he's running his own Netflix show. At home, meanwhile, he discovers a dead body in his pool. Cringe-making? Yes. Funny? Oh, yes.



**AWKWAFINA IS NORA FROM QUEENS** 

Comedy

30 mins

The awesome Awkwafina does just what it savs on tin here, helming this very funny sitcom as Nora, a twentysomething woman who lives in Queens, where she plays video games and tries to work out what she wants from life. Something other than playing video games, presumably.



LIVE AT THE APOLLO: APOLLO BITES V

Comedy

15 mins

If you've ever wanted a carefully curated compilation of girdle-busting clips from the long-running comedy series filmed at London's Hammersmith Apollo - bitesize portions, if you will - then you'll be hanging out the bunting for Apollo Bites, which is exactly that.

# **OVERCOMING THE ODDS**



# **Blood, Sweat and Cheer**

Sports Corner 45 mins

### MEET THE WELSH ADAPTIVE ABILITIES CHEERLEADING SQUAD.

a team of disabled and able-bodied athletes who have one thing in common: they all take incredible amounts of pride in representing their country at the highest levels. This inspirational and empowering documentary shows the team as they prepare to cap years of hard work and training by preparing for the World Cheerleading Championships in Florida. Led by coach Sabrina, they must master sharp choreography and stunts while juggling their personal lives as they count down to the moment when their chance to be named best in the world comes down to a two-minute, 15 seconds-long routine.



# WONDERS OF THE WORLD I CAN'T SEE ♥

Comedy

45 mins

Series in which comedian Chris McCausland visits the world's most stunning places. However, Chris is blind, so he takes a celebrity pal along to try to put these global wonders into words. See opener



# OTTO BAXTER: NOT A F\*\*KING HORROR STORY ♥

15

Documentary

90 mins

At its core, this is a documentary following a filmmaker with Down's syndrome – Otto Baxter – as he goes about making an autobiographical horror movie. It's a clever, thoughtful and amusing piece.

# **SPORTING DRAMA**



### BEYOND ALL LIMITS: HAMILTON VS VERSTAPPEN

Sports Corner

Up to 27 mins

Delving into the often complex psyches of top Formula 1 drivers, this documentary series places particular emphasis on the rivalry between Lewis Hamilton and Max Verstappen.



### RUGBY WORLD CUP HIGHLIGHTS 2023

Sports Corner

90 mins

Exactly as it sounds, this show gives you the chance to relive (or, depending on your nationality, "wallow in") the highlights of what was a scintillating Rugby World Cup 2023.



# **CASSIUS X: BECOMING ALI**

Sports Corner

90 mins

Before he was the boxing legend known as Muhammad Ali, he was the almost-as-legendary Cassius Clay. This film takes a look at his formative years of 1959–64, following his physical and spiritual journey.

# **TOP DOCS**



### TOP GUNS: INSIDE THE RAF ♥

Factual

60 mins

Stand aside Tom Cruise, this is Top Gun for real, UK style. Based at RAF Lossiemouth, the show combines a glimpse of everyday life on the base with footage from inside the cockpit and all the way to the front line.



### **ANGEL CITY**

Sports Corner

60 mins

In 2020, the Los Angeles-based Angel City Football Club was formed. Part-owned by actress Natalie Portman and other notables, the team brings a dash of Hollywood pizzazz to the US soccer scene.



# Designer Skin 🗸

Documentary

# ➤ ALL THINGS TATTOO COME UNDER THE MICROSCOPE IN THIS NEEDLE-

crazy feature-length documentary from directors Kyle Niezgoda and Charlie Driscoll. As the film tells us, we're smack-bang in the middle of a massive tattoo renaissance, and so the movie kicks off by tracing the evolution of tattoos and the attendant culture, marking the ways in which the cost and the quality have changed over the years. We go inside the lives, minds and studios, not just of the collectors but of the creators as well - very often one and the same, of course. The result is a fascinating, enlightening work that not only has incisive points to make about tattoo culture but boasts some truly eye-popping visuals.

Sick Bern Why Leonard Bernstein still strikes a chord



He wrote tunes for West Side Story. Cast-iron bangers from that show - America. Maria - more than justify his immortal status. But he also wrote symphonies, including jazzy, Auden-inspired The Age of Anxiety.

As a conductor he changed the game with his flamboyant, exaggerated style and iconoclastic instincts. His first big gig? Conducting the New York Phil age 25 after the regular guy caught flu, with only a few hours' notice and no rehearsal. He smashed it, obvs.

**Bernstein loved** to teach. In popular TV shows like Young People's Concerts he inspired millions through his near-unique facility for explaining the finer points of classical repertoire - Beethoven, Mahler - without ever coming across as patronising.

The FBI branded the outspoken Bernstein a communist and briefly revoked his passport. He kept going, saying: "This will be our reply to violence. To make music more intensely, more beautifully, more devotedly than ever before."

(2) WATCH THE MAESTRO: LEONARD BERNSTEIN



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# AUD JANUARY

# A FREEWHEELING MIX OF SOUNDS

# FREAK **POWER**

**KING GIZZARD & THE LIZARD** wizard are the weirdest band ever. reckons Jazz Hodge

# > AUSSIE PSYCH-ROCK

band King Gizzard & the Lizard Wizard just dropped The Silver Cord - their second album in the past six months, their seventh in two years and 25th in 13 years. Unusually, for rockers, this LP is synthbased. But then nothing's

"unusual", as such, for King Gizz everything about them is utterly, deliahtfully bonkers. Here's a pick of our

favourite of their bandtics.

When labels ignored them, they improvised. Back in the day, distributors thought the band name was "dumb". So the lads shipped early record releases themselves in pizza boxes. That's one way to earn your crust.

They're impossible to pigeonhole. New record The Silver Cord touches on



ancient mythology, but previous efforts in their discography (aka, ahem, "The Gizzverse") have assimilated epic rock odysseys, jazz, hip hop and thrash metal.

# The world is their studio.

Mostly acoustic 2015 album Paper Mâché Dream Balloon was recorded in

> a shipping container. During the severe Covid

lockdowns in their Melbourne home town. they recorded three

- three! - albums entirely remotely.

# They're playful.

Their album *Made in* Timeland (2022) was only distributed to attendees of the band's Timeland Festival, and features two 15 minute tracks, one per side of vinyl. Seven months - and three albums! - later, the Laminated Denim LP shipped in an embroidered denim sleeve. Its title is an anagram of Made In Timeland.

# They're not afraid to go

long. They make short tracks - Some Context has a lean 16-second run time. But some go outrageously long. My personal favourite, The Dripping Tap, is over 18 minutes. And it's still too short, in my opinion.

# LISTEN TO THE SILVER CORD





Crazymad, For Me BREAKING ARTISTS

Irish troubadour Ciara Mary-Alice Thompson, aka CMAT, served notice of a singular talent on *If My Wife New I'd Be Dead*. This is a second set of mournful yet slyly funny songs.



KING GIZZARD & THE LIZARD WIZARD ♡

The Silver Cord

For their 25th album, King Gizzard have not only produced a double LP, but they've gone "electronic". Of course, it's weird, off-kilter and very psychedelic. See opener



# REN

Sick Boi HIP HOP

Welsh rapper Ren spent the year prior to this album living in Canada undergoing medical treatment. This musically ambitious, frequently brilliant album delves into his struggles.



BOMBAY BICYCLE CLUB ♥

My Big Day
ALTERNATIVE

Rulebook-wreckers Bombay Bicycle Club have been mixing alt-rock, world music and electronica since before smartphones, and they're still doing it on this sublime sixth LP.



The Secret to Life

# ▶ IF DESCRIBING THEMSELVES AS A SUPERGROUP MAY BE STRETCHING

things a tad, it is at least true that all four members – that's Orla Gartland, Greta Isaac, Martin Luke Brown and Dodie – have previously made music away from the central band and now come together as Fizz. Individually, they make what you might describe as stylish, introspective pop. Together, however, they make a euphoric, joyful racket that somehow manages to coax the sun from behind the clouds. As one critic pointed out, the four of them working as Fizz "is the musical equivalent of a photographer saying, 'Now let's do a silly one." But that's often the best shot.

Joy polloi Why Joy Anonymous are the people's DJs



During the lockdown era, frustrated musos Henry Counsell and Louis Curran took their gear to London's South Bank to entertain folks on their daily state-mandated walk. Word spread and so was born Joy Anonymous (the name is a play on AA meet-ups and to this day they call shows "meetings"). Now they tour with big acts – The Streets, Fred Again – and their new LP is, well, joyful.

H LISTEN TO CULT CLASSICS

# **PLUCKY CONFESSIONALS**



HOLLY HUMBERSTONE

Paint My Bedroom Black
POP

Hailing from the same Lincolnshire town as Margaret Thatcher, Holly Humberstone has had a meteoric rise, with a lauded EP, The Walls Are Way Too Thin, paving the way for a debut that has won her comparisons to Olivia Rodrigo and Phoebe Bridgers, among others.



### **MORGAN WADE**

Psychopath COUNTRY

With the plaudits to match her tattoos (she's up to her neck in them and they're very colourful), Morgan's 2021 debut album, *Reckless*, snagged a place on *Rolling Stone*'s best-of-year list. Could album number two possibly top it? The answer is a button-click away.

# Taylor Swift 🗢

1989 **POP** 

# **▶BY NOW YOU KNOW ALL**

about Taylor Swift's rather brilliant means of reclaiming her back catalogue by re-recording all her old albums in Taylor's Versions. Here we reach the point in proceedings where 1989 gets its turn, an album that holds a special place in the hearts of fans and critics as the moment that Taylor completed her transition from country to pop, wore her lyrical heart on her sleeve and created a bona fide chart masterpiece. As before, she's added some from-the-vaults tracks for this release, including Slut! and Is It Over Now? and they are of course superb. But the likes of Blank Space and Shake It Off are irresistible.



# **Audiofiles**

# Discover some new music podcasts



### **TAPE NOTES**

Radio X presenter John Kennedy knows a thing or two about music, and anything he doesn't know, you can be sure his guests do. Here, he reunites an artist and producer to talk about the highlights of their collaboration in the studio.





# SOUNDTRACKING WITH EDITH BOWMAN

Edith Bowman combines her love for films and music by buttonholing a variety of film directors, actors, producers and composers in order to talk about the music that inspired them and how they use it in their work. Sound, indeed.



# The state of the s

### BEHIND NUMBER 3 ABBEY ROAD

With Abbey Road (made famous by the Beatles) celebrating 90 years in operation, it's easy to forget about the people behind the scenes who make the studio what it is. Well, it would be, if not for this podcast that goes behind the scenes at the iconic studio.

# **FLOOR FILLERS**

# **Troye Sivan**

Something to Give Each Other

# > TROYE SIVAN FIRST BLIPPED ON

the radar around a decade ago, when he made a splash on YouTube, won a couple of talent competitions in his native Australia and then began releasing EPs. In the years since, Troye has

made the leap to bona fide queer pop icon, finding time to act as well as picking up the odd award. But it's in the arena of pop that he really shines. Rapturously received by critics, this third album finds Troye

by critics, this third album finds Troye embracing what can only be described as "fun" – fun on the dancefloor and even, dare we say it, between the sheets.



### JOY ANONYMOUS

Cult Classics
DANCE/ELECTRO

Henry Counsell and Louis Curran, aka Joy Anonymous, first got together playing impromptu meet-ups. This second album brings the disco warmth and does, they say, "revel in the euphoria of being alive and all the feelings, good or bad, that come with it". See left



# **CHVRCHES**

The Bones of...(10th Anniversary Edition)

Chvrches' debut was acclaimed as a hook-laden synthpop classic on its release in 2013, and in the 10 years since its stock has risen to the extent that it's now thought of as a birrova classic of the genre. Here it gets the morethan-welcome reissue treatment.

# **PROPER ROCK**



### THE STRUTS ♡

Pretty Vicious ROCK

British band The Struts produce the kind of leathertrousered rock that makes you want to go "woo!", evoking not just the Rolling Stones, but those other solid mineral types, The Stone Roses. For proof, apply within - their fourth album in just over a decade.



THE GASLIGHT ANTHEM

History Books ROCK

Their first album in nine years - and sixth altogether finds The Gaslight Anthem in typically emotive form - a sound that's been compared to The Hold Steady and REM. Oh, and there's also a cameo from a certain Bruce Springsteen. Not to be missed.



### **RETRO: ROCK**

Call it retro, classic or whatever, when it comes to whisky-soaked, patchouli-smelling quitar classics they don't get any better than this playlist. Sympathy for the Devil. Smoke on the Water. Tom Sawyer. All are here and loads more besides.

# Nirvana 🗢

In Utero (30th Anniversary)
ALL TIME GREATS

# ►IT'S DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE NOW, BUT AT THE TIME

- the time being 1993 - Nirvana's In Utero was considered something of a disappointment. There's a reason why, of course: it came in the wake of Nevermind, an album that had made Nirvana the biggest band of the 1990s. In response, Kurt Cobain had threatened to make their next album an unlistenable dirge, and although In Utero isn't that, there's no doubt that it's a more challenging, less radio-friendly record than its predecessor. But a disappointment? No way. Not only a worthy follow-up to Nevermind, in many respects In Utero betters it, managing a timeless quality

linked to a specific time and place, could never hope to attain. Any discomfiting passages are more than compensated for by moments of songwriting genius, Dumb and All Apologies among them.

that its predecessor, so index-



Class of '23

Listen back to last year's bangers



# Cassö, RAYE & D-Block Europe **PRADA**

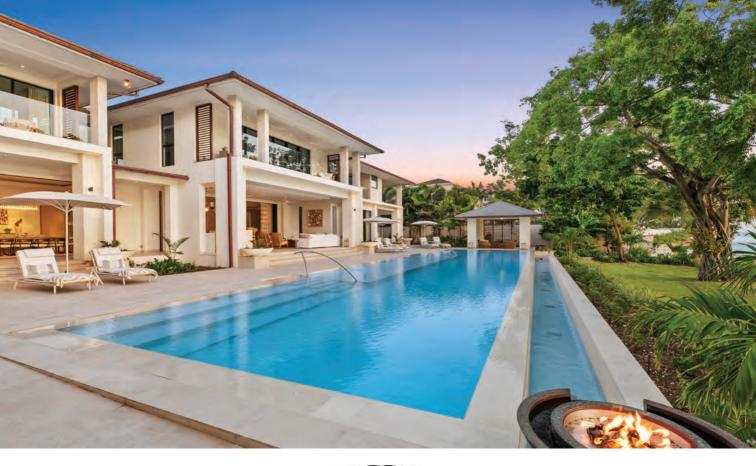
As quintessentially London as rain and red buses, this song started life as a twoway collab named Ferrari Horses by Tooting songstress Rave and Lewisham production duo D-Block Europe. A voung upstart producer called Cassö, from not far up the road in Maidenhead. Kent, remixed the track, cannily renamed it Prada - after the hook - and whacked it on Soundcloud. Now it's a staple of national radio and DJ sets all around the world.

# Milev Cyrus FLOWERS

A decade after Miley's last number one - Wrecking Ball, you remember - the empress of pop returned a year ago with this disco-infused self-love anthem. Flowers topped the US charts for eight weeks and is, some say, a swipe at ex-hubby Liam Hemsworth. Certainly, it references their old house burning down (true story). And it was released on his birthday. Wrecked!

H LISTEN TO VARIOUS -**BEST OF 2023** 





# ONE CARIBBEAN ESTATES









One Caribbean Estates presents One Beachlands, a beachfront villa on Barbados' West Coast.

This mansion-sized residence, spanning two floors, boasts exquisite international brands, and ocean-facing windows. With six bedrooms, it caters to entertainment with a private gym, home cinema, and a 75-foot infinity pool blending seamlessly with the Caribbean Sea.

This meticulously designed villa offers indoor-outdoor living, a smart home system, and lush gardens leading to the warm Caribbean waters. The grand entrance exudes elegance, making One Beachlands an unparalleled luxury property, combining breathtaking design with an unbeatable Barbadian location.

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wingback.co.uk

# THE 2024 HANDY



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charlestyrwhitt.com



# **CALEX ORGANIC LAMP**

Refresh your living room or workspace the easiest way imaginable with this Organic Neo LED lamp from the bright sparks at Calex. The Organic's captivating shape. champagne coating and trendy visible filament will effortlessly spruce up any room, delivering a warm dimmable glow and instant cosy vibes.

calex.eu



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neweybloomer.com



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This creative Notting Hill concept store champions emerging and independent labels with a story to tell. Couverture is dedicated to womenswear, accessories and homeware. The Garbstore is firmly established as London's best menswear shopping destination. Explore an eclectic edit in person, or browse online.

couvertureand thegarbstore.com

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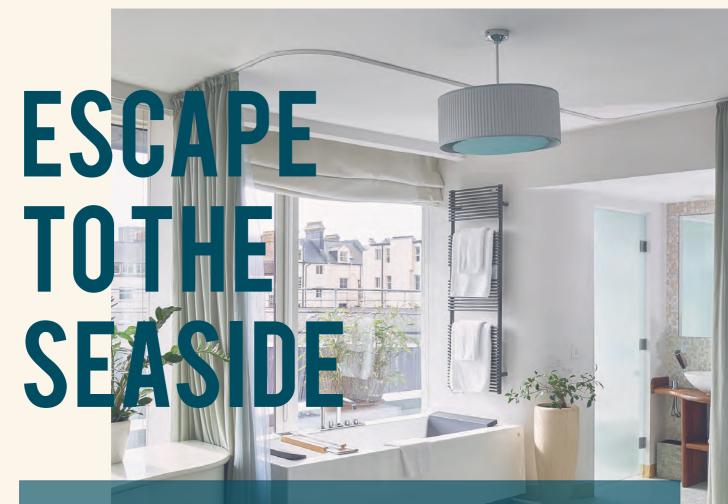


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# CREDITS

# **VIRGIN ATLANTIC NEWS AND VIEWS**



### Clockwise from above: Vicky with her bestie, Flight Service Manager Ryan Johnstone; working hard en route to Orlando: sharing a joke with the team





# > WHENVICKYSILK

from Croydon, London, was born with Down's syndrome and a variety of challenging lung and heart problems, her parents. John and Gerry. vowed they'd do anything for her. Aged 20, in 2013, Vicky expressed a wish to work with an airline cabin crew. John reached out to several airlines, but it was Virgin Atlantic that first gave Vicky the opportunity to step up and join the team.

"It was Vicky's dream," savs Flight Service Manager Rvan Johnstone. "So we arranged that she could do some training and volunteer on a flight." Several flights later, she's now a much-loved part of the family.

RGIN ATLANTIC THE ONLY **AIRLINE THAT GAVE VICKY THE OPPORTUNITY TO LIVE HER DREAM AND** JOIN THE TEAM

Last year, for Vicky's 30th, Ryan arranged for our iconic red Vivienne Westwood uniform to be delivered for her birthday trip to Orlando. "Whenever the family fly. they reach out to check I'll be on the flight," says Ryan. "She barely sits down the entire flight, helping with drinks and more. She's lovely and our customers think she's fantastic."





# CLEARED FOR TAKEOFF

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# ➤ IN NOVEMBER, VIRGIN ATLANTIC

passed a major milestone on the route to greener aviation. Our 100% SAF (Sustainable Aviation Fuel) flight to New York – aka Flight100 – was a huge success, demonstrating the workability of this technology. We'll be sharing what we've learned with the wider aviation world and hope to scale up our own SAF use as soon as possible. One problem? "There's simply not enough SAF," says CEO Shai Weiss (above). "To reach production at scale, we need to see significantly more investment. Flight100 proves that if you make it, we'll fly it."

# **WORTH A SHOT**

RISE AND SHINE WITH A BAOBAB-POWERED PICK-ME-UP Looking for a healthier source of get-up-andgo? From this month, customers in Upper Class can enjoy a revitalising ginger shot made by our friends at British start-up Unrooted. "Our shots are boosted with African baobab fruit. wild-harvested from the 'tree of



life'," says Unrooted founder Nathan Clemes. "It supports natural energy, gut health, with five times the Vitamin C of oranges and twice the antioxidants of açai." The spicy Mighty Ginger shot also has ginger, pineapple and lime juices. scotch bonnet chilli, turmeric and black pepper. A start-up whose whole business is starting you up? We'll drink to that.



# On sail now



his year we're proud to once again support Barbados Sailing Week,"

says Virgin Atlantic
Country Manager Hannah
Swift. Running from 13–24
January, the Caribbean
island's annual regatta
jamboree features thrilling
coastal head-to-heads,
kitesurfing, wing-foiling
and even remote-control
races. "In other
waterborne news, we're
supporting The World's
Toughest Row, too,"
continues Hannah.

Taking place right now, The World's Toughest Row is a gruelling 3,000-mile endurance rowing race across the Atlantic from the Canary Islands to Antigua. "Respect to the competitors. But I think we know a much nicer way to get to Antigua."



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