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MAY 2024

Level up

Simu Liu is playing the long game

► **Serving looks**

LA'S CHICEST PING-PONG PLAYERS

► **Second shot**

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Meet new flag icon Ruby Rebel and toast the airline's 40th anniversary with a Virgin Redhead cocktail.



FEATURES Simu Liu brings his A-game to Hollywood, the British pubs that got a second chance at life and why ping-pong is popping off in LA's Little Tokyo neighbourhood.

CAMEOS



Based in London, Zoey Goto is a journalist who has contributed to National Geographic Traveller, Rolling Stone, GQ, Lonely Planet and more. This month, she went to LA to meet the city's swinging table tennis community. See p46



It's a good thing photographer Dave Imms – who's also worked with Adidas and Mr Porter – loves an adventure, because we sent him from London to Brighton to Gloucestershire to Fife to capture Britain's community-rescued pubs. See p38



Geetanjali Krishna lives in Delhi and loves to write about social trends, the environment and public health for publications including Monocle. She headed to Bengaluru to see why the city's attracting a new creative class. See p22

Ink

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

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The paper in Vera magazine contains a biocide based on Silver Chloride that has been tested and shown to be effective on viruses including feline coronavirus.

Printed on Revive
Silk 100% recycled
certified paper

PHOTOGRAPHER: ERK CARTER STYLIST: CHLOE TAKAYANAGI GROOMER: MIRA CHAI HYDE CLOTHES: COVER: JUMPSUIT: RHUDE SHOES: ZEGNA WATCH: ROLEX NECKLACE: DAVID YURMAN RING: VARGAS GOTOE BRACELETS: KINNI & DAVID YURMAN CONTENTS: FULL LOOK: WINNAN WATCH: PANERAI NECKLACE: DAVID YURMAN RING: VARGAS GOTOE BRACELETS: KINNI: DAVID YURMAN SHOES: ALDO

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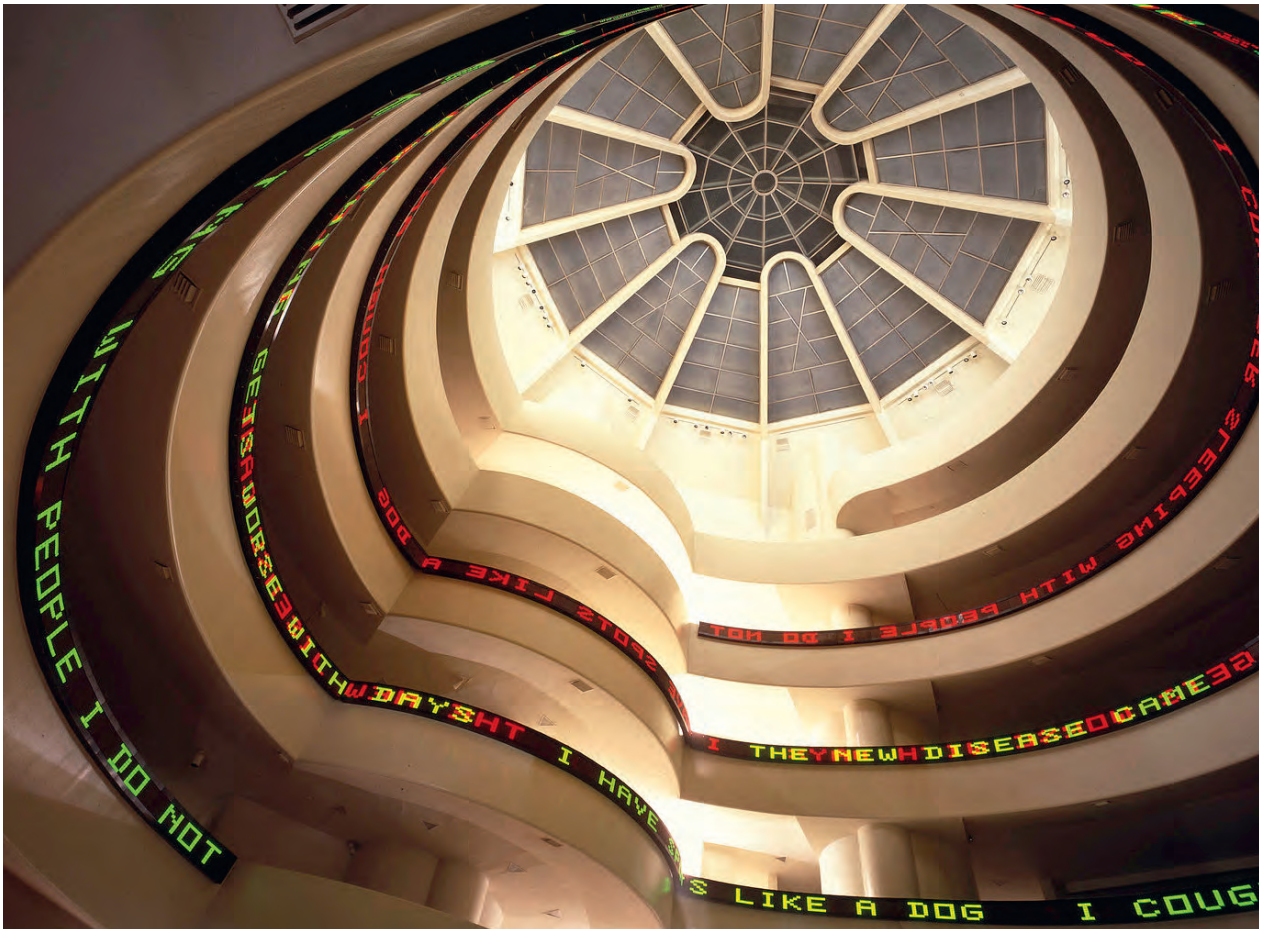
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RED HOT

WORDS: JESSICA PRUDAS. PHOTO: JENNY HOLZER. UNTITLED (SELECTIONS FROM TRUYSMS, INFLAMMATORY ESSAYS, THE LIVING SERIES, THE SURVIVAL SERIES, UNDER A ROCK, LAMENTS, AND CHILD TEXT), 1989. © 2024. JENNY HOLZER. PHOTO: DAVID HEAD. © SOLOMON R. GUGGENHEIM FOUNDATION, NEW YORK



Coming soon //

All talk in New York City

► **JENNY HOLZER HAS A WAY WITH WORDS. THIS** neo-conceptual artist has made the English language her medium, turning clichés of speech and aphorisms into text-based works that confront war, violence, loss and more. In New York in 1989, she took over the Guggenheim's distinctive rotunda for *Light Line*, a landmark installation that covered the museum's winding ramps with scrolling LEDs displaying Holzer's writing. She's resurrecting the piece from 17 May to 29 September – sure to get tongues wagging.

📍 FLY TO NEW YORK

First take //

STARS ARE GOING UNDER COVERS

There was once a formula for getting busy onscreen – now love scenes are really nailing the complexity of sex, says Al Horner

ILLUSTRATION: BARRY FALLS

► **A WORD OF ADVICE FOR ANYONE** flicking through this month's in-flight entertainment options and contemplating watching *Poor Things*, the brilliantly bizarre drama from director Yorgos Lanthimos. Before hitting play, look to your left. Now, to your right. Are either of the passengers next to you an elderly nun? If the answer's yes, it may be better to choose again – unless you're actively trying to get shady looks from a woman named Sister Agnes, that is.

Poor Things is steamy. Very steamy. But not in the way that we've come to expect from Hollywood, where a new wave of post #MeToo films are changing how sex is depicted onscreen. Watch an

80s action blockbuster and you'll quickly be reminded that sex scenes used to be pretty one-note – some music and soft lighting told viewers that the characters were about to get busy, only for the scene to cut just when clothes were shed. That era of uncomplicated sex – mostly focused on male pleasure – gave way to the last decade, where love-making was almost absent from mainstream films. Across 33 Marvel movies, the dominant franchise among film-going adults since 2008, there's been a grand total of one sex scene. But now a new era of sex onscreen is dawning – and it has plenty to say about how complex and consequential the act can be.

Movies like *Poor Things* and *How to Have Sex* – another recent award-winner available on today's in-flight entertainment – are proof of how sex scenes are becoming less about titillation and more about characterisation. *Poor Things'* coming-of-age story sees Stone play Bella Baxter, a woman who uses sex to liberate herself and discover the world. In *How to Have Sex*, meanwhile, three friends go on a girls' holiday, where lead Tara's encounters with the opposite sex force her to question herself and her friendships. The sex scenes are never gratuitous – they all say something about who the women at the centre

Having made his TV debut in 2019, Paul Mescal rose to fame with his lead role in the 2020 miniseries *Normal People*.

STARSTORIES

Celebs are spacing out

1 //



GOLDIE HAWN says she once met some interplanetary tourists – “silver in colour, slash for a mouth, tiny little nose, no ears” – who touched her face, but apparently meant her no harm.

VERDICT: PERSONAL SPACE INVADERS

2 //



MILEY CYRUS told *Interview* magazine that she’s “pretty sure” she made eye contact with an alien in a passing UFO. But she also noted that this was shortly after buying “weed wax” from outside a California taco shop.

VERDICT: HIGHLY DUBIOUS

3 //



Singer, songwriter and Broadway actor **NICK JONAS** claims to have seen not one, not two, but three flying saucers circling above his Los Angeles backyard as a teenager.

VERDICT: TRIPLE THREAT



“**A NEW ERA OF SEX ONSCREEN IS DAWNING – AND IT HAS PLENTY TO SAY ABOUT HOW COMPLEX AND CONSEQUENTIAL THE ACT CAN BE**

of them are and how the world views them, rather than getting audiences hot under the collar.

Those two dramas aren’t alone. The acclaimed 2023 drama *All of Us Strangers*, starring Paul Mescal and Andrew Scott, is an LGBTQ+ love story full of layered love-making scenes, with the awkward, tender way its protagonists get it on, a window into how they’ve both been hurt before.

It’s not just in front of the camera that things are changing. Behind the scenes, Hollywood is evolving its attitudes towards how sex scenes are shot, too, with “intimacy coordinators” (professionals who look after the well-being

of actors and actresses in sex scenes), the norm on movie sets. All of which speaks to a massive change sweeping the industry. Now, with the spring calendar full of sexually charged movies like Zendaya’s *Challengers*, there’s no doubt onscreen sex is back with, ahem, a bang.

In that film and others to come like it, expect raunchiness, sure, but rarely for the sake of it. Love-making in movies is increasingly becoming about driving plot and character – and that’s no poor thing. In fact, even Sister Agnes might agree, it’s a change that’s long overdue.

© WATCH POOR THINGS, HOW TO HAVE SEX & OPPENHEIMER

PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES



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Former child star, musician and actor **ALEX WOLFF** has worked with a long list of greats, from Nicolas Cage to Christopher Nolan. Now he'll embody another great in the new TV series *So Long, Marianne*

PORTRAIT: BEN RAYNER

► **HOW'S THIS FOR A** humbling moment? After *Oppenheimer's* Best Motion Picture win, Alex Wolff – who plays Nobel-winning physicist Luis Alvarez in the film – was left out of the cast photo at the Golden Globes afterparty because he was mistaken for someone working the event. But he didn't mind too much. “It happened at the exact same time that they brought out a tonne of these ridiculously fancy appetisers,” he tells me. “I saw Alexander Payne was eating these fries. So I was kind of immediately sidetracked.”

Wolff is calling me from LA. A born and bred New Yorker, he's on the West Coast doing press for *So Long, Marianne*, a biographical series that chronicles Leonard Cohen's relationship with his muse, Marianne Ihlen. Wolff plays the legendary Canadian singer-songwriter – a dream role, since Wolff is a lifelong fan. The former child actor also has a band with his brother, Nat Wolff. He finds time to release catchy pop-rock tunes

between acting gigs – like in the horror classic *Hereditary*, M Night Shyamalan's *Old*, or opposite Nicolas Cage in indie drama *Pig*. You'll also be able to catch him in *A Quiet Place: Day One*, June's most anticipated release. Between appearing in Golden Globe-sweeping dramas and starring in massive summer blockbusters, we don't think anyone will be mistaking him for wait staff again.

How did you get involved in *So Long, Marianne*?

I got the role because I met with the director and I did a collage picture of me and Leonard

Offscript //

“I begged and pleaded for the Leonard Cohen role”



Above: Alex Wolff's Leonard Cohen alongside Thea Sofie Loch Naess as muse Marianne Ihlen in *So Long*, Marianne

when we were young. And I sent him a version of me singing *Suzanne*, kind of a makeshift Leonard style. And I guess he felt it was good enough. And I think after enough begging and pleading, he just gave up and gave me the part. I think that maybe the gall to send him a version of me singing [*Suzanne*]... the chutzpah to do that inspired him to think I could take on something this gargantuan.

What piece of archival material did you find most helpful when prepping for the role?

I really lost myself in *The Spice-Box of Earth*. [It's] pure in a way that I can't really explain because I think *Flowers for Hitler*, his book of poetry after, is maybe superior, and *Let Us Compare Mythologies* has that first fine frenzy of a person. But I think with *The Spice-Box of Earth*, there's a kind of refined, elegant honesty. It's just like you could eat those pages, you know? They're just so delicious.

What lessons have you taken from your time as a child actor that you still apply to your career?

I think there is a warmth and camaraderie and a sort of honouring artistically of what I was excited about then that I try to carry on. I wasn't very old when I discovered Leonard, I was given a book of [his] poetry by my brother when I was young. And so I think that I have been really excited about him and excited about what he offered to the world. That was the lesson that I took, is to sort of

follow your inspiration. It sounds kitschy, but it's actually really hard to do. I think as you get older, you want to make compromises, yada yada. But it's important sometimes not to.

You were in a major blockbuster [*Oppenheimer*] last summer and now you're in another one, *A Quiet Place: Day One*. What are you going to do next summer?

Go to camp. I've never been. You know what I'll do? Go back to Copenhagen. Have you been to Christiania [in Copenhagen]? That's the craziest place I've ever been to in my whole life. I went there and there was a little secret door, and I found a skate ramp with all these

skateboarders, and I just skated barefoot on this half pipe.

Everyone seems to have really great stories of working with Nic Cage...

He's the best actor I've ever worked with. By far. I really feel like being around him is like being around one of the great artists of any generation. So you're always watching him for something interesting to happen, but also just his regular guy-ness. He's a great father, he's a great husband, he's a great family member. He's just a really great person. So maybe what I took away is that you can be a great artist and also a really great person.

I heard you and Ari Aster had a bit of a bromance?

I think [working with him] is the most I've ever felt like, "Wow, I'm working with one of the greatest geniuses ever." He's so academic and [knows] everything about film. But he's also deeply emotional and deeply present. I think that's why his movies are a perfect balance: austere, but also really tender, too.

You grew up in New York. What's one thing you'd take from New York and give to every other city in the world?

The 1 Train.

But everyone complains about New York's transit system...

They're idiots.

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66
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Table read //

BIG UP THE JUNCTIONS

Forget the steam age – a colourful new book finally gives props to modern train travel

► **MODERN TRAIN TRAVEL** can feel bereft of romance. Getting from point A to B by rail is frequently a heroic journey beset by delays, squabbles over seats and skyrocketing prices. It's no wonder we glamourise the good old days of steam locomotives, with their fancy dining carts and patrons travelling with dignity.

But what if the last few decades of train travel still offered plenty to shout about? That's the central premise behind *Station*, a coffee-table book that celebrates modern railways. Instead of getting misty-eyed about the steam era like most train books, *Station* takes a look at the triumphs of train travel from the 1950s onwards. Writer Christopher Beanland says that it's this period that gave birth to many of our most cherished icons. "I love a trip on the steam train to the end of the world in Patagonia as much as the next person," he says, "but also there's a fascinating world of sleek new stations and



The proposal for New Delhi Station features 18 indoor platforms – to cope with over 500,000 passengers daily.

really cool design, too – I'm thinking of the New York Subway signage and, obviously, the Harry Beck London Underground map."

The world's most miraculous modern stations get a good look in here – from the sleek futurism of New Delhi Station to the Spanish Colonial Revival style of LA's Union Station. Beanland says that, in researching the book, he found many of the most celebrated stations have something in common: they thoughtfully bring

traditionalism into a modern vernacular. "I don't think anyone would quibble with something like London St Pancras, where tradition and modernism meet. It feels romantic and exciting, and it's clean and a little glamorous. Many of us just go to St Pancras to eat or shop even if we're not catching a train, right?"

● *Station: A Journey through 20th and 21st Century Railway Architecture and Design*, by Christopher Beanland, is published by Batsford

Top, left to right: The Elizabeth Line, London; Union Station, Los Angeles





“
THERE’S A
FASCINATING
WORLD OF SLEEK
NEW STATIONS
AND REALLY
COOL DESIGN,
LIKE NEW YORK
SUBWAY SIGNAGE

■ SET VISIT ■



Crowning glory in Lincoln

When the soaring Gothic spire of Lincoln Cathedral – used as a stand-in for Notre-Dame, Paris, in Ridley Scott’s epic *Napoleon* – was finished in 1311, it overtook the Great Pyramid at Giza as the tallest building in the world. Although a storm in the 1540s tragically destroyed the central spire, Lincoln Cathedral’s epic interior still provides a glorious cinematic backdrop to the coronation of Emperor Bonaparte (Joaquin Phoenix). The cathedral’s in-house choir even got to sing on the film’s soundtrack. This towering medieval marvel was described by Victorian critic John Ruskin as “the most precious piece of architecture in the British Isles”. It’s well worth a pilgrimage if you like big buttresses, we cannot lie.



WORDS: JESSICA BRUPAS PHOTOS: SIMON TURNER/ALAMY, CHRIS PUTNAM/ALAMY, INDIA'S EVOLVING RAILWAY STATIONS/FARRELLS, ADOBE STOCK

📺 WATCH
NAPOLEON
✈️ FLY TO
MANCHESTER



➤ **MAURO COLAGRECO IS** obsessed with produce. Sure, all chefs revere the humble building blocks of a dish to a certain degree, but the Argentinian maestro – head of three Michelin star mecca Mirazur, in Menton, France – has a regard for his ingredients that borders on worshipful. Each of the five courses served at his fine-dining pet project at the new Raffles London hotel, which opened last year within Churchill’s WWII offices, begins with a postcard laid at your table. These cards display each course’s “hero ingredient” – carrots, radicchio, truffles – and come with colourful factoids recited by your server (did you know the UK eats two billion carrots per year?). The whole dinner and show will set you back £165 (£110 for three courses), but

it’s a price many are willing to pay to witness a top chef work magic on the finest ingredients sourced locally. Like in this dessert – delicate petals of spicy wheat and Manjari 64% chocolate revealing a puffed buckwheat tart. Our verdict? Let a thousand flowers bloom.

Snacks //

FLOWERY FOOD IN LONDON

The floral dessert at **MAURO COLAGRECO AT RAFFLES AT THE OWO** epitomises a top chef’s artful cooking style

✉ FLY TO LONDON

DRINKS

Don’t sleep on coffee cocktails



avvy drinkers all around our network are buzzing for a new wave of coffee cocktails. Sure, the espresso martini is timeless, but these days there’s far more interesting ways to get caffeinated in your cups. Try an American Coffee at new spot Three Sheets in Soho, London, with salted coffee,

Maker’s Mark and maple butter (*right*). The luscious Reinventing at Sonsie in Boston combines sotol with coffee liqueur, amaro fantasia and a shot of espresso. Chez Zou in NYC proffers its Red Right Hand with coffee, dark rum, Campari and Kashmiri chilli. Definitely grounds for excitement.

✉ FLY TO LONDON, BOSTON & NEW YORK



WORDS: JESSICA PRUPAS, ANDY HILL PHOTOS: JUSTIN DE SOUZA, JAMIE HENDERSON.

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➤ **PICTURE THE MALDIVES. WHAT DO** you see? Thatched roof villas perched on stilts? Many hotels offer this version of a paradisiacal island holiday – but the new SO/Maldives is less castaway chic and more continental sophisticate. The SO/ Hotels collection's flagship is in Paris, and they're known for their partnerships with French fashion designers (previous collaborators include Christian Lacroix and Guillaume Henry). So you can expect classic beachfront or overwater villa accommodation, where straw roofs are swapped for smart, solar panel-covered ones. But there's also a sprinkling of French style and savoir-faire everywhere: at the excellent restaurants, where stylish guests sup on Asian fusion dishes at Citronelle Club or Moroccan plates at Hadaba; at the zen Wellness Camp, where Maison CODAGE and Odacité products help guests hack ageing and stress the French way; and, most of all, at Lazuli Beach Club, where striped parasols, private cabanas, and low-decibel house music evoke chic, sunburnt days on the French Riviera. *Mais, oui!*

Sleeper hit //

C'EST CHIC IN THE MALDIVES

SO/MALDIVES brings a bit of French flair to a private island 15 minutes from Malé

⊗ FLY TO THE MALDIVES

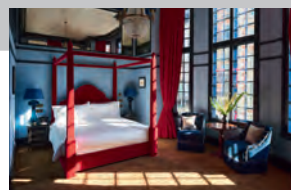


3 more French-chic hotels



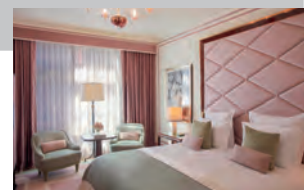
THOMPSON HOLLYWOOD, LOS ANGELES

An A-list magnet in central Hollywood, the Thompson blends chic 70s design with French touches, like in its Paris brasserie-style Mes Amis restaurant and the Côte d'Azur-inspired rooftop bar.



THE TWENTY TWO, LONDON

One of London's most moneyed quadrants – Mayfair's Grosvenor Square – welcomed this hotel and members' club in 2022. Layered textures and patterns in the rooms reference 18th-century French homes.



HÔTELS BARRIÈRE FOUQUET'S, NYC

New to lower Manhattan is the first American venture from ultra-luxe French hotel brand Barrière. Inside the Tribeca high rise: a wash of pastels, plus a bar inspired by speakeasy Le Marta Paris.

WORDS: JESSICA PRUPAS PHOTOS: MICHAEL MUNDY, THE TWENTY TWO, MATTHIEU SALVANG

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Location scout //

BENGALURU'S CREATIVE BOOM

India has a new cultural heart – Bengaluru, a city in the southern Karnataka state with a thriving grassroots scene and glossy new arts centres, says Geetanjali Krishna



► THERE'S A SHINY NEW UPSTART BANG

opposite Bengaluru's historic Government Museum, its modern glass facade a stark contrast to the old museum's dusty red brick. Instead of musty displays, the **MUSEUM OF ART & PHOTOGRAPHY (MAP)** features interactive paintings, a chance to converse with acclaimed Indian artist MF Husain's AI avatar and a digital gallery where visitors can choose which exhibits they'd like to explore – with topics ranging from Bollywood kitsch to folk art. When MAP opened in 2023 with a collection of 60,000 artefacts, it announced Bengaluru as India's newest arts hub. In the same year, Bengaluru became the first place in India to join the World Cities Culture Forum, a group of 40 cities including London, New York and Tokyo, which would like to place culture at the heart of urban growth and investment. Today, the city – which until five years ago was known for its tech companies and pensioners – now has an independent creative scene to rival Berlin. With a grassroots spirit and scrappy creative class, Bengaluru is well on its way to becoming India's artiest city.

“Bengaluru has a unique mix of cosmopolitan energy and cultural rootedness,” muses Anurag Shankar, a music-industry professional who has lived in the city for decades. Between its tech community, large army cantonment and sizeable Anglo-Indian community, the locals are a diverse lot. Consequently, “India's Silicon Valley” has seen a burgeoning of cultural spaces and multi-format venues for its growing population, which Shankar says is “always looking to experience something new”.

For some of the most intimate, interactive concerts (and even private music lessons) head to **THE BLUE ROOM** in Jayanagar, about four miles (6.4km) from the major MG Road. In the basement of a family home, it is the best place to listen to underground music in the city. London-based jazz artist Ashley Henry performed here recently. “Performing here was a give-and-take experience, everyone was actively trying to connect with the music,” he says. Audiophiles will also enjoy **INDIAN MUSIC EXPERIENCE**, with its beautifully designed galleries that introduce visitors to the vast breadth of Indian music. The Bollywood sections are great fun, ditto the soundproof karaoke room where visitors can record their own music videos.

One of the city's best-kept secrets is another multi-use cultural space, **LAHE LAHE** (“slowly, slowly” in local parlance), a quiet sunlit spot where punters can get to grips with pottery (classes

Left: A gallery at Bangalore Creative Circus

“**FIVE YEARS AGO, BENGALURU WAS KNOWN FOR ITS TECH COMPANIES AND PENSIONERS – BUT NOW IT HAS AN INDEPENDENT CREATIVE SCENE TO RIVAL BERLIN**”



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start at £14), salsa and other hobbies. Visitors interested in sustainable ways of living should make time for **BANGALORE CREATIVE CIRCUS**, seven miles (11km) from MG Road. With walls made of scrap metal and furniture cobbled from recycled material, BIC holds farmers' markets, upcyclers' meetups and screens documentary films, too.

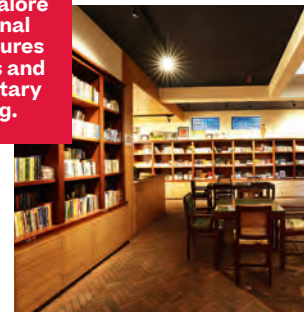
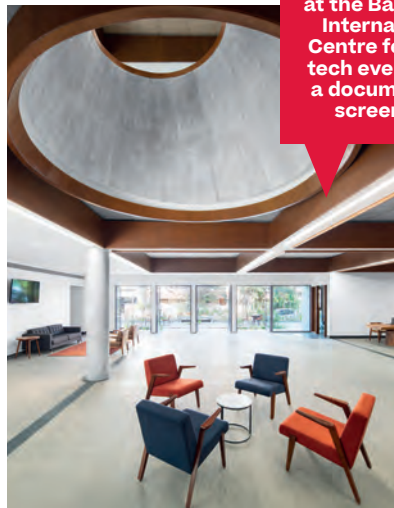
For booklovers, **ATTA GALATTA**, the indie, pet-friendly bookstore three miles (5km) from MG Road, has a lovely lounge where one can thumb through a paperback over cheap coffee and free WiFi. It also has a busy performance space that hosts everything from book readings to open mics. And for those who already have overloaded bookshelves, the iconic **BLOSSOM BOOK HOUSE** in Ashok Nagar lets you bring in old books and exchange them for something new.

"Bengaluru's melting pot culture and intellectually curious audience are unique," says Vikram Bhat, director of the **BANGALORE INTERNATIONAL CENTRE**. The venue in the heart of the city has been described as a "spa for the mind and soul", and hosts lectures – in the past few years, five Nobel laureates have enraptured full houses – exhibitions and film screenings. Bhat, who is thrilled at the great turnouts at most BIC events, says, "Bengaluru's ethos is being enriched with so many people from across India, and indeed the world, coming here to work and play – and this is the best time to experience it."

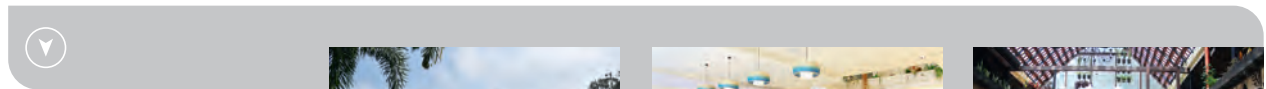
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May's calendar at the Bangalore International Centre features tech events and a documentary screening.



Clockwise from top: The Visible/Invisible exhibition at the Museum of Art & Photography; Atta Galatta bookshop; inside the Bangalore International Centre



CUBBON PARK

The city is known as the Garden City of India and this is its crowning glory. With 120 hectares of local trees, historical monuments and walking trails, Cubbon offers a verdant escape from the city's bustle.



ARAKU COFFEE

Located in the heart of India's coffee-growing region, Bengaluru's coffee shops are second to none. Araku – which has its flagship in Paris – has a great range of organic specialty coffees and 560m² of space.



TOIT

Bengaluru has a strong reputation for its fab microbreweries and this is a great option. Sample brewed-on-site ales and lagers in the taproom, which also serves decent pub grub and hosts live music.

3 more Bengaluru must-dos

DISCOVER NEW HORIZONS...



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Screen test //

Could Britain flood?

New mother Jodie Comer faces environmental catastrophe in *The End We Start From*. Are we all set to get very wet soon? asks Ralph Jones

ILLUSTRATIONS: RUBY FRESSON



► **NO ONE LIKES BEING UNEXPECTEDLY** underwater. As a rule, most of us prefer not to be on land one moment and then suddenly submerged in H₂O. Unfortunately, this is what happens when a flood hits you. Very quickly you learn that water isn't as innocent as it looks. In the years to come, how much more of it is going to come crashing into our lives?

The End We Start From, starring Jodie Comer, imagines a world in which first London and then Britain are hit by devastating floods. People are forced to move across the country in search of safe ground. Things begin to collapse. The frightening question we need to ask ourselves is: is this fictional scenario plausible? And, if it is, just how plausible?

The carnage of *The End We Start From* differs from that of a film like *The Day After Tomorrow* because there are no building-sized waves or temperatures cold enough to freeze people to death in seconds. The picture is mundane, wet – and potentially imminent. Depending on how you look at it, this might make it even scarier.

Professor Hannah Cloke of the University of Reading specialises in forecasting natural hazards. “We have to take account of the fact that we’re going to have more damaging storms and we do need to protect ourselves from them,” she says. While stressing that she hasn’t seen the film, Cloke thinks the events depicted are perfectly realistic. “This scenario where people are having to move away from low-lying lands is definitely something that we’re planning for [in] the future.”

How would such a situation arise? In south London, the Thames Barrier – a clever 520m-long



series of steel gates – is a huge national defence against flooding, most immediately to the capital. The barrier’s gates come up, hold the water back and go down again once the tide does. But if the barrier were overwhelmed, it would be “catastrophic” for London, says Cloke. And it might well happen.

Because the barrier is now “wearing out” – it was completed in 1984 – we must urgently build a new one, Cloke says. It isn’t our only defence against flooding, of course – there are barriers along the country’s coast as well as a network of floodgates in London – but it is our best. It also needs to be as invulnerable as possible to any form of attack because it is so important in keeping us safe. “If we choose not to build a new Thames Barrier,” says Cloke, “then the consequences are that this one will be overtopped or will fail.” In that scenario, we would be in the middle of *The End We Start From*.

But just building a new Thames Barrier won’t be enough, because the sea will continue to rise for decades even if we drastically reduce our contribution to climate change, Cloke argues that “we can’t protect everyone everywhere” and that we will need to learn to live with some degree of flooding. Like it or not, you’ll need to buy some bigger wellies.

VERDICT: Yes. H₂O dear.

© WATCH THE END WE START FROM


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**ERIK
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**DE
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IT'S SIMU CALLING...

A photograph of actor Simu Liu inside a phone booth. He is wearing a light-colored, short-sleeved button-down shirt with a nautical-themed pattern, including anchors, ropes, and flags. He is holding a black rotary telephone receiver to his ear with his left hand. The background shows a window with several posters, including one for 'CANYON TOMORROW' and another for 'SON OF YOUTH'. The lighting is warm and dramatic, highlighting his face and the texture of his shirt.

SIMU LIU dreamed of being a Marvel superhero. Now that he's done that – and then some – he's wondering, what's next? By Jessica Prupas



all comes back to Hollister. Simu Liu first got comfortable exposing his torso working there as a teenager. (He's still at it today, on Instagram and in films like *Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings*, the 2021 Marvel film that catapulted him to global fame.) At the time, in suburban Toronto, the beach-inspired retailer was a paragon of mainstream cool. Being accepted into the club meant that not only did you meet certain (white-centric) beauty standards, but you also possessed a hang-ten "chill" that made you untouchable in the high school social order. The company notoriously "scouted" for teenage boys they could employ to hang out sans shirt at the store entrance and fold polos. Liu would go into the store and peacock for the staff, hoping he'd get the tap on the shoulder. "I definitely tried to flex a little bit," he recalls. "And match their tone like" – here he affects a surfer-dude voice – "*Hey.*"

It didn't work. So he resorted to plan B – actually applying for a job, something "nobody did" at Hollister. He presented his CV to the store manager, who "looked me up and down, and was like" – he shrugs – "yeah. Very much a lukewarm reception." Once he got the job, though, he excelled in the Hollister-verse, eventually parlaying that gig into a job at Abercrombie & Fitch – a step up in the mall store hierarchy. He was even asked to model for them. "I guess my motto for myself is, if you just give me a little, a foot in the door, I'll find a way to surprise you."

It's been three years since Liu was first given a foot in the door of Hollywood. Before he landed *Shang-Chi*, he was a regionally famous actor living in Toronto and starring in sitcom *Kim's Convenience*, a beloved CBC show about a Korean-Canadian family that's since been picked up by Netflix. Since playing the titular Shang-Chi – the first lead superhero of Asian descent in the Marvel Universe – he memorably appeared as a rival Ken to Ryan Gosling's emotionally fragile doll in last year's *Barbie*. Two massive, zeitgeist-defining films later, he feels like he's in Hollister all over again, trying to get noticed. Ascending to a new plane of recognition means that he's now in a league with people he's looked up to for a while. "The people I admire and respect, in a very constructive way, are my rivals or my competition. I'm at a point in my career where the imposter syndrome is really setting in. I'm still the new kid at school. I've still got nowhere to sit."

In our conversation, we frequently return to those complicated years between about 12 and 22. Sometimes it doesn't take much – a clumsy comment from someone, a fleeting feeling – to make you feel like an insecure teen again.

Sitting across from me at an A-list haunt in LA – wearing a diamond-encrusted dog tag and a heavy coat that belies the warm weather – Liu tells me that's exactly how he felt after he auditioned for 2018's *Crazy Rich Asians*. He was told that he didn't land the role because, as a casting director allegedly put it, he "didn't have the X factor". Liu has said that that comment was possibly apocryphal – it was relayed to him via a string of broken telephone calls. Regardless, it hurt.



Opening page:
Shirt & trousers:
Rhude
Watch: IWC
Necklace:
David Yurman
Ring: Vargas Gotoe
Bracelets: Kinn &
David Yurman

This page:
Suit: KidSuper
Shirt: John Varvatos
Watch: Panerai
Necklace:
David Yurman
Ring: Vargas Gotoe
Bracelet: Kinn
Shoes: Fray London

SIMU LIU



But it also fanned a flame in him. Two years later, when he got the audition for Shang-Chi, he doggedly pursued the role, even flying himself out to LA from Toronto to meet with one of the film's casting directors (he cautions other actors not to necessarily do as he did, though: "I worry that people will read this and [spend their] last dollar flying out to show up at a person's door to, like, demand a job"). Landing the role was the result of a long period of metabolising rejection and failure. There's an expression for it in Chinese – *chi ku*, meaning persevering through hardship without complaint. Essentially, "eating shit," as Liu puts it.

He tells me that, when it comes to his career, he has an impressive capacity for eating shit. "I couldn't do it for just anything, I had to find the thing first. And it took a while. If you'd known me in college or in high school, I was very much not that person."

Liu was born in Harbin, China, where he was raised by his grandparents until age five, while his parents pursued graduate degrees in Canada. He eventually joined them and they moved a few times before settling in Mississauga, Ontario, a suburb of Toronto. "I had moved around so much in my life that I kind of just took that as given. There was a sense of, like, don't get used to anything, cause it could always change."

It's easy to imagine how that first move across the world was massively destabilising to a young Liu, especially since he didn't speak English and barely knew the parents who had left China soon after he was born. Liu has spoken

at length about those rocky early years with his parents – they struggled to understand Liu, who was becoming more Canadian by the day and whose first-world concerns puzzled his hard-scrabbling parents. "Their position was, you shouldn't be talking to girls, you should be studying. I had nowhere to go, I was desperate for mentorship."

So, like many teenagers do when they feel lost or misunderstood, Liu acted out. After his parents scratched together enough money to send Liu to a high-performing private school in Toronto, he thanked them with lacklustre grades. They fought constantly. His parents were disappointed when Liu didn't show an interest in STEM subjects – they emphasised maths and science because "it was the same no matter what language you spoke".

"There's an objectivity to it, there's a fairness to it," he says. "Say what you want about grades, but theoretically anyone can score in the top percentile, get a great scholar-

"I'm at a point in my career where the imposter syndrome is really setting in. I'm still the new kid at school. I've still got nowhere to sit"

ship, go to a great school. And contrast that with an industry like entertainment, where nepotism is so pervasive it's not even a thing. That seems infinitely more scary because it's more variable."

Young Liu sought out non-academic outlets for self-expression (and attracting girls). As this was the 2000s, he discovered breakdancing. Soon he was popping and locking at school dances. "It [was] like, okay, how do I become – please let the record show that I'm wincing as I'm saying this – the king of the dance floor?" he remembers. "I [felt] girls would be like, 'Oh my God, I have a crush on Simu, he's a breakdancer.' I wanted to bust a move and girls flock to me. I think instead they were like, there he goes again."

Though it didn't help him in the romance department, breakdancing allowed him to eventually link up with the parkour community, which then exposed him to people

*Left: Suit: Win Rian
Tank: Tom Ford
Watch: IWC
Necklace: David Yurman
Ring: Vargas Gotoe
Bracelet: Kinn
Shoes: Aldo*

KING OF LATE NIGHT

LIU'S CHAT SHOW ANECDOTES ARE LEGENDARY. HERE ARE SOME OF HIS BEST



Liu's brought some photos of his stock modelling days to Fallon.

"The numbers are in, Jimmy. They're looking good!" he joked of the above photo.

Liu has also mined his time as a children's birthday entertainer for interview material.

He told Jimmy Kimmel that he would dress up as Spider-Man for "six-year-olds' birthday parties" and "basically get physically assaulted by them for an hour".

During his most recent visit to Kimmel, he told of a family visit gone awry.

His parents got into his, ahem, stash (mistaking it for "gummy bears and trail mix with dried mushrooms"), ate the whole thing, and crashed the actor's car outside his LA home.



Liu admitted that he was once nearly the victim of a Craigslist scam, also on Kimmel.

As a struggling actor, Liu was lured into a fake audition and told he got the job by the "casting director" – so long as he paid him \$5,000 to join SAG. He came across a police photo of the scammer six months later.

doing stunt work for film and TV. Liu himself trained as a stuntman so he could get onto local sets. “The cool part of it is that sometimes the beginning of these things is rooted in something dumb, like wanting to impress girls, but then it actually leads to a real passion for the thing,” he says.

Liu couldn’t help but think of that lost, performatively macho teenager when he was shirtless on a fake beach filming *Barbie*. In one scene, the Kens serenade the Barbies with an acoustic cover of Matchbox Twenty’s *Push*, a classic dude-bro fireside jam. Liu tells me he felt very called out in that moment. “I used to be that guy, 100%. If it wasn’t Matchbox Twenty it was, like, *Wonderwall*, it was John Mayer.”

He had spent most of his younger years “trying to emulate Chad Michael Murray”, because all he could see on TV was blond guys with six packs. I ask him if that’s why he so frequently strips off on Instagram; if it is, in a sense, a political statement.

Yes, he says. “For so much of my life I felt like I was very invisible, whether as an Asian person or an Asian man.” He wants to show the world that Asian men can be sexy. But he also wants more three-dimensional roles for Asian people onscreen. He tells me that he feels Hollywood is more accepting than ever of diverse voices, which he characterises as “incredibly awesome”. Still, he sometimes feels like the old rules are still in play. “It’s hard sometimes to watch people I perceive are less talented get more opportunities. And I feel like I’ll never know the true reason,” he says. “Hollywood is very opaque. Sometimes I’m, like, that script was clearly written a certain way, with a character in mind.”

That’s why he’s started to dip his toes into producing; he wants to make sure there are enough opportunities for Asian actors to go round. He was inspired working with multi-hyphenate Jennifer Lopez on the new Netflix sci-fi action thriller *Atlas*. Liu plays the villain to Lopez’s data analyst sent on a suicide mission to capture a renegade robot. It’s Lopez’s baby – she also produced the film. “I really watched Jen move as somebody who is focused on her character, but also on the project,” he tells me. It motivated him to keep “fighting



“It’s hard for someone who looks like me to be in this position and adopt any sort of complacency, saying I’m just going to wait for the right part”

for the stories” he wants to get made. “It’s hard for someone who looks like me to be in this position and adopt any sort of complacency of just saying, I’m just going to wait for the right part to come. I think I have to keep working.”

The fickle nature of Hollywood can be frustrating, he tells me, but he’s learned to go with the flow. His guiding principle now is picking projects which sound fun to film. That’s what pushed him to sign on to Mark Wahlberg-fronted drama *Arthur the King*, released in March. The film shot over three months during the pandemic in the Dominican Republic and off days were spent “surfing by sunset, biking, hiking”. He even met his best friend during filming: a street dog named Chopa, who he brought home to LA. After a difficult early life, she’s thriving in her new environment. “She’s just the best and sweetest. [She’s] very spoiled. She claims the whole couch, hates rain, hates water. Which is weird because she’s from an island. But if it’s raining, she would just look outside – like, not even.”

*Above: Shirt & trousers: Harago from FWRD
Watch: Rolex
Necklace: David Yurman
Ring: Vargas Goteo
Bracelets: Kinn & David Yurman
Shoes: Aldo*



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Left: Suit & shirt:
Paul Smith
Watch: Rolex
Necklace: David Yurman
Ring: Vargas Goteo
Bracelets: Kinn
Shoes: Aldo

From above: In *Barbie*
and *Shang-Chi*
and the Legend of
the Ten Rings

“I thought winning an Oscar would put me in a good position to become a Marvel superhero. And it kind of happened backwards”

So after landing a job at Hollister, modelling for Abercrombie, fronting a Marvel film, playing the world’s most famous doll and racking up thousands of thirsty comments on his Instagram photos, does he finally feel like he has the X factor? “I would say, something that for sure people with the it factor don’t do is constantly question whether they have the it factor,” he says. “It doesn’t come from trying to prove yourself. I spent the first 29 years of my life [thinking] I need to prove things to people, I need to [mimes taking his shirt off].”

Liu is much more settled in himself now than he was as an anxious teen, but that doesn’t mean he’s complacent. Now that he’s checked off his early career goal of appearing in a Marvel film, he’s pursuing another major goal. “Twenty-seven-year-old me thought winning an Oscar would put me in a good position to become a Marvel superhero. And it all kind of happened backwards. And if you’ve got one before the other, I think you will always try to course-correct because everyone wants it all in this industry.” That eager kid who bulldozed his way into a Hollister gig? He’s still here. He just has his shirt on – most of the time.

© WATCH BARBIE

WHAT A MARVEL!

SIMU LIU’S CV



BORN

On 19 April 1989 in Harbin, China, where he spent five years of his life before moving to Canada.

EDUCATION

Liu attended the private University of Toronto Schools, then the University of Western Ontario, where he studied business administration.

FUN FACT

After working at the firm for a short time, Liu was fired from his accounting job at consulting firm Deloitte. On the 10th anniversary of his termination, he wrote an Instagram post thanking his boss for cutting him loose. “No amount of money is worth compromising your vision for yourself.”



KEY WORK

Blood and Water (2015)

Liu’s first starring role came in this well-received Canadian crime drama, which mixes Cantonese, Mandarin and English dialogue.

Kim’s Convenience (2016–21)

In this adored comedy about a Korean-Canadian family, Liu embues black-sheep Jung with plenty of pathos.

Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings (2021)

In 2014, Liu tweeted at Marvel, “Now how about an Asian American hero?” Seven years later, he stars as the titular Shang-Chi in this blockbuster, based on the Marvel comics.

Barbie (2023)

Liu stole the show as one of the hyper-fragile Kens in this Greta Gerwig juggernaut. The “beach off” scene is extraordinary.

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SAVE OUR PUBS

ANOTHER ROUND

Pubs are shuttering at a frightening rate all over Britain – but these drinking holes, once threatened with closure, got another chance at life after locals swooped in. Here's how these fearless publicans are doing their bit to raise the bar.

By Andy Hill

PHOTOGRAPHS:
DAVE IMMS



THE STYLISH SOUTH LONDONER

The Earl of Derby, London

FOR ISAAC TOOBY, WORKING IN A BAR is theatre. “You’re on show,” he enthuses. “The bar is your stage, the customers your audience.” The horseshoe bar at this elegantly zhuzhed-up south London

boozier – with its tasteful lampshades and swanky contemporary paint job – is the perfect arena. Twenty years ago, Tooby and three like-minded pals – Shane Ranasinghe, Neil Watson and Michael Robinson – established independent pub group Parched. “Back then there were hardly any real ales. People barely ever cleaned their lines. Service was terrible. We just thought we could do better.” Two decades and a dozen pub restorations later, the Parched team have a reputation for turning around unloved pubs with great tunes and smiley staff. “We’ve got playlists that have been growing for years now,” says co-founder and former DJ Michael Robinson. “Cool bar managers approach us these days, people who used to own record labels.” In the case of The Earl of Derby, the boys, who are all local to south London, saw an opportunity to bring a historic Telegraph Hill watering hole back from the brink by giving it a thoughtful

facelift and throwing their doors open to the community. “Proper locals, Millwall fans, young families – they are all chuffed. It’s a landmark that we’ve helped restore to its former glory.”

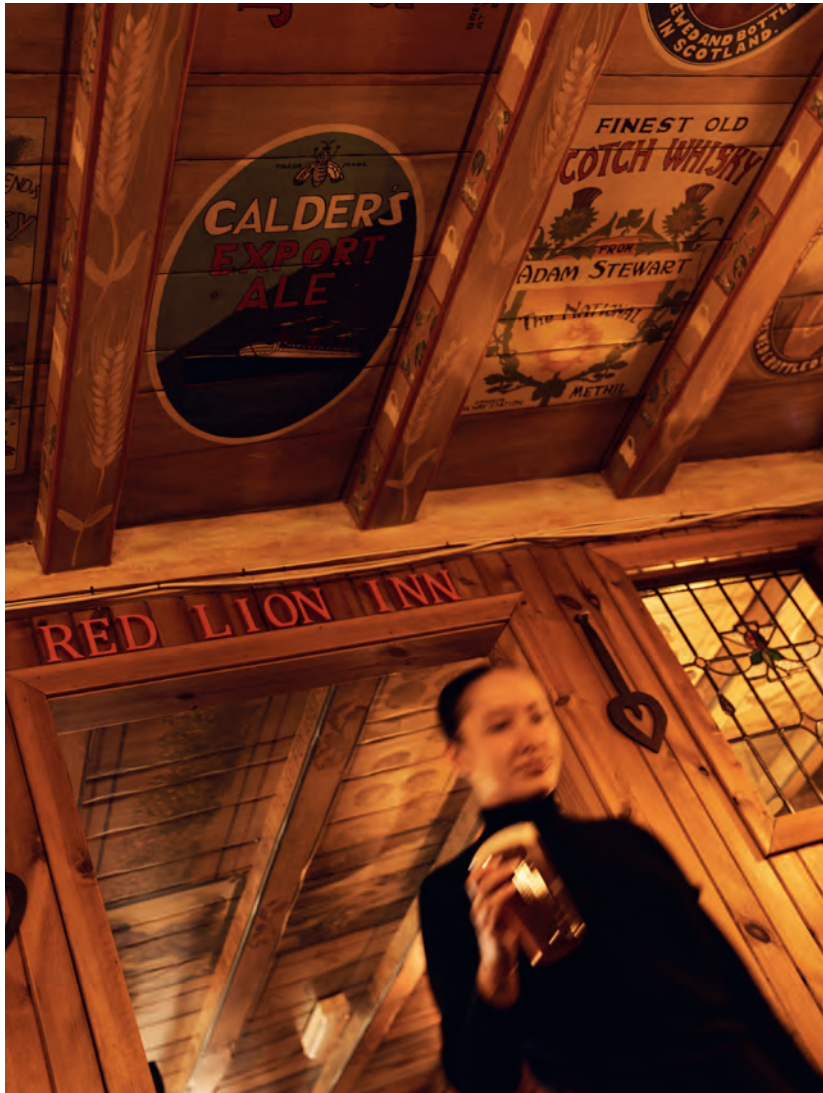


Pint of Brockley Brewery Spring IPA, chicken, bacon & leek pie with a side of charred hispi, curried butter and labneh.

Clockwise: Isaac Tooby and Michael Robinson, the pub exterior, a pie and a pint

● earlofderby.uk

⊗ FLY TO LONDON



THE BONNIE BOOZER

The Red Lion Inn, Culross

ABOUT FIVE YEARS AGO, THE LANDLORDS of this cosy, 600-year old timbered institution in Fife, Scotland – David and Ann – were nearing retirement. But they were anxious that the pub didn't fall into the hands of unscrupulous property developers. "A group of locals

decided to do a community buyout," says long-standing tenant Mike Brown. "But the future was still uncertain." Fortunately, help was at hand in the shape of some actual heroes. The cast of popular Scottish time-travelling fantasy show *Outlander*, filmed nearby, used their social-media clout to attract more investors. "Actors Sam Heughan and Caitriona Balfe would come in for a wee dram from time to time," recalls

Mike. The Red Lion Inn is a major village employer, as well as a popular tourist stop-off thanks in part to the show. "People who come in say it's like going back in time," says Andrena Brown, co-tenant alongside husband Mike. "We're not one of those modern pubs, where everything matches. We don't like to mess with things too much."

“Actors Sam Heughan and Caitriona Balfe would come in for a wee dram from time to time”



Steak and haggis pie, pint of Red Lion ale from the on-site microbrewery.

● redlionculross.co.uk

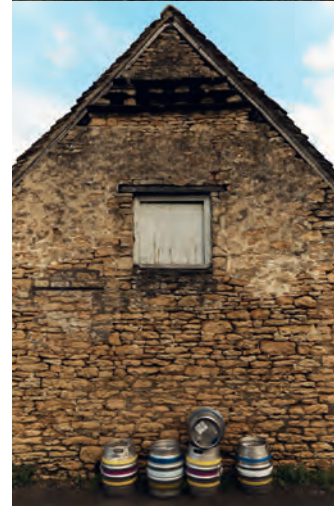
✕ FLY TO EDINBURGH



THE COTSWOLD CHARMER

The Fleece Inn, Hillesley

ALL MOSSY TILES AND MULLIONED windows, The Fleece Inn appears the very model of sturdy English stability. However, “in the space of just a few short years, our Cotswold village had lost its bakery, its shop, most of its farms, its restaurant, its chapel,” recalls retired executive and local pub lover Lance Doughty. “We couldn’t let the pub die too.” The Fleece was indeed about to close, as the previous owners, a chain, went bust. A meeting was convened. “There was so much interest. Over a hundred people pledged their support.” The Fleece reopened for business, better than ever, the day of the London Olympics opening ceremony (“a stupendous night”) and a few years later Prince Charles, now King, stopped by to pull a few pints. Today, anyone passing through can expect “good beer, hearty food and a warm welcome”. AKA, the royal treatment.



A pint of Butty Bach from the local Wye Valley Brewery and a plate of creamy Dijon chicken with celeriac mash.

● thefleecehillesley.com

⊗ FLY TO LONDON



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THE REFRESHED NORTHERNER

The White Lion, Hankelow

AN IDYLIC 200-YEAR-OLD RURAL INN, The White Lion is chock full of antique features and faces the village green duck pond. “Some builders planned to tear it down to build houses on the site,” says local businessman, project co-director and investor Phil Smith. “When they realised that would be tricky, our community clubbed together to buy the building.” It wasn’t easy. “The place

was falling to bits. Somebody made tea towels for fundraising. But when you need a million quid, well, that’s a lot of tea towels.” Then Covid happened, causing material prices to skyrocket. And the tragic passing of project chairman Tony Lee. Still, thanks to tireless work by the village, the pub finally reopened. “Our builder was a local conservation expert,” says marketing manager Sian. “There are beautiful tiles on the dining room fireplace saved from a local manor house, with centuries-old children’s footprints baked into them.” Not to mention solar panels and rainwater

recycling in a nod to modernity. The pub hosts a summer music festival and sponsors local football team Audlem FC. “Wherever they sit in the league,” Smith jokes, “they always leave The White Lion happy.”



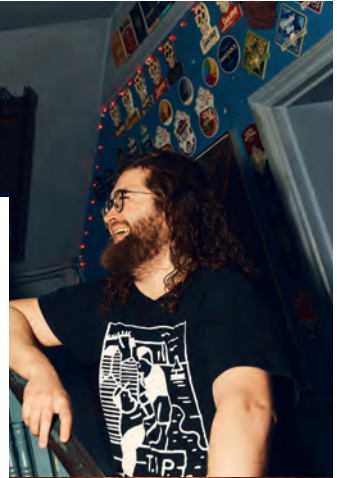
A sharing platter of roast dinner (“We’re all about breaking bread together”) and a pint of local-brewed White Lion lager.

● thewhitelionhankelow.co.uk

✕ FLY TO MANCHESTER



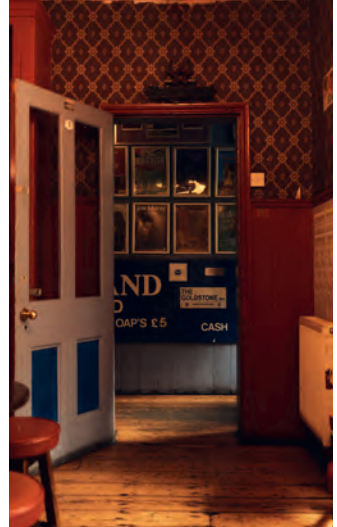
“There are beautiful tiles on the fireplace saved from a local manor house, with centuries-old children’s footprints baked into them”



THE VALIANT VENUE

The Prince Albert, Brighton

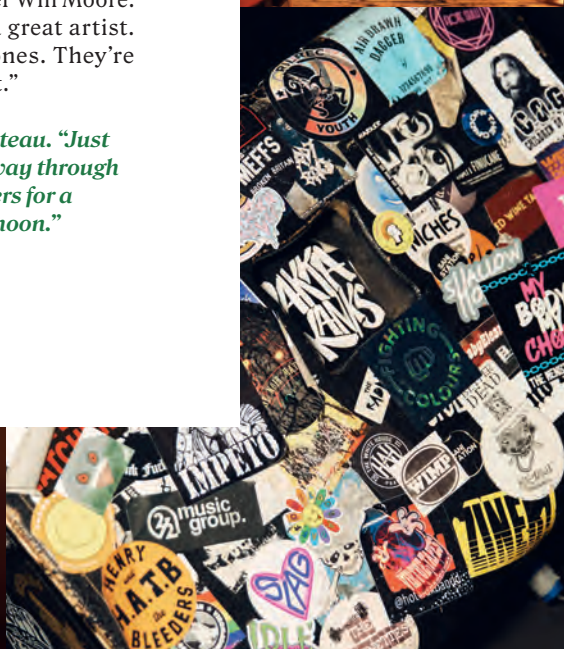
“THIS PUB HAS BEEN A GIG VENUE since the 1970s,” says bar manager George Taylor of this vivid landmark in the Brighton music scene – daubed in a multicoloured mural picked from submissions from a colouring-in competition run by George’s dad, the landlord. The Prince Albert was threatened by a recent planning application that would have seen a neighbouring lot turned partly into flats. “Noise complaints from new places like that are a death sentence.” The team leapt into action, creating a petition which gained 22,000 signatures – with a little help from some friends. “We emailed Fatboy Slim’s team. Within the hour, he rung us up, personally offering to play a gig.” The application was refused and the venue saved. “There’s nothing better than seeing people’s faces at a show,” says venue manager Will Moore. “Being right up close to a great artist. They’re not on their phones. They’re right here, in the moment.”



A pint of Plateau. “Just work your way through the craft beers for a lovely afternoon.”

● princealbertbrighton.co.uk

⊗ FLY TO LONDON

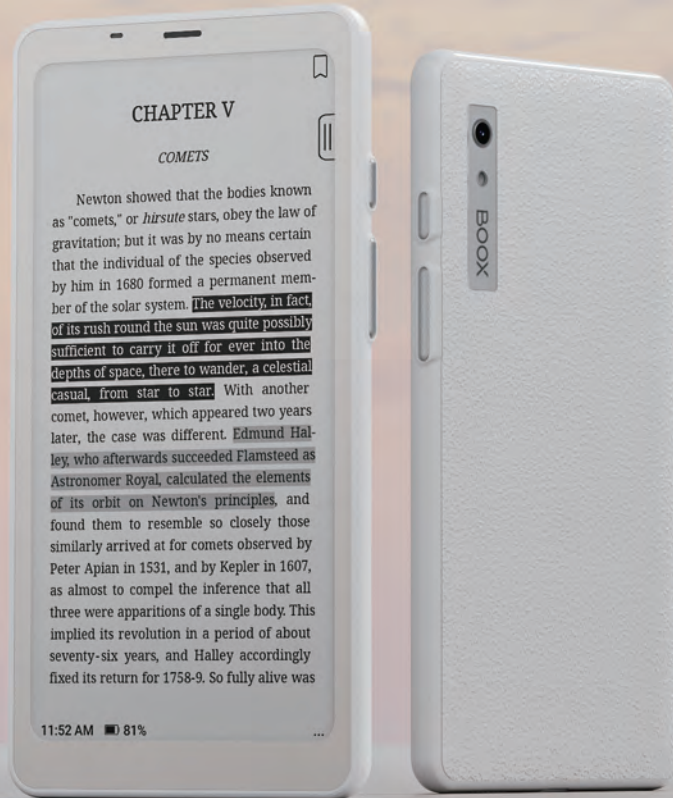


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MAKING A RACKET IN LA



HIT SQUAD

In the heart of downtown Los Angeles, a stylish ping-pong club is rebranding the vintage pastime for a younger generation and attracting new visitors to the Japanese American neighbourhood of Little Tokyo. Zoey Goto paddles up

PHOTOGRAPHS:

MAGGIE SHANNON

JOOLA

VIZON



40-042



Tuesday evening in Little Tokyo and the air is heavy with the hypnotic pop-pop-pop of white plastic balls bouncing off wooden bats, mixed with the beat of deep house music pounding through the speakers. Limbering up like ballerinas at the sidelines, a group of kids in silky 1980s sports jerseys await their moment in the spotlight. Stray balls are flying wildly through the air, as an eclectic crew – ranging in age from teens to middle-aged players – face off across ping-pong tables. To step inside Terasaki Budokan community centre feels a bit like walking into a rave in a gymnasium – only way more wholesome.

Little Tokyo Table Tennis, a weekly ping-pong happening, was founded in 2021 by Japanese American designer Jiro Maestu as a way to reconnect his community post-pandemic. Having honed his game during lockdown with up to 12 hours of back-and-forth practice, Jiro finally persuaded the sceptical owners of his local community centre that he could rally enough interest to host a regular social.

“They didn’t think enough people would attend to make it worthwhile,” Jiro recalls with a smile. “My big idea was just to create a fun space for people to play ping-pong without judgement.”

He delivered, game, set and match, when Little Tokyo Table Tennis became



Opening pages:
Little Tokyo Table Tennis
regulars Kyle Pak and
Ohana Ikuma

This page, clockwise
from centre: Packed
tables at LTTT, players
taking a break, Jiro
Maestu and the benches
at LTTT

an instant underground hit, attracting a cult following of a couple of hundred faithful players, many travelling from outside the city limits to finesse their backspins. Soon enough, the club had attracted thousands of online fans thanks to their surreal aesthetic and DIY approach to marketing. It soon inspired a merch line featuring branded caps, upcycled tracksuits and embroidered paddle covers, sold in Jiro’s clothing boutique located on First Street, also called Little Tokyo Table Tennis.

At the steel benches fringing the room, I chat with Nanami Tsukamoto, a 20-year-old hairstylist with fuchsia hair and matching eyebrows, who explains that joining the club has helped her connect to her Japanese American heritage.

“Table tennis is a really big deal in Asia,” she points out. In America the sport may still be associated with suburban



basements or *Forest Gump*, but in Asia it's taken far more seriously. China, South Korea and Japan dominate the Olympic medal tables, and ping-pong has even been crowned the official national sport of China. "As a result, there's a good mix of Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese and Chinese youth here. I get to practise speaking Japanese a little with friends that I've met here."

Across the polished surface of the court, a seasoned player delivers the ball over the net with pinpoint accuracy, while her opponent, wearing a bucket hat, responds with some ferocious footwork. It's an impressive display of athletic skill, but newcomers shouldn't feel intimidated to pick up a bat, says 32-year-old regular Kyle Chen.

Despite not having a sporty background, Kyle became hooked on ping-pong after visiting the club on a whim. "It's really low stakes, so you don't have to be particularly athletic

to join in. Plenty of people don't actually even play – they just come here to socialise,” he says. “This club has also revitalised the social scene here in the Little Tokyo neighbourhood, with new people congregating here.”

Little Tokyo's roots can be traced back to the late 19th century, when the West Coast received its first serious wave of immigration from Japan, after the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 barred Chinese immigration. Workers from Japan arrived to fill the labour shortage and Little Tokyo sprang forth – a thriving hub of temples, sushi counters and America's oldest Japanese newspaper. These days, Little Tokyo remains the epicentre of Japanese American cultural

life in Southern California, as one of only three Japantowns in the entire US.

I meet Jiro the following morning at the Little Tokyo Table Tennis store. The shop is hidden behind a subtly marked door – if you know, you know – on the main strip of this storied

neighbourhood. “I used to come to this building as a kid to buy random hardware items with my family,” recalls Jiro, who grew up nearby. When the 69-year-old Japanese cookware store shuttered its doors, like a number of heritage businesses in the district in recent years, Little Tokyo Table Tennis took up tenancy



From top: The LTTT store, Jiro and friends



in the exposed brick space. Today, it's been reimagined as a chic shrine to ping-pong, crammed with kitschy-cool trinkets, retro Japanese table tennis fanzines and cool sneakers.

We head back outside, where Jiro takes me on a tour through the Little Tokyo district. We pass a string of *omikujī* – fortune-telling paper slips – fluttering in the breeze outside Koyasan Temple, one of the oldest Buddhist temples in America. Our destination is the Japanese Village Plaza, a shopping

centre filled with anime emporiums and crisscrossed by alleyways festooned with glowing paper lanterns.

Inside the cavernous Bunkado gift shop on First Street, I meet third-generation owner Irene Tsukada Simonian. Her store, its shelves lined with *kawaii* collectables and traditional tea ceremony supplies, stands on the original site of Little Tokyo's first Japanese-owned business: a restaurant called Kame that

FROM EAST TO WEST

WHERE TO GO IN LITTLE TOKYO

ILLUSTRATION:
JIA-YI LIU

1: Little Tokyo Table Tennis store
Dayglow laces, logo paddle covers and limited-edition training tracksuits: this boutique is a one-stop-shop for ping-pong fashionistas.
309 E 1st St

2: Hachioji Craft Ramen
Also known as "Ramen Row", this low-key spot is the place to feast on steaming bowls of rich soupy ramen.
313 E 1st St

3: Fugetsu-Do
Since 1903, the Kito family have owned this dinky emporium of Japanese

confection, famed for its beautiful boxes of mochi and manju.
315 1st St

4: Anime Jungle
Treasure trove of anime toys, Tokusatsu live-action films, Japanese indie films and Studio Ghibli collectables.
319 E 2nd St, Unit 103

5: Japanese Village Plaza
Packed with shops, this plaza feels like it was plucked straight from Japan, complete with strings of red paper lanterns swaying overhead.
335 E 2nd St

6: SomiSomi
Join the queue for a taiyaki – a golden waffle shaped like a fish and filled with soft-serve ice-cream.
332 E 2nd St

7: Little Tokyo Table Tennis club
Where the group plays ping-pong.
249 S Los Angeles St

8: JACCC Plaza & James Irvine Japanese Garden
At the heart of this plaza is a looming sculpture by renowned artist and Los Angeles native, Isamu Noguchi.
244 S San Pedro St

9: Max Karaoke Studio
For a slice of cheap and cheerful Japanese pop culture, head to this ace karaoke bar.
333 S Alameda St #216



“It’s bringing new people to the historic businesses around here. It’s about creating a new chapter of history for Little Tokyo”

the Zen sanctuary of the James Irvine Japanese Garden at JACCC, with its cherry blossom trees and tranquil streams. Jiro tells me that, in recent years, many residents of Little Tokyo have been pushed out due to rising rents. But he hopes

that his club will help struggling businesses in the area. “I want people to understand the depth of ping-pong culture in Asia, but using a visual language that Americans understand. It’s also bringing new people to the historic businesses around here. It’s about creating a new chapter of history for Little Tokyo.”

On the buzzy street corner, a handful of teenagers in cosplay outfits mill around, listening to an elderly Japanese American musician who has been performing at this exact spot for decades, Jiro tells me. The scene is a mash-up of past and present, cultures and generations criss-crossing and colliding, just as I had witnessed the previous evening at the Little Tokyo Table Tennis club.

“It’s much more than an athletics club,” Kyle had told me between matches, standing in front of a whimsical banner showing a herd of deer above the phrase “Table tennis gave me a lot in my life”, written in both Japanese and English. “We come here to move culture forward, while still being reverent to the past.”

● Little Tokyo Table Tennis club runs every Tuesday from 6–9 pm at Terasaki Budokan, 249 S Los Angeles St, Los Angeles, CA 90012, and costs \$5 for entry

📍 FLY TO LOS ANGELES

opened in 1885. “Sushi was introduced to the US on this very street. At the time they thought that Americans wouldn’t want to eat raw fish, but it proved a roaring success.”

Little Tokyo’s strong community was partially forged by a troubling chapter in US history, Irene says. “During WWII, the people on the West Coast of my parent’s generation, including my own parents, were rounded up and sent to camps,” she says of the internment camps where 112,000 people of Japanese descent living on the Pacific Coast were forcibly relocated. “When the war ended and they were allowed home, they returned to Little Tokyo to rebuild what had been lost. It created a strong sense of togetherness.”

The beauty of the Little Tokyo neighbourhood that exists today is its authenticity, Irene feels. “This isn’t a place for people to pretend that they’re in Japan. Instead, it’s where Japanese Americans actually live or come to get their clothes, books and food. And it also happens to serve the best ramen in town!”

We take the scenic route back to the Little Tokyo Table Tennis store, passing



From top: Shopping at Bunkado, cherry blossom at James Irvine Japanese Garden at JACCC and tempting local food





London's Best Kept Secret

Are you planning to visit Central London this summer?

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Sophisticated Elegant Escape in the Heart of Knightsbridge, London



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The five-star HOTEL GUIDE



Take five

Self-care is all the rage. How better to properly look after yourself than with a stay at some truly superior accommodation to enjoy luxury rooms, big soft beds, amenities, a grand setting and impeccable service? Here's our pick of prime spots around the Virgin Atlantic network, where you can really take care of number one.

In an unashamedly

Brutalist hulk - once part of Camden Town Hall - on buzzy Euston Road, perches the UK's first branch of trendy US hotel group The Standard. Suffice to say, it's a bit cool. Not least for the well-judged balance of groovy-baby London kitsch in the decor, and the feeling that actually interesting people from the creative industries hang out here (they do). Meet friends at the ground-floor Double Standard cocktail spot, near the adjacent library



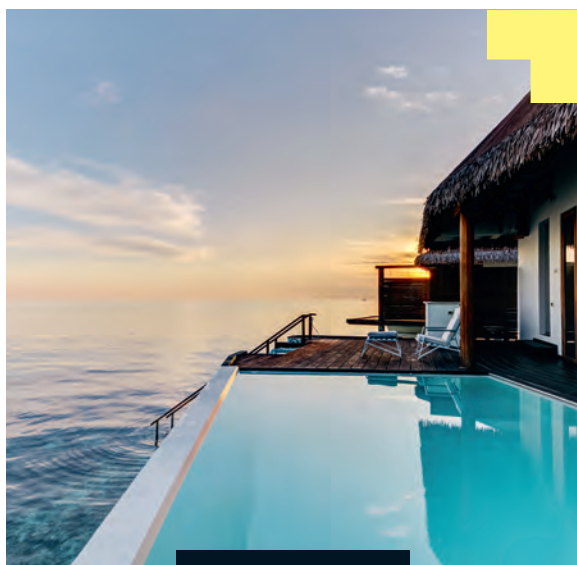
lounge (complete with DJ booth). Then whisk them up the red-pill glass elevator for supper at 10th-floor Decimo, where Peter Sanchez-Iglesias's decadent Spanish/Mexican-inspired menu can be savoured as the sun sets over the Hogwartsian silhouette of St Pancras, opposite. Nothing standard here.



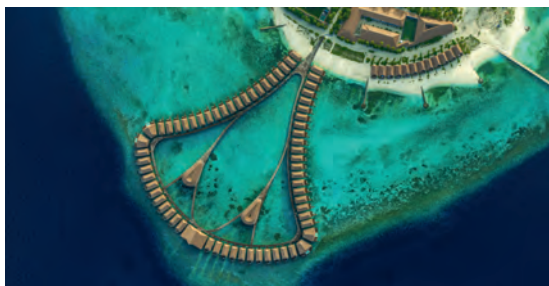
The Standard, London
THE ONE FOR SOCIAL CLIMBING

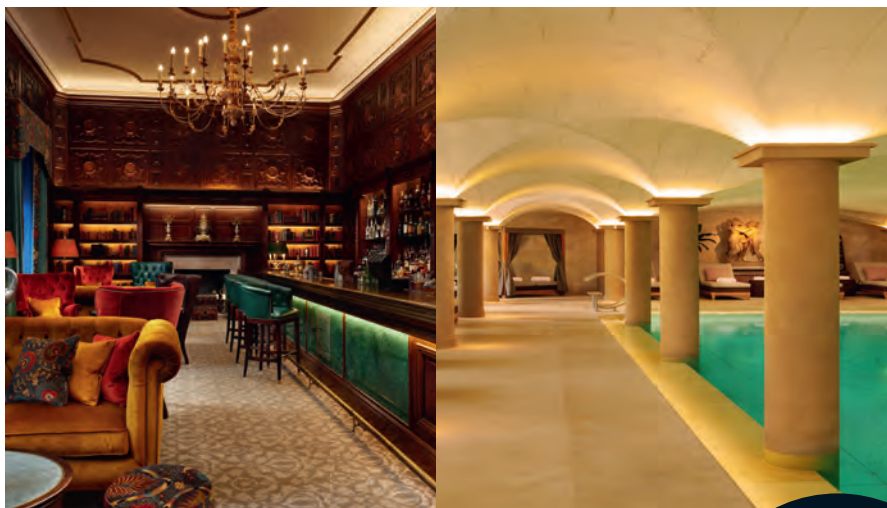
CINNAMON VELIFUSHI MALDIVES

The one for **waking up in paradise**



Everybody should treat themselves to a luxury break in the Maldives at least once in their lives. The paradisiacal island nation, all cerulean seas and pristine beaches, has treasures aplenty. The Cinnamon Hotels and Resorts group presents Cinnamon Velifushi, with easy access to a dramatic coral-encrusted shipwreck. Cinnamon Ellaidhoo is reckoned one of the finest snorkelling sites in the world, with near-peerless access to manta rays and psychedelic shoals of fish. Cinnamon Dhonveli is by the famous waves of Pasta Point surf break. Platinum Island at Cinnamon Hakuraa Huraa is all about adults-only indulgence, with a top-notch spa and flawless service. Cinnamon is all about memorable breaks with a little bit of added spice.





Grantley Hall, Ripon

THE ONE FOR
STATELY
HOMECOMING

A prettier Palladian

pile you never did see. Grantley Hall, magnificently set against the backdrop of the Yorkshire Dales, is part 17th-century, part Georgian palace. Amid 15 hectares of manicured grounds - including a Grade II listed Japanese Garden - the stately manor features rich mahogany, and deep velvet armchairs.

Behold the Italian marbled swimming pool, beneath its cloistered ceiling. Plush rooms, many of which boast period fireplaces and copper baths. There's a Michelin-starred restaurant with a 10-course tasting menu by local hero Shaun Rankin, a pan-Asian spot, and a rather exclusive nightclub, plus a vast spa, Nordic Spa Garden, indoor-outdoor hydrotherapy, Swedish massage and reiki. If you're a fitness nut, get down to the gym, the underwater treadmill, the 3D body scanner and cryotherapy chamber. Doesn't get cooler than that.



PAN PACIFIC, LONDON

The one for family wellness

➔ It's a classic dilemma for parents who fancy a bit of pampering - what to do with the kids? Refreshingly, Pan Pacific London, a refined, forward-thinking designer spot in the heart of the City, believes kids deserve to be pampered as well. Its wellness floor hosts innovative facials and skincare programme for 6-16 year olds, using natural, hypoallergenic skincare products by luxury children's brand Bonpoint, served with uplifting stories and valuable lessons in self-care. The partnership with Bonpoint extends to Pan Pacific's toothsome children's afternoon tea and there's generous time set aside in the handsome 18.5m infinity pool just for little ones to make a splash. Family rooms - all floor-to-ceiling windows and epic City views - have fun stuff for nights in, double queen-size beds and kids' own choice of bedtime treats before a (hopefully) nice long sleep.



Where better to

rest your head on an authentic English countryside break than a barn? Admittedly, a very fancy barn. Twin barns, indeed. Congrove Barns are a pair of hi-spec conversions at the end of a south-facing valley gesturing towards the historic city of Bath. Perfectly idyllic as a romantic bolthole for two, or a snug getaway for families, one barn has two plush en-suite bedrooms, the other a games room with table football, lounge, kitchen and quality sofa bed. Outside, in the verdant, gated private garden, there's a swish in-ground hot tub, badminton equipment

Congrove Barns, Bath

THE ONE FOR BUCOLIC EASE

and even a croquet lawn so you can embrace that authentic upper-crust weekend-away vibe. Impressively, there's a private arboretum in the same valley. Check out this and other rural manors and fine country house escapes at Luxury Cotswold Rentals.



THE SETAI, MIAMI BEACH

The one for **transcendent finery**

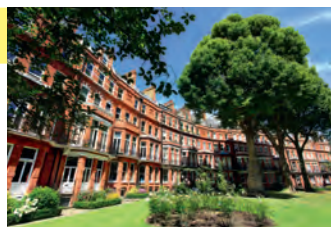


A heady fusion of Art Deco styling and discreet Zen sophistication make this plum hideaway on the more subdued northern stretch of South Beach a reliable go-to for folks who really know their quality hotels. The mood shifts the moment you step in, cosily ensconced in handsome teak, with rustic flooring that was carted brick-by-brick from Shanghai's Old City. Jaya restaurant is a ravishing temple to pan-Asian cooking, with tandoori and thali dishes served out alongside signature Peking duck, with incendiary fire-breathing live entertainment. While away the balmy Florida afternoons in one of a trio of infinity pools, each heated to subtly different temperatures, retire to your massive room with its handmade Duxiana bed and Frette linen, or savour a sundowner at the Setai's beachfront grill. Taking a beat, in style, is very much the vibe here.



On an elegant Victorian

street in well-heeled Knightsbridge sits one of the most discreetly luxurious hotels in London. The Franklin, of the Italian Starhotels Collezione, is a sumptuous sanctuary combining the warmth of a family home with flawless five-star service. Designed by interiors doyen Anouska Hempel, the Venetian-inspired rooms have heavy curtains framing fine views over leafy Egerton Gardens. Each is furnished with palatial beds decked in lavish



linens and complete with marble bathrooms and Penhaligon's products. The Franklin Bar is a glamorous arena for supping champagne, while The Franklin Restaurant - led by Michelin-star chef Alfredo Russo - is an opulent space for sampling poached wild lobster and Jerusalem artichoke crème brûlée.



**The
Franklin
Hotel,
London**
THE ONE FOR
LA DOLCE VITA



Foster and partners

It's no longer unusual for major movie stars to step into the small screen, led in no small part by *True Detective*. Matthew McConaughey, Woody Harrelson and Michelle Monaghan were the marquee launch signings a decade ago. Since then Colin Farrell, Rachel McAdams, Mahershala Ali and Vince Vaughn have graced the crime drama. Now Jodie Foster (pictured with Kali Reis) has become the latest luminary to sign on – for a new season set in Alaska.

© WATCH TRUE DETECTIVE: NIGHT COUNTRY

65-71// Movies

Check out Emma Stone's iconic film looks, and catch up with Argentine thriller *The Delinquents*, plus Jason Statham as *The Beekeeper*.

73-77// Television

We break down *The Evolution of Black British Music* and get to spend *A Day With the Executive Chef* at NYC's Hottest Seafood Restaurant.



79-82 // Audio

Another Sky are back for *Beach Day*, Brittany Howard wonders *What Now*, while Jazmin Bean contemplates a *Traumatic Livelihood*.



Vera Loves

We're one of the few airlines that selects their own movies and TV, with lots of new content onboard each month. Look out for anything labelled with a heart - that means we think it's the best of the best. We champion big blockbusters, quirky shorts, binge-worthy box sets and ace docs. Read on for our top picks for May.

A WORLD OF ENTERTAINMENT AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

MAY'S ON

MAY

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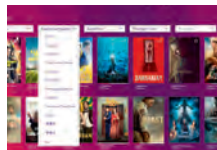
- Select an album from Music, a TV show from TV or a movie from Movies.
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Viewing guide

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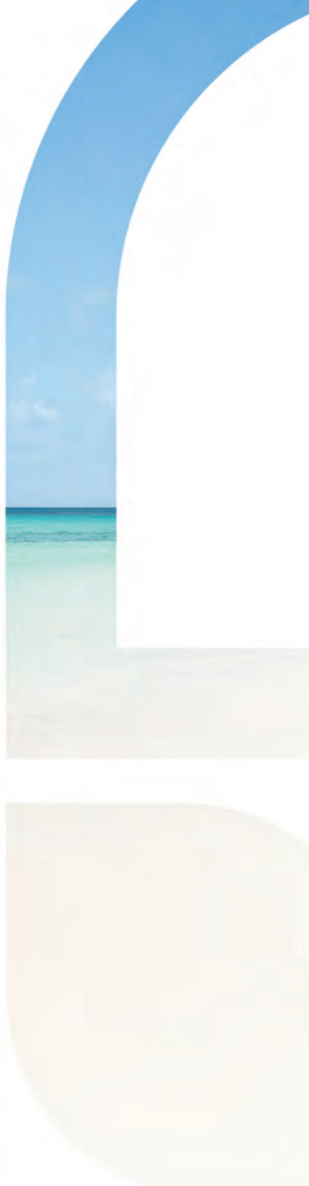
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WHAT'S ON MOVIES

THE BEST-DRESSED FILMS IN THE SKY

Poor Things (2023)

BELLA'S WEDDING DRESS

British costume designer Holly Waddington won an Oscar for Stone's garms in this off-beat 1880s-set sci-fi. She clearly had some tricks up her (massive) sleeves – those “leg o'mutton” shoulders on character Bella Baxter's wedding dress are reportedly a metre around each, ribbed to evoke a cage and as puffy as IKEA lampshades. Apparently the veil was a last-minute addition – Stone saw it on the rack and insisted on fastening it to her chops.



Clockwise from top: Poor Things, Battle of the Sexes, La La Land and The Favourite

The Favourite (2018)

ABIGAIL'S SCULLERY-MAID DRESS

Triple Oscar-winning costume designer Sandy Powell subtly tweaked Stone's attire to reflect her character's ascent up the social ladder in the court of gout-ridden Queen Anne (Olivia Colman). By the end, Stone's Abigail is decked out in an OTT white party dress with black chevrons, mad make-up and debauched hair, radiating nouveau riche vulgarity.



STONE COLD ICON

EMMA STONE's most knockout onscreen looks



Battle of the Sexes (2017)

MATCH-DAY DRESS

During fittings for this biopic of tennis star Billie Jean King, costume designer Mary Zophres was impressed at how much the usually dainty Stone bulked out her musculature. This match-day dress, donned while vanquishing chauvinistic male player Bobby Riggs (Steve Carell) before a TV audience of millions, was a copy of the real thing, designed by “tennis couturier” – an actual job! – Ted Tinling.



La La Land (2016)

MIA'S YELLOW FROCK

So iconic it made it onto the poster, this sunny outfit – worn for Mia's dance sequence with Sebastian (Ryan Gosling) – was inspired by a Versace number Stone wore on the red carpet promoting *The Amazing Spider-Man 2*. Designer Mary Zophres (her again) wanted a palette and fit that was believable for a struggling actress, but also paid homage to Hollywood's Technicolor golden age.

© WATCH POOR THINGS & LA LA LAND

HOT RIGHT NOW



How to Have Sex 15

Mia McKenna-Bruce,
Lara Peake

91 mins

▶ **WHEN THREE BRITISH GIRLS EMBARK ON THE HOLIDAY OF A** lifetime, they plan to visit lots of art galleries and take bracing walks in the countryside. Only joking! In fact, their idea of a good time involves decamping to the party resort of Malia for plenty of drinking, clubbing and hooking up with fellow holidaymakers. It will indeed be memorable, but mostly for the wrong reasons, because although the girls manage the drinking, clubbing and hooking-up part, having a great time proves elusive, particularly when they're thrown into a nightmare of sex and consent. What emerges is an expertly observed and very timely coming-of-age drama.



RACE FOR GLORY:
AUDI VS LANCIA 12

Riccardo Scamarcio,
Volker Bruch

90 mins

This big-budget biopic does what it says on the tin, telling of the rivalry between Audi and Lancia, particularly the battle between Roland Gumpert's Audi team and Cesare Fiorio in the Lancia at the 1983 Rally World Championship. Can Lancia regain its former glory?



SELF RELIANCE 15

Jake Johnson,
Anna Kendrick

85 mins

Quirky comedy starring actor-writer-director Johnson as a regular bloke asked if he wants to play a reality TV game that involves evading "hunters" out to kill him. With a huge prize in the offing, he agrees, thinking he's found a loophole. Ah, but has he?



POOR THINGS 18

Emma Stone,
Mark Ruffalo

120 mins

Hoovering up awards everywhere, the latest from director Yorgos Lanthimos tells of Bella Baxter (Stone), a woman brought back to life by a scientist. Bella's subsequent voyage of self-discovery is eyebrow-raising, to say the least. See *opener*



THE IRON CLAW 15

Zac Efron,
Jeremy Allen White

132 mins

Many say that this was unfairly ignored at the Oscars. Featuring an incredible, transformative performance from Efron, it's the true tale of the Von Deich family – talented wrestlers so dogged by tragedy you'll begin to wonder why they bothered.



DRIFT 15

Cynthia Erivo,
Alia Shawkat

93 mins

Festooned with Sundance buzz, the superb *Drift* tells of Jacqueline, a refugee who escapes to a Greek Island – only to find herself in a day-to-day struggle for survival. When she meets a tour guide in similar circumstances, the two become unlikely pals.

Get a grip

Why we love wrestling movies



Fakers

Wrestling-hating bores love to remind us faithful that pro wrestling is totally staged, pretend, for the cameras. Well, yeah! Fake violence is better than the real thing – see *Cassandro*. Fun fact – wrestling’s fictional component actually has a name – kayfabe.

Emotional hold

Wrestling movies add another layer of fiction to the myth. They’re not phoney, they’re meta! And besides, they obviously have great actors – no wonder former ring stars Dwayne Johnson and Dave Bautista are among Hollywood’s biggest box office stars.

Drama

Movies like *The Iron Claw* use wrestling to explore profound questions of masculinity, competitiveness and shattered dreams. It’s Shakespeare, basically – with huge, rippling dudes in tiny shorts.

WATCH THE IRON CLAW & CASSANDRO



VERA LISTINGS: ANDREW HOLMES. WORDS: ANDY HILL

SMART LAUGHS



The Delinquents

12

Esteban Bigliardi, Daniel Elias

189 mins

► **THIS IS THE KIND OF MOVIE YOU MIGHT DESCRIBE AS “FREE-wheeling”, “idiosyncratic”, or maybe even “surreal”.** All of which is another way of saying that whatever we say here won’t do it justice, but we’ll try anyway. Firstly, it hails from Argentina. Secondly, it’s pretty long. Thirdly, it has an off-kilter plot in which a man steals money from the bank where he works, intending to own up, do three years of jail time, then come out and enjoy the proceeds. However, the bloke he’s entrusted to look after the money while he does his time has not quite kept up his end of the bargain. The result is a unique and really rather brilliant experience.



THE POD GENERATION

12

Chiwetel Ejiofor, Emilia Clarke

101 mins

An intriguing mix of sci-fi, comedy and romance here (“sci-rom-com” anyone? “Com-fi-rom”?), with Clarke and Ejiofor playing a couple who in the not-too-distant future use artificial womb and “pod technology” in order to literally grow a family.



AMERICAN FICTION

15

Jeffrey Wright, Tracee Ellis Ross

117 mins

Award-eating comedy with a sharp satirical edge, in which frustrated writer Monk (Wright, who’s brill) pens a mickey-take novel about the Black experience – only to have the world take it seriously. Based on the 2001 novel *Erasure* by Percival Everett.

ACTION STATIONS



The Beekeeper ♥

15

Jason Statham,
Jeremy Irons

105 mins

▶ **FOLLOWING A SPELL IN THE US NAVY, THE BEEKEEPER DIRECTOR** David Ayer turned his hand to writing screenplays and, having penned *Training Day* and *The Fast and the Furious*, took up directing with equal success, bringing us *Fury* and *Suicide Squad*, among others. This, then, has quite the pedigree, and that's before you factor in Statham as ex-special forces beekeeper Adam Clay, whose friend Eloise runs afoul of criminals and commits suicide. Adam's peeved and swears revenge; as well as being an actual beekeeper, Adam is also a "Beekeeper", a clandestine organisation of fellow tough guys he can call upon to sort stuff out. Plenty of action, lots of intrigue and a fair amount of bees follow.



THE PAINTER

15

Charlie Weber,
Madison Bailey

100 mins

A woman from the past resurfaces for ex-CIA operative Peter (Weber). Exposed and targeted by a relentless killer and a rogue black ops programme, Pete must rely on skills he hoped to have left behind.



FREELANCE

15

Alison Brie,
John Cena

108 mins

A treat for the eyeballs and a bit of time off for the brain, this action-comedy stars Cena as an ex-special forces operative tasked with providing security for a journalist (Brie) on an overseas trip, which is ambushed.

LOVEBIRDS



FRENCH GIRL ♥

15

Zach Braff,
Vanessa Hudgens

106 mins

Lots of fun in this rom com in which Braff plays a mild-mannered teacher who goes with his girlfriend to Quebec so she can try out for a restaurant job. However, it turns out that the owner (Hudgens) is her ex.



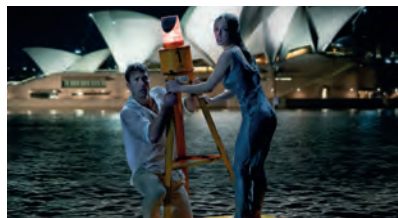
WHAT HAPPENS LATER

15

Meg Ryan,
David Duchovny

104 mins

When ex-lovers Willa (Ryan) and Bill (Duchovny), who last met 10 years ago, find themselves stranded overnight, they're reminded of what annoyed them about each other – and more, of course.



ANYONE BUT YOU ♥

15

Sydney Sweeney,
Glen Powell

104 mins

Eye-candy settings are at stoopidly high levels in this winning rom com. Sweeney and Powell are the couple who, thanks to a misunderstanding, hate each other but must pretend to be in love.

THE THRILLS



OUT OF DARKNESS

15

Safia Oakley-Green,
Kit Young

87 mins

This gnarly British horror film visits a rarely explored horror niche – cavemen. Using a language invented for the movie, our palaeolithic heroes find themselves at the mercy of a strange creature.



The Lesson

15

Richard E Grant,
Julie Delpy

102 mins

THE TEACHERS' LOUNGE

12

Leonie Benesch

95 mins

Nominated for a Best International Feature gong at this year's Oscars, this German drama focuses on a teacher given the job of weeding out the student (or maybe students) responsible for a series of thefts.

► **PART MYSTERY, PART CHARACTER STUDY, THE LESSON IS BUILT ON** three brilliant performances, chief of which is that of Richard E Grant as novelist JM Sinclair. Agonising over a follow-up to his bestseller, and still mourning the death of his son Felix, who drowned in the garden pool (very *Don't Look Now*), Sinclair employs a young writer (Daryl McCormack), ostensibly to tutor his other son, Bertie. As we soon discover, our man Sinclair has ulterior motives. Does it have something to do with getting that difficult second novel done? Is there a sexual connotation involving Sinclair's wife (Julie Delpy)? Does it have something to do with the dear, departed Felix – or is it a combination of all three?

Movie bluff

How true is *The Great Escaper*?



So what's the premise? Bernard Jordan, an 89-year-old World War II

veteran (played by Michael Caine), decides to flee his Sussex care home one day in June 2014 and sneak over to France for the 70th anniversary of the D-Day landings.

That rings a bell. Is it based on a true story? Indeed, IRL Bernie led the authorities a merry dance for the 48 hours or so he went AWOL. There's also a poignant, somewhat dramatised, scene where he meets some old German soldiers in a pub, it's very moving.

So the film's mostly true? Yes, including the fun detail that he couldn't be arsed standing around waiting for dignitaries – the Queen, President Obama – to show up, so he left early. The hashtag #greatestescaper did indeed go viral.

Quite the achievement. In his prime, Bernie captured an Enigma machine from a German U-Boat, and transported tanks to the beach at Normandy on D-Day. But sure, going viral and being played by Michael Caine is also pretty rad.

WATCH THE GREAT ESCAPER

TRUE TALES



The Blind

Aron von Andrian,
Matthew Erick White

110 mins

► **THIS BIOPIC WITH A CHRISTIAN ANGLE TELLS THE TRUE STORY** of the Robertson family, who found fame on US reality TV show *Duck Dynasty*. If you're not familiar with US reality TV, it doesn't matter, because the movie takes place before the family found TV fame – and it tells a great story. It's the tale of how Phil Robertson and his pal Big Al went from humble beginnings to found Duck Commander, a family-operated business that provides gear for duck hunters. It was, of course, a journey beset by problems: along the way, Phil battled alcoholism and mental health issues. However, through his religious beliefs and a newfound commitment to his family, he discovered the true meaning of love and perseverance.



THE GREAT ESCAPER

12

Michael Caine,
Glenda Jackson

96 mins

At the grand old age of 90, Sir Michael Caine joins Glenda Jackson (since departed) in this heart-warming true-life tale of WWII veteran Bernard Jordan, who was so determined to join the 2014 D-Day commemoration that he ran away – from his nursing home. See box previous page



THE BOYS IN THE BOAT

12

Joel Edgerton,
Callum Turner

123 mins

George Clooney's latest stint in the director's chair focuses on the University of Washington rowing team, which competed for gold at the 1936 Berlin Olympics. A true underdog story, it's aim is that you will be uplifted and inspired. And you will be.

Movie quiz

Take on our featured films

1 //

Sir Michael Caine said he would only appear in *The Great Escaper* if old friend Sir John Standing was also cast. They had known each other since starting out as actors in the 1950s and both appeared together in which classic 1976 WWII movie?

2 //

In *Race for Glory: Audi vs Lancia*, Daniel Brühl stars in his second racing biopic – what was the first?

3 //

What connects the names of the five lead characters in Argentinean writer-director Rodrigo Moreno's hugely entertaining heist movie, *The Delinquents*?

4 //

The Boys in the Boat is George Clooney's first sports movie since which college football flick from 2008?

5 //

Jake Johnson, the writer-director behind Andy Samberg comedy thriller *Self Reliance*, is known for playing Nick Miller in which 2010s comedy series?

● *Answers on the right*



OUR COMPLETE MOVIE LISTINGS

Make your choice from the A-Z of our pick of the BEST OF THE BEST

NEW RELEASES

A-D

- Aliens Abducted My Parents and Now I Feel Kinda Left Out
- All Dirt Roads Taste of Salt
- American Fiction
- Americanish
- Anatomie d'une Chute (Anatomy of a Fall)
- Anyone But You



● Aquaman and the Lost Kingdom

- Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe
- Arthur's Whisky
- Back on the Strip
- The Baker
- Barbie
- The Beekeeper
- Bernadette
- The Blind
- Blue Beetle
- The Book of Clarence
- The Boys in the Boat
- The Burial
- The Caine Mutiny Court-Martial
- The Canterville Ghost
- Carmen (2023)
- Cassandra
- Cat Person
- The Color Purple
- The Creator
- Dead Shot

- The Delinquents
- The Dive
- Dreamin' Wild
- Dream Scenario
- Drift
- Drishyam 2
- Dumb Money

E-H

- The End We Start From
- The Equalizer 3
- Expend4bles
- Fallen Leaves (Kuolleet lehdet)
- Ferrari
- Five Nights at Freddy's
- Freelance
- Fremont
- French Girl
- Freud's Last Session
- Gran Turismo: Based on a True Story
- The Great Escaper
- A Haunting In Venice
- The Holdovers
- How to Have Sex
- The Hunger Games: The Ballad of Songbirds & Snakes

I-L

- Influencer
- Insidious: The Red Door
- The Iron Claw



- Killers of the Flower Moon
- The Kill Room

- The Kingdom: Flame of Destiny
- Lego DC Comics Super Heroes: Justice League vs Bizarro League
- The Lesson
- Lights Out
- Lola

M-Q

- Mafia Mamma
- The Marsh King's Daughter
- The Marvels
- May December
- Mean Girls
- Medusa Deluxe
- Mending the Line
- Migration
- Miller's Girl
- A Million Miles Away
- The Miracle Club
- Mission: Impossible – Dead Reckoning Part 1
- Monster
- The Movie Teller (La Contadora de Películas)
- Napoleon
- Next Goal Wins
- No Hard Feelings
- The Nun II
- The Old Oak
- Oppenheimer
- Origin
- Out of Darkness
- The Painter
- Past Lives
- Paw Patrol: The Mighty Movie
- The Persian Version
- The Pod Generation
- Poor Things
- Priscilla

- Puffin Rock and the New Friends
- Puppy Love

R-V

- Race for Glory: Audi vs Lancia
- Reality
- The Retirement Plan
- The Royal Hotel
- Rumble Through the Dark
- Saltburn
- Sanctuary
- Saw X
- Scooby-Doo! And Krypto, Too!
- Scrambled
- Self Reliance
- She Came to Me
- Shortcomings
- Sick Girl
- Silent Night
- So Long for Love
- Sound of Freedom



● Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse

- Strays
- Suzume
- The Swan Princess: A Fairytale is Born
- The Swan Princess: Far Longer Than Forever
- TAZ: Quest for Burger
- The Teachers' Lounge
- Teen Titans Go! & DC Super Hero Girls: Mayhem in the Multiverse
- Thanksgiving
- Le Règne animal (The Animal Kingdom)
- The Three Musketeers: D'Artagnan (Les Trois Mousquetaires: D'Artagnan)
- Tripped Up
- Trolls Band Together

W-Z

- War Pony
- What Happens Later
- Wish



● Wonka

- The Wrath of Becky
- The Zone of Interest

VERA CLASSICS

- About Time
- Atonement
- Bridget Jones's Diary
- Crazy, Stupid, Love
- The Departed
- Eastern Promises
- Gangs of New York
- Gladiator
- Goodfellas
- Indecent Proposal
- Interstellar
- La La Land
- Memento
- No Country for Old Men
- The Prestige
- Slumdog Millionaire
- Something's Gotta Give

REGIONAL

- Afamefuna
- Angrezi Medium
- A Bag of Trouble
- Bala
- Born to Fly
- Brahmastra Part One: Shiva
- Daddy
- Daredevil Musthafa
- The Ex-Files 4: Marriage Plan
- Golmaal – Fun Unlimited
- Kantara
- Kapoor and Sons
- Kesari the King
- Malaika
- Merry Men 3
- Orisa
- Pathaan
- Rocketry: The Nambi Effect
- Shiv Shastri Balboa
- Something Like Gold
- Street Dancer 3D
- Tanhaji: the Unsung
- Tatsama Tadbhava
- Uunchai
- Vikram Vedha

SHORT FILMS

- Bean Feasa (Wise Woman)
- Cat Got Your Tongue
- Everybody Dies... Sometimes
- Gene
- Harold & Mary
- An Irish Goodbye
- Strange Way of Life (Extraña forma de vida)
- The Stupid Boy
- Tondex 2000

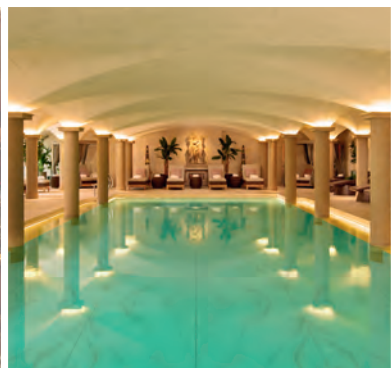


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RELAIS &
CHATEAUX

WHAT'S ON

TELEVISION

MAY

A MASHUP OF GLOBAL STYLES

BEAT ROUTE

A new series explains how Black British music has evolved. Dwayne Wilks breaks it down...



THE HIGHLY CHARGED MASHUP OF JUNGLE SENT PARTYGOERS INTO RAPTURES

UK FUNKY

KEY ARTIST: DONAE'O
"Bad boy baseline, sweet topline melody"

A growing African influence in the Black British diaspora ditched the lyric-driven discipline, but kept grime's competitive spirit to create a new genre that borrows from Afrobeats and house, but also exhibits hints of American R&B and Jamaican dancehall. Young artists "skanked out" to tunes by the likes of Donae'o. It's been remarked, with some irony, that such a fusion could only have happened in the UK.

© WATCH THE EVOLUTION OF BLACK BRITISH MUSIC

JUNGLE

KEY ARTIST: GOLDIE
"Jungle is the mother of UK dance music"

In the early 90s, young Black artists fused Jamaican dancehall samples with racing percussion inspired by techno and breakbeat. The result? A highly charged mashup of dance and soul that sent partygoers into raptures.

GARAGE

KEY ARTIST: MC VERSATILE
"Garage is the Motown of Black British music"

Garage, at 130 beats per minute (BPM), was a tad slower than jungle's breathless 160 BPM, but still lively enough to set late-90s dancefloors alight. This more relaxed tempo allowed R&B elements to permeate the sound, making it more palatable – as such it spawned countless hits.

GRIME

KEY ARTIST: DIZZEE RASCAL
"No glitz and glamour, all blitz and hammer!"

In the early 00s, inner-city east London kids fused dancehall's soundsystem culture with the skilled penmanship of American hip hop, to create what became known as grime. This slower tempo allowed artists to rap more comfortably over the beats. Picture hard-nosed, witty inner-city kids either beating their chests or painting sobering pictures of their environment.

MUST WATCH



Waitress: The Musical

Culture	164 mins
---------	----------

► **BACK IN 2007, ACTRESS, WRITER AND DIRECTOR ADRIENNE SHELLY** scored a huge critical smash (and modest commercial hit) with her movie *Waitress*, the delightful tale of Jenna, a pie-maker and waitress who dreams of turning her baking talents into something more. Tragically, Adrienne was murdered just months before her movie's release and therefore never saw it develop a glorious tailwind: first finding success as a cult favourite and then adapted as a musical that began on Broadway, transferred to the West End and went back to Broadway, bagging a Tony award and more nominations – including a Grammy – than you can shake a stick at in the process. Now this is the big-screen version of that Broadway musical.



TRUE DETECTIVE: NIGHT COUNTRY 18

Box set	Up to 69 mins
---------	---------------

Don't worry if you've never seen *True Detective* – each season presents a new story. This one features the ever-brilliant Jodie Foster investigating the sudden disappearance of eight blokes at an Alaskan research station. It's dark, compelling – and we're showing the whole of series four.



CASA GRANDE ♥

Drama	43 mins
-------	---------

A little bit of soap, a little bit of drama, plus some social commentary thrown in – this drama set in sunny southern California shifts its focus between several families in order to tackle universal themes of class and culture as the state's migrant workers come into conflict with landowners.



NAVALNY 12

Documentary	98 mins
-------------	---------

Made and released before his death in prison in February, this feature focuses on Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny. As the documentary begins, he's recently survived a Novichok poison attempt, and the film charts his fight back to health.



BREAKING OLYMPIA: THE PHIL HEATH STORY 15

Documentary	114 mins
-------------	----------

Featuring contributions from Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson, among other muscled luminaries, this documentary joins legendary bodybuilder Phil Heath as he battles back from injury in the hope of becoming the greatest muscleman ever.



THE EVOLUTION OF BLACK BRITISH MUSIC !♥

Culture	45 mins
---------	---------

This award-winning documentary series charts the emergence and rise of jungle, grime and garage in Britain. Featuring pioneers of the scene, it describes how jungle emerged in the early 90s. From that sprung garage – and more. *See opener*

Brains trust

Who's who in *Young Sheldon*?

1 //

Sheldon

The roots of the boy genius (played by Iain Armitage) who becomes *The Big Bang Theory's* overgrown boy genius are all here.



2 //

Meemaw

Sheldon's beloved grandma (Annie Potts) is every inch the loveable God-fearing Texan matriarch. Except when it comes to her secret gambling den.



3 //

George

More of a "dramedy" than straight sitcom, nowhere is this arc more pronounced than when Sheldon's dad's (Lance Barber) family-man image is compromised.



4 //

Paige

Sheldon is miffed to encounter a rival in the shape of Paige Swanson (Mckenna Grace). She's every bit as whip-smart as our hero, without any of his social hang-ups.



WATCH YOUNG SHEDDON

ALL THE DRAMA



Captivated ♥

12

Box set

43 mins

➤ **THIS IS ONE OF THOSE PSYCHOLOGICAL THRILLERS INTO WHICH** you can sink several hours of your life and have it feel like minutes. It'll involve compelling performances (step forward Kara Tointon) and, of course, the kind of high-concept plot that gets you on the hook and won't let you off. Here it's the fact that poverty-stricken single mum Rachel (Tointon) is able to give up her hard-scrabble cleaning job when a wealthy businessman, Elliott (Allen Leech), offers her a job. It's well-paid and childcare's not a problem, so at first it seems like her problems are over. But pretty soon the red flags are waving and the more she becomes involved in her new boss's affairs, the more suspicious she grows. We're showing series one.



THE TOURIST

15

Box set

59 mins

Biggest TV phenomenon of the last few years (the one that's not *Mr Bates vs The Post Office*)? That would be *The Tourist*, the twisty-turny drama starring Jamie Dornan. And we have the entire second season at your fingertips, you lucky, lucky people.



MIDSOMER MURDERS ♥

15

Box set

Up to 92 mins

Right now, there's a bit of a trend for what they call "cosy" murder-mysteries (we're looking at you, Richard Osman) and right on-brand is this long-running detective show set in villages dotted around the fictional county of Midsomer. This is series number 24 screening onboard!

WHAT'S ON TELEVISION

IMPECCABLE TASTE



A Day With the Executive Chef at NYC's Hottest Seafood Restaurant

Culture

18 mins

► **EXCUSE US IF WE'RE ABOUT TO MAKE YOUR MOUTH WATER, BUT** this is the bit where we tell you about Hav & Mar, the top New York seafood joint where chefs Marcus Samuelsson and Fariyal Abdullahi pay homage to their Ethiopian and Swedish roots. And if you're wondering what it's like behind the scenes of such a cutting-edge establishment, wonder no more, as this documentary joins executive chef Abdullahi for a scintillating, tastebud-tickling, day-in-the-life look at her work.



GINO'S ITALY: SECRETS OF THE SOUTH

Culture

23 mins

Join the irrepressible Mr D'Acampo as he explores the food secrets of where else but Italy, sampling "nun's breast cakes" (the mind boggles), meeting mermaids in Gallipoli and much, much more.



FEEDING TOMORROW

Our World

80 mins

Eye-opening doc that tells the story, firstly, of how food interacts with and transforms every part of our lives. And, secondly, of the very clever minds working to transform what they say is a broken food system.

DOSE OF REALITY



GO HARD OR GO HOME

Reality

Up to 59 mins

Reality TV with a difference here, as unfit contestants are put through their paces, confronting personal issues at the same time as completing demanding tasks. Their journeys are frequently inspiring.



GARDEN RESCUE

Lifestyle

44 mins

Garden designers the Rich Brothers join green-fingered legend Charlie Dimmock to give folk the gardens of their dreams – including Nancy and Simon, who want a garden that reminds them of Beverly Hills.



SORT YOUR LIFE OUT

Factual entertainment

59 mins

Stacey Solomon and team aim to declutter Britain's homes, upcycling and recycling along the way. As the homeowners decide what to keep and what to chuck, their personal stories are revealed.

GOOD SPORTS



THE OUTDOOR SHOW ♥

Sports Corner	27 mins
---------------	---------

Love breaking a sweat? Enjoy nature? If it's sports and it's outdoors - from marathon races to climbing, skiing to surfing, hiking to triathlon, sailing to cycling - then *The Outdoor Show* has it covered.



CITIZEN ASHE

Sports Corner	95 mins
---------------	---------

This documentary is a fittingly superb portrait of a true legend: Arthur Ashe, the Black US tennis star whose work on AIDS awareness was as important as his considerable achievements on court.



The Countdown to Paris 2024 ♥

Sports Corner	24 mins
---------------	---------

▶ **FOR FOOTBALL FANS, 2024 MARKS THE 17TH UEFA EUROPEAN Championship** - a tournament that will take us from 14 June to 14 July. But if that wasn't enough sporting nirvana, just 10 days after the Euros end comes the Paris Olympic Games 2024, marking 100 years since the French capital last hosted the event. A spectacular opening ceremony is planned for the banks of the River Seine, while the new sports include breakdancing, which is making its Olympic debut. We're happy to be part of the hype by presenting this guide to the Games, in particular some of the key teams taking part. Fancy learning more about the likes of Jamaica and Team GB? This is the show for you.

Running rings Athletes to watch at Paris 2024



Philip Sesemann
Not only is this great British hopeful the third fastest British marathon runner ever, but he's also a qualified doctor. He trains with his dogs Kipchoge and Haile. Both "mileage mutts" have popular accounts on exercise tracker Strava.

Sun Yingha
This Chinese table tennis hotshot - a seven-time world champion - hopes to be first to win three golds at a single Olympics. "We are both winners," she once said of vanquished rival Chen Meng - a backhanded compliment.

Lauritta Onye
Paralympian Lauritta Onye, from Nigeria, is an F40 shot-put star famous for her flamboyant hip-shaking celebration dance. No stranger to the big stage, Onye once starred in a Nollywood movie called *Lords of Money*.

Anush Agarwalla
This trailblazing equestrian is set to be the first-ever Indian participant in the dressage event at the Games. A confident rider since taking to the saddle aged just three, Agarwalla hopes to make history on the hoof.

WATCH GUIDE TO THE GAMES

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WHAT'S ON

AUDIO

MAY

OTHERWORLDLY SOUNDS TO SOOTHE THE SOUL

► **RISING INDIE STARS ANOTHER SKY** CAME close to losing everything. Their new album *Beach Day* is their best yet – all skyscraper choruses and surging rock riffs, held together by stratospheric ambition. But it almost didn't happen.

Arriving at their London studio one day, the band were distraught to find the space was flooded – by an illicit marijuana farm on the floor above, of all things. Relocating to a south-east London crypt, Another Sky acquired a newfound sense of purpose. And some ghostly collaborators.

"I used to get the vicar's voice coming through my amp from his mic upstairs – I was convinced it was haunted!" singer Catrin Vincent recalls. "One day our guitarist took a nap and woke up screaming, saying he'd seen a skinless creature he called 'the slime man'."

Paranormal visitors or not, it's clear that Another Sky have tapped into something otherworldly on this triumphant new record, which blends the wide-screen vision of Mogwai with the emotional heft of early Radiohead. "We just... let it be," is how Catrin describes the recording

process. "Whatever came out, came out. And what emerged was a lot of angry rock music."

First drawn together as students at London university Goldsmiths, the bonds that forged them have only grown stronger over time.

Picking up the promise of their stellar debut, the band use this album as a space to unleash the pent-up frustrations of lockdown, the pandemic and the daily struggles musicians face in the UK. "Music is becoming a playground for the rich," Catrin says. "And we all lose out in that scenario. People only connect to music if they see themselves in it."

So it's an album riddled with rock-hewn emotion, made by a group of friends who have beaten the odds to make it. "There's something really special when you get a group of people who have known each other for a really long time making music together in one room," says Catrin. "It was cathartic."

“PEOPLE ONLY CONNECT TO MUSIC IF THEY SEE THEMSELVES IN IT”

“I WAS CONVINCED OUR STUDIO WAS HAUNTED!”

From left: Max Doohan, Catrin Vincent, Jack Gilbert and Naomi Le Dune

Robin Murray meets ethereal indie kids **ANOTHER SKY**

LISTEN TO BEACH DAY

FRESH SOUNDS



Brittany Howard ♥

What Now
ALTERNATIVE

► **AS LEAD SINGER OF ALABAMA SHAKES, BRITTANY HOWARD SNAFFLED** four Grammy awards along with a reputation as one of the finest blues singers, not just of her era but, like, ever. After the band declared a hiatus in 2018, Howard went to work on a solo joint, which resulted in the brilliant *Jaime* in 2019 (four Grammy award noms, if you're counting). Now comes the follow-up and if anything it's an even stronger set, creating a 21st-century soul sound by blending what the *NME* described as "psych-jazz, electro-funk, soulful house and the occasional rocker" into an irresistible musical whole. And giving us some of her best vocals ever.



ANOTHER SKY ♥

Beach Day
ALTERNATIVE

Refining their mix of post-rock and prog-rock (think early Radiohead with more key changes and strange time signatures), Another Sky drop a second album. *See opener*



LITTLE SIMZ !

Drop 7
HIP HOP

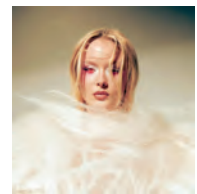
The reason we all go nuts over Little Simz is her fearless yet effortless mix of hip hop, gospel, soul, funk and IDM. Oh, and also because Simz is at the top of her game right now.



DECLAN MCKENNA ♥ !

What Happened to the Beach?
POP

What does *What Happened...* sound like? Imagine The Beatles' *White Album* meets MGMT and Devendra Banhart, and you've got the bones of Mckenna's superb third album.



ZARA LARSSON ♥ !

Venus
POP

Classic songwriting meets experimental pop (and then takes it to the disco) on Larsson's fourth album. You like Robyn? You like Sigrid? Then take it from us, this is your new favourite artist.

**Jerry!
Jerry!**
Springer's
final
thoughts



Multi-award-winning podcast *Celebrity Catch Up: Life After That Thing I Did* last year hosted chat show legend Jerry Springer for what turned out to be his last-ever interview. "I'm really honoured," says host Genevieve Hassan, whose pod takes listeners on an unashamedly nostalgic stroll down memory lane. "Jerry was a lovely, genuine, humble man."

🎧 LISTEN TO CELEBRITY CATCH UP:
LIFE AFTER THAT THING I DID



NU INDIE



YARD ACT ⚠️

Where's My Utopia?
ROCK

Along with Wet Leg, Yard Act are the indie breakout band of recent years. This second album is a dance-inspired departure from the post-punk sound of their acclaimed debut, *The Overload*, and is just as brilliantly smart and funny.



PET NEEDS ❤️ ⚠️

Intermittent Fast Living
ALTERNATIVE

If you like your rock short, sharp and punky, then you want *Pet Needs* in your life. Third album *Intermittent Fast Living* tells of big nights out and hungover, regret-filled days, and does it in spiky, two-and-a-half minute blasts just like Buzzcocks used to do.

The Snuts ❤️

Millennials
ALTERNATIVE

➤ **THE MEMBERS OF SCOTS INDIE-rockers** The Snuts met at school and, inspired by the likes of The Arctic Monkeys and The Libertines, set to writing their own material. The sessions proved fruitful and resulted in debut single *Glasgow*, which had more hooks than a fisherman's box and roughly the same amount of melodies. They followed it up with a bunch of attention-grabbing festival performances – and before you know it, The Snuts had themselves a devoted fanbase. Fast forward to now, and this is album number three, which they describe as tapping into emotions they'd previously not "processed into music".

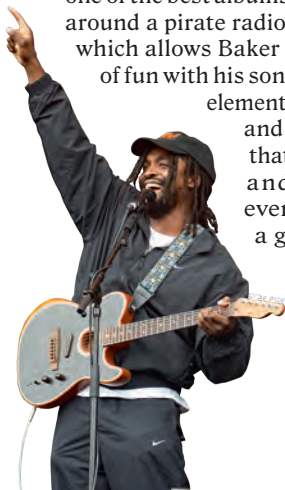


URBAN BANGERS

Hak Baker ⚠️

World's End FM
HIP HOP

➤ **LONDON RAPPER HAK BAKER** was a young choirboy before joining Public Enemy's Bomb Squad crew at age 14 and going on to collaborate with The Streets' Mike Skinner. With that kind of pedigree you might expect something special when it comes to his debut album, and special is what this is. Named by the *NME* as one of the best albums of 2023, it's built around a pirate radio station concept, which allows Baker to have all kinds of fun with his sonic palette, adding elements of grime, reggae and punk into a stew that's always eclectic and occasionally even chaotic, but in a good way. Listen carefully and you'll also hear him showing off his guitar skills.



POTTER PAYPER ⚠️

Thanks For Hating
HIP HOP

A couple of years back, Barking-born rapper Potter Payper's contribution to the *Top Boy* crime drama, *Gangsteritus*, saw him propelled to the big leagues. This seventh full-length mixtape shows why his lyrical skills are so much admired.



DAVE, CENTRAL CEE ⚠️

Split Decision
HIP HOP

Championed by none other than Drake, UK rapper Dave has gone from strength to strength, culminating in the rapturously received *Psychodrama* album. Here he teams up with Central Cee for a superb EP, which features *Sprinter*.

The dark side
When you're feeling moody

1 //



CHELSEA WOLFE ⚠️
She Reaches Out to.....

Over seven albums, Californian axewoman Chelsea Wolfe has tinkered with her style, offering up something new with each successive release. One thing that hasn't changed is her devotion to the more extreme.

2 //



MASSIVE ATTACK
Mezzanine

Its dark, doom-laden atmosphere, as well as influences ranging from rock to dub, saw Massive Attack's third album hailed as a masterpiece on its release in 1998. Now, well over 20 years later, its genius has dwindled not a jot.

3 //



VARIOUS ⚠️
Metal Rocks

Featuring classics old and new, including Black Sabbath's *Paranoid*, Slayer's *Raining Blood* and Metallica's *Master of Puppets*, this is a heavy, heavy playlist.



POST POP



KEYON HARROLD

Foreverland
JAZZ

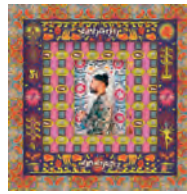
Growing up, trumpeter Harrold counted hip hop legend Common among his musical heroes. Sheer talent meant that years later Keyon would not only be working with Common, but inviting him to guest on this brilliant third album of post-pop.



JAZMIN BEAN

Traumatic Livelihood
POP

The daughter of Ginger Wildheart from cult rockers The Wildhearts, Jazmin Bean has taken the “wild” bit of the family name and gone in a very specific direction, creating a brand of colourful “horror pop” that mixes sugar-coated melodiousness with barbed lyrics.



SID SRIRAM

Sidharth
ALTERNATIVE

The boundary-pushing, genre-hopping Indian pop star is at it again – this time with an all-English album that mixes Carnatic music with R&B and indie rock influences. It’s a dazzling collection, heralded by singles *Dear Sahana*, *The Hard Way* and *Friendly Fire*.

L Devine

Digital Heartfacts
BREAKING ARTISTS

➤ **ORIGINALLY HAILING FROM WHITLEY BAY, NEAR Newcastle**, L Devine (the L is short for Olivia) spent time on Warner Bros Records before the two parted company and L took a DIY path. Her brace of *Near Life Experience* EPs signalled a move towards the indie-inspired end of things, but it’s on this debut album, which came out in February, that the 26-year-old’s really nailed down her approach. She’s been listening to her muse and matching a looser sound to a set of songs that explore the idea of expressing analogue emotion in a digital world – a concept that began with her writing of the album’s second single, the song *Miscommunikaty*. “I find it fascinating that all those emotions are just code on a computer,” she says. The overall effect is to see pop taken in unexpected and edgy new directions.



Hit piece
What was the best year for music?



1969
As The Beatles’ relentless stranglehold over the 1960s charts finally abates – ish – a new generation of star emerges blinking into the light. David Bowie, singing about the Space Race. A young unknown named Stevie Wonder. Old-school titans – Elvis, Sinatra – still have gas in the tank, while glittering genius Nina Simone has a big Civil Rights-era hit, *To Be Young, Gifted and Black*, one of her greatest numbers.

🎧 LISTEN TO THE GREATEST YEAR FOR MUSIC? – 1969

1984
The torch of rock, with a capital “R”, burns bright in the capable hands of Billy Idol and Bruce Springsteen. Yet! A newfound spirit of gender experimentation is in the air, with Annie Lennox and Frankie Goes to Hollywood rewriting the rule books. Duran Duran, Giorgio Moroder and their ilk make much of a new age in studio technology. Run DMC’s eponymous LP is the first rap record to be certified gold.

🎧 LISTEN TO THE GREATEST YEAR FOR MUSIC? – 1984

2003
Post-boyband radio pop reaches it’s floor-filling apex with Justin Timberlake’s peerless run of early solo hits. Chart-friendly rap has scant seen better days than 50 Cent’s *In Da Club*, or Black Eyed Peas’ *Where Is the Love?* The Foo Fighters, The Strokes and The White Stripes all have an annus mirabilis. But all else pales next to Beyoncé’s debut, *Crazy In Love*, with an incendiary rap feature from future hubby Jay-Z.

🎧 LISTEN TO THE GREATEST YEAR FOR MUSIC? – 2003



MATFEN HALL

COUNTRY HOTEL, SPA & GOLF ESTATE

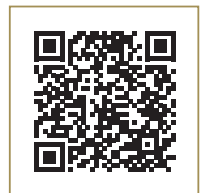


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● southoflondon.com



JOSEPHINE SCOTT

Discover the unashamedly romantic world of Josephine Scott. Luxury bespoke bridal gowns celebrating individuality are crafted with sculptured necklines, intricate handmade embellishments and a rigorous "fabric first" philosophy. Check out these clean silhouettes and chic British styling at Josephine's Luton Hoo Hotel showroom.

● [@josephinescottlondon](https://www.instagram.com/josephinescottlondon)

WHAT'S HOT NOW



CHARLES TYRWHITT

Immaculately crafted from lightweight pure linen – a naturally breathable fabric that absorbs moisture to keep you cool – this eye-catching shirt from the style experts at Charles Tyrwhitt is blessed with a delightfully soft feel. Available in a range of bright, confident colours, this versatile piece is your dream summertime travel companion.

● charlestyrwhitt.com



VIRIDIAN NUTRITION

Committed to crafting supplements that are effective, ethical and pure, Viridian uses 100% active ingredients with zero nasties. The Viridian High Five Multivitamin is a unique blend of 23 vitamins, minerals and plant extracts, with Vitamin B5 to support normal mental performance and reduce fatigue, in a handy one-a-day vegan capsule.

● viridian-nutrition.com

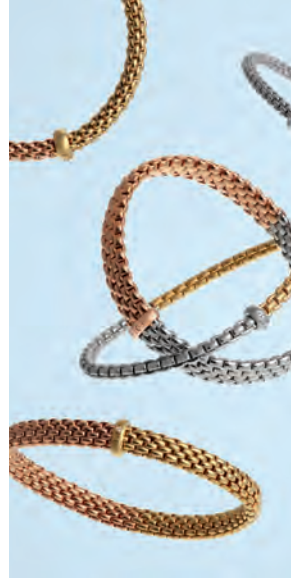
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GUNPOWDER PLOT

Get stuck into history's most daring conspiracy at a new immersive experience in Tower Vaults at the Tower of London. With realistic sets, period costumes and VR, you'll visit London in 1605 and meet the crew aiming to blow up Parliament. Plus there's themed cocktails and an on-site restaurant. Save £5 off two or more tickets – enter VERA75C at checkout. It's a blast.

● gunpowderimmersive.com



FOPE JEWELLERY

FOPE, based in Vicenza since 1929, crafts 18-carat gold jewellery pieces that represent the epitome of quiet luxury. The Italian brand's Flex'it system makes quality gold bracelets, chokers, necklaces and rings that sit beautifully on your body without needing a clasp. FOPE is all about elegantly fusing smart new technology with traditional goldsmithing.

● fope.com

BUYS GUIDE

THE VERY BEST IN
SPRING FASHION,
DAYS OUT AND
TRAVEL MUST-HAVES



THRUDARK

Explore spring outerwear from high-spec British brand ThruDark. With utilitarian designs inspired by its military heritage, ThruDark gear is fit to conquer everything from the extreme to the everyday. From insulated jackets and activewear, technical fleeces, hard wearing overshirts to durable trousers, ThruDark means "Endeavour Through Adversity".

● thrudark.com



LENOR CREASE RELEASER

Maintain an enviably crease-free look with Lenor Crease Releaser, a game-changer for anybody who doesn't compromise on looking great even while travelling. Simply hang up your creased garments, give them a quick squirt of Lenor's fragranced formula, smooth by hand and watch those tiresome crumples dissipate.

● [@the_laundry_hub](https://www.instagram.com/the_laundry_hub)



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Above: Ruby Rebel, our latest flying icon, tips a wink at the work of founder Sir Richard Branson

HIGH ART

Stylish new flying icon Ruby Rebel is ready for take-off

► **“RUBY IS DEFINITELY THE REBEL OF THE pack,”** says award-winning artist Toby Tinsley of his latest creation. Tinsley is the talented designer behind Virgin Atlantic’s new-look, more-diverse-than-ever Flying Icons artwork, *right* – and cut his teeth for us creating stellar artwork for the Virgin Galactic spacecraft. Ruby Rebel, *above*, his most detailed flying icon to date, graces the nose of our brand-new, fuel-efficient Airbus A330neo, registration G-VSRB, celebrating founder Sir Richard Branson on Virgin Atlantic’s 40th anniversary. The icons, which have adorned the fuselage of our planes from the early days, are partly inspired by the graceful figureheads that decorated the bows of ships at sea from the 13th century.

“Ruby is the first of our Flying Icons to have such intricate detail,” continues Tinsley. “The art



tells multiple stories. On one bracelet the initials JSH pay tribute to Sir Richard Branson’s wife and children. A silver anchor represents Virgin Voyages cruise ships. Badges on her lapel honour his early Virgin Records signing, the Sex Pistols.” They knew a thing or two about rebellion, too.

Meet your maker

THE REDHEAD COCKTAIL

► **THE VIRGIN REDHEAD** cocktail has been a luxurious staple of our lounges for decades. To celebrate our 40th birthday, we commissioned pre-mixed cocktail maestro – and sundowner obsessive – **James Kerlake**, the guy behind the wildly popular Tom Savano brand, to create a canned version for Upper Class. “It’s sort of a kir royale meets a gin bramble,” says James. “There’s real Italian Prosecco, fresh blackberry, strawberry, lemon juice

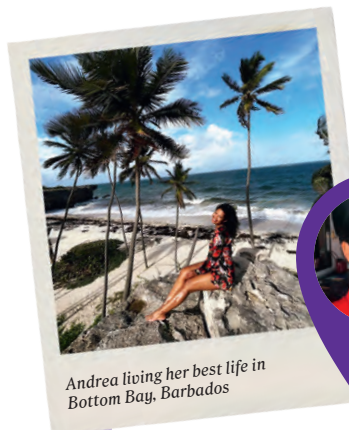


A Redhead walks into a bar: the classic Virgin cocktail in its usual form

and gin.” James started crafting cocktails after enjoying a perfect sunset mojito at Café del Mar, Ibiza. “I became obsessed with perfecting pre-mixed drinks,” he says. “The Virgin Redhead evokes the golden age of aviation. It’s about passion, with a hint of cheekiness.”

Join the crew in... Barbados

CABIN CREW SUPERSTAR **ANDREA BURTON** SHARES HER ULTIMATE TIPS FOR GOING BIG IN BARBS



Andrea living her best life in Bottom Bay, Barbados



1 //

Coffee is my pre-flight ritual and local-roasted beans from Wyndhams are the best. The pink blush latte at **Blush Cafe, Bridgetown**, is pure heaven.

2 //

Harrison's Cave never gets old. Explore naturally hewn caverns, where crystal waters flow like shiny teardrops to a soundtrack of mini waterfalls.

3 //

Savour a beautiful marmalade-hued sunset at **La Cabane**. Live music, cocktails and warm breezes sway you like a palm tree; a dream golden-hour spot.

TOP TIP
Find great souvenirs like **Bajan hot sauce** at **Brighton Farmers Market** every **Saturday**.



Meet Virgin Atlantic's **Product Supply Chain Manager ANDREW SMITH**



The role

My job is to manage the purchase and supply of all onboard

products relating to inflight services, apart from food and beverages. So that's everything from toothpicks to textiles, teaspoons to trays, trolleys to toilet rolls.

The lowdown

On a typical Virgin flight there are 28,500 individual pieces of kit loaded onboard. We have limited space, so it's like a giant jigsaw. Because we're airborne, weight is a huge consideration. And balance! The front can't be heavier than the back.

The buzz

Over the past couple of years we've removed 90% of single-use plastic items onboard, simultaneously reducing the weight of many products, leading the industry with our pressed cardboard cutlery and lightweight recycled plastic glasses. I derive great satisfaction finding solutions that simplify and reduce impact, without compromising on our sky-high design aspirations.

We are the face of seamless travel.



BETC

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HOW TO CONNECT

- 1 //** Turn on your WiFi-enabled device and connect to the "Virgin-Atlantic" WiFi network.
- 2 //** If you don't automatically connect to the WiFi portal, don't worry. Just take a look at the safety card in your seat pocket to see what type of aircraft you're on.

If you're onboard...

- A 787-9 or an A350-1000, open your browser and navigate to virgin-atlantic-wifi.com
- An A330-300, open your browser and navigate to airborne.gogoinflight.com

- 3 //** Just follow the onscreen instructions to buy a session and then get browsing!

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Tweet or take a pic with #LiveFromVirgin and let the world know you're connected above the clouds.

MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR DATA

Remember to switch off your device's automatic app updates and synchronisations. That way you can avoid using up your data on the boring background stuff while you're busy browsing, tweeting and sharing.

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Are you hiring?



Hi. I'm a FANUC CRX Cobot and I'm ready to work hard for you. I don't take up much space, so I can easily fit into your existing operation. I'm hard working, very talented and consistent. I'll do the job perfectly, each and every time. With the right tools I can pack, pick, inspect, palletize, weld, sand and more. I'm strong - and can easily lift up to 30kg and never get tired. I'm happy to come to work every day and extremely easy to get along with. My user-friendly programming language means you just need to instruct me, and I'll get the job done. I'm available and eager to start contributing to your success.



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