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SPRING 2020 | ISSUE 05

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TO WATCHING THE WORLD PILOT GIG ROWING
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THE NORTH TO THE STUNNING
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ICONICLUXURYHOTELS.COM

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Courtesy of Visit Isles of Scilly / Anthony Greenwood

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WELCOME



ECO-FRIENDLY TOURISM is at the top of our 2020 travel agenda. We have introduced a new Sustainable Travel series, kicking off this issue with ideas for *Environmental Volunteering*, p22, and, in an eco-conscious quest of our own, we have discovered a supplier of recyclable paper wraps for sending our magazines in the mail. Next issue we will be featuring the UK's finest eco-friendly holiday homes so, if you know of any hidden gems you are happy to share, please email

words@britishtraveljournal.com. Touched to hear about two Longleat koala keepers, Graeme Dick and James Dennis, who, following the devastating Australian bushfires, travelled to South Australia's Cleland Wildlife Park, to help to save the lives of koalas, wombats, echidnas and a host of other unique Australian wildlife - we have the pleasure of featuring the Wiltshire attraction in our new seasonal 'Hot List', p81-87.

For those with the confidence to go one step further, our *10 of The Best Charity Challenges*, p38-41 are sure to inspire. From cycling across Britain to skydiving from 15,000 feet, you can raise some vital charity donations while pushing yourself to your limits. *The World Pilot Gig Championships* is a seaside spectacle like no other on *The Isles of Scilly* this May, p70-73 - and we go *Behind-the-Scenes* ahead of *The Cheltenham Festival*, this March, p60-63.

Other destinations we uncover this season include the beautiful *Lake District*, p74-79, spending a wonderful *48 Hours in St Mawes and the Roseland*, p64-69, an adventure packed weekend on *The Isle of Man*, p26-31, and, arguably with the best views in London, our *In the Capital* series this season takes us to discover the highlights of leafy *Greenwich*, p32-37.

As always I hope this issue helps to inspire your travel experiences, and the spring season brings you many magical moments spent savouring the glorious British Isles - wherever you choose to visit. ♦

Jessica

Jessica Way
Editor-In-Chief



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CONTENTS

SPRING 2020 | ISSUE 05



COMPETITION

88 WIN A NIGHT OF LUXURY IN HEVER CASTLE, KENT...

We are offering you and your companion the chance to stay overnight at Hever Castle Luxury Bed and Breakfast, a 13th century Castle in Kent, once the childhood home of Anne Boleyn.

P74 IMAGE ©VISITBRITAIN/TOMO BREJC

JOTTINGS

09 TRAVEL NEWS
A look at what's new and travel noteworthy in the British Isles

13 CULTURAL AGENDA
Dates for your diary of things you don't want to miss out on this spring

47 HEALTH
Keep your body and mind feeling well with our unmissable spring selection of must-haves promoting wellbeing and mindfulness

81 THE HOT LIST
A round up of some of the best destinations, attractions, restaurants and hotels to visit this spring

98 FOR YOUR JOURNEY
Latest books, travel gadgets and our British travel inspired crossword

FEATURES

22 SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL
In the first of a new series, we look at Environmental Volunteering

42 MEET THE MAKER | FLOWER FIELDS
How an innovative Dorset venture is changing the face of the British perfume industry

48 OPERA IN THE COUNTRY
A British phenomenon - we take a look at the English Country House Opera

61 THE FINAL FURLONG
Behind the scenes at one of the oldest race-meets in Britain; The Cheltenham Festival

70 WORLD PILOT GIG CHAMPIONSHIPS
Join in the festivities of maritime tradition and experience a seaside spectacle like no other →



EDITOR LOVES

ALLBIRDS

While enjoying a leisurely afternoon in London's Covent Garden recently I discovered this stylish new ethical brand, *allbirds*, first London store.

New to the UK they are a locals' best kept secret, and have just opened their second store in Marylebone.

While they're not cheap, they are easily the most comfortable pair of shoes I have ever owned!

Women's Wool Runners, £95
allbirds.co.uk

LIFESTYLE

38 10 OF THE BEST
 Charity Challenges

88 HEVER CASTLE
 Stay overnight in luxury at the childhood home of Anne Boleyn

92 LONDON HILTON PARK LANE
 An iconic hotel in London's exclusive Mayfair district

94 INTERVIEW WITH HEAD CHEF
 OF THE DORCHESTER
 Tom Booton tells us about his inspiration and how he's transforming a London icon

ITINERARIES

26 WEEKEND OF ADVENTURE
 The Isle of Man

32 IN THE CAPITAL
 Greenwich

64 ST MAWES AND THE
 ROSELAND
 Marvel at the unspoilt beauty of Cornwall to connect with nature and walk in the footsteps of pirates

74 48 HOURS IN
 The Lake District



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INSTAGRAM HIGHLIGHT

@BRITISHTRAVELJOURNAL

In need of some coastal air we've taken a trip to Cornwall and just stumbled upon the beautiful St Nectans Glen Waterfall. Happy New Year from St Nectans Waterfalls, the 4 hour drive to get here has already been worth it!

instagram.com/britishtraveljournal

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TRAVEL NEWS

WHAT'S NEW

Destinations | Renovations | Launches | Celebrations



NEW HELICOPTER SERVICE TO ST MARY'S AND TRESKO, ISLES OF SCILLY

Helicopters will once again link the Isles of Scilly with Penzance. Penzance Heliport and Sloane Helicopters are partnering to provide regular helicopter flights from Penzance to both St Mary's and Tresco – it will be the only Isles of Scilly helicopter service to fly to both islands. There will be up to 17 return flights per day and a limited Sunday schedule. Helicopter flights, which are more weather-resilient than other options, will take just 15 minutes!

penzanceheliport.co.uk



SAIL ON THE SOUTH COAST

Sunsail is bringing its popular flotilla holidays to the UK for the very first time! Based at Port Solent in Hampshire, the new luxury flotilla charters mini cruises, with skipper, are perfect for exploring the stunning south coast - even for first time sailors.

sunsail.co.uk/destinations



RETREAT TO NORFOLK

Set within Somerleyton Estate's 1000-acre wildland project, Fritton Lake is an exclusive new holiday destination in the wild east of England. Stay in either a cabin retreat or farm cottage, and enjoy yoga, wild swimming and paddleboarding.

somerleyton.co.uk/fritton-lake

TASTY LONDON LANDMARK

Master Belgian chocolatiers *Neuhaus* have unveiled a giant, handcrafted chocolate replica of Big Ben to mark the opening of their UK flagship boutique in St Pancras International. The statue took over 100 hours to create and 45 kg of Neuhaus Belgian dark chocolate!

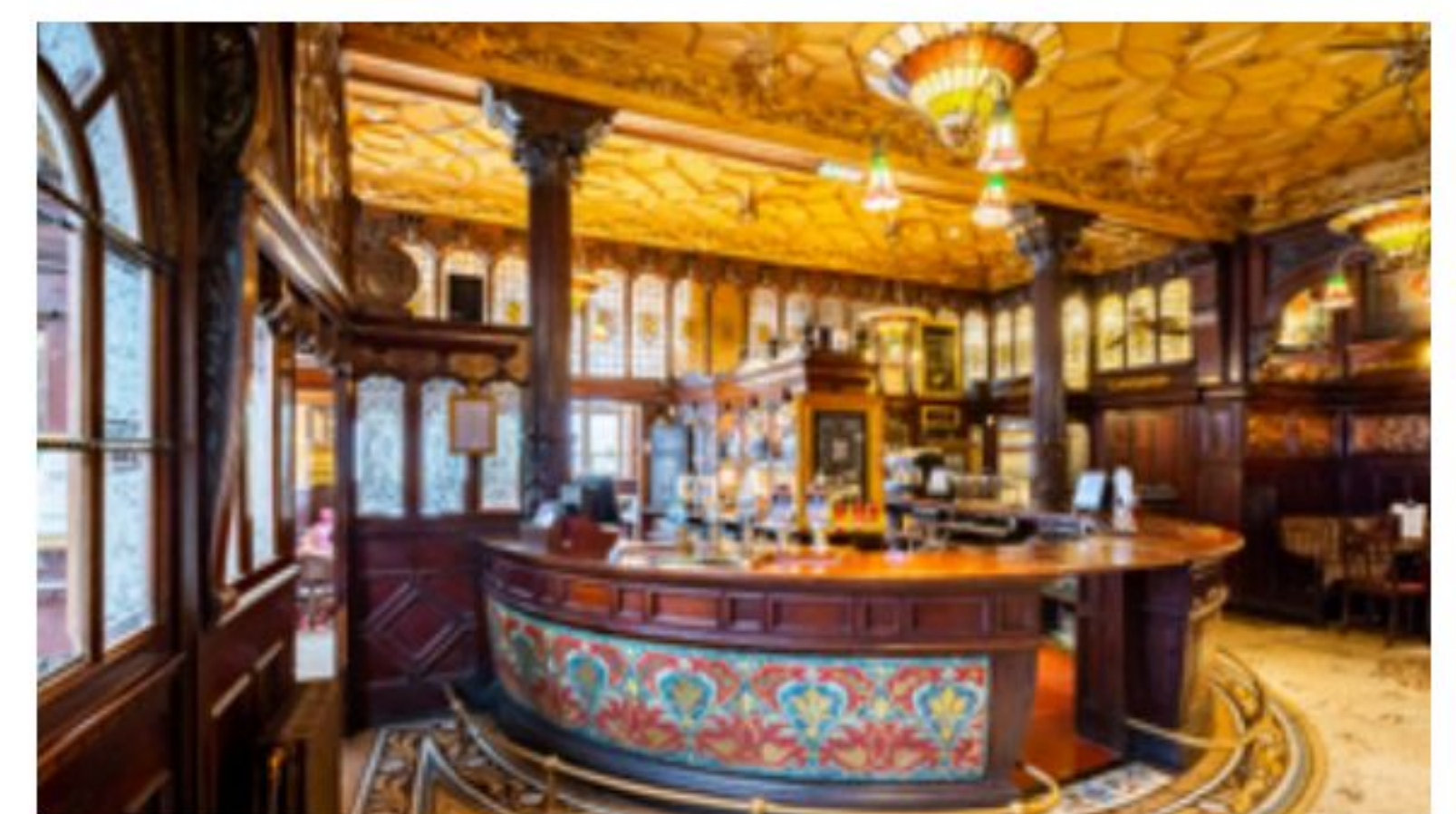
stpancras.com/shop/neuhaus-chocolates



CATHEDRAL AMONG PUBS

The Philharmonic Dining Rooms in Liverpool has just become the first purpose-built Victorian pub in England to be given Grade I listed status.

nicholsonspubs.co.uk



NEW LAUNCH

CABIN CASE CHIC

The new Hi-Fi Spinner, is a sleek lightweight case with a water repellent zipper, priced £165, available in a range of bright, vibrant and dark colours.

➔ samsonite.co.uk



HOTEL OF THE SEASON

STRAND PALACE LONDON



THE 110-YEAR OLD STRAND PALACE HOTEL IN LONDON'S WEST END HAS A MULTI-MILLION POUND INVESTMENT

Located in the heart of London, just minutes from Covent Garden, Trafalgar Square and the Thames, Strand Palace has the perfect hotel location for discovering cultural icons by day, and enjoying West End theatre by night. As part of a multi-million pound refurbishment all 785 guestrooms, the reception, concierge, restaurant and bar areas have been completely transformed into luxuriously modern stylish spaces, with intriguing touches of the 1920 art deco stylings that the hotel is renowned for. Look out for photos and hotel memorabilia proudly framed on the walls - or visit London's V&A Museum to see an original Strand Palace key, dating back to the First World War, found in the trenches in Normandy, France, together with the hotel's original revolving doors. The new rooms have air conditioning, luxurious White Company toiletries - and if you opt for a Deluxe room there's even a complimentary minibar! They have also recently opened a brand-new art deco restaurant and bar at the hotel, Haxells – with a quintessential afternoon tearoom and private dining room, and don't miss the hotel's colourful and elegant cocktail bar - The Gin Palace.

strandpalacehotel.co.uk



BEST FOR WELLNESS

Set within 55 acres of nature, in a Grade II listed Georgian mansion house, (formerly home to the 1920s socialite Lady Valerie Meux) Birch is a new city escape - ideal for meditation, with a running track in the surrounding woods, pottery, bakery and a rolling cultural programme of events.

birchcommunity.com



BEST FOR ENTERTAINMENT

The Gantry opens in Stratford this summer, a luxury hotel featuring a bustling artisan food market, restaurant and cocktail bars - situated on the 18th floor - has the highest rooftop bar in East London, with floor-to-ceiling windows, offering sunset views across the capital - live music and DJs.

thegantry.co.uk



BEST FOR ROMANCE

Inspired by the area's bustling theatre scene, Ruby Lucy is set to be London's coolest hotel in Southbank, with cosy 'Nest' rooms to expansive 'Loft' rooms with a sleep-scientist-approved formula, with full soundproofing, blackout curtains, and extra-long and wide custom mattresses.

ruby-hotels.com

IN A DIFFERENT LEAGUE

The Royal Over-Seas League is a unique not-for-profit private members club in the heart of Mayfair. Members can enjoy clubhouse accommodation, food and drink, a global network of over 100 reciprocal clubs and a diverse portfolio of social activities which supports young artists, musicians, and writers.

www.rosl.org.uk

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CULTURAL AGENDA

HOT THIS SEASON

Exhibitions | Museums | Galleries | Shows



IMAGE: ANDY WARHOL'S PORTRAIT OF DEBBIE HARRY

Words | **Melanie Abrams**

WHAT WE'RE BOOKING

Richard Alston Dance Company: Final Edition

02 MARCH – 08 MARCH 2020

It's the final curtain call for the Richard Alston Dance Company this March as the contemporary corps closes after 25 years. New and recent works will be performed at the Cambridge Arts Theatre and London's Sadler's Wells "to show my current extraordinary dancers at their very best," says Alston.

➔ cambridgeartstheatre.com;

➔ sadlerswells.com

101 Dalmatians

16 MAY – 21 JUNE 2020

Cruella de Vil stalks onto the Regent's Park open air stage on 16 May as the lovable story of 101 Dalmatians is given a musical twist. The new production sets an upbeat tone for the season including Rodgers and Hammerstein's Carousel.

➔ openairtheatre.com

Damon Albarn: The Nearer the Fountain, More Pure the Stream Flows

26 MAY 2020

With Blur and The Gorillaz, Damon Albarn was synonymous with Britpop. Now his latest solo work premieres in Britain at the Barbican Hall on 26 May. Typically experimental, he mixes natural sound and electronics with an orchestral ensemble to evoke Iceland's poetic landscape.

➔ barbican.org.uk

To Kill A Mockingbird

21 MAY – 10 JUNE 2020 (PREVIEWS)

11 JUNE 2020 – 05 SEPTEMBER 2020

Classic American novel, To Kill A Mockingbird by Harper Lee comes to London's Gielgud Theatre from May. Adapted for the stage by The West Wing creator, Aaron Sorkin, Rhys Ifans plays the earnest lawyer in this tale of racial injustice.

➔ Tokillamockingbird.co.uk



WHAT WE'RE READING

Jane Was Here: An Illustrated Guide to Jane Austen's England

28 MAY 2020

For a lively literary pilgrimage, dip into Jane was Here: An Illustrated Guide to Jane Austen's England by Nicole Jacobsen, Devynn Dayton and Lexi K. Nilson, published by Hardie Grant. From Portsmouth to the Peak District, explore the places where the Pride & Prejudice author visited to where her books were filmed. The tips of nearby eateries included are also worth sampling.

➔ hardiegrant.com

WHAT WE'RE SEEING

Andy Warhol

12 MARCH - 06 SEPTEMBER 2020
(TATE MODERN)

15 APRIL - 05 JULY 2020
(NATIONAL GALLERY)

London is going Andy Warhol crazy this Spring with his works in two major shows. Tate Modern hosts his retrospective from March including the iconic Marilyn Monroe diptych. While the National Gallery's new interpretation of Sin pits his pop art alongside Old Masters and others from April.

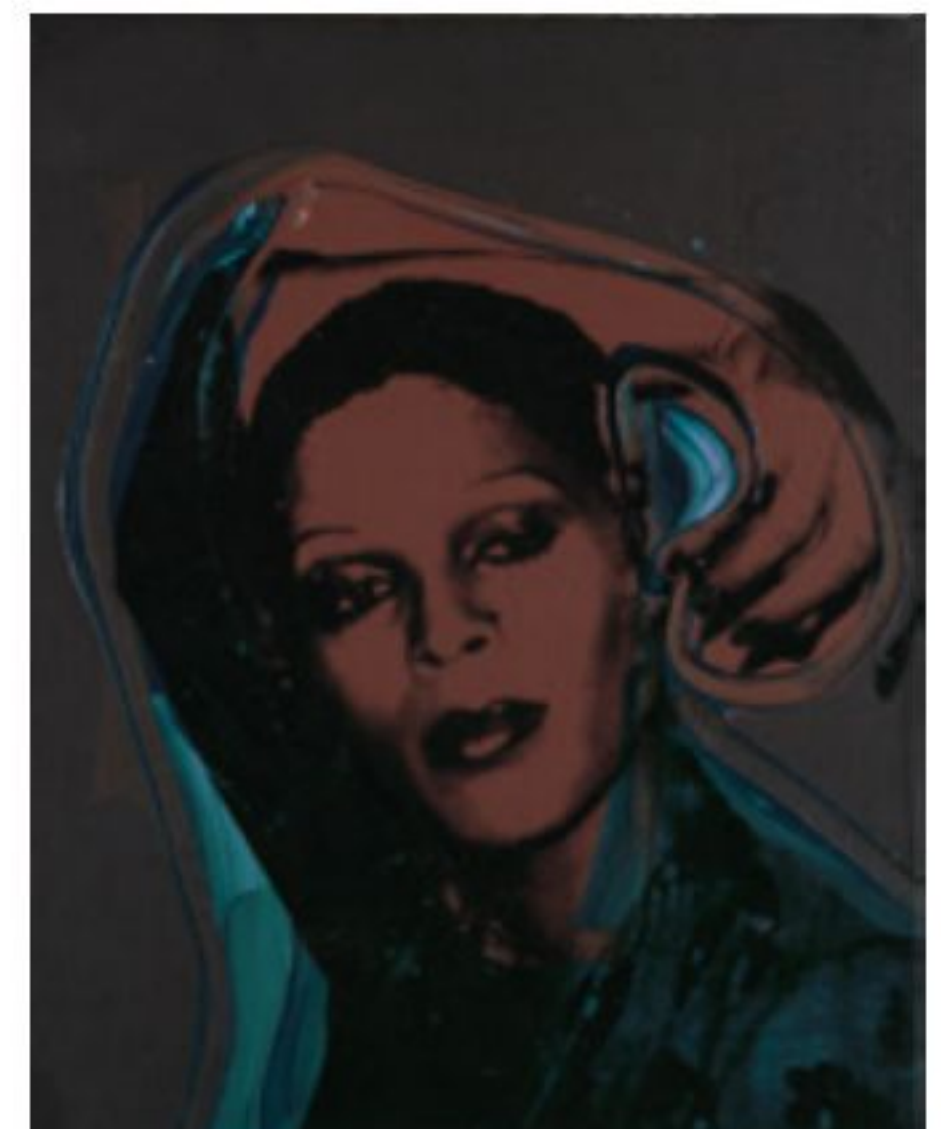
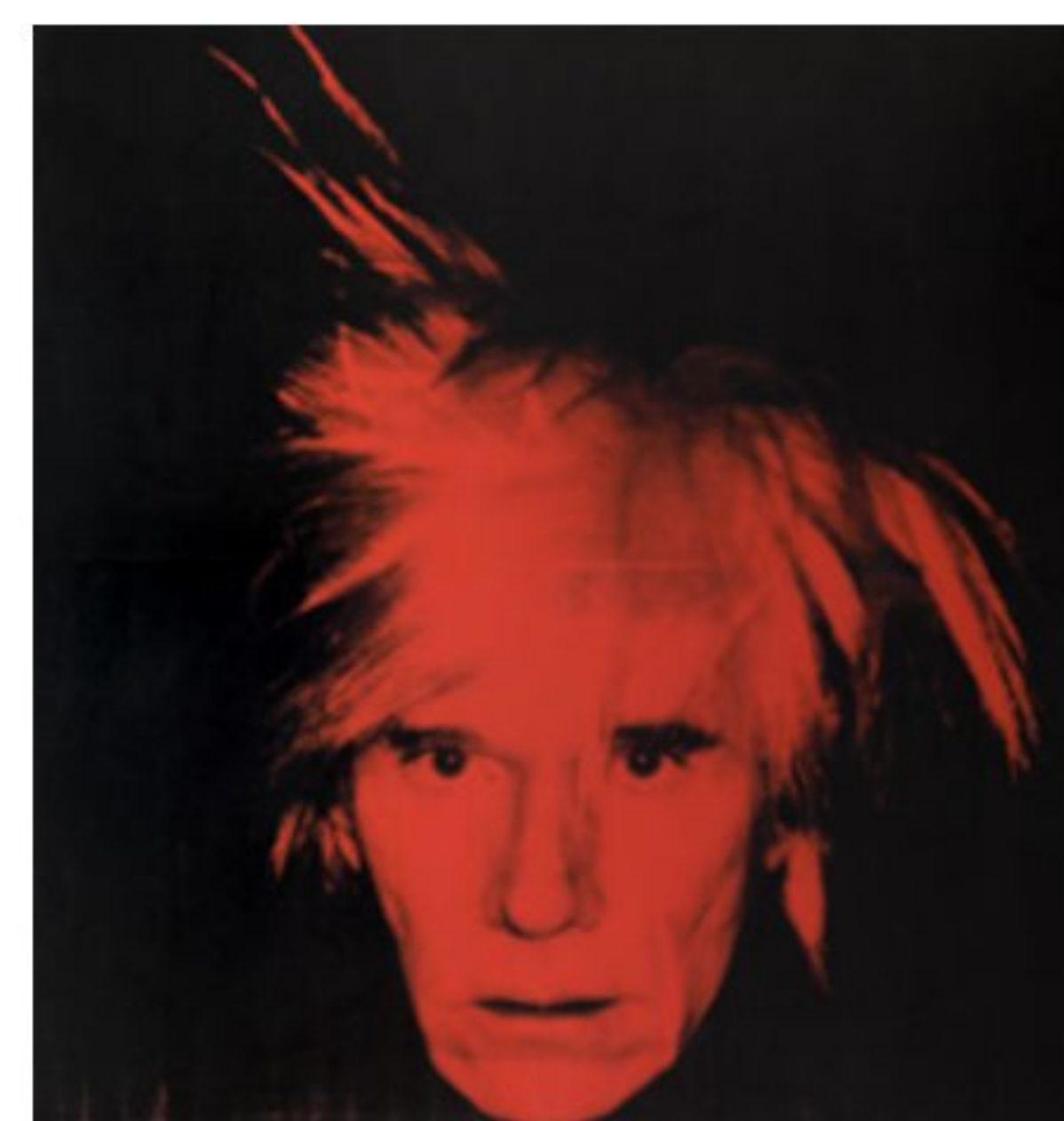
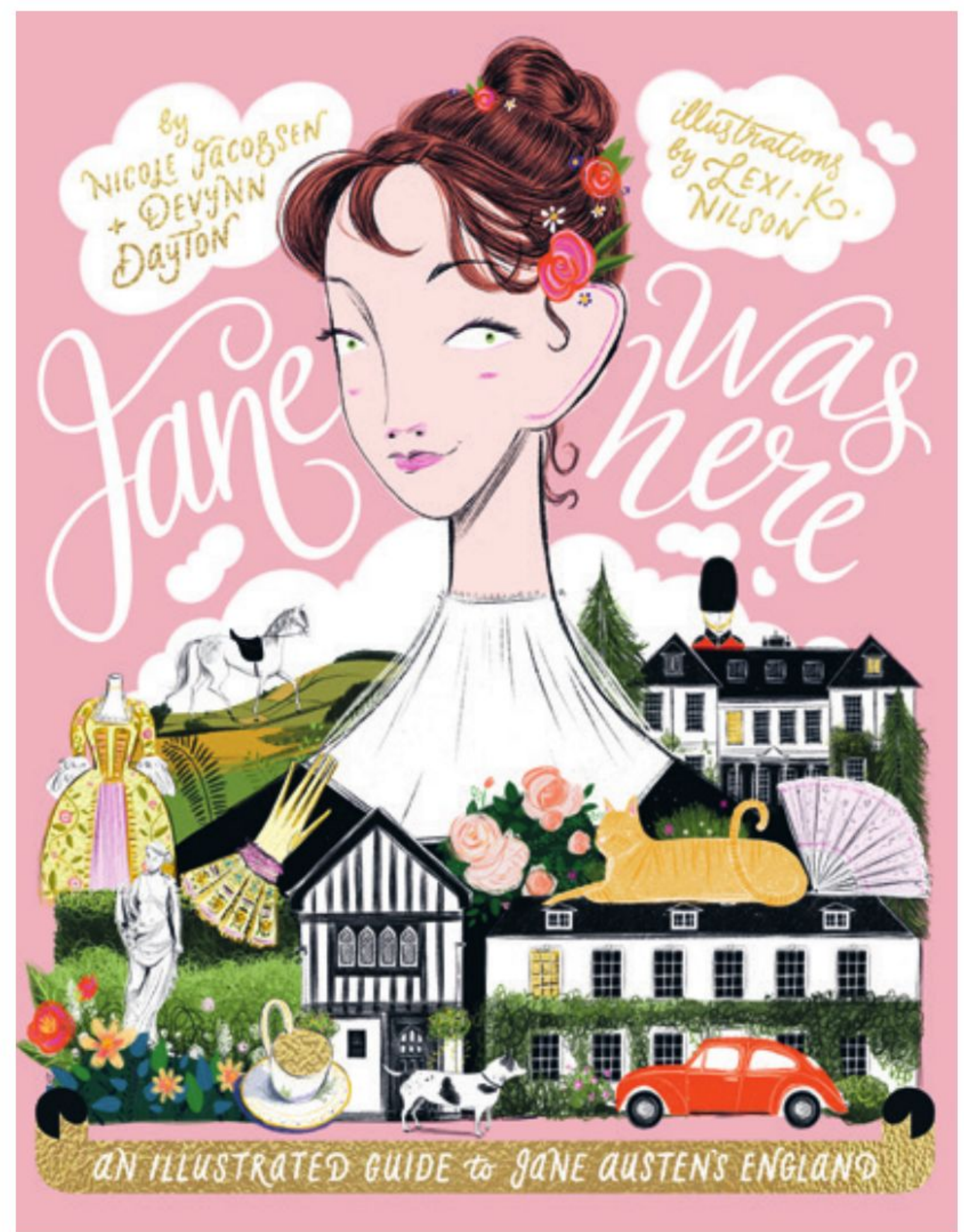
➔ tate.org.uk /
nationalgallery.org.uk

Mat Collishaw

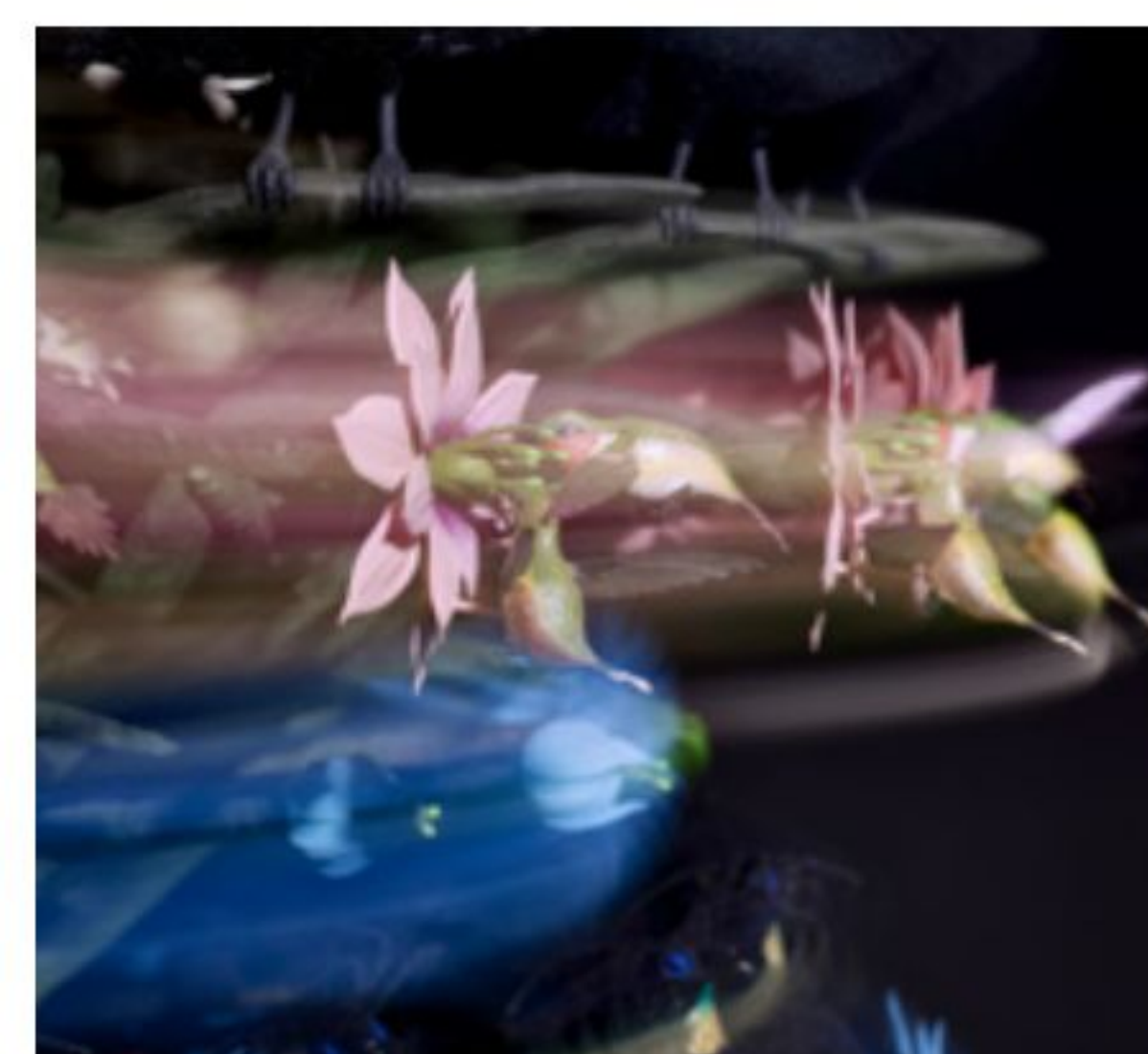
14 MARCH - 07 JUNE 2020

Since his heady days as a Young British Artist (YBA) alongside Damien Hirst, Tracey Emin and others, Mat Collishaw has been experimenting with high technology in his art - from virtual reality to animatronics. Now highlights are on show in his Nottingham hometown at the university's Djanogly Gallery including the shadowy laser scanned recreation of a local Sherwood Forest oak.

➔ lakesidearts.org.uk

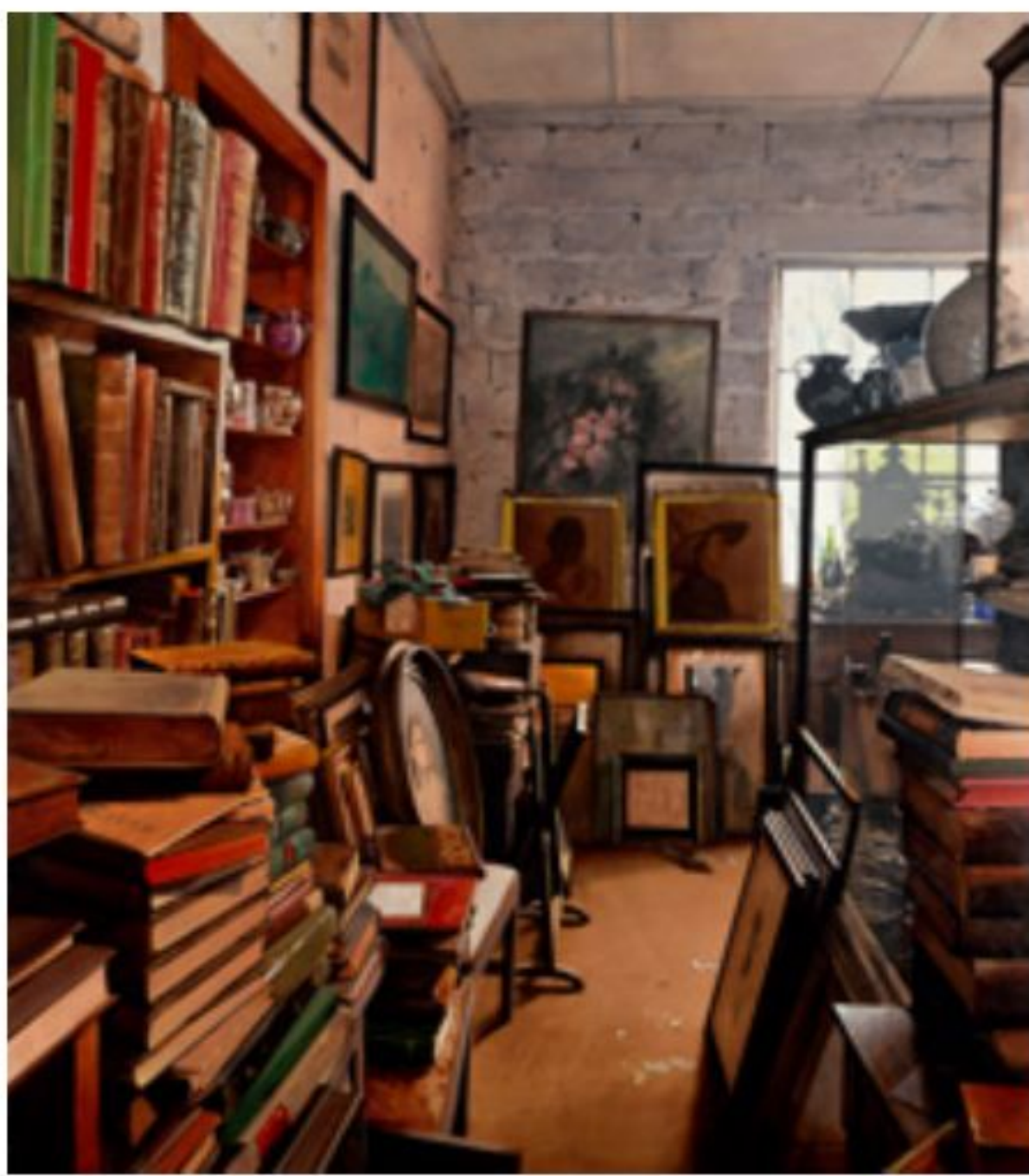


IMAGES LEFT AND ABOVE:
ANDY WARHOL AT TATE MODERN
BELOW: MAT COLLISHAW,
LEFT-RIGHT, THE CENTRIFUGAL
SOUL AND ALBION COURTESY OF
THE ARTIST AND BLAINSOUTHERN
© PETER MALLET

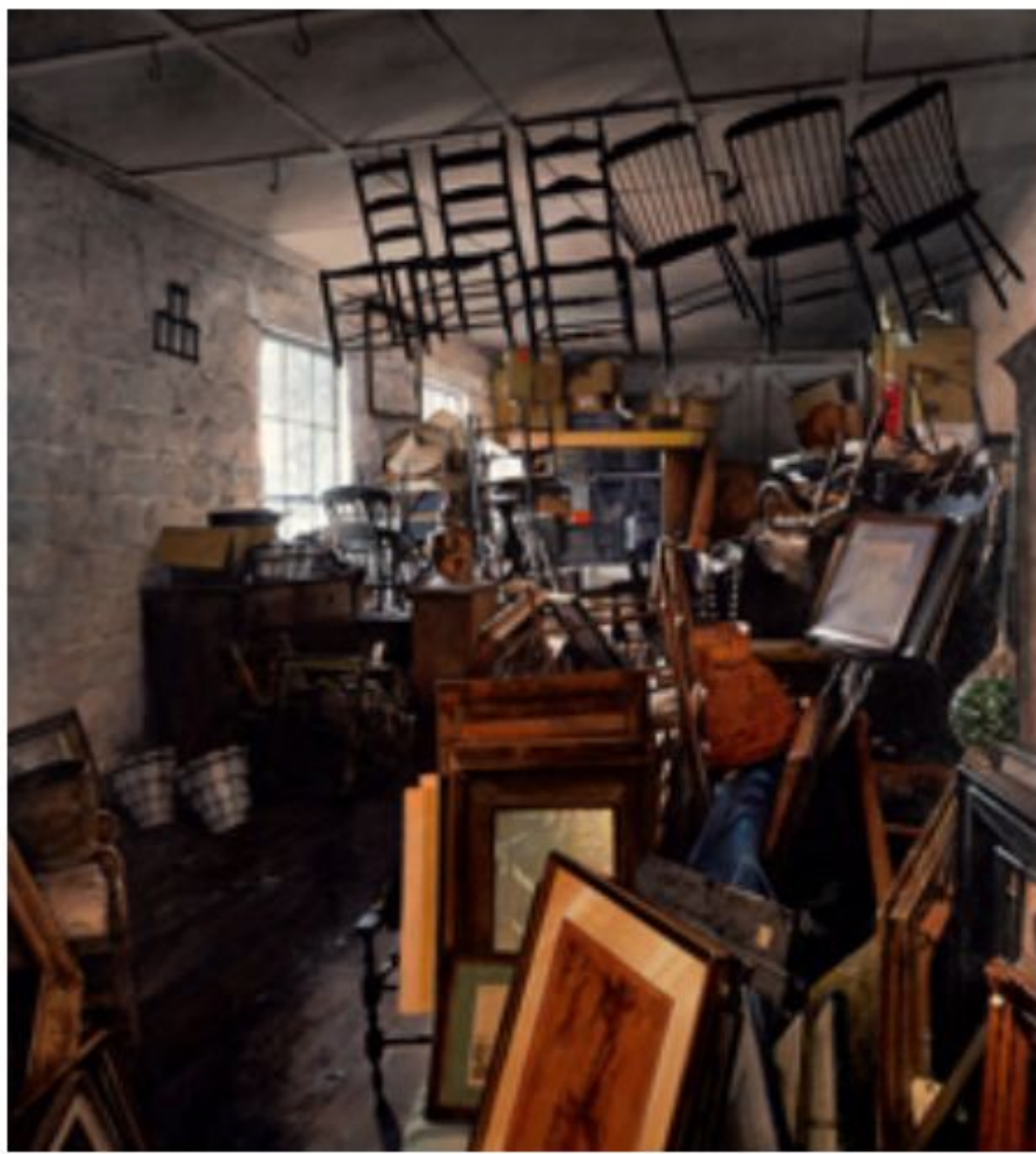




IMAGES ABOVE LEFT-RIGHT: HIDE AND SEEK, MICHAEL JOHN HUNT, £12,500 FROM THE HUNT GALLERY / THE PETWORTH PARK ANTIQUES & FINE ART FAIR. SNEAKERS UNBOXED: STUDIO TO STREET/THE DESIGN MUSEUM, KENSINGTON.



IMAGES ABOVE: SNEAKERS UNBOXED: STUDIO TO STREET / THE DESIGN MUSEUM, KENSINGTON
BELOW: ROYAL WINDSOR HORSE SHOW © RWHS / NIXONPHOTO



TOP-BOTTOM: ANTIQUE FRAMES, £21,000; IN THE SHENANDOAH VALLEY, £28,000; PLEASE TAKE YOUR SEAT, £21,000. ALL MICHAEL JOHN HUNT FROM THE HUNT GALLERY / THE PETWORTH PARK ANTIQUES & FINE ART FAIR



Sneakers Unboxed: Studio to Street

06 MAY – 06 SEPTEMBER 2020

Calling Sneakerheads to the Design Museum from 6 May as the Kensington gallery unveils its latest drop, Sneakers Unboxed: Studio to Street. Archives from the likes of Nike are opened, unrealised models revealed and visitors can also create their own designs. Join the snaking queues.

➔ designmuseum.org

Niki de Saint Phalle: Joy of Living

02 MAY – 06 SEPTEMBER 2020

Bold colour and fantasy brighten the Yorkshire Sculpture Park as its Weston Gallery showcases Niki de Saint Phalle's multi-faceted work. Birds, snakes and other recurring symbols feature in sculpture to jewellery; complementing her mirror, glass and stone Buddha which sits permanently in the park.

➔ ysp.org.uk

WHERE WE'RE PARTYING

Royal Windsor Horse Show

13 MAY – 17 MAY 2020

Head to Windsor Castle for the best British equestrian sport. Don a smart Drake's jacket and tie or pretty Erdem dress for this 77 year old show-jumping to dressage extravaganza. An up-tempo evening pageant showcases Britain's military and equestrian history.

➔ rwhs.co.uk

The Petworth Park Antiques & Fine Art Fair

15 MAY – 17 MAY 2020

17th century Petworth House and Park is the magnificent backdrop to May's fine art and antiques fair. Set in the rolling Sussex Downs, discover treasures from majestic marble and gilt bronze objets d'art to the unusual egg tempera painting of local artist, Sue Viner.

➔ petworthparkfair.com



ROYAL
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GREENWICH

rmg.co.uk

Greenwich Means Looking up Time

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art at the Queen's House gallery.

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RHS Flower Show Cardiff

17 APRIL 2020 – 19 APRIL 2020

The gardening season blossoms in April as Bute Park behind Cardiff Castle hosts this year's 15th Royal Horticultural Society's Flower Show Cardiff. There are top British nurseries, live floristry demonstrations and more. Top tip: visit the park's arboretum with its Siberian elm, Ginkgo biloba and other exotic trees.

➔ rhs.org.uk

Chiddingstone Castle Literary Festival

07 MAY 2020 – 10 MAY 2020

Chiddingstone Castle's literary festival in Kent is fast making its mark. Five this year, intimate talks and workshops are given by seminal authors including War Horse's Michael Morpurgo, Joanna Trollope and former Vogue editor, Alexandra Shulman. The bonus: exploring the 19th century house with its ancient Egyptian to Japanese lacquer collections.

➔ chiddingstonecastle.org.uk/literary_festival

The Great Escape

13 MAY 2020 – 16 MAY 2020

Discover hot new music from around the world at Brighton's Great Escape Festival. Ones to watch include Nigeria's Odunsi (The Engine) with his alté (which stands for alternative) mix of R&B, funk and Afrobeat to the Manchester rapper, Aitch.

➔ greatestescapefestival.com

WHAT WE'RE LISTENING TO

Future Nostalgia by Dua Lipa

3 APRIL

It's been worth the three year wait for Dua Lipa's second album, Future Nostalgia, releasing on 3 April. Don't Start Now set the pop pace, whilst Physical adds pulsating electro beats. Our pick: Break My Heart with its melodic nod to INXS's Need You Tonight. Hear her live from London to Glasgow from 26 May to 15 June.

➔ dualipa.com; ticketmaster.co.uk

WHAT WE'RE WATCHING

No Time To Die

02 APRIL 2020

James Bond is back. And so is Daniel Craig – maybe for the last time as the suave spy. In his 25th outing, Bond is recruited by the CIA to rescue a scientist and finds himself on the trail of a villain (played by Rami Malek) armed with dangerous technology. Billie Eilish, the 18 year old big winner at this year's Grammys, warbles the theme tune.

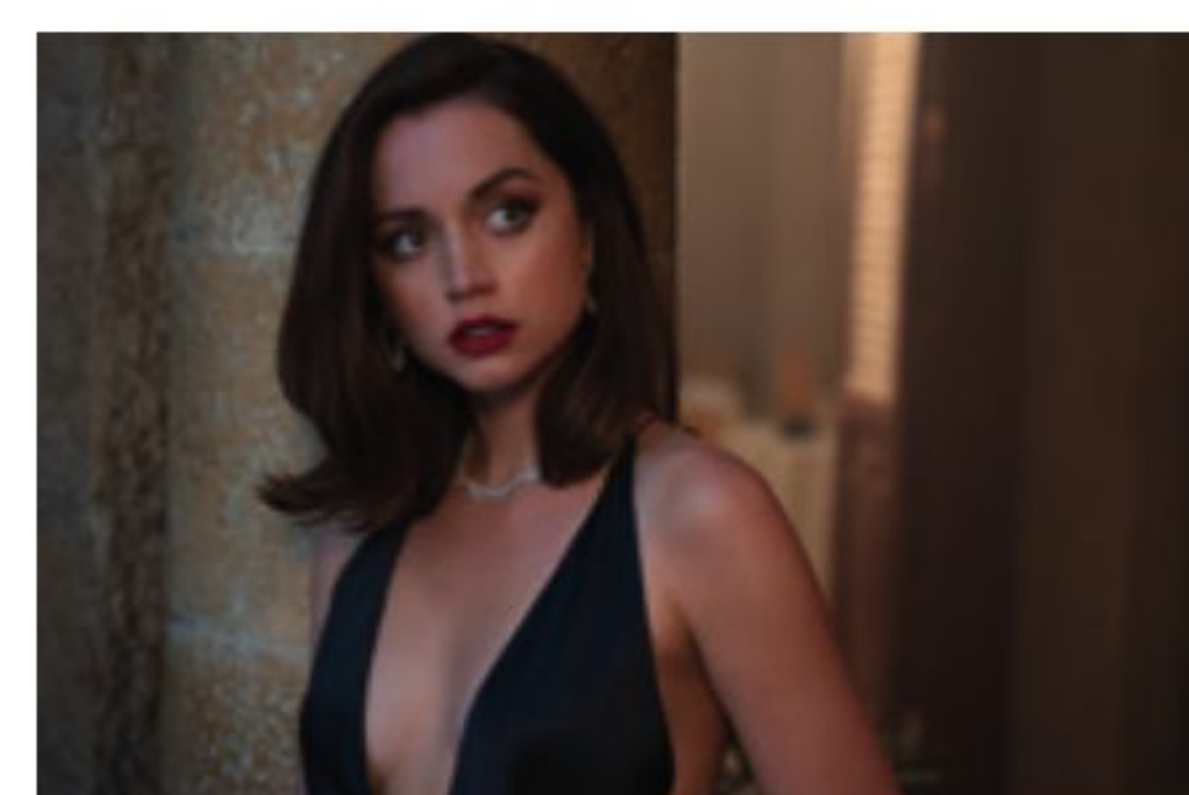
➔ 007.com

WHERE WE'RE DISCOVERING

Borough Market Kitchen

Sample this season's freshest produce at Borough Market Kitchen's long tables. Choose from daily changing tortillas to tahini pie at its various stalls. For heartier fare, try Stoney Street by 26 Grains restaurant with dinner dishes including braised venison with wild mushrooms.

➔ boroughmarket.org.uk



ABOVE: NO TIME TO DIE James Bond (Daniel Craig) and Dr. Madeleine Swann (Léa Seydoux) drive through Matera, Italy; Paloma (Ana De Armas) in Cuba; James Bond (Daniel Craig) in discussion with Dr. Madeleine Swann (Léa Seydoux)



IMAGE TOP LEFT-RIGHT: RHS FLOWER SHOW CARDIFF © RHS / JASON INGRAM; DUA LIPA, PHOTO BY HUGO COMTE. ABOVE AND BELOW: BOROUGH MARKET KITCHEN





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Environmental Volunteering

SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL

In the first of a series about sustainable travel, we discover how to visit some of the most beautiful parts of the UK – and help to preserve them while you travel.

Words | **Helen Holmes**



THE HEBRIDEAN WHALE AND DOLPHIN TRUST



TREES FOR LIFE VOLUNTEER

It's a rare traveller in 2020 who isn't at least slightly haunted by the spectre of their carbon footprint. Most of us are trying to figure out how we can best combine our love for discovering new places with the need to fly less, consume less, and tread lightly on the beautiful environments that we are privileged to visit.

It can be a tough calculation, weighing up the potential environmental cost of your proposed trip, against the need for a change of scene, a breath of fresh air, a dip in the cool ocean. But what if there was a way to visit some of the most remote and precious parts of the British Isles, see them from a perspective that isn't available to an ordinary traveller, and to feed your soul at the same time?

Residential conservation holidays offer exactly this opportunity. From dolphin watching off the Hebrides to drinking country wines in Cheshire, by volunteering some of your time to help protect the environment, you can give yourself an experience that you'll never forget.



SAIL THE WILD WEST COAST OF SCOTLAND

The Hebridean Whale and Dolphin Trust is based on the Isle of Mull. The organisation gathers evidence about whale, dolphin and porpoise, collectively known as cetaceans, as well as basking sharks, in the waters around the Hebrides. The information they collect is used by the Scottish Government to help protect these important species.

The Trust uses citizen scientists to collect data, and one unique volunteering opportunity that they offer is to join the crew of the Silurian – the Trust's research yacht. Expeditions last 7 to 10 days, and no experience is required. Rod White is a veteran of nine Silurian expeditions: "To sail in the wonderful scenery off the Scottish coast is a privilege, and anchoring in wild places accessible to only a few makes the experience unforgettable.

"If you've never experienced a close encounter with cetaceans you will very likely find it a profound and spiritual event. No two expeditions are the same. The weather, time of year, complement of the crew and of the volunteers ensures a unique experience. I'm always pleasantly surprised by the diversity of the people aboard – it doesn't take long for a team spirit to develop." hwdt.org



REWILD THE HIGHLANDS

Trees for Life is a conservation charity dedicated to rewilding the Scottish Highlands. They have planted nearly two million trees, and offer conservation weeks where volunteers plant and grow trees, monitor wildlife and support other vital work which helps restore the Caledonian Forest.

Stephen Couling is a volunteer week leader for Trees for Life: “I love the work we do, which I think is crucially important in trying to repair some of the damage done to the environment by centuries of poor land management; I love the people with whom I do this work – my Trees for Life colleagues and the amazing volunteers who come from all walks of life and many different countries; I love the places in which we do this work: the Highlands of Scotland.”

“Our volunteers say that they enjoy doing something to help nature recover; they enjoy the community spirit that comes from living and working with like-minded people for a week; they love being outside working in all winds and weathers; they love meeting new people; and they love being so isolated and wild – away from phones and the internet – and living completely off-grid for a week. But above all they love ending the week feeling that they’ve made a difference.”

“We’re drowning in stories of natural disasters – fires, floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, melting ice caps, pollution, plastics, disappearing animals and insects. These conservation weeks are small but important moments of hope.”

treesforlife.org.uk



GLENCOE IN THE HIGHLANDS, VISITSCOTLAND / KENNY LAM



ABOVE AND BELOW: TREES FOR LIFE VOLUNTEERS



CONNECT WITH NATURE ON AN ORGANIC FARM

Founded in the UK in the 1970s WWOOF (World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms), is an organisation connecting willing WWOOFers with farming hosts. Accommodation, meals and learning are given in return for help on the farm. Emma Robinson has been WWOOFing for several years now: “It seemed like a brilliant way to travel, meet really interesting people, stay in some wonderful places, and learn lots about organic growing and off-grid lifestyles.”

“I took my partner for his first WWOOFing adventure to a smallholding just outside Macclesfield, where we stayed with a lady who was an absolute inspiration. She lived a

very simple life, with no electricity, and kept her milk in the stream. She made her own country wines and let us sample a different one each night. We stayed in a gypsy caravan, with its own little stove, we bathed in the stream and had beautiful walks across the nearby meadows.”

“Another of my favourite visits was to a community farm in the South West – another idyllic place. I was there during a holiday week, where various families came every year for a break. Every day included amazing meals, sharing stories and lovely conversations.”

“For me, although I really love learning about gardening, growing, animal husbandry and so on, the best bit is the people. Really, it’s about enjoying the company of people that I otherwise wouldn’t meet, and who are always incredibly interesting, warm, inspirational and generous. There’s something about the nature of WWOOFing and its mutual generosity that really warms your soul.”

wwooof.org.uk



SCOTTISH WILDLIFE TRUST VOLUNTEERS AT LOCH OF THE LOWES

PROTECT VITAL ECOSYSTEMS

The Scottish Wildlife Trust undertakes policy and campaigning work to protect Scotland’s wildlife for the future, as well as managing a network of around 120 wildlife reserves across Scotland. The organisation offers a range of volunteering opportunities, from cleaning beaches to saving squirrels. Helen Lancaster worked with the Trust as a volunteer assistant ranger. “I experienced and worked on all five of the Trust’s wildlife reserves in Perthshire. Each one of these reserves has unique features and working on them has given me an insight into how different habitats such as meadows and woodlands need to be managed.

“Loch of the Lowes Wildlife Reserve is one of the Trust’s flagship reserves, with iconic wildlife including beavers, red squirrels and ospreys. Helping to look after the reserve was a great responsibility to get to take on. The best thing about volunteering, though, was sharing time with like-minded people. There was a huge amount of support and encouragement from everyone I met during my time as a volunteer.” scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk



Weekend of Adventure

THE ISLE OF MAN

World-famous for being home to the Isle of Man TT Races, we explore the uniquely charming and mysterious bays, towns and ports, without the smell of petrol, or a speedy superbike in sight

Words | **Jessica Way**



With 95 miles of beautiful coastline, ancient ruins, historic castles, adventure sports, wonderful wildlife and an endless amount of activities, the Isle of Man is the perfect playground for some unforgettable family fun and an awe-inspiring weekend break.

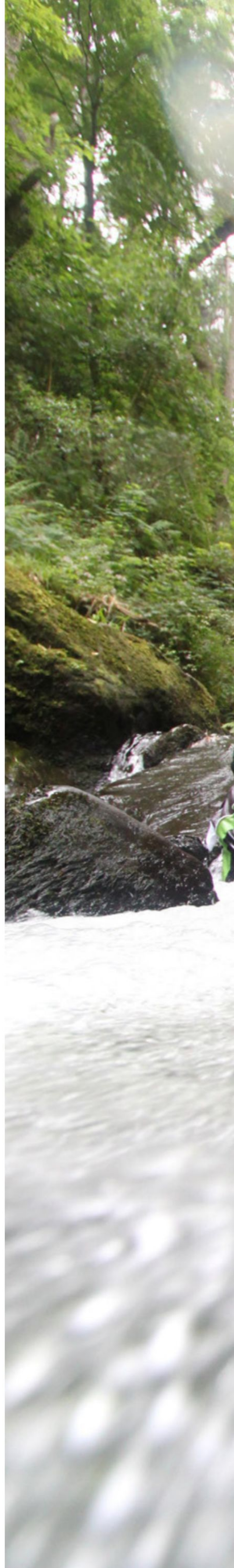
A melting pot of character and taste, there's an abundance of attractions, cafes, cosy pubs and trendy restaurants offering something for all ages. Little ones, especially, are bound to love the hidden tales of giants and fairies.

From the miniature buildings that evoke the island's rich folklore where fairies take flight, to discovering the Fairy Bridge - a quaint old stone structure where trinkets, tokens and letters are left for the 'Little People' known locally as 'mooijer veggey' - to bring luck.

Young adults, and the young at heart, might prefer the water and outdoor activities, enjoying an adventure-fuelled break amidst the mountainous peaks, emerald waters and tangled trees and twisty trails, and everyone will enjoy the many unique towns, picturesque villages and quaint harbours just waiting to be explored.



© MIKAEL BUCK / JILL JENNINGS / ISLE OF MAN





Pictured left-
right: Dhoon
Glen Beach;
Garwick Bay;
Ballaglass
Glen; Close
Leece Farm

DAY 1

Where better a place to start than the capital, Douglas, with its unique blend of traditional seaside resort and bustling culture quarter?

Here we enjoy exploring the peaceful seafront by horse-drawn tram admiring the views of the two-miles long bay, which includes a mini-castle (The Tower of Refuge) built by the founder of the RNLI, William Hillary, before heading across the island to Peel.

Douglas is located on the east side of the island, just 13 miles in width, so it takes no time at all to drive across to Peel on the opposite, west side of the island.

On our journey, we decide to stop for a breakfast-brunch at Close Leece Farm. Their shop and cafe, housed in a stylishly renovated old barn, is an absolute must - it opened in 2018, and still feels brand new with a warming wood burner, floods of natural light, and modern artwork filling the walls. With the help of their Tamworth pigs, Golden Guernsey goats and Manx bees they serve some of the best breakfasts on the island!



Along with some friendly local folk we are lucky enough to have the cafe almost entirely to ourselves, and we sit outside in their spacious garden admiring the beautiful countryside, surrounded by their Manx Loaghtan sheep, goats and free-range chickens. →

Just a five-minute drive around the corner and we arrive at Adventurous Experiences, where we meet Keirron, the owner and head coach of our coasteering adventure. Wetsuits on, and safety briefing over, we head down the road in convoy to the stunning Peel Beach, a white sandy bay, overlooked by the magnificent Peel Castle, on the majestic coastline.

The rugged cliffs of St Patrick's Isle, supporting the castle above, are steep and craggy, and as they plunge into the sea they create the perfect coasteering landscape.

We start off gently, scrambling, swimming and stepping, sometimes jumping, into the crashing sea from reasonably low heights as we make our way around the rocks further behind the imposing castle.

The waters are choppy and we enjoy the rushing waters between the rocks and the thrill of navigating our way through the push and pull of the swells.

Keirron advises that if we get tired from swimming to simply flip on our backs and let our buoyancy aids do the hard work for us, and he's right - you simply stay afloat and let the waves take you.

We reach the next outcrop and take a short breather in a cave where we examine the sedimentary rock formations of blocks and geometric shapes the sea must have formed over the years. There are also some interesting markings inscribed into the rock by sailors from a time gone by.

Keirron's knowledge of the island is profound. He was born on the Isle of Man, trained in North Wales, and then set up his business 15 years ago. Keirron teaches us some more about the history of the island, before stepping it up, and taking us up to our biggest jump yet, around 20ft high!



Keirron is brilliant, very professional and he made us all feel completely at ease, and most importantly when coasteering, safe! My youngest jumped in just as I had reached the top, my heart was in my mouth, but not wanting to let my family down or lose face, I took the leap of faith - and we celebrated together in the water.

Back in Peel, once dry and warm, we decide to spend the rest of the afternoon exploring this thriving Manx fishing port. Aptly named 'Sunset City', Peel is famous for its stunning sunsets, sandy beach and of course the magnificent castle, constructed by the Vikings in the 11th Century.

We stop to see a working kipper curer who gives us a fantastic insight into the production of the famous Manx Kipper before visiting Davisons Ice Cream Parlour, for a taste of the most beautiful ice cream on the island.

We enjoyed wandering along the beach and up the promenade, investigating the quaint, winding streets lined with numerous shops and cafes - passing the Island's only cathedral, and spotting our first Manx Cat with its very short tail - ginger and adorable!

Peel is also a great town for learning more about Peel's, and the Island's, history and marine heritage by visiting the interactive House of Manannan museum, the Leece Museum and the unique Manx Transport Heritage Museum.

One of the locals tipped us off about The Boatyard Restaurant, which is located on Peel's historic quayside and enjoys stunning views of the bustling marina and ancient Peel Castle.

Here we enjoy fresh local fish, (I order Monkfish and Prawn Moilee - delicious) before driving back to our holiday home, admiring the striking sunset and believing the legends here to be true.



DAY 2

Our morning starts with a 5k run at Nobles Park, Douglas. The only Parkrun on the Isle of Man, attracting around 150 locals and parkrun tourists every Saturday with the run starting at 9am. Parkrun is something we do regularly as a family at home, and it's always an adventure to take part when we're away on holiday too.

Here we discover the TT Grandstand and enjoy looking at the startline, pit lanes, refuellers, and scoreboard, and we meet Karen Penny, an impressive lady who is walking the entire coast of Britain and Ireland - 19,000 miles - for Alzheimer's Research UK (justgiving.com/fundraising/thepennyrollson).

We drive to The Sound, the Island's very southern tip, approximately a 30-minute drive. It's breathtaking, one of the most scenic places in the British Isles, with views over to the Calf of Man - and a great place for spotting seals. With floor to ceiling windows, The Sound Cafe is an excellent place to then treat yourself to local Manx dishes, coffee and some cake while still enjoying those fabulous coastal views.

If you prefer walking to running, allow yourself the day to explore footpaths which lead from The Sound to Port Erin or Spanish Head, Cregneash and the Chasms in Port St Mary. Or you could hire bikes from The Bike Hut in Port Erin, and make like Peter Kennaugh and Mark Cavendish for an afternoon of cycling! Alternatively, book a boat trip to or around the Calf of Man. →

Pictured left-right: Jessica's daughters and Keirron, owner of Adventurous Experiences, Jessica and her family coasteering; Sunset at Niarbyl



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Given its remote location, the island is, unsurprisingly, a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve and wildlife haven, above and beneath the waves, with regular visits from whales, dolphins, porpoises and seals as well as chough, fulmar, redshank and a breeding colony of Manx shearwater. As a Nature Reserve and Bird Observatory, the Calf of Man is a 600-acre islet located on one of western Britain's major migration routes, making it an ideal place for birdlife, fauna and flora. Around 33 species of seabirds breed on the islet annually, include Manx Shearwater, Kittiwake, Razorbill and Shag.

This area is also a hotspot for seals sunbathing on the rocky Kitterland, an even smaller rocky islet - often frequented by dolphins and basking sharks.

Next, we head to the Manx Electric Railway terminus back in Douglas. The car park is next to the Terminus Tavern Pub, a good option for lunch - serving generous, homemade and freshly prepared meals.

From here we take an unforgettable journey, aboard the electric tram, along the east coast. Travelling on this unique heritage railway, which dates

back over 100 years, is an adventure in itself. The 17-mile route takes us along some of the most scenic stretches of railway in the British Isles.

On one side are views of the beautiful Manx countryside, glens and charming villages and to the other, far-reaching views out to sea.

We stop at Laxey, a picturesque village on the east coast, set in a deep valley. Here you can discover insight into the Island's mining heritage and view the world's largest working water wheel, the Laxey Wheel, or Lady Isabella as she is also known, which used to pump water out of the mines.

We enjoy a light lunch at Ballacregga Corn Mill Tearooms, a newly refurbished mill offering a mix of history, contemporary art and delicious food before taking a ride on the Snaefell Mountain Railway.

This unique Victorian enterprise, which is around five miles long, has been in operation since 1895 and is the only electric mountain railway in the British Isles! The tram winds its way to the summit of the Island's only mountain, Snaefell, at a height of 2,036 feet above sea level. On a clear day, it is said seven kingdoms can be seen from the top of



Snaefell: Isle of Man, England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Heaven and the Sea.

Roam, relax and be refreshed at the summit cafe, before taking the next convenient tram back to Laxey, where you alight and wait for the Manx Electric Railway service to take you back to Douglas.

In Douglas there is a huge selection of restaurants to choose from. We decide on Ocean on North Quay where they had a vegan menu, ideal for my daughter, who was delighted to have the option of a cauliflower coconut curry and sticky toffee pudding with ice cream.

It was so refreshing escaping the everyday and waking up each morning in such sublime surroundings, with a day packed full of excitement and adventure. We felt we still might have only scraped the surface of this extraordinary island - next time we will hopefully stay for a week! ♦

GETTING THERE

In addition to ferry services from Heysham, Liverpool, Belfast and Dublin, there are over 200 flights from UK and Ireland airports to the Isle of Man each week. Once on the island, it is best to hire a car. Try ASP (aspcarhire.com) and request a satnav for navigating the island.

Jessica and family were guests of Visit Isle of Man, and stayed in a self-catering holiday home in Santon courtesy of Ballavartyn, an exclusive equestrian centre. visitisleofman.com



In the Capital

GREENWICH

Visit this UNESCO World Heritage Site for beautiful buildings, a wealth of history and stunning views of London

Words | **Helen Holmes**

The Maritime Greenwich World Heritage Site comprises the historic town centre, Royal Park and related institutional buildings. Maritime Greenwich has joined a unique club of the most important and natural places on earth – special places which people are encouraged to visit and explore now and for generations to come.

The ensemble of buildings at Greenwich and their landscape setting, including the Royal Park, are a potent architectural symbol of English artistic, scientific and other institutional endeavour, notably from the 17th to late 19th centuries.

Pictured right page:
View of Greenwich Naval College and the City of London from the Royal Observatory in Greenwich

NESTLING IN A SOUTH eastern curve of the Thames, Greenwich is an oasis in the city. Whether you're taking a stroll in the 180 acre park and enjoying panoramic views over the capital, or admiring the broad expanse of water from a riverside pub or restaurant, in Greenwich you don't feel hemmed in.

It's also an area where you can really connect with London's seafaring history – since Saxon times Greenwich has been a place where people moored their boats, and it's now home to the National Maritime Museum, the Old Royal Naval College and the *Cutty Sark* – not to mention quirky shops like Nauticalia, and Maritime Books, which add to the nautical feel.

Where Greenwich town centre is steeped in history, North Greenwich adds a contemporary dimension to the area. The peninsular is dominated by the Millennium Dome, now The O2 arena, which hosts entertainment and sports events, as well as housing, shops and restaurants. The new Tide elevated linear park, with five meditation points, provides a tranquil space from which to enjoy the river views, and art installations, and the NOW Gallery hosts immersive exhibitions from contemporary artists. →







ATTRACTIONS

Step back in nautical time aboard the **Cutty Sark**. A slice of life on one of the fastest ships of the nineteenth century, it's packed with artifacts, as well as hands-on activities for kids. To continue your seafaring adventure, the **National Maritime Museum** houses a collection of more than two million items relating to the history of Britain at sea – with four new galleries having recently opened and free entry, it's one not to miss.

Built in the seventeenth century, the **Royal Observatory** played a pivotal role in the global advancement of astronomy and navigation, and is the site of the Prime Meridian, longitude 0° -the line which officially divides the eastern and western hemispheres of the world. Aside from the amazing telescopes and clocks, visit for the unique opportunity to be photographed with one foot in each hemisphere.

The *Cutty Sark*, Maritime Museum and Observatory are all part of **Royal Museums Greenwich**: rmg.co.uk

The Old Royal Naval College is a magnificent architectural masterpiece designed by Christopher Wren. Inside, the recently refurbished Painted Hall, is decorated with eighteenth century baroque paintings by James Thornhill, and has been compared to the Sistine Chapel. ornc.org



For something a bit more energetic why not climb the O2? Yes, you can actually trek up the outside of the iconic dome. On a clear day you can see for 15 miles from the top, and for the romantics, **Up at the O2** also organises climbs to coincide with dusk and sunset. theo2.co.uk/up-at-the-o2





FOOD AND DRINK

If climbing The O2 isn't enough of a thrill, how about having dinner at a table suspended 100 feet in the air? **London in the Sky** will hoist you and your fellow diners up for a three course meal complete with unique views of the capital's skyline (May-July). londoninthesky.co.uk

For a proper London lunch, it's hard to beat **Goddards**. On the edge of Greenwich Market, it's a traditional pie and mash shop with a selection of pies (including veggie and vegan options) and plenty of seating. goddardsatgreenwich.co.uk

The Trafalgar Tavern has amazing views of the river, and is a great spot for a sundowner on a spring evening. trafalgartavern.co.uk

Founded in 1999, **Meantime Brewery** was ahead of the curve on craft beer. You can visit the brewery and shop on Lawrence Trading Estate, and also have a pint in the Meantime pub, the Greenwich Union, on Royal Hill.

meantimebrewing.com

Avocado x Coffee near Maze Hill does the best organic vegan cakes and breakfasts in town.

avocadoandcoffee.com

Finally, for the best in fine dining, head to **Craft London**, next to The O2 arena. Modern British food by acclaimed chef Stevie Parle, in an interior designed by Tom Dixon, is sure to make it a night to remember. craft-london.co.uk →



Pictured top left then clockwise: Greenwich University with Royal Museums Greenwich, Queen's House in the background; The Trafalgar Tavern; Goddards at Greenwich; Cutty Sark at the National Maritime Museum; Royal Museums Greenwich, Queen's House; Up at the O2 climbing experience.



SHOPPING

Greenwich's historic covered/undercover market is crammed with crafts and antiques, and surrounded by cute boutiques. It's a great place to pick up an original gift or souvenir.

If it's upmarket groceries you need, take your shopping basket to **Royal Hill**. With a cheese shop, traditional greengrocer, a flower shop and a butcher your weekly shop can be complete without darkening the door of a supermarket.

Lush Designs on College Approach sells a range of home wares with distinctive, bright prints. Many items made by the designers in their studio in nearby Deptford.

For more mainstream shopping at discount prices, the **ICON Outlet** at The O2 includes over 60 stores, including Hackett, Hobbs, Radley and Moss Bros.

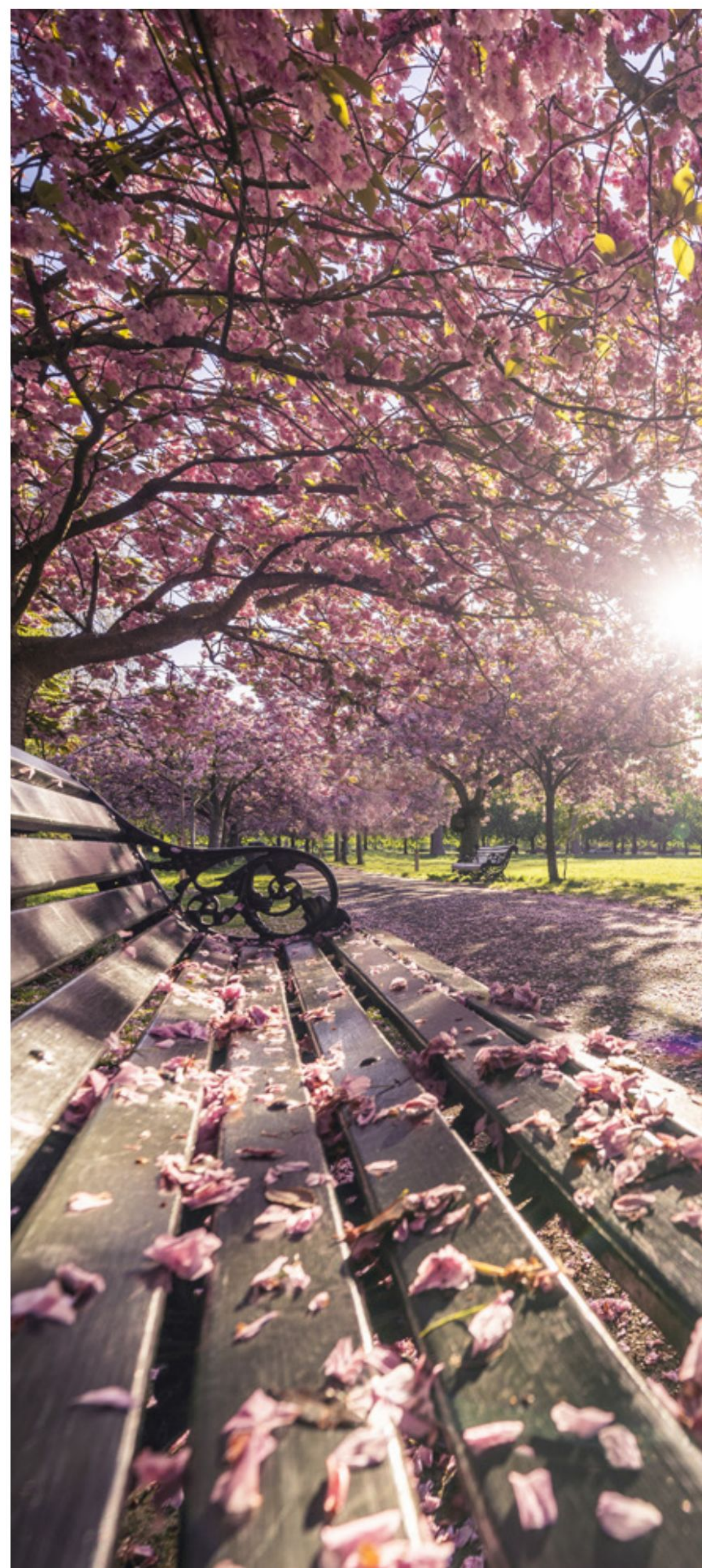
WHERE TO STAY

Why not enter into the nautical vibe of this part of town by staying on an actual boat, without sacrificing anything in the way of comfort or facilities? **The Sunborn London Yacht Hotel** is moored in Royal Victoria Dock, just across the river from North Greenwich, and perfect for catching the cable car. The luxury yacht has a bar and restaurant and a spa, as well as 132 guest rooms and 4 suites. sunbornhotels.com/london

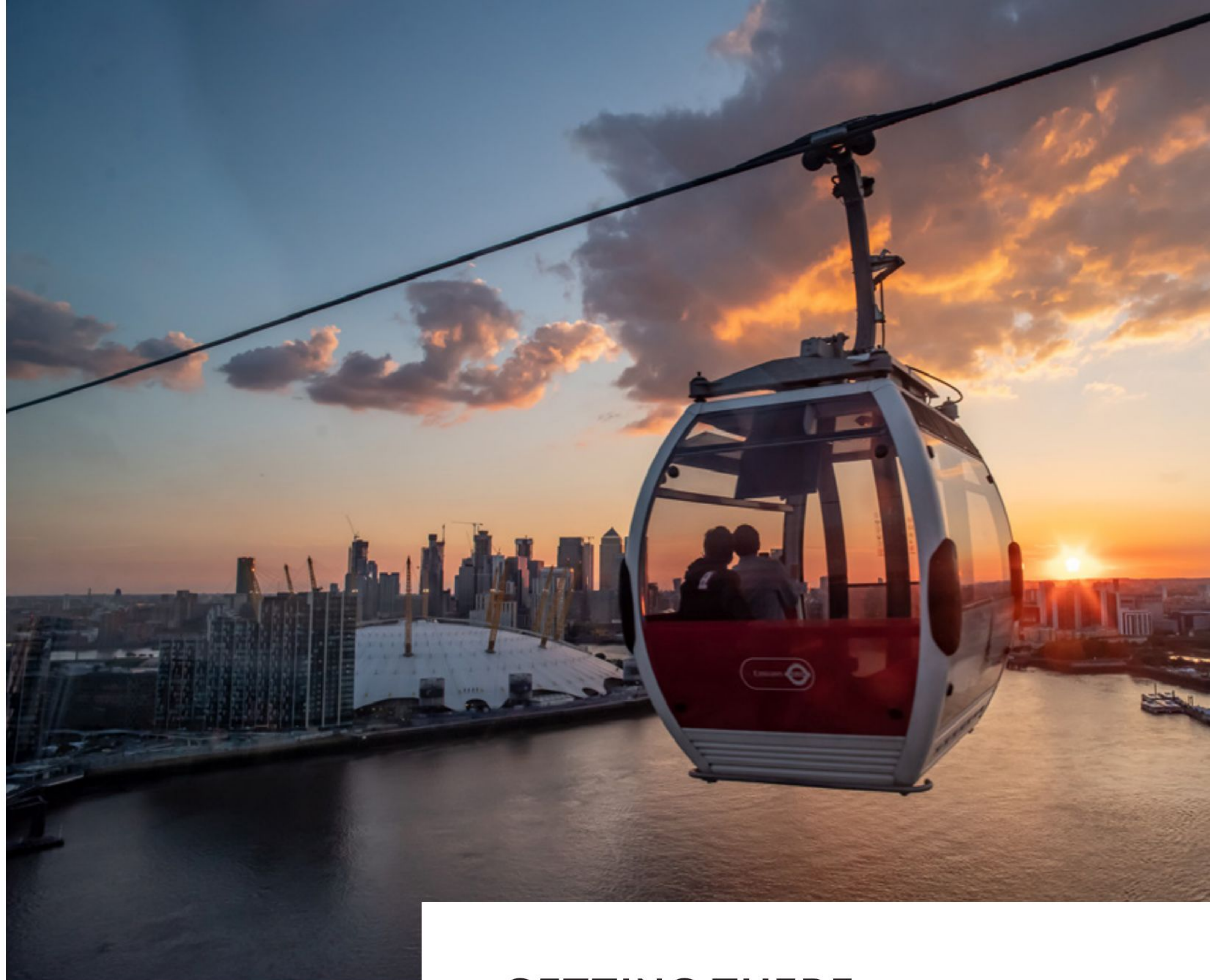
If you want to be in the heart of Greenwich, surrounded by historic buildings, the **De Vere Devonport House** is your place. The red brick Georgian building is next door to the National Maritime Museum, and a short stroll from the market, the Royal Observatory and the *Cutty Sark*. devere.co.uk/devonport-house

On Greenwich Peninsula, **The Pilot Inn** is a 200 year old pub, and also a boutique hotel. The ten hotel bedrooms are quirkily decorated, and the hotel is ideally located for visits to the O2. pilotgreenwich.co.uk

Pictured top
left then
clockwise:
The O2 arena;
Thames
Clippers
sailing past
The O2 arena;
Cable car from
Royal Victoria;
Thames
Clippers
sailing past
Greenwich
University; The
Tide, People
walking in
Greenwich
Park



© VISITBRITAIN/TAREQ MOORADUN / ED SIMMONS



GETTING THERE

The most fun way to arrive is by **cable car from Royal Victoria** - enjoy spectacular views as you swing into the North Greenwich peninsular. There's no need to book ahead, you can simply swipe in with your contactless card.

Another option is the river bus. **Thames Clippers** serve both North Greenwich and Maritime Greenwich from moorings up and down the river – and again, the boats are part of the TfL network, so you can swipe on and off.

The Docklands Light Railway stops at Cutty Sark and Greenwich, and North Greenwich has a tube station on the Jubilee Line.

You can even **walk to Greenwich under the river**, with a foot tunnel connecting the Cutty Sark area with the north bank of the Thames. ♦

Don't Miss:

London's first-ever elevated riverside linear park open on Greenwich Peninsula. Initially 1km in length, running from Peninsula Square to the river and along the riverside, The Tide will eventually stretch 5km in length around the whole Peninsula.



10

of the best

CHARITY CHALLENGES

Words | **Max Wooldridge**

Remember that New Year Resolution to get in shape? It's not too late! Why not try an endurance event, a personal challenge or a fun day out - and raise some vital charity donations at the same time?



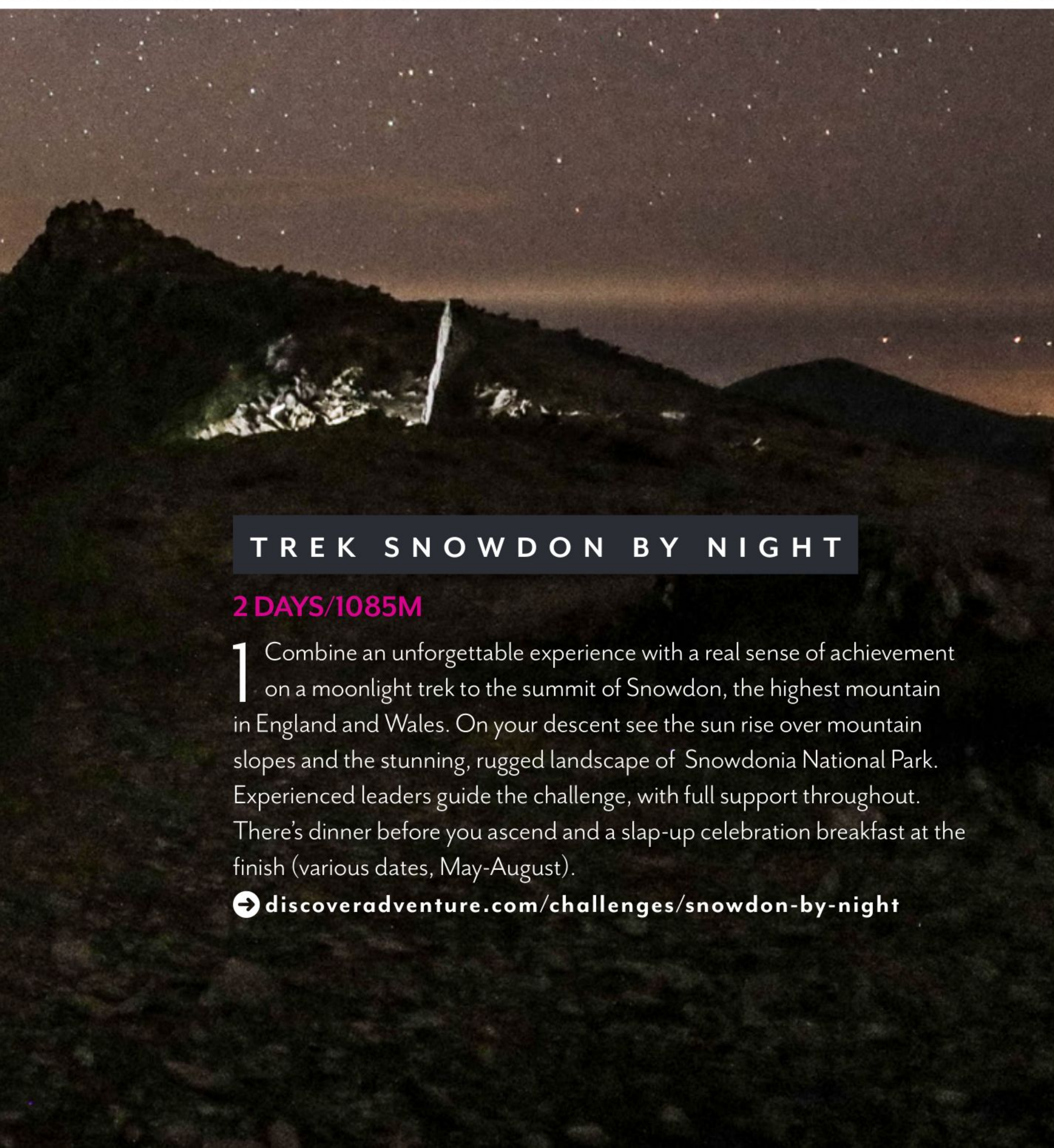


DELOITTE RIDE ACROSS BRITAIN

9 DAYS/1,000 MILES

2 Push yourself to the limit and make memories to last a lifetime on one of the UK's greatest two-wheeled challenges. Join hundreds of other cyclists from Land's End to John O'Groats on the ultimate British bike ride - nearly 1,000 miles in nine days through marvellous landscapes. There's full support en route - food, mechanics and medics - leaving you to focus wholly on making friends – and the road ahead (5-13 September).

➔ rideacrossbritain.com



TREK SNOWDON BY NIGHT

2 DAYS/1085M

1 Combine an unforgettable experience with a real sense of achievement on a moonlight trek to the summit of Snowdon, the highest mountain in England and Wales. On your descent see the sun rise over mountain slopes and the stunning, rugged landscape of Snowdonia National Park. Experienced leaders guide the challenge, with full support throughout. There's dinner before you ascend and a slap-up celebration breakfast at the finish (various dates, May-August).

➔ discoveradventure.com/challenges/snowdon-by-night

JUMP FOR JOY IN PITLOCHRY

132 FEET

3 Here's a highland fling with a difference! Head to Perthshire and this special bungee jump platform 132 feet above the beautiful River Garry, near Pitlochry. Take a leap and (try to) enjoy spectacular views of the historic Pass of Killiecrankie, a dramatic gorge surrounded by ancient trees. Jump experts Highland Fling Bungee works with charities of any size and cause and offers jumps all year round.

➔ bungeejumpscotland.co.uk



JURASSIC COAST TREK

25KM/50KM/100KM

4 Embark on an historic trek along the spectacular sites of Lulworth Cove and Durdle Door along the Jurassic Coast - a World Heritage Site since 2001. Starting at Poole Harbour, this walking challenge takes in Portland Bill, Chesil Beach and the famous cliffs at West Bay. There are three trek options to choose from – 25km, 50km, or push yourself to the limit with the full 100km challenge (16-17 May).

➔ jurassiccoastchallenge.com



LAKE DISTRICT FIVE PEAKS CHALLENGE

14 MILES

5 Here's a weekend to treasure: why not tackle five of the Lake District National Park's most demanding peaks. Challenge yourself to 14 miles of walking across dramatic crags and moorland, the Langdale Pikes towards England's highest peak, Scafell Pike. There's full support and qualified mountain leaders to show the way (April, August & September).

➔ charitychallenge.com



CHARITY SKYDIVE

7,000/10,000/15,000FT

5 2020 is a leap year, so no better challenge than a tandem skydive in aid of charity. As a specialist first-time skydiving centre, Salisbury-based GoSkyDive are perfect for fundraisers who have never jumped before. They work with hundreds of charities across the UK, so, go ahead and jump into an enthralling experience you'll remember for years (throughout the year).

➔ goskydive.com





WALK THE ISLE OF WIGHT COASTAL PATH

FULL, HALF OR QUARTER ISLAND

7 Great challenges need great settings - and few are better than the Island's coastal path - with white cliffs, sandy beaches, stunning views and an undulating coastal path to really test you. The Full Challenge starts at Chale, in the south, and at 106km and 2,000 metres climb - makes it a tough one! The 2 Day Full Challenge Option enables rest at half-way in Cowes, with the whole route in daylight. (2/3 May 2020) For a much slower pace, you might also enjoy 2-17 May, Isle of Wight Walking Festival - two weeks of stunning guided walks around the Island.

➔ isleofwightchallenge.com

DEVIZES - WESTMINSTER CANOE RACE

17 MILES

8 Pitch your strength and wits against other water babies in a memorable canoe challenge - The Devizes to Westminster International Canoe Race. Starting in Devizes, in Wiltshire, competitors paddle 125 miles along the Avon Canal and River Thames. Over 70 locks will need to be navigated en route, and a 17-mile stretch of Thames tidal water (10-13 April).

➔ dwrace.co.uk

RIVER DART 10K SWIM

10,000M

9 Join swimmers in the UK's longest established ultra swimming challenge, along the River Dart from Totnes to Dittisham. It's the watery equivalent of the London Marathon and at 10,000m, nearly a third of the length of an English Channel swim (5-6 September).

➔ outdoorswimmingsociety.com



LONDON TO BRIGHTON ULTRA CHALLENGE

25KM/50KM/100KM

10 Put your best feet forward from the capital to the coast on a trek from Richmond to Brighton over the North and South Downs. There are great views en route to the south coast, full support throughout and even the chance to camp midway. Walk, run - or even hop - the Full (100km), Half (50km) or Quarter (25km) Challenge (23-24 May).

➔ ultrachallenge.com



Meet the Maker

FLOWER FIELDS

In a quiet part of the English countryside, in fields bursting with scented flowers and herbs, an innovative Dorset venture is changing the face of the British perfume industry

Words | **Emma Johnson**



Nestled in the in the Tarrant Valley, and bordered by the River Stour, Keyneston Mill is a beautiful, tranquil estate, whose scented perfume fields stretch across 50 acres. The rural idyll is in full force here – with river walks, natural woodlands, converted stone barns and an orchard where bees are happily and productively located. But it's the fields and formal gardens that are really the star of the show at Keyneston Mill, Blandford Forum, Dorset – their heady, colourful expanse a striking patchwork on the valley canvas.

The Bridgers moved here in 2015, after looking specifically for a property with enough space and scope to grow the flowers and herbs for their perfume business, which they had started to explore a few years before. “We have both loved perfume for many years, but in fact we approached the business from the horticultural angle,” explains Julia. The duo started growing cut flowers and trialling herbs on a small scale at David's family property, and then visited Grasse in the South of France, the centre of modern perfumery in Europe, whilst on holiday. “It was then that we started thinking in terms of growing our own perfume ingredients,” says Julia. “And





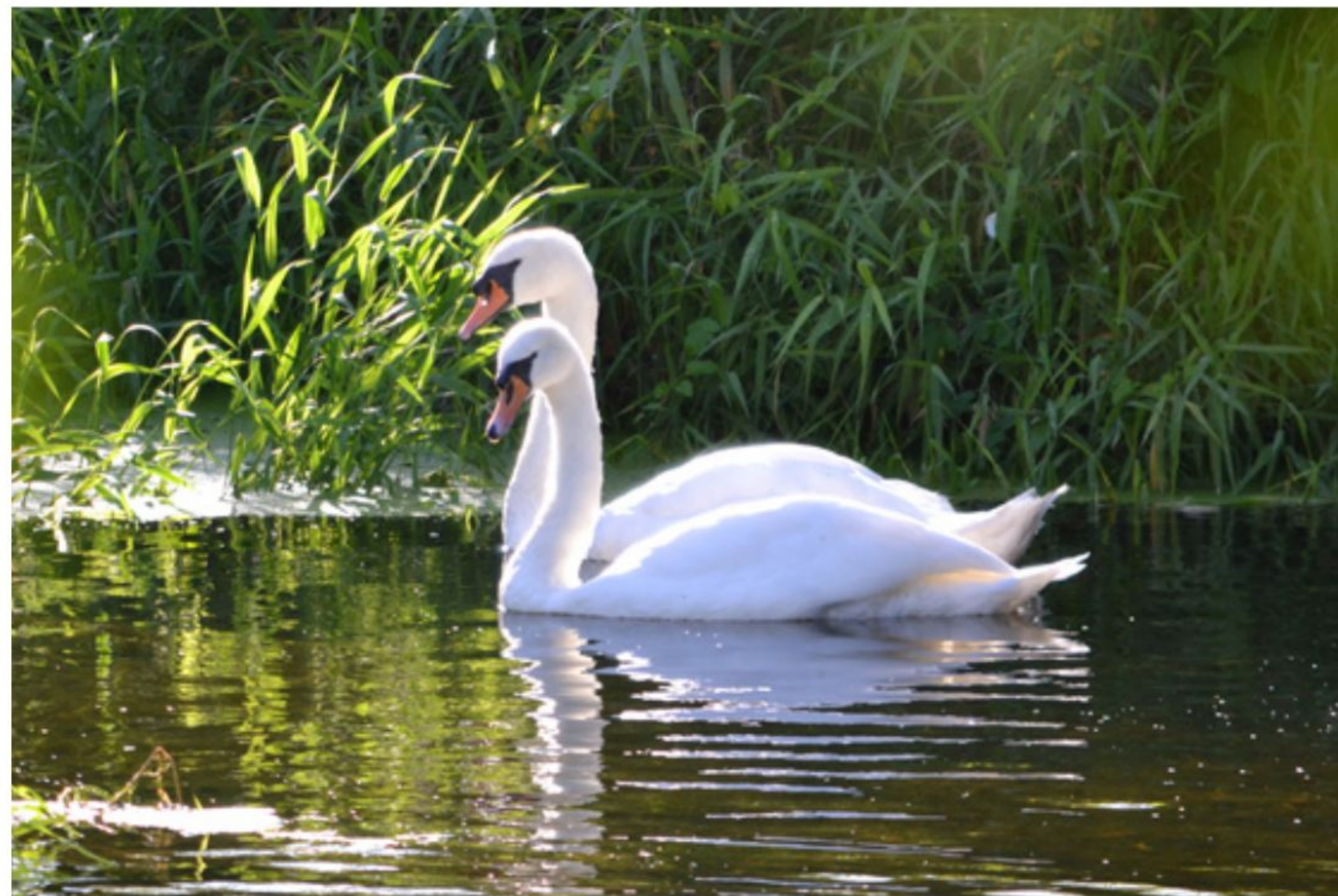
the idea grew from there. It turns out that this was quite a unique proposition as no-one else has taken on the challenge in quite the way we have.”

The Bridger’s launched their first perfume in Fortnum & Mason in 2017, and three years on, with open gardens, a bistro, a gift shop as well as perfume workshops and a busy year-round events programme, Parterre is now a thriving creative and experimental hub.

Julia, David and their team grow, harvest and distill all the key ingredients for their luxury perfumes on-site – with all 50-acres dedicated solely to aromatic and scented plants. “There are over 1500 varieties currently in cultivation,” explains Julia. Beautiful and gloriously scented, these gardens are also practical trial beds where unusual varieties are grown and distilled in small batches, and are then planted out in the fields for use in future perfumes.

Designs for the trial beds and Collection gardens – which house all the plants used in the fragrances - have been thoughtfully put together, divided into distinct sections and often created with consideration for history and heritage of some of the great gardens of the world.

The gloriously scented Padua garden is home to the floral family of fragrances, featuring roses, jasmine, sweet peas and lilies, and is based on the design of the Orto Botanico, founded in 1545 in Italy by the Venetian Republic. “This garden is beautiful year-round,” says Julia. “From early spring when the bulbs emerge, through the summer months when the roses, →



peonies and sweet peas come into their own, and right through to the first frosts it is always colourful and gloriously scented.”

Close by, the Fougere (French for ‘fern’) garden is a heady mix of lavender, rosemary, clary sage, and mint as well as hundreds of different ferns, their earthy scent mixing perfectly with the pungent herbs; while the Citrus garden – a favourite of David’s – is an especially fresh and exciting addition, with a host of tangy scents and aromas.

The Spice Garden reflects the colours and scents of a contemporary spice market and is designed in geometric, block-planted beds, inspired by the works of Kandinsky. It includes classic spices such as bay and fennel, and the more unusual, like Vietnamese coriander and perilla.

All the plants in the Collection are related in some way to fragrance, and many have fascinating histories. “The gardens help us to bring to life some of the stories behind perfume making,” says Julia. Walking around the gardens, visitors are encouraged to rub the leaves between their fingers, and to allowing the different scents

to release into the air. Julia explains that: “The plants are here for us all to enjoy. We want them to look – and smell – wonderful.” Entry to Keyneston Mill’s gardens is free throughout the winter, but you can also do garden tours that focus on specific flowers and herbs in the gardens, as well as workshops where Julia and her team share some of the process of perfume-making, and in particular the harvesting and distilling process that runs throughout the summer and into autumn.

The process of creating Parterre fragrances is quite complex, as every plant has to be treated differently, and the team now works with over 40 different crop varieties at any one time. As an example, Julia takes me through the process of working with rose-scented geraniums. “We propagate and nurture them indoors until May, when we plant them out in the perfume fields in rows. They are then tended for the next few months until it is time to harvest them, before distilling.”

Distillation takes place in the converted Long Barn, close to the Collection gardens, using their large still – affectionately called Dorothy – which extracts the oil from the foliage



and flowers. The timing and the detail has to be very precise, and the intensity of fragrance is achieved through the careful nurturing of the plants, each of which is picked at the optimum moment. “Most plants, such as rose geranium, are harvested in the early morning and taken directly to the distillery, resulting in essential oils infused with freshness,” says Julia. “But, others, like vetiver root, are dried before distillation, a process that takes several days and produces an extract of rare depth and richness.”

After the oils have matured and been tested for several months, they are sent to Jacques Chabert, Parterre’s master perfumer based in Grasse – who has previously worked with Chanel and Guerlain. Using Parterre’s oils, produced fresh that season, he creates a series of perfumes, which are then bottled and packaged back at Keyneston Mill in Dorset.

The whole process from planting to bottled perfume can take 18 months or more, and each perfume is a highly limited edition, because each year Parterre only produces a small amount of the finest oils that form the key notes. From this, only a finite number of bottles of perfume is created from each yearly extraction. Like wine, no two years are the same, and so each bottle of perfume produced has its own unique and rich qualities, meaning a Parterre fragrance is both a luxury item and a unique piece of the British countryside. ♦





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thebigretreatwales.co.uk



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cardenpark.co.uk/spa/



AQUA CLUB AT THE HEADLAND

Set in a world-class position over-looking Fistril Beach, the new £10 million Aqua Club at the five-star destination, The Headland, opens this spring.

headlandhotel.co.uk



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OPERA IN THE CO

The English Country House
Opera Season is a hugely
successful British phenomenon,
now being copied across Europe

Words | **Adrian Mourby**

COUNTRY



THE IDEA IS SIMPLE: as summer stretches across the English countryside, take the world's great operas out of air-conditioned opera houses and stage them in rural estates, either in the grounds or the house itself. Audiences will follow. The atmosphere is festive. People arrive with picnic hampers – the long dinner interval is an essential element of country house opera – and they tend to dress up.

It all began at Glyndebourne before World War II, when John Christie opened up his Sussex mansion to fellow opera-lovers. The wealthy landowner never intended to establish an art form but that is what Country House Opera has become. As these festivals proliferate across England, there seems to be no diminishment of appetite for them. The season grows longer and festivals are getting more distinct identities. Each has its speciality.

As well as hearing great operas well sung, the Country House phenomenon offers the chance to stay overnight in some lovely hotels or pubs nearby and make a whole weekend of your night at the opera.



© GLYNDEBOURNE PRODUCTIONS / JAMES BELLORINI





GLYNDEBOURNE FESTIVAL OPERA

21 MAY – 30 AUGUST

In the opera world, 4G is nothing to do with mobile phone reception. It's all about the four big opera festivals that dominate the English countryside in the summertime: Garsington, Grange Park, the Grange Festival - and then Glyndebourne.

Glyndebourne began it all. Based in a beautiful faux-Jacobean house in Sussex, Glyndebourne's owner John Christie inadvertently invented country house opera in 1934 when he staged a small festival at his home for the benefit of his wife, the soprano Audrey Mildmay. She told her husband that if he was going to stage an opera, he may as well build her an opera house – so he did.

All the traditions of country house opera began at Glyndebourne, including the long interval, the champagne and picnic baskets, and the distinctively British combination of dinner jackets with panama hats.

The festival is now run by Gus Christie, grandson of John, whose family still live in the manor house. In 1994 Glyndebourne replaced its old performing space with a new state of the art opera house, acoustically one of the best in Britain and the administration of the three-month summer season – the longest of all the festivals - is now a year-round, highly professional business.

This year Glyndebourne offers six operas – new productions of *Dialogues des Carmélites*, *Alcina* and *Fidelio*, plus revivals of *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, *L'elisir d'amore* and *The Rake's Progress* which was designed by David Hockney. glyndebourne.com

Where to stay Ockenden Manor

Ockenden Manor is 15 miles north of Glyndebourne



© GLYNDEBOURNE PRODUCTIONS / SAM STEPHENSON



THE GRANGE FESTIVAL

5 JUNE – 12 JULY

—

The Grange in Hampshire is a magical venue that since 2017 has been run by the opera singer Michael Chance CBE (pictured left). The building has had a long and glamorous history.

In 1795 it was leased to George, later Prince Regent and king, as a hunting lodge offering more than 400 deer in its park. In the nineteenth century the building was reworked in the Greek Revival style and in 1823 a substantial iron and glass greenhouse was added. This hot-house would eventually have its floor dug out to become an unconventional opera house.

In 1998 Martha Fiennes used the decaying mansion as a location in her film *Onegin*, starring her elder brother Ralph. In 2017 a new festival was created at The Grange by the celebrated English singer Michael Chance. Its first season (in June 2017) opened with operas by Monteverdi, Mozart, Bizet, and Benjamin Britten. Their 2020 season is brimming with young love - from Puccini's tragic tale of urgent young lovers *Manon Lescaut*, and Rossini's fizzing masterpiece *La Cenerentola* to Britten's most popular *A Midsummer Night's Dream* full of summer antics and fairy dust. And don't miss ballet superstar Edward Watson, who will premiere at *Dance@TheGrange*, with a piece created especially for him by in demand choreographer Mtuthuzeli November.

thegrangefestival.co.uk

—

Where to stay

The Woolpack Inn is two miles north of The Grange Festival

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GRANGE PARK OPERA

4 JUNE – 18/19 JULY

Grange Park Opera began in 1998 at a country house in Hampshire that had been rebuilt in the early years of the nineteenth century. Grange Park had the appearance of a Greek temple but had been allowed – through decades of neglect – to fall apart. Then came Wasfi Kani OBE, the former Chief Executive of Garsington who set up Grange Park Opera. This festival ran from 1998 to 2016 making the most of the Grange’s crumbling, Miss Havisham-like interiors where guests could dine in the intervals.

When Wasfi’s lease was up in 2016, a new management took over at The Grange but the lady wasn’t done yet. She took her high-profile festival to a new venue, sixteenth-century West Horsley Place in Surrey. This country house is owned by the writer and University Challenge broadcaster Bamber Gascoigne. In 2016 Gascoigne leased part of his estate to Wasfi where she built herself a brand new “Theatre in the Woods”. With four tiers of seating in a horseshoe shape (modelled on La Scala, Milan), the Theatre in the Woods can accommodate 700 people. This summer Grange Park at West Horsley is performing La Bohème, Ponchielli’s rarely heard La Gioconda, a new commission The Life and Death of Alexander Litvinenko and musical Meet Me in St Louis.

grangeparkopera.co.uk

Where to stay

Barnet Hill is nine miles south of Grange Park Opera



© GRANGE PARK OPERA / RICHARD LEWISOHN / WILLIAM DUFFY





Longborough Festival Opera

4 June – 4 August

While opera’s 4G venues all began in old country houses, Longborough in Gloucestershire began in a cowshed. In 1998 Martin Graham, a successful local businessman, converted an agricultural building on his land into an opera house with the intention of one day mounting Wagner’s Ring. In 2013 Graham’s ambition was achieved with three complete stagings of The Ring Cycle, as is the tradition at Bayreuth.

Seven years on, and now under the artistic direction of Martin’s daughter Polly, Longborough has already begun its second Ring Cycle which will be given in its entirety in 2022. This year Wagner’s Die Walküre will be presented alongside L’elisir d’amore, The Return of Ulysses and The Cunning Little Vixen.

Visiting Longborough is similar to the 4G festivals, although here many people erect their own gazebos in the carpark (not something that happens at Glyndebourne). There is the same long interval for dinner and the same dress code. The opera house itself remains an exception however. Martin Graham bought old seating and a chandelier from Covent Garden but no attempt has been made to disguise the fact that this was once an agricultural building. “The moment we start to pretend it is an opera house, it will look like a barn,” says Martin.

lfo.org.uk

Where to stay

The Sheep in Stow less than three miles south of Longborough



© Longborough Festival Opera / Matthew Williams-Ellis



GARSINGTON OPERA

28 MAY – 18 JULY

The Garsington festival is no longer at Garsington, but has kept the name. Garsington was founded by the financier Leonard Ingrams and his wife, Rosalind Moore in 1989. The Ingrams had bought the manor house that had belonged to the Bloomsbury patron, Lady Ottoline Morrell.

The couple wanted to stage opera in their gardens, much as the Christies had, and so built a 500-seat auditorium. However from the start Garsington distinguished itself in its programming which mixed well-known works with the less well-known. The very first season presented Mozart's *Così fan tutte* with the British premiere of Haydn's (perhaps deservedly obscure) *Orlando paladino*.

By 2008 the Ingrams family decided they wanted their home back and a new location was found for the festival fifteen miles away at the idyllic Getty estate in Wormsley. A remarkable new 600-seater house was designed that could be assembled every year and taken down at the end of the six-week season.

This year the company will perform a rare early Verdi comedy, *Un giorno di regno* plus *Mitridate*, *Re di Ponto*, *Rusalka*, and *Fidelio*. garsingtonopera.org

Where to stay

Cliveden House Hotel is 15 miles south of Garsington at Wormsley



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Claire as a soldier, 1987. Courtesy the artist and Victoria Miro. © Grayson Perry



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NEVILL HOLT OPERA

10 JUNE – 1 JULY

Beginning as recently as 2013 with a staging of *The Magic Flute*, Nevill Holt Opera is a newcomer on the country house opera scene. This festival takes place at Nevill Holt Hall, Leicestershire, the home of the Cunard family from 1876 to 1912 but now owned by David Ross, co-founder of Carphone Warehouse. In 2018 Ross built a beautiful new theatre for his festival, seating 400 people in the hall's seventeenth-century stable courtyard. This, the smallest opera house in Britain, was subsequently shortlisted for the Stirling Prize.

With a commitment to new talent, Nevill Holt Opera aims to cast young singers whenever possible. This year the festival offers productions of *La traviata* and *Don Giovanni*. nevillholtopera.co.uk

Where to stay

Hambleton Hall is 14 miles to the north of Nevill Holt

WEST GREEN HOUSE OPERA

18 JULY – 26 JULY

West Green House was built in the early eighteenth century by Henry Hawley, the general who led the cavalry charge that massacred Bonnie Prince Charlie's army at the Battle of Culloden in 1745. In the twentieth century this Hampshire mansion came into the possession of Sir Victor Sassoon, builder of the Peace Hotel in Shanghai. Sassoon left the property to the National Trust on his death in 1957. In 1993 Marylyn Abbott, former marketing and tourism manager of Sydney Opera House, bought the lease and instituted an opera season which is held annually in July and August. A purpose-built auditorium in the garden known as The Green Theatre stages all the productions. This summer's festival includes *Eugene Onegin*, Puccini's *La Rondine*, the musical *Gigi* in concert and Howard Goodall's choral work *Invictus: a Passion*.

westgreenhouseopera.co.uk

Where to stay

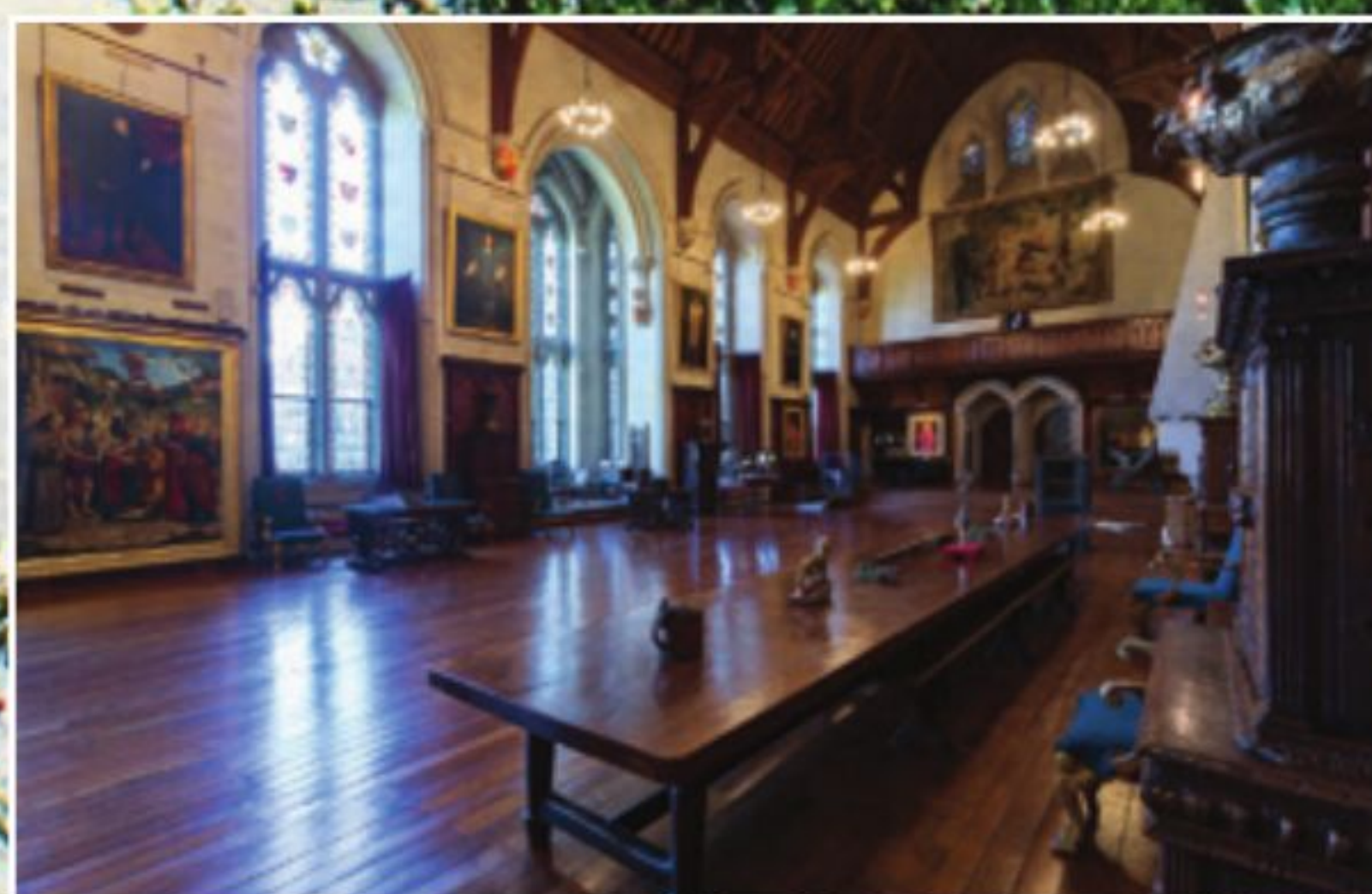
Tylney Hall is three miles from West Green House.



You might also enjoy.... **BAMPTON CLASSICAL OPERA** a mini festival – staging just one, little known opera annually - in the garden of the Deanery at Bampton. This charming, mostly seventeenth-century rural Oxfordshire house uses a curved yew hedge to enclose the opera stage. In August performances transfer to The Orangery in Westonbirt. 17, 18 July – 31 August, bamptonopera.org

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Behind-the-scenes

THE FINAL FURLONG

Not only one of the most important dates in the racing calendar, but also a key part of the spring social season, **Cheltenham Festival** has been a celebrated event for over a century.

Emma Johnson places her bets at one of the oldest race-meets in Britain...

LOCALS AND EXPERTS will tell you that nothing beats the 'Cheltenham roar'. As the horses in the first race of the Festival take their places at the starting line, the sound rising from the crowd is sheer power and excitement, rippling in waves across the grandstand. As the horses' hooves thunder across the turf, turning their keen noses to the final straight, the crowds surge forwards to the finish line, hands in the air, →

waving and cheering for their favourite, their faces a mixture of joy and frustration. Big winners turn to cheer with friends and the winning jockey raises his fist in a gesture of victory, while his horse trots gently back down the course, tail swishing with pride and excitement. Cheltenham has begun.

It is a thrilling moment, at a venue renowned for its atmosphere, and one voted ‘The Greatest Racecourse in the World’ by the Racing Post in 2019. Nestled in the natural amphitheatre created by Cleeve Hill, which flanks the course and faces the rising terraces that overlook the expansive racecourse and the green Cotswold hills beyond, Cheltenham Racecourse is known as the home of jump racing - and the Festival the jewel in its sporting crown. Its three-tiered grandstand and terraces provide unparalleled views across the racecourse, and the countryside beyond, and the sense of excitement in town when ‘the Festival’ arrives is palpable.

One of the oldest race-meets in the Britain, with prize money second only to Grand National, the Festival has been running at Cheltenham in late March since 1911. A bucket-list event for many, the meet itself features several Grade I races including the Champion Hurdle, Queen Mother Champion Chase and the Cheltenham Gold Cup. Held on the final day of the four-day Festival, The Gold Cup is always a sell-out event, with a 70,000 strong-crowd there to witness one of the biggest races in the sporting calendar.

This iconic event attracts over 250,000 people over four days, catered for with nearly 6000 staff and nearly 30 races run. For 2020, many of the races look to be some of the most exciting of the past decade. Favourite Altior will race for the £400,000 winnings in the Queen Mother Chase on Ladies Day (day two), while memorable 2019 winner Frodon will compete on day three and the last three Gold Cup winners are among 31 entries for the Magners Cheltenham Gold Cup 2020 on day four.

PICK YOUR SPOT

There's perhaps no better way to enjoy The Festival than from the Club Enclosure, which has spectacular views from the tiered main grandstand, as well as the expansive members' lawn where you can watch the racing up close and even get a spot by the winning post. A club ticket also means access to the Parade Ring and the newly launched Orchard, a luxurious themed area hosting a range of luxury British brands



© PA WIRE/PA IMAGES

“New for 2020, an area called The Park, featuring a Ferris Wheel, for wonderful views of the whole course, as well as live music all day and DJ sets after the racing from top names such as Nick Grimshaw.”

including Glenfarclas whisky, Bentley, Boodles and Nyetimber keeping the celebrations going with their finest English sparkling wine. The Orchard also boasts glamorous ‘pods’ which can accommodate between 12 and 20 guests, and offers relaxed dining and a private balcony.

In addition, the Festival usually coincides with St Patrick’s Day, making it particularly popular with Irish visitors, as well as the many Irish jockeys and trainers that dominate the sport. There is a dedicated Guinness Village onsite, which has become an area famed for fun, and home to the Irish fan base. New for 2020, the course has also created an area called The Park, featuring a Ferris Wheel, for wonderful views of the whole course, as well as live music all day and DJ sets after the racing from top names such as Laura Whitmore and Nick Grimshaw.



SIZING IT UP THE FESTIVAL IN FIGURES

- > £4.5m - the record amount of prize money on offer at The Festival
- > 21,120 ft – the distance run during the National Hunt Chase, The Festival's longest race
- > 12,320 – yards of running rails surrounding the track
- > 5,000 – bundles of birch used in jumps every season
- > 22 – fences jumped during the Magners Cheltenham Gold Cup
- > 24 – the number of times an Irish-trained horse has won the Magners Cheltenham Gold Cup
- > 266,779 - people attending in 2019
- > 134,600 – people using Cheltenham Spa train station over the four days of racing
- > 45,000 – afternoon teas served
- > 8,000 - gallons of tea and coffee served
- > 9 – tons of potatoes consumed
- > 5 - tons of smoked and fresh salmon consumed
- > 5,936 – staff employed over The Festival, including 350 chefs

DRESS CODE

There is no particular dress code at Cheltenham, but you can expect to see plenty of tweed, as well as people wrapped up in chic coats and striking hats against the - often bracing - early Spring weather.

GOOD TO KNOW KEY MOMENTS IN HISTORY

- > 1934 – Golden Miller became the first horse to win both the Cheltenham Gold Cup and the Grand National in a single season.
- > 2001 – the only year (besides the periods during the two World Wars) that The Festival has been cancelled (due to foot and mouth disease)
- > 2009 – jockey Ruby Walsh rode a record-breaking seven winners over the four days
- > 2009- 2014 Quevega achieved the most consecutive victories by a horse in any Cheltenham Festival race
- > 2010 - Ruby Walsh rode Sanctuaire to victory in the Fred Winter Juvenile Novices Handicap Hurdle and became the jockey with the most wins in the history of the Cheltenham festival
- > 2016 - Ruby Walsh equalled his 2009 record
- > 2019 - Bryony Frost became the first female jockey to win a Grade One over fences at The Festival in 2019, when she and her “best friend” Frodon, won the Ryanair Chase

OUT AND ABOUT

If you're staying overnight during the Festival you can't beat No. 131 for accommodation – a grand Georgian lodge in the centre of Cheltenham, it has 11 beautiful rooms with vast beds and roll-top baths. Downstairs the restaurant and bar serve creative British food and excellent cocktails, while on Thursday and Friday nights there are DJs in the bar until 3am. Slightly out of town, the 16th Century The Frogmill Hotel is nestled in the Cotswold countryside close to the racecourse and features beautifully styled rooms, with Feather and Black beds, statement wallpaper, and premium fabrics. Packages are available with the racecourse, which include helicopter and Bentley transfers, and luxury dining options while at the races. Dining in Cheltenham is also fantastic - The Ivy providing a bit of big city glamour, while Le Champion Sauvage and Purslane both make for a decadent end to your day. ♦



ST MAWES AND THE ROSELAND

Marvel at the unspoilt beauty of Cornwall to connect
with nature and walk in the footsteps of pirates

Words | **Lydia Jackson**

If you're looking to shake off the last of the winter and experience some of the best the UK has to offer, look no further than St Mawes and the Roseland Peninsula. Bordered by the Fal Estuary to the west and St Austell Bay to the east, The Roseland Peninsula has been designated part of Cornwall's Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty for the quality of its landscape and coastal scenery. Spring is the perfect time to explore this spectacular part of Cornwall; its pretty fishing villages, dramatic coastline and beautiful sandy beaches are at their finest when the tourists of summer are yet to arrive and you have the space to fully appreciate what the south coast has to offer.

ST MAWES, ST JUST, PORTSCATHO AND ST ANTHONY'S

WE STARTED OUR ADVENTURE in St Mawes, situated at the mouth of the Percuil River and known as the principal village on the Roseland Peninsula, boasting spectacular views of the river Fal, Falmouth town and the English Channel.

It has a rich maritime history and a fabulous castle, which stands today as the best preserved of King Henry VIII's coastal fortresses. Its sister castle, Pendennis, is visible just one mile across the water in Falmouth.

From here, begin the 2.5-mile walk to St Just in Roseland. An easy walk, the route is beautiful, navigating along the cliffs, past a boatyard and through fields of sheep and cattle. Pristine shingle beaches along the way invite you to dip





Pictured main image: Looking across the water to St Mawes and St Mawes Castle
Above top-bottom: St Just Church, in Roseland and pretty cottage in St Mawes

your toes in, or even take a brisk swim in the clear and tranquil waters, though they tend to be a bit chilly before April! Despite this, with the early spring sun on our faces, our adventure was proving to be almost Mediterranean and we took in the dramatic coastline of granite cliffs whilst watching the comings and goings of fishing boats and yachts.

Arriving at St Just in Roseland you are greeted by a small 13th century church, which sits above the tidal creek of St Just Pool. The waters are an azure reflection of the banks, which rise covered in lush foliage. The churchyard is set slightly higher up, overlooking the church and creek; its gardens embellished with a plethora of sub-tropical species, as well as rhododendrons, camellias, azaleas, bamboos, wild garlic and bluebells.

There are also ponds with giant gunnera and small streams. The atmosphere is magical, and reminiscent of a fairy tale.

After soaking up the ambience, the route headed across the peninsula to Portscatho, famous for pilchard fishing in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and well-known today for its art galleries.

A fantastic and sheltered spot for swimming in its own right, Portscatho is also in close proximity to a number of beautiful sandy beaches, including Porthcurnick, Towan and Carne.

Rest and refresh at The Plume of Feathers, a cosy pub just a couple minutes' walk from the harbour, before catching a bus back to the starting point. →





Pictured left-right: Coastal path from Carne Beach and fishing boats in the harbour at Portloe.

CARNE, PORTLOE, VERYAN AND MEVAGISSEY
Begin your second morning with a pleasant drive to Carne beach, home to The Nare - one of Cornwall's only two five star hotels (along with the Headland Hotel in Newquay).

Facing south and sheltered by Nare Head rising to three-hundred feet over the bay, Carne Beach is an excellent spot for both walkers and dog-owners at low tide and is one of Cornwall's few beaches which are dog friendly all year round.

From the beach, follow the coastal path towards Nare Head, walking right to the end to lap up the views overlooking Gerrans Bay, continuing westwards on the South West Coast Path along The Roseland Heritage Coast to Portloe, taking in spectacular

views of the rugged Cornish coastline. We stopped twice along the way, once at Mallet's Cottage, a ruined stone building at the foot of a wooded valley with breathtaking views, and then at Kiberick Cove, a gorgeous spot where fields roll into the sea and there is a beach at low tide, the perfect spot for snorkelling.

Arriving in Portloe, we realised why it has a reputation for being one of the prettiest villages in Cornwall. Its steep sided valleys shelter the small cove, where fishing boats sit on the slip, surrounded by lobster and crab pots: a quintessential Cornish postcard scene! Disney chose Portloe to film scenes for their 1949 version of Robert Louis Stevenson's classic Treasure Island, a nod to its piratical past when local fishermen would smuggle French →

EDITOR'S HIGHLIGHTS DON'T MISS



Pictured above-left: Two Round Thatched Cottage, Veryan; The Nare Hotel

Veryan Round Houses

Veryan has five roundhouse cottages each with a thatched roof and topped by a cross. Dating back to the nineteenth century, the cottages were built by the Vicar of Veryan church, Samuel Trist, for each of his daughters. Legend has it they were constructed without any corners, so the devil couldn't hide in them!

The Hidden Hut

This adorable beach cafe can be found on the South West Coast Path on the Roseland Peninsula - look forward to what could quite possibly be the best Cornish pasty and Rocky Road you have ever tasted!

Trelissick Parkrun

You might enjoy taking the King Harry Ferry across the Fal River directly to National Trust's Trelissick, and joining in with their weekly 9am Saturday parkrun - but be warned there's a very steep hill in the middle of the course!

The Nare Hotel

This luxurious country house by the sea is an exceptionally rare gem where the memories will stay with you a lifetime. Family-owned for five generations this remarkable hotel with rooms and private suites has an outdoor pool and hot tub, indoor spa pool, two hotel boats, a classic car and direct access onto Carne Beach.



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THE SUNDAY TIMES

www.saltpondshouse.com



The Ship
Inn, Portloe

brandy and hide it in their cellars. You may decide to stop for a drink in the local pub, The Ship Inn, where the walls are adorned with seafaring pictures and paraphernalia and the bartenders are extremely friendly.

Suitable refreshed, follow the footpath to Trewartha before taking a right to Veryan, most famous for its five nineteenth century thatched Round Houses. You must visit the ancient village church before continuing your tour eastwards.

You could spend the afternoon delighting in the joys of traditional Mevagissey, a historic fishing village which still boasts a working harbour. Here, you can wander the narrow streets, perusing the many gift shops, craft workshops, galleries, cafés and pubs. You can't stop here without feasting on a Cornish pasty, locally caught fish and chips, or if you fancy a treat, dining out in one of its well-renowned seafood restaurants.

FALMOUTH, ST ANTHONY HEAD, THE LOST GARDENS OF HELIGAN, CHARLESTOWN VILLAGE AND SHIPWRECK CENTRE

If you have any time to spare, or don't want to spend as much time on the coastal path, there is plenty to see and do nearby.

For £10 you can catch a return ferry from St Mawes harbour to Falmouth and spend the day exploring its bustling high street and fantastic range of restaurants. Falmouth also has a number of beaches popular for swimming and Falmouth Maritime Museum holds a number of exhibitions each year.

Another option is catching the Place Ferry, which runs from April to October, and walking to National Trust's St Anthony. Take the coastal route (signs show you the way) past the two secluded beaches of Great and Little Molunan. Its lighthouse, marking the entrance to the Carrick Roads, keeps ships clear of the infamous Manacle Rocks and was the setting for the television series *Fraggle Rock*.

Alternatively, Charlestown Shipwreck Centre is an excellent place to visit for adults and children alike. The village is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and the Shipwreck Museum holds the largest private collection of shipwreck artefacts in Europe. Not only this, but Charlestown is a fabulous place to visit in its own right. To this day the port remains unspoiled and retains much of its Georgian character. It is also a popular location for film and television, including the Cornish drama *Poldark*.

Near Mevagissey, you can also find the Lost Gardens of Heligan. Rediscovered 29 years ago after being lost during the First World War, Heligan has since been restored to become one of the most beautiful gardens in the UK and holds a number of events all year round. ♦

WHERE WE STAYED ST MAWES



Chapel House East

This is just one of Portscatho Holidays wonderful self catering holiday homes on the beautiful Roseland Peninsula. This beautiful three-bedroom property is located in the heart of St Mawes - a perfect base for exploring the local area offering a luxurious home-from-home coastal stay.

The beach is just a pebble throw away, or step outside your front door and stroll into the village. Leave your car behind and hire a bike, or kayak, or take the ferry taxis across the water for an eco-friendly day of adventure simply messing about by the water.

There's a well-equipped kitchen, breakfast terrace, spacious bright living room and balcony with stunning sea views of St Mawes Harbour and St Anthony Head.

Dining out? You can find traditional harbourside fish and chips at The Victory Inn, or if you're feeling flush try the A' la Carte Menu at the award-winning Idle Rocks. For a cosy night in we ordered woodfired takeaway pizzas from St Mawes Hotel - delicious!



St Mawes

To book your stay with Portscatho Holidays - a family run business that dates back more than 50 years visit:

➔ portscathoholidays.co.uk

WORLD PILOT GIG CHAMPIONSHIPS

Join in the festivities of maritime tradition and
experience a seaside spectacle like no other
between 1st and 3rd May on The Isles of Scilly

Words | Lydia Jackson





NOW IN ITS 31ST YEAR, the World Pilot Gig Rowing Championship is a spectacular event that sees thousands of rowers and supporters travel to The Isles of Scilly to watch the gigs power through the waves in a colourful and exciting extravaganza. Taking place on the first bank holiday of May, a week in Scilly at this time enables you to watch the islands transform from an idyllic haven to a festival-like celebration of Cornish heritage, offering the best of both worlds in a stunning and family friendly location. The population of the island doubles, there's a buzz in the air and everyone is in high spirits. →



What is gig rowing?

Whilst The Isles of Scilly are an enchanting archipelago boasting white sandy beaches and crystal-clear turquoise waters, these waters are famously treacherous to navigate. The islands have one of the highest concentrations of shipwrecks in the UK, with over nine hundred wrecks having foundered on the rocks fringing the shores (you can learn all about this at Charlestown Shipwreck Museum on the Cornish mainland). Gig boats have been used since the eighteenth century to carry pilots with expert knowledge of the coastline to board and direct vessels requiring assistance. They would race from each island to approaching ships, with the hope of arriving first and being awarded the contract for the pilotage and therefore payment. It is from this tradition that gig rowing was born as a sport and is now an important social activity for bringing the island community together.

Those spectating the championships can see three gigs known for saving many lives from shipwrecks and transporting cargo (the Bonnet, Slippen and Golden Eagle) in action, being raced by Newquay Gig Club.

What are the championships?

Initially, the championships were mostly inter-island with a few crews travelling from Cornwall. However, since then it has grown considerably in popularity, attracting crews from around the globe and even a blind crew!

The main event is the race from St Agnes to St Mary's on Saturday, involving every gig scrambling to get to the harbour in Hugh Town first. The event comes alive as each of the brightly coloured gigs churn up the water, hoping to scoop a favourable group position in preparation for the heats taking place over the remainder of the weekend. The start line is over a mile long and as the race ensues, you can hear the paddles as they cut through the water and clatter against one another as teams strive for pole position. This fabulously unique sight and sound is best experienced from the water by boarding one of the many available visitor boats, but for those who favour the land, welcoming the boats to the finish line amongst the crowds is also an exhilarating experience. Alternatively, there are a number of favourable viewing spots around the Garrison, from which you can also view the shorter Nut Rock races. If you're struggling for directions, fear not;

“The start line is over a mile long and as the race ensues, you can hear the paddles as they cut through the water and clatter against one another as teams strive for pole position.”





the gig and island communities are well-known for being friendly and there is always a local or fellow reveller happy to point you to a viewing point. Sunday afternoon's races determine the overall positions, group and medal winners, but festivities are held each evening of the weekend as crews celebrate or commiserate the day's successes. Hugh Town comes alive as people flock to the pubs lining the harbour, where a pint of island brewed ale is a must and Cornish chants boom through the streets. Whilst the championships are a jovial and exciting occasion, the sport is still taken very seriously. A spokesperson for St Mary's Gig Club told me that training takes place all year round, with intense gym sessions during the winter and training on the water whenever the opportunity arises. This year, the level of competition is expected to be higher than ever as the event's popularity has increased so much that a selection criterion for crews has had to be introduced!

How to make the most of your visit to the Isles of Scilly

The best way to enjoy the championships is by booking a week on the islands with a few days either side of the weekend. This way, you can enjoy the build-up of the event and the excitement of the races, before watching the island return to its idyllic state for a few days of relaxation. To get the full experience, exploring the islands is a must.

There's plenty to do and it's often that visitors are so wrapped up in the exhilaration that they forget to delve into the many wonders on offer. Easter is typically the start of the tourist season, so by the time gig weekend swings around most, if not all, places are already open and well prepared for visitors. At this point of the year the puffins are returning; The Isles of Scilly being one of only a handful of sites in the UK where you can spot them. Other animals to keep an eye out for are basking sharks, seals and dolphins; though there's a better chance of seeing them when the excitement of the races has died down. There are also a number of boat tours happening, so you can go island hopping and visit one of the many inhabited or uninhabited islands around St Mary's.

There are plenty of walking and cycling trails and the sights and scents of Scilly are something to marvel at. Covered in sub-tropical plants and flowers, you can see a number of unusual species of flora, especially if you take a trip to the spectacular Treco Abbey Gardens where twenty thousand plants from more than eighty countries flourish. By night, Scilly sunsets are some of the best in the country and the stargazing is truly spectacular. ♦

48 HOURS IN

IN THE LAKE

DI





STRICT

There's water, water everywhere in this stunning part of England, and oh so many ways to enjoy it, whether in it, on it or simply looking at it!

Words | **Emma O'Reilly**

I'VE BEEN VISITING the Lake District for many years, encouraged by my husband for whom it was an annual family pilgrimage. They used to stay in basic B&Bs with flowery carpets and fierce landladies. Each day, rucksacks would be stuffed with sandwiches and Thermos flasks for ascents up into the surrounding fells. A treat would be a visit to a twee teashop. Once they camped - and experienced a summer storm with horizontal rain that filled the tent. None of this dampened his enthusiasm.

These days, the rain still comes (how else those emerald hills and sparkling waters?) but the Lake District is also awash with hip hotels, top class spas and a veritable galaxy of Michelin starred restaurants. Still, home comforts apart, nothing beats the feeling of striking out into the countryside, where time seems to have stood still. In this age of constant technological distraction, nothing soothes the soul like a day spent with Mother Nature at her very best, enjoying her most dramatic scenery. Despite the popularity of the area, it's relatively easy to leave the crowds behind and, as Wordsworth did, wander lonely as a cloud. At this time of year you will also see many hosts of golden daffodils, we promise.





HIGHLIGHT DON'T MISS



► Lodore Falls waterfall

Find Lodore Falls behind the Lodore Falls Hotel near the Grange end of Derwentwater. The waterfall is formed by the beck from Watendlath Tarn cascading over huge boulders for a distance of some 100 feet!

→ [visitcumbria.com](https://www.visitcumbria.com)

DAY ONE

Take a hike – it's the one thing you simply must do in the Lake District. If you're not feeling dressed for it, head for George Fisher in Keswick for a kit out. Fear not if you blanch at the thought of wearing a cagoule and battling up vertical fells as there are routes to suit everyone, including flat circular strolls around tranquil lakes and tinkling tarns.

Fell virgins wanting a relatively gentle incline might try the route up Catbells from Hawes End. It's an easy hike (my daughter did it at the age of three!), up and down in less than two hours, with a bit of a scramble at the top and the reward of astonishing views over Derwentwater. Many other walks are accessible from the Keswick area, including England's highest peak, Scafell Pike.

You'll be hungry by now, so refuel with a bowl of steaming Hungarian goulash with dumplings, the speciality at The Dog & Gun, one of Keswick's oldest pubs and popular with tourists and locals.

Next, head over to Keswick Boat Landings for a boat trip around Derwentwater. It takes around 50 minutes and there are various hop-off points. The Lingholm Estate is worth a visit for its octagonal walled garden. The original provided inspiration for Mr McGregor's vegetable patch in *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* (Beatrix Potter spent many holidays on the estate). The café has its own bakery and mountain views so stay for tea and cake. Or get off at Lodore Jetty and it's a 15 minute walk to the bijoux but beautiful Lodore Falls waterfall.

Dinner may be beckoning by now. For something special, try The Cottage in the Wood. This 17th century restaurant with rooms, recently awarded a Michelin star, is tucked away in the Whinlatter Forest - on the aptly named Magic Hill. →

Visit our flagship Windermere store

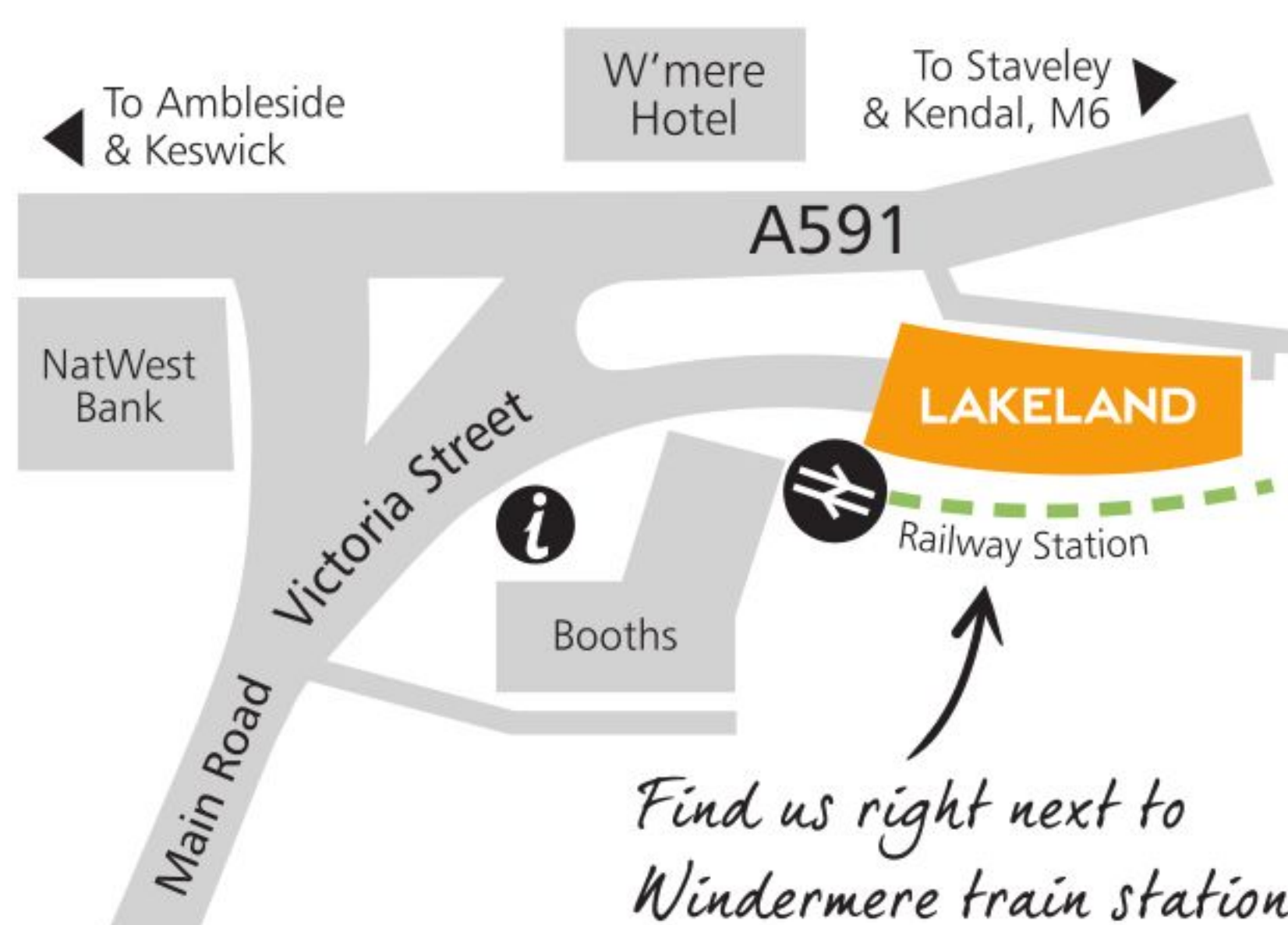


Find thousands of great ideas to help you cook and bake better, clean faster with minimal effort, and tackle the laundry mountain with ease – and with regular product demos from our knowledgeable colleagues, you're sure to find something you can't live without.

While you're here, treat yourself to a drink and a bite to eat as you take in the stunning panoramic views of the Lakeland fells from our First Floor Café.



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OPENING TIMES:
Mon to Fri 8am-7pm, Sat 9am-6pm,
Sun 11am-5pm. Café times differ.



LAKELAND

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DAY TWO

More Beatrix Potter nostalgia is on offer at Hilltop, in Near Sawrey. Her former home, where she wrote 13 of her 23 books, is charming and exactly as it was when she died in 1943. The garden is also being restored and fans will recognise scenes from the books – like the beehive featured in *Jemima Puddleduck* and the rhubarb patch where the character tried to hide her eggs.

Hilltop is close to Lake Windermere, so if you fancy getting out onto the water again, hire a traditional rowing boat or motor boat for a putter around, Swallows and Amazons style.

Grasmere is an easy drive from here, and worth a visit just for the to-die-for gingerbread at Sarah Nelson's Grasmere Gingerbread shop. It's been made to the same secret recipe since Victorian times. When you've indulged, wander over to Dove Cottage, once home to William Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy, for an insight into the life of Britain's best loved poet. The cottage has reopened this spring after a major refurbishment to make it more interactive and relevant to today's visitor. If you need to walk off that gingerbread, have a walk along the Grasmere lake shore, or do the 'Coffin Route', a glorious three mile stroll through a wooded valley to Ambleside.

If you're still in the Grasmere area come the evening, the Jumble Room is a casual, cosy, slightly quirky place to hole up and eat good, hearty food. Foodies should book well ahead for the tasting menu at Simon Rogan's two Michelin-starred L'Enclume restaurant in Cartmel. Or, try Simon's latest venture, Henrock, at the newly refurbished Linthwaite House hotel in Bowness. ♦

Getting there:

A car is undoubtedly the easiest way to get around the Lake District but if you want to be eco-friendly, it's possible to travel there by train (direct services from London, Glasgow and Manchester) then catch buses to get around.





LUXURY HOTELS WHERE TO STAY



► **Brimstone Hotel**

Modern romantics will fall in love with this cool, classy hotel. Rooms and suites are huge, many with bedside baths and fireplaces. The lavish spa includes seven thermal experiences and an indoor/outdoor pool. It's a walk to the restaurant, but 24 hour complimentary snacks and drinks are available in the onsite lounge.

➔ brimstonehotel.co.uk



► **Another Place**

I stayed here years ago, when it was the stuffiest hotel. Now it's transformed into a trendy haven for families. Activities include wild lake swimming, cycling, kayaking and horse riding. Rooms have views over Ullswater and there's a spa with stunning pool and two restaurants.

➔ another.place



► **Gilpin Hotel & Lake House**

A contemporary country house hotel near Windermere. Stay in the main house, in a garden suite with cedarwood hot tub or in a detached spa lodge with ensuite treatment area, steam room, outdoor sauna and hydrotherapy tub. The separate Lake House has just six rooms, sharing an indoor pool, outdoor whirlpools and saunas and grounds around a private lake.

➔ thegilpin.co.uk

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THE HOT LIST

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THE CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK

For expansive landscapes blooming with fauna and flora, vast woodland and breathtaking lochs, head on over to explore Scotland's wonderful spring scenery. A great place to start a springtime Scottish adventure is Loch Morlich, which is nestled in the picturesque Cairngorms National Park. Fans of cruising will cherish the memory of gently gliding through the calm loch surrounded by the great outdoors; even beginners can enjoy an instructed kayak trip through the loch. Visitors should not miss the chance to explore these stunning waters in 2020, during VisitScotland's official Year of Coasts and Waters.

cairngorms.co.uk



PEMBROKESHIRE

For a revitalising break full of unforgettable moments take a trip to the rugged Welsh coast, enjoy the views and fill your lungs with fresh sea air, during VisitWales' official Year of Outdoors.

visitwales.com



NORTHUMBERLAND

For medieval ruins, traditional pubs and the chance to see a unique walled garden head to Lindisfarne, also known as Holy Island, a charming tidal refuge and slice of rustic coastal life.

lindisfarne.org.uk

ISLES OF SCILLY

After a day spent enjoying clear waters, relax on the islands of Bryher, Tresco or St Mary's with a blanket and bottle of fizz for a romantic evening under the sparkling stars in this official Dark Skies location.

visitislesofscilly.com



THE PEAK DISTRICT

For a taste of the wilder side of the British countryside, hike your way on an outdoor adventure in the beautiful Peak District National Park.

peakdistrict.gov.uk



THE ENGLAND COAST PATH

1,000 mini adventures around the world's longest coastal path, by Stephen Neale. Priced £18.99

➔ bloomsbury.com

WHERE TO GO

HOT ATTRACTIONS



DISCOVER ANIMALS FROM AROUND THE WORLD BY ROAD, RAIL, BOAT AND FOOT

For the first time in nearly 20 years, you may see Amur tiger cubs in the Safari Drive-through at Longleat, nestled within the Wiltshire countryside. Born in July 2019, Yuki and Rusty are growing fast and enjoying roaming around Tiger Territory. Explore further into the Safari Drive-through and be entertained by the infamous Rhesus monkeys as they clamber over cars. Spot the big cats, hyenas and pack of wolves as they roam free in their open enclosures before exploring the main park from the squeal-inducing koalas to the endearing zebra mice. Walk with the meerkats, watch the charming giant otters play in their underwater viewing enclosure and marvel at the adorable Egyptian fruit bats above your head. Feel the weight of a rainbow lorikeet as it lands on your hand to drink nectar, see how agile the sea lions are as you throw fish to them on the Jungle Cruise boat tour, listen to the entertaining parrots and gain first-hand experience as you feel various textures while holding a tarantula, snake or cockroach in the Animal Handling Hall. Find the centre of the Hedge Maze then, take a breath, and board the miniature Longleat Railway.

longleat.co.uk

THE ROYAL YACHT BRITANNIA

Step aboard The Royal Yacht Britannia between 18 - 21 May and you will get the opportunity to meet the 'Yotties', the former crew of Royal Yachtsmen.

They will be donning their white overalls once again and returning to their beloved Royal Yacht.

royalyachtbritannia.co.uk



ABBEY OF ST EDMUND

Surrounded by the beautiful Abbey Gardens, an award-winning 14-acre park, visited by 1.3million people from all over the world every year, Abbey of St Edmund, in Suffolk, this year celebrates its 1,000th anniversary since its founding.

abbeyofstedmund1000.co.uk



FOR LITERARY LOVERS

The Story Museum, an unusual museum in the heart of Oxford, has just re-opened, fully transformed, following a £6m redevelopment. The museum will present distinct narrative worlds, immersive installations and gallery spaces to inspire visitors, of all ages, to connect with stories.

storymuseum.org.uk



FOR ENTERTAINMENT

Turn your world upside down with a visit to one of these creative and fun two storey houses in Brighton, Essex, Bristol and Manchester – with more launching soon. This is a hybrid of street art and experiential entertainment providing visitors with a zero-gravity illusion experience.

upside-down-house.designmynight.com



FOR HEALTH & WELLBEING

Early birds to the Thermae Bath Spa, famed for its naturally hot thermal waters, can start their session with a complimentary Aquasana class in the Rooftop Pool thanks to a a Feel Good Bath campaign, and new events, launched by sister-property The Gainsborough Bath Spa.

thermaebathspa.com



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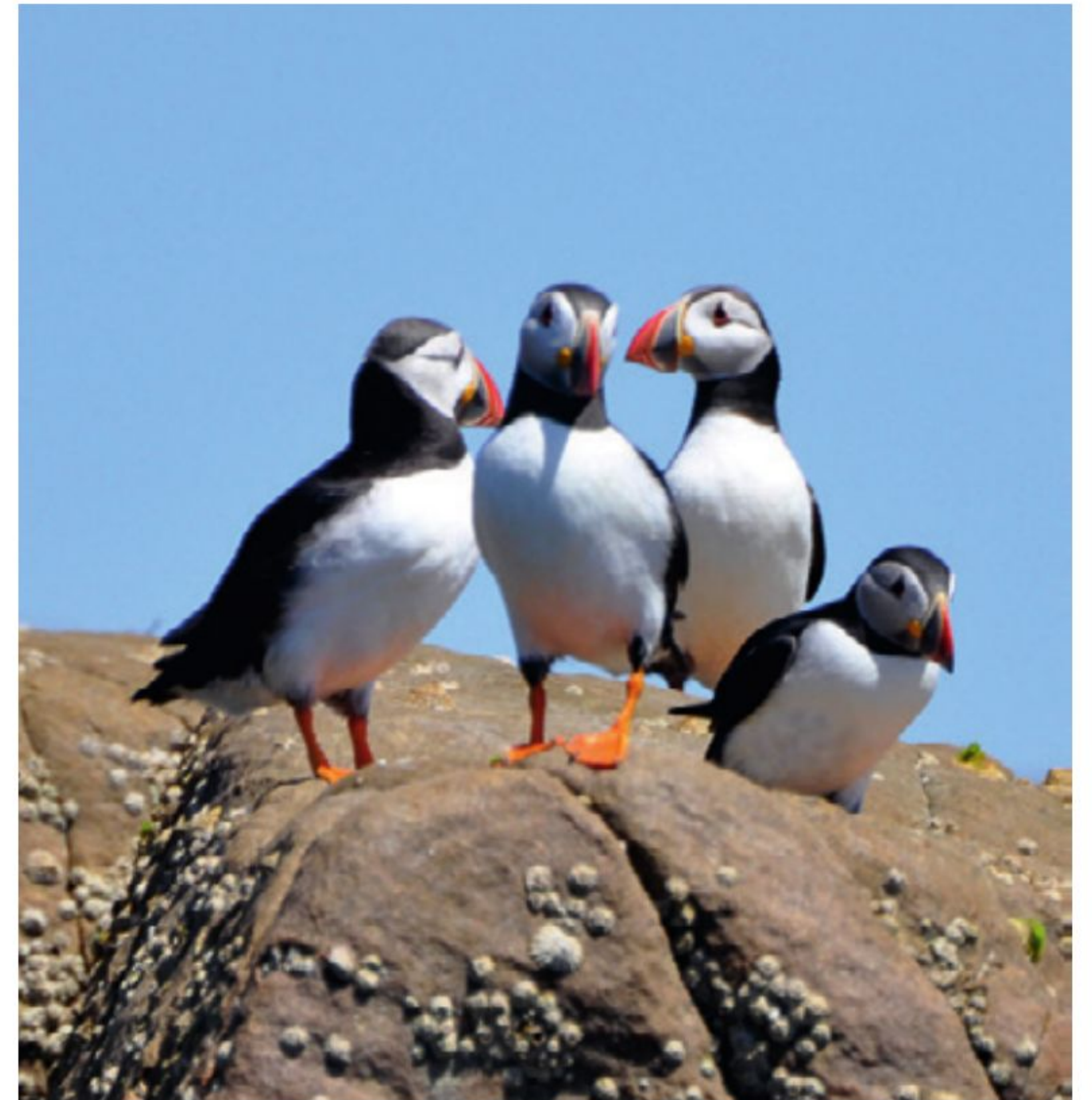
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Alderney

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tourism@alderney.gov.gg
visitalderney.com

WHERE TO EAT

HOT RESTAURANTS, CAFES & BARS



NEW ARTISANAL AFTERNOON TEA STOPS TIME IN PADDINGTON

One of London's grandest Victorian hotels, the Hilton London Paddington, has launched a delectable new afternoon tea offering with British artisanal tea Hope & Glory and Belgian chocolates from Maison Pierre Marcolini. The new space, 'Time Stops Here @ 146' is an oasis of calm which can be accessed through the hotel, directly from the commuter hub Paddington.

Enter the elegant, floral inspired tea room and take a moment to 'stop time' and enjoy a collection of premium teas, sweet treats, scones and savouries. The finest teas and tisanes are served in bespoke bone china sourced from Sri Lanka, tea-inspired cocktails by Hope & Glory and champagne by Pommery Royal Blue Champagne are also available to order. The bespoke 'Time Stops Here @146' afternoon tea is available seven days a week from 12-6pm.

paddington.hilton.com

A SUPERHERO IN SOHO

Park Row is the world's first theatrical dining experience set in an immersive DC-inspired Art Deco Grade II listed venue with five restaurants, storytelling and multi-sensory tasting menu with 360-degree projection mapping technology.

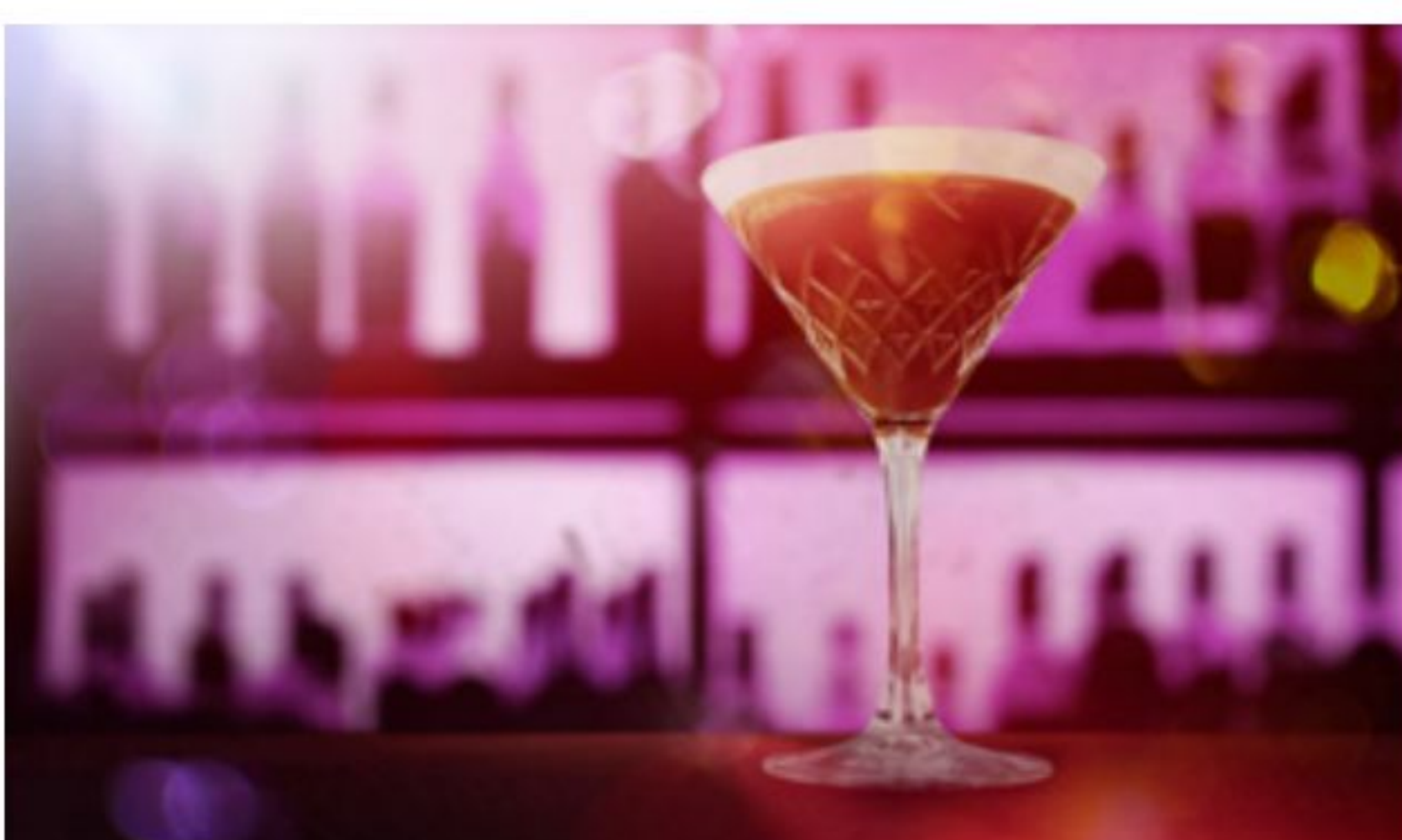
parkrowlondon.co.uk



ICONIC DESTINATION DINING

Cinnamon Kitchen Battersea is part of the first chapter in the exciting regeneration of the Grade II listed Battersea Power Station, serving contemporary Indian dishes inspired by the dishes found on the Mumbai Jaipur Pink City Express train route.

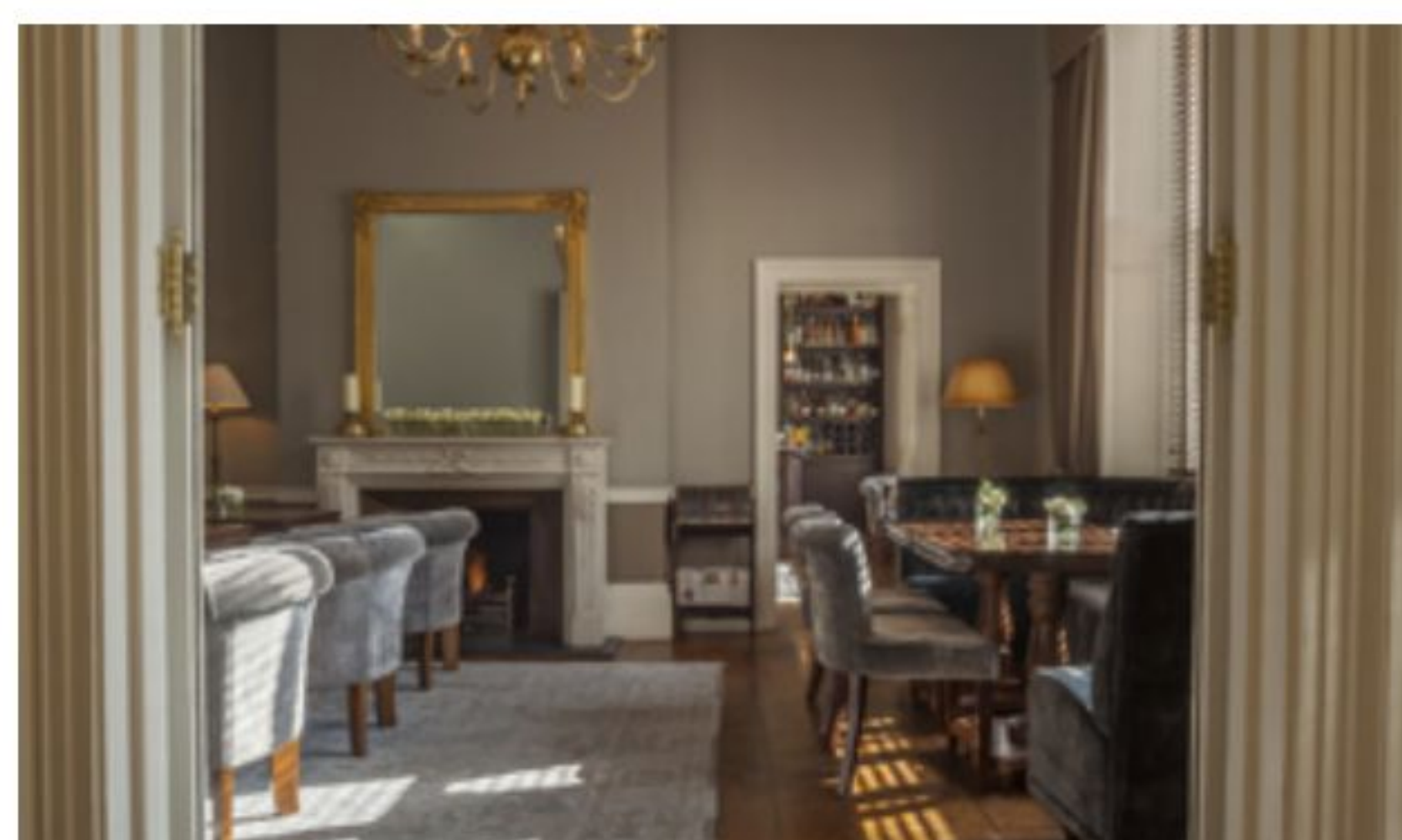
cinnamon-kitchen.com/battersea



TIMELESS FUN

Timeless Bar is a new time-travelling cocktail bar in Hackney offering an all-day happy hour, playing along with the age old idiom of it always being happy hour somewhere, offering some of the greatest cocktails ever invented - and sharing plates from the kitchen.

cocktail-time-machine.com



WEST LONDON'S NEW HYDE

The Hyde is a super-intimate new restaurant located on the ground floor of the Grade II listed boutique hotel, Roseate House London, tucked away on leafy Westbourne Terrace, in West London. The menu options are modern European cuisine, with innovative contemporary twists.

roseatehotels.com/london



INSPIRATION FOR TOURISTS

Page Common at the new Page8 hotel, located off Trafalgar Square, not only serves great coffee and all-day dining, it has been designed to encourage conversations, be it by sharing coffee experiences, travel stories or taking part in a coffee masterclass.

pagehotels.com

WHERE TO STAY

HOT ACCOMMODATION



MEDLEY COURT AT HEVER CASTLE & GARDENS

Dating back to 1903, Medley Court is a luxurious four bedroom 5* gold holiday cottage surrounded by private lawns forming part of the Astor Wing at Hever Castle & Gardens in Kent. The charming, double-moated Castle and surrounding lawns provide a stunning backdrop to this beautiful holiday cottage. Although Medley Court is now just over 100 years old, its appearance is that of a Tudor house, and it still retains the warm, relaxed feel of a family home, with a regal dining room displaying a fine collection of period paintings. There is a kitchen and a sitting room, with views across to the Castle, that opens out onto a beautiful outside covered terrace. The four stunning bedrooms are divine and sleep up to eight guests. Once the childhood home of Anne Boleyn, Henry VIII's ill-fated second wife and mother of Queen Elizabeth I, Medley Court guests have the opportunity to visit the historic Castle and gardens throughout the duration of their stay - even during times when they are closed to the public. Medley Court residents arrive to the private gated entrance of the Astor Wing and upon arrival a member of staff will escort guests to the house, via the private riverside driveway.

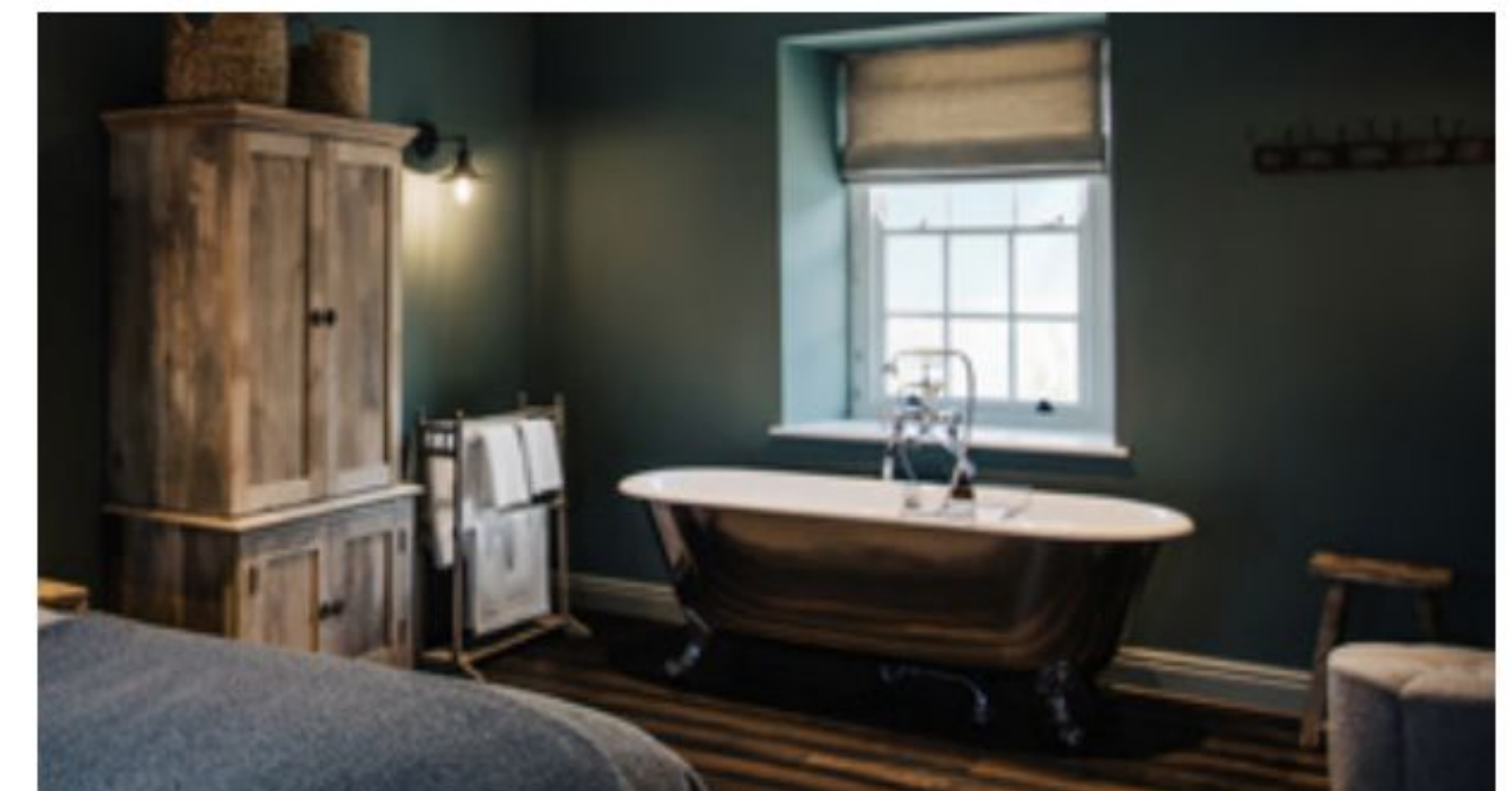
Guests will be welcomed with a 'Castle Kitchen' hamper to get their stay off to a special start.

To book call 01732 861800 or email events@hevercastle.co.uk

THE BLONDE HEDGEHOG

The Blonde Hedgehog is a brand-new boutique hotel located in the quiet cobblestone streets of St Anne, Alderney made up of nine rooms and suites set across two buildings, as well as one detached luxury three-bedroom cottage.

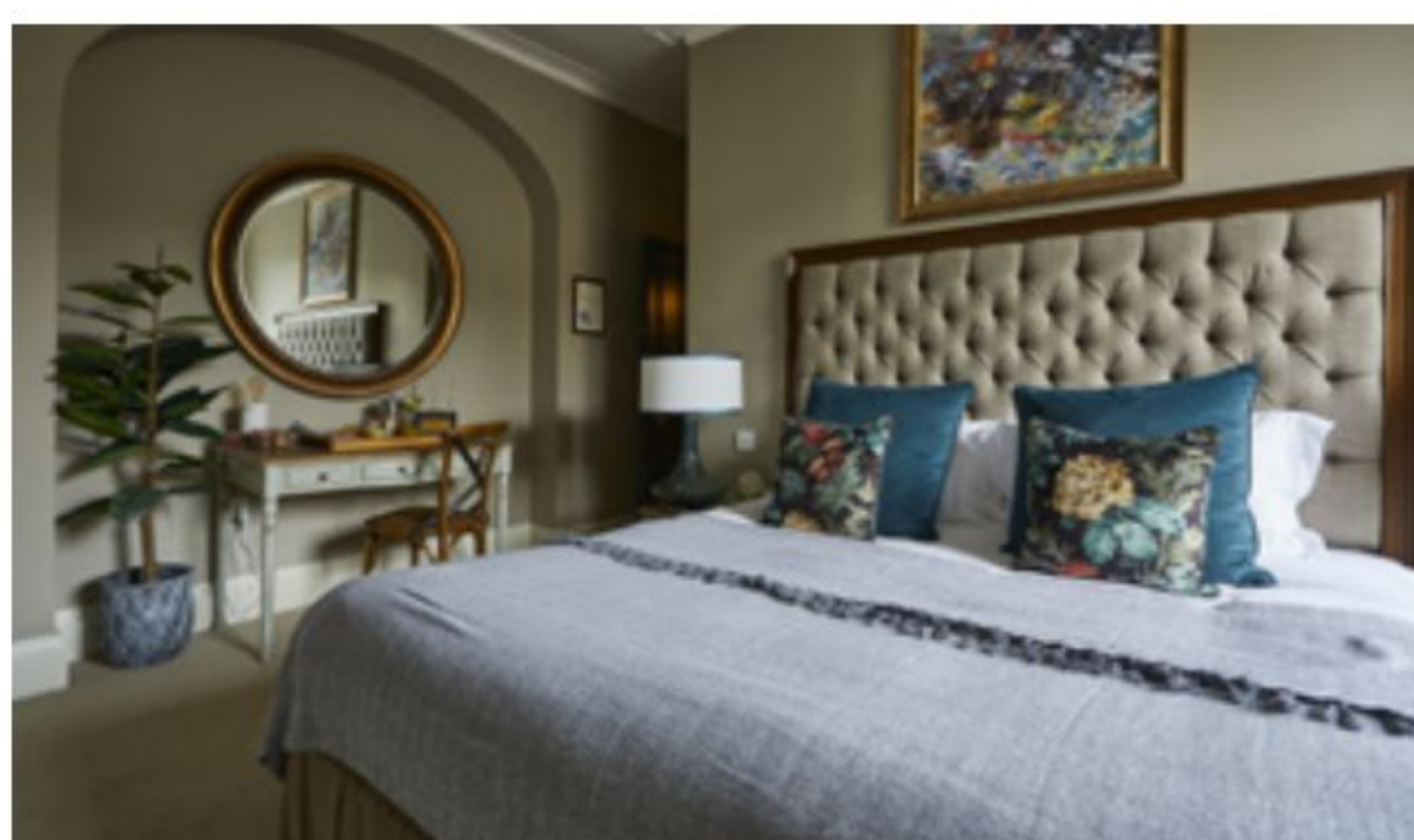
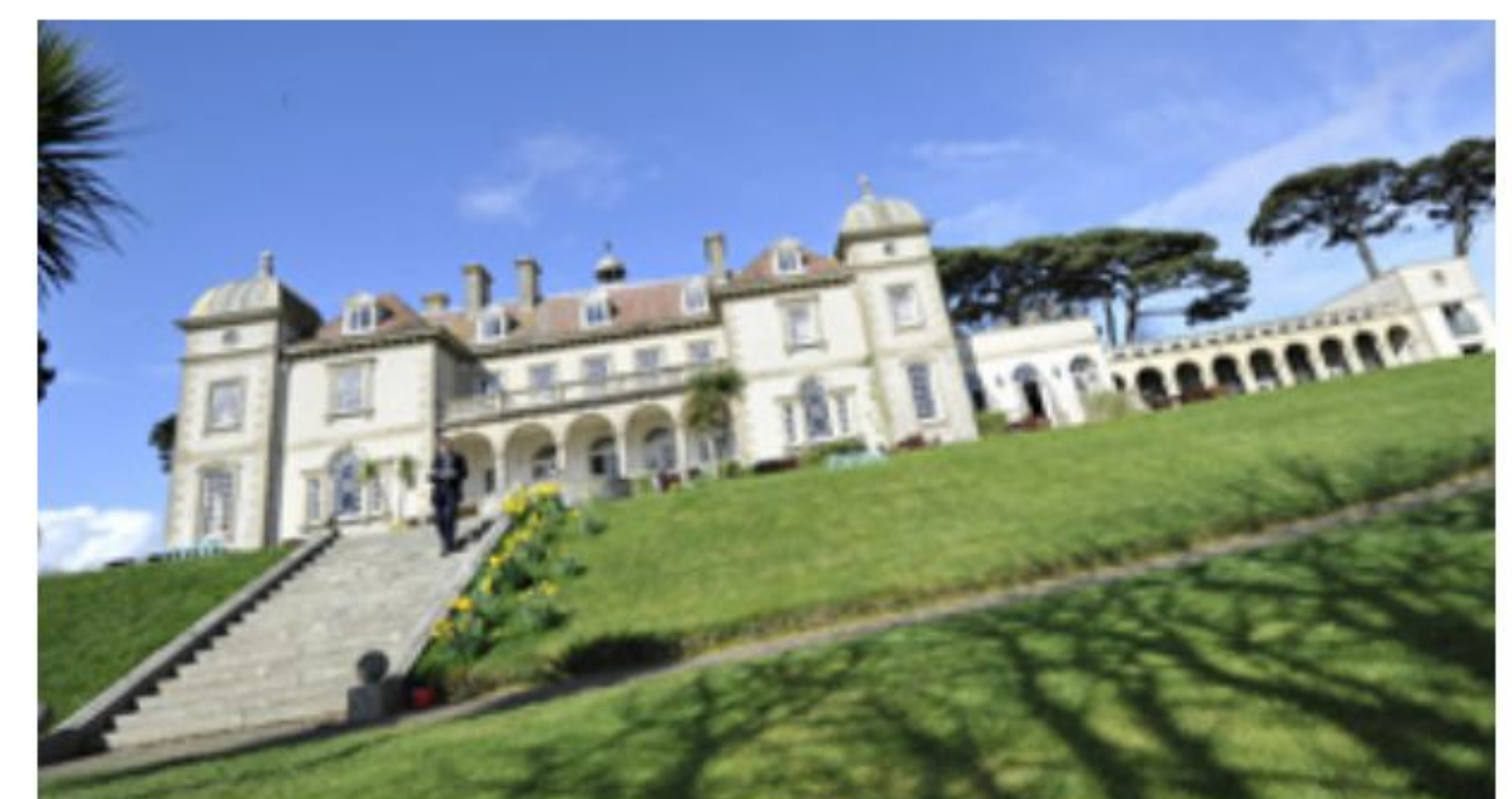
blondehedgehog.com



FOWEY HALL

Luxury Family Hotels' Fowey Hall Hotel, Cornwall, has reopened following an impressive multi-million pound refurbishment of all of the hotel's 36 bedrooms, reception and lounge areas, spa, library, games room, crèche and indoor pool.

luxuryfamilyhotels.co.uk



THE METHUEN ARMS

Award-winning coaching inn, The Methuen, a 3 AA Rosette restaurant, pub and kitchen garden in Corsham, has unveiled 14 beautifully designed, country-inspired bedrooms, with free-standing bath tubs and stunning views over the quintessential town, following a major refurbishment.

themethuenarms.com



HARTWELL HOUSE

2020 is the 125th anniversary of the National Trust and the perfect time to experience Hartwell House, one of three Historic House Hotels, owned by the National Trust. This Grade I listed property is located in over 90 acres of gardens and parkland in the Vale of Aylesbury in Buckinghamshire.

hartwell-house.com



HOTEL INDIGO

Hotel Indigo, is a new hotel in Stratford upon Avon, formerly The Falcon Hotel. The hotel has undergone a multi-million-pound major restoration project. The decorative black and white half-timbered building is now blended with modern, stylish, contemporary bedrooms,

stratford.hotelindigo.com



Nestled in the rolling valleys of Dartmoor National Park you will find 5 Red Star luxury at Bovey Castle. The hotel offers 60 bedrooms along with 22 self-catering country lodges tucked away within the grounds. There's also two award-winning restaurants, our luxurious Elan Spa and a professional 18-hole championship golf course.

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HEVER CASTLE

You might have been one of the 400,000 visitors to the childhood home of Anne Boleyn last year, but did you know you can also stay overnight in luxury accommodation, with access to parts of the gardens after the Castle and grounds have closed to the public?

Words | **Jessica Way**



WAKING UP AT HEVER CASTLE has the perfect blend of luxury and history combined. 16th-century portraits, paintings, furniture and tapestries charm you happily back to Tudor times, while the sumptuous furnishings, fluffy dressing robe, and opulent bathroom (many with heated flooring) offer a wake-up morning routine fit for a 21st-century King or Queen.

Located within William Waldorf Astor's Edwardian extension to the Castle are the Astor Wing and the Anne Boleyn Wing where there are 28 five star luxury bedrooms, each with their own unique charm and character. We stayed in the super spacious Edward VII Suite. The room was flooded with natural daylight and comes with a 7ft bed, living area with a deep sofa and armchairs positioned next to the leaded windows looking out across the apple orchard to the Castle. This enchanting view of

the Castle, from morning to evening, frost to sunlight, is mesmerising. Throughout our stay, we couldn't help admiring the changing view and atmosphere around the Castle at different times of the day, from a warm romantic sunset, being covered in morning mist and frost, to the mysteriously beautiful sunrise. When the sun is really shining the reflections of the Castle in the intense blue moat are just magical.

There are not many places I have stayed where the team who work there make you feel as truly welcome and at home as they do at Hever Castle, helped I'm sure by the fact that everyone we met, from the receptionists, waitresses, porters to the gardeners, were so happy and proud to be part of the Castle team. And who wouldn't be - the Castle, grounds and luxury accommodation are utterly exquisite!

The team thank William Waldorf Astor, who used his fortune to restore and extend the Castle in the early →



20th century. It is said he invested around £10 million in turning Hever Castle into his own 'grand design', spending the equivalent of over £1 billion today. Astor's wealth and vision enabled him to turn Hever Castle into a lavish family home while also indulging his passion for history - and it is both elegant and fascinating.

Astor visited many Tudor and Elizabethan buildings for inspiration at that time. On the private tour of the Castle (which is included for overnight guests on days that the Castle is closed to the public) you are first taken into the ornate Inner Hall which in Tudor times was used as the kitchen. It has been beautifully furnished with Italian walnut panelling and with a staircase gallery that was a copy of the King's College Chapel Rood Screen, which William had admired from Cambridge University.

Hever Castle has been beautifully restored, without losing its 13th-century charm, that visitors are able to appreciate its history

and heritage throughout all of its years. The tour is an unmissable opportunity to learn more about the Castle's fascinating Tudor heritage while also admiring the extraordinarily sumptuous furnishings, inspired by Astor and from around the world, lining the walls of the galleries and halls as we see them today. Originally the Castle was built in 1271, almost 750 years ago. It was built to protect the nearby town of Edenbridge, which at that time was a very influential and prosperous town with a tannery making expensive leather goods. The fear was that the river Eden, which runs adjacent to the Castle and accommodation and then to the town, could be used as a gateway for an enemy to come up the river and attack the town. So Hever Castle was built to stop that happening, and you could say it worked, as Edenbridge was never attacked.

The Castle then was just the gatehouse with two rooms above (The Council Chamber) and the Castle walls, and it remained that way for



a further two centuries until Geoffery Boleyn, Anne Boleyn's Great Grandfather, bought the house in 1462. Geoffery had risen through the ranks to become Lord Mayor of London, and he wanted more accommodation in the property, and so he went about building within the walls, adding a single-storey, and two double-storey wings. Further into the tour you learn more about Henry VIII and his six wives. Anne Boleyn was his 2nd wife and Queen of England for just 1,000 days before Henry arranged her beheading.

Hever later passed into the ownership of another of Henry VIII's wives, Anne of Cleves, and from 1557 onwards it was owned by a number of families including the Waldegraves, the Humphreys and the Meade Waldos.

William Waldorf Astor came along just at the right time, as by now it was beginning to fall into gradual decline. He commissioned the 'Tudor Village', now called the 'Astor Wing' and the construction of the magnificent gardens and lake.

As an overnight guest, you are entitled to access to the Castle and Gardens throughout your stay to include the opportunity for an early morning or evening stroll at times when the Estate is closed to the public - a wonderful way to experience the peace and tranquillity of the Gardens and made our stay even more memorable. No matter what time of year you visit this is an absolute must. In spring the walls are covered in camellias and tulips are in bloom, by summer the fragrance from the Rose Garden drifts through the air, come autumn the Dahlia Border provides dazzling displays and, as winter approaches, the warm red bark of the redwood trees glow against the winter sky and berries glisten in the frost.

One of our highlights was appreciating the views from the Loggia as we gazed across the 38-acre lake, followed by a sunset walk of The Pergola in the Italian Garden, before relaxing in the Music Room (guests' sitting room) sinking into the sofas in front of the roaring wood-fire.

To make your stay extra special, beauty treatments, massage and exercise classes can be booked at Hever Castle's wellbeing centre, located at Hever Castle's Golf Club, with a 27-hole golf course, just a short drive away. ♦

Prices start from £180 per room per night hevercastle.co.uk/stay

How to get there...

Trains run to Edenbridge Town and Edenbridge Station, from there it is a short taxi journey, or from Hever Station, you could take the one-mile rural walk. Alternatively, there is free parking for guests directly adjacent to the Astor Wing.

COMPETITION WIN A LUXURY STAY!

Win a one-night stay for two at Hever Castle Luxury Bed and Breakfast, a 13th century Castle in Kent, once the childhood home of Anne Boleyn. Arrive to the private gated entrance of the Astor Wing where your journey begins. Discover an abundance of rich fabrics, crisp linens and panelled walls. There are leaded windows looking out on to private lawns, ornate fireplaces, four poster beds and roll top baths. Complimentary access to the Castle and gardens is included during the stay. Relax and unwind in the peace and tranquillity of this special place. Enter online at britishtraveljournal.com Last entries 31 May 2020. Terms and Conditions apply.

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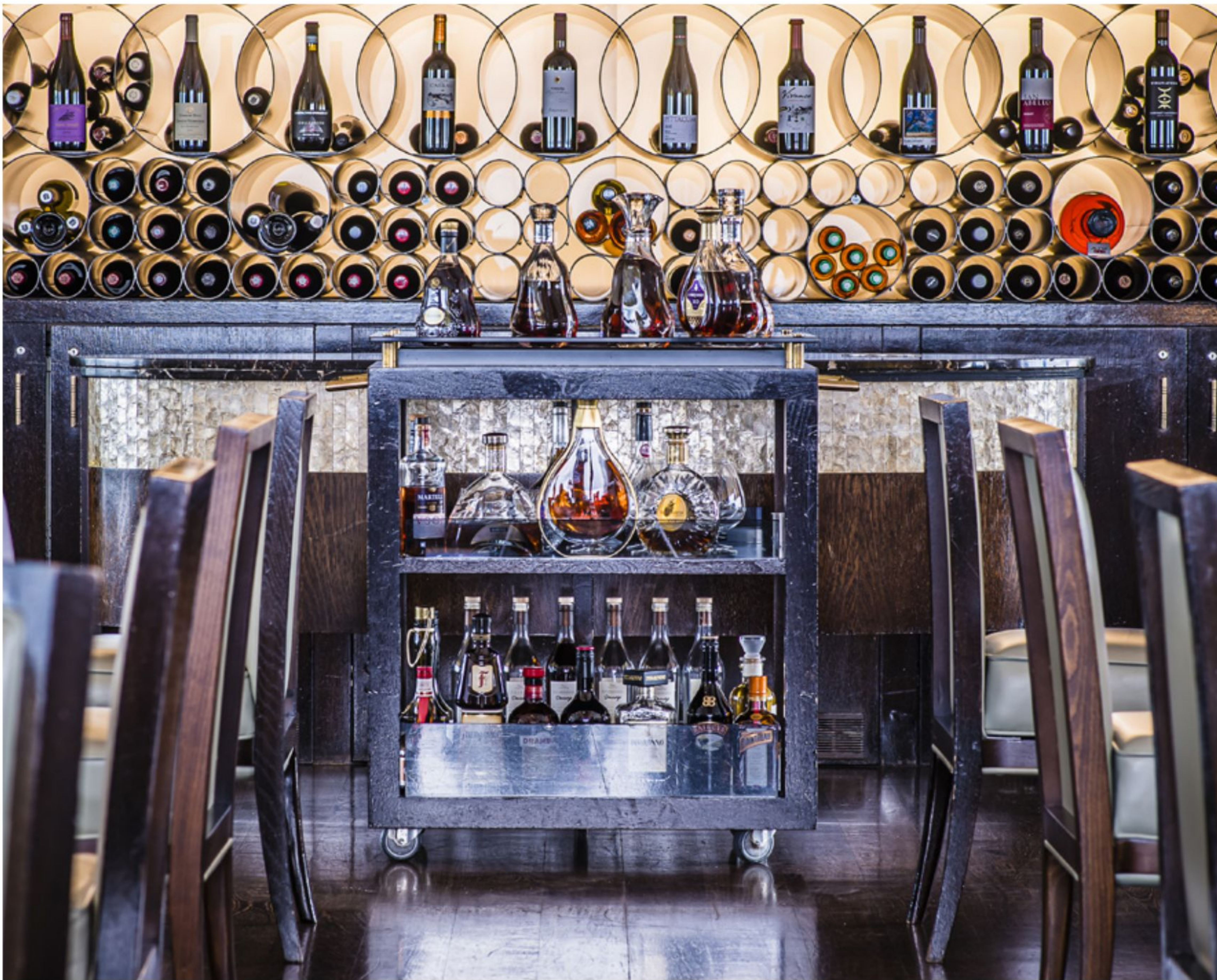
DON'T MISS

Squerryes

Take a visit to family-run gem, Squerryes and join one of their Vineyard Tour and Tasting Flight experiences. Just a 15-minute drive from Hever Castle this 2,500-acre vineyard estate is home to the Wardes - the 8th generation of Wardes to live there. Learn more about their vintage sparkling wine, rich heritage and beautiful North Downs Estate. squerryes.co.uk

King Henry VIII

Book a table at the nearby King Henry VIII, Hever, dating back to 1597. This is a historic half-timbered, peg-tiled pub serving hearty, wholesome dishes by candlelight. Think dramatic chimney stacks, authentic oak beams, open fires and panelled bars. kinghenryviiihever.co.uk



LONDON HILTON PARK LANE

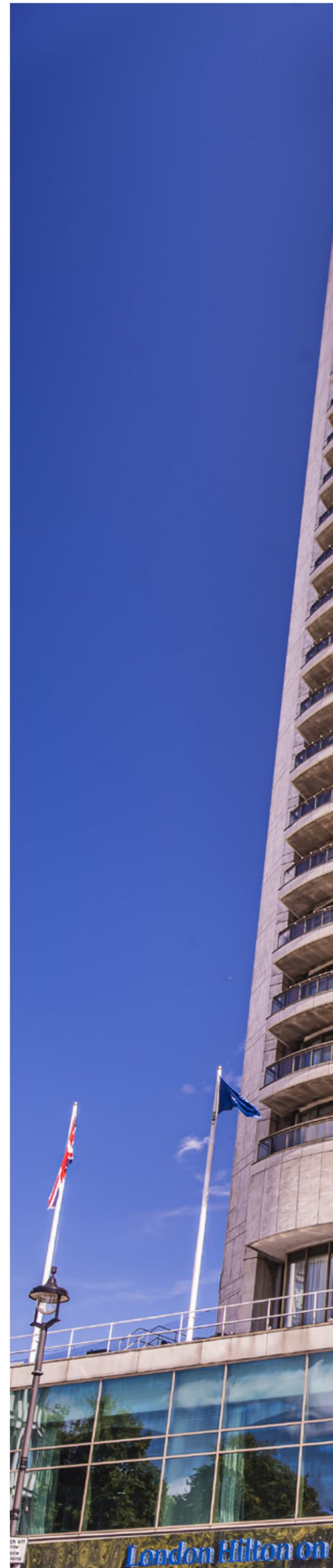
An iconic hotel in London's exclusive Mayfair district

Words | **Jessica Way**

AN ICON OF BRITISH hospitality since 1963, London Hilton on Park Lane was the first Hilton hotel to open in the UK. Set in the heart of the West End, Mayfair is one of London's most attractive villages abundant with pretty streets, boutiques and cafés. Overlooking Hyde Park, and with Green Park nearby, the location is an oasis of calm, while being conveniently close to West End theatres, historic landmarks and the famous shopping districts of Oxford Street, Knightsbridge, and Bond Street. Inside the hotel, there are elegant rooms with magnificent views, world-class dining, and modern facilities - everything you need for an exceptional

stay in the capital. Choose from a Deluxe Room, Executive Room or a delightfully spacious Suite with separate living space and views of Hyde Park, Mayfair or the city. With the option of a suite, you can enjoy the space of a separate dining area, walk-in wardrobe, and whirlpool tub - not to mention helpful access to the Executive Lounge with complimentary breakfast each morning.

With world-famous landmarks such as Buckingham Palace on your doorstep, exploring the capital will be a delight, and you will feel so much at home you won't want to leave! If you don't get round to visiting them all just head to the 28th Floor for views of the London Eye, Houses





of Parliament, Westminster, St Paul's Cathedral, The Shard, The Gherkin and the River Thames.

The hotel concierge will happily organise other experiences too, with Touriocity for example, you might like a tailor-made walk of the local neighbourhood or a whistle-stop tour of London's iconic landmarks and stunning landscapes. Or head to the best seats in the house with the Royal Box Experience package (to include a bottle of fizz and snacks) at Curzon Mayfair.

As night falls, there's no better place to be than the hotel's pre-eminent sky bar, 10°, on the 28th-floor - sip a signature cocktail, or vintage Champagne as you unwind in stylish interiors with abundant natural light, enjoying the amazing 360° views across London. Take time to reflect and appreciate the energy of London, with a warm and mellow ambience, live music, and DJs.

You might like to enjoy some hand-crafted miniature dishes before heading next door to the award-winning restaurant, Galvin at Windows.

Here you can enjoy à la carte dining from Chef Patron Chris Galvin, Head Chef Joo Won and his team. Chris and Joo have together won over 30 awards - setting the bar as high as the restaurant itself! Their seasonally-inspired menus have been based around modern French haute cuisine - think pan-fried Faroe Islands salmon, mussels and purple sprouting broccoli followed by Poached Yorkshire rhubarb, yoghurt cream and hibiscus.

You might also enjoy Trader Vic's - a London institution and home of the Mai Tai cocktail. Sample the eclectic global cuisines, taste a little bit of paradise with their signature tropical cocktails and savour an exotic atmosphere bedecked with authentic artefacts, Tiki carvings and trappings from around the world which adorn the walls of this tropical bar and restaurant.

And don't check-out before sampling the hotel's legendary Chocoholic Afternoon Tea designed and created by pastry chefs Emmanuel Bonneau and Sam Leatherby, crowned the winners of Bake Off: The Professionals 2018. The afternoon tea menu offers chocolate lovers a four-course feast of exquisite treats! Following a selection of open sandwiches with traditional fillings, enjoy freshly baked chocolate chip scones served with homemade chocolate praline spread, indulgent cupcakes and miniature chocolate fancies, all served on an edible chocolate plate - delicious! ♦

INTERVIEW WITH

Head Chef
**TOM
BOOTON**

At 25 years old, Tom Booton is the youngest head chef in the Dorchester Grill's 88-year history. He sits down with **Chantal Borciani** to talk about his inspiration and how he's transforming a London icon

TOM BOOTON'S CAREER actually began at 15 years of age, when he won Chef of the Future at the Essex Food & Drink Awards. His talent was clear, doors opened, and Tom's ambition saw him succeed at the kitchen passes of restaurants including Le Talbooth, L'Autre Pied and Dabbous. Following stints in New York, Copenhagen and Iceland, Tom worked as head chef for Alyn Williams at The Westbury in London and it was there that the general manager of The Dorchester discovered him. So impressed by his meal, the general manager struck up a conversation with the head chef and the rest is history.

In July 2019, Tom was named the new head chef of The Grill at The Dorchester, heralding a fresh direction for the historic hotel. Built in 1931, The Dorchester has hosted Hollywood starlets, literary greats and royalty. The hotel is famously the establishment chosen by Prince Philip for his stag do the night before his wedding to Princess Elizabeth in 1947. Its Grill restaurant was a business lunch stalwart, but under Tom's direction the restaurant reopened in November 2019 with a fresher more contemporary air.

"When you walk into the restaurant it feels a lot more open and more approachable. It's almost stripped back a little now – you've got no starched white tablecloths and I wanted guests to feel a kind of home from home vibe. It doesn't feel stuffy and you don't feel like you're scared to ask where your table is," Tom says.

This is not to say that The Grill doesn't share the opulence that courses through the rest of the hotel. The centrepiece gold Murano glass chandelier is still retained and through a deft use of glass, mirrors and butterscotch seating and soft lighting, the restaurant feels buzzy yet intimate. The cocktail bar is a sumptuous full run along one side of the restaurant, its myriad decanters twinkling in the glow.

Tom is certainly the fresh face of The Grill – looking even more youthful than his 25 years. "I honestly think age is just a number," explains the head chef. "I've been working for 12 years at a high level. I would say 12 years in any trade is quite a lot really – I don't suppose there's many people my age who have worked for more than a decade doing the same thing. A lot of my guys in the kitchen have worked with me before. It's a young team as well – my sous chef is only 25 – but I knew I wanted him and he would be brilliant."





Confident, highly trained and full of energy, Tom comes to The Dorchester with vision and aptitude in equal measure.

“The general manager [of The Dorchester] came to eat at the Westbury and that’s how this all started. It certainly teaches you to look after every single table, because you never know what might happen!

The general manager and the food and beverage director invited me to the hotel. The first thing I said when I walked

into The Grill was why do we have this bar at the back? The counter was a lot higher, you see, so it was tricky to reach your drinks and it just didn’t work as a space. It seemed clear to me; lower the bar, put a little kitchen in the back and make it into a pudding section.”

The Pudding Bar is one of the pieces of theatre Tom has created in the reinvented Grill, believing dessert should be “savoured not skipped”. Diners who choose to move to the clutch of bar stools along the open →



“A lot of people in hospitality don't actually have the most important value at the core, and that's that the customer is the most important. If the customer wants it, we will make it happen - I never want to hear, “let me just go and ask the chef”

kitchen pass can watch and talk to the chefs as they prepare dessert bowls of heaven – from an irresistible banoffee tart to Tom's new classic, the 'Double Decker'.

While much has been reimagined, Tom doffs many a cap to The Dorchester's rich history. “It's such an iconic hotel. I looked into the history, the war secrets and the stories through the eras,” Tom says.

Stories do indeed abound. When the hotel was built after World War I, the new building was constructed from reinforced concrete, to make giant open-plan rooms a possibility. During World War II, this made The Dorchester one of the safest buildings in the capital. In 1944, General Eisenhower set up base in the hotel in what's now known as the Eisenhower Suite and planned the Normandy landings of D Day and during the same era, Ernest Hemingway used the hotel as a London base from which to work as a war correspondent.

Today, the hotel stands in the same much-envied spot overlooking Hyde Park. Brunei-owned, the décor is unavoidably lavish with gold and Middle Eastern hues alongside some more traditional palettes.

On the menu, Tom's dishes often make a play on the classics; a prawn scotch egg with a warm tartare sauce, The Grill's lobster thermidor tart; and doughnuts and ice cream.

“I hate the phrase signature dish, but the lobster tart is what we are becoming known for. The menu is designed as four courses, with the first course being very light, for example a really beautiful fresh scallop ceviche – we get fresh scallops in every day from the Orkney Islands. My favourite dish from the second course is the veal sweet bread, which goes really nicely with a little lentil ragu. For the third course, we have the lobster and great British meats. There's a really fresh rack of lamb dish with a lamb boulangère on the side.”

The menu will change with the seasons, classics will remain and so will Tom's ethos.

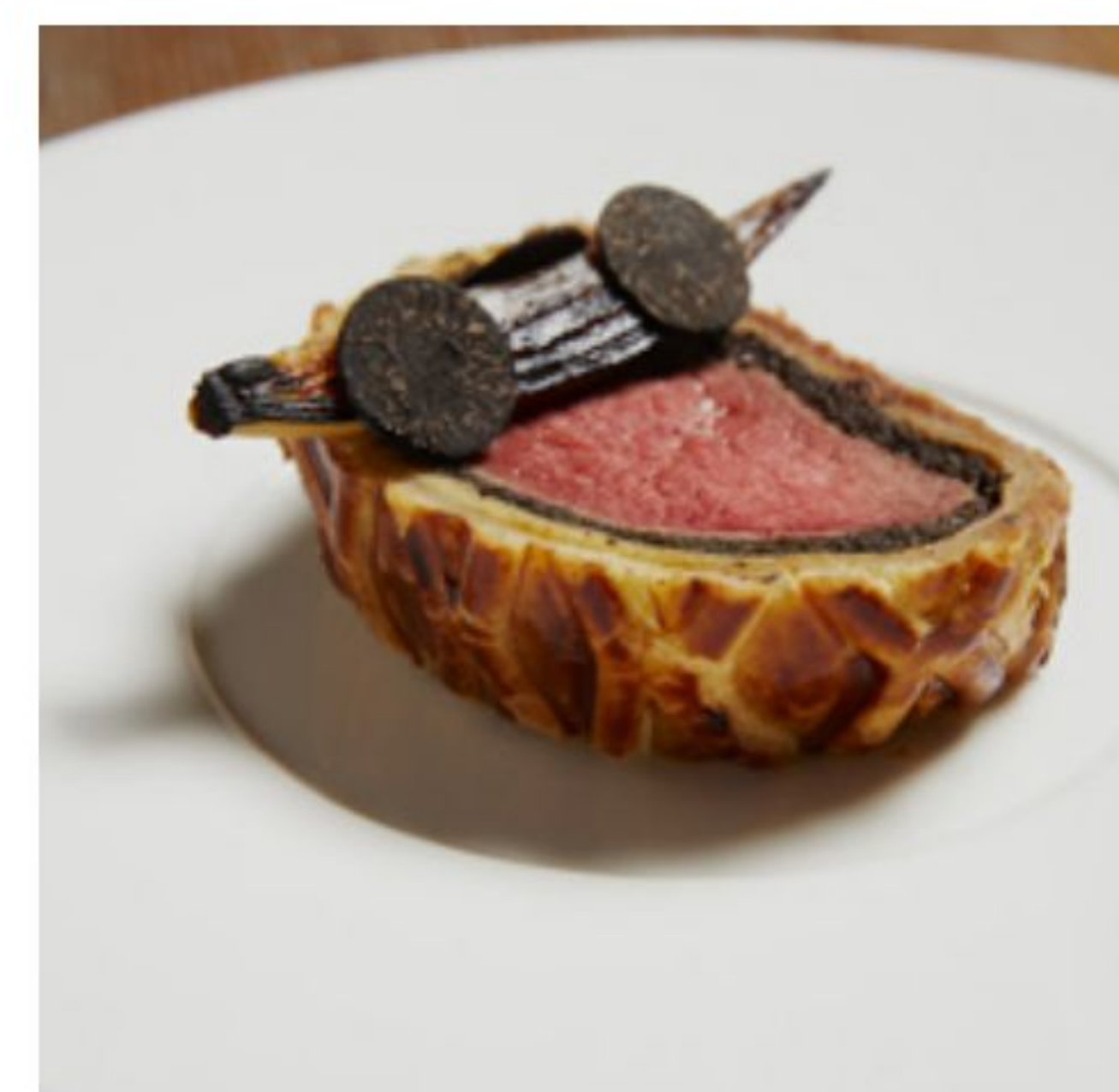
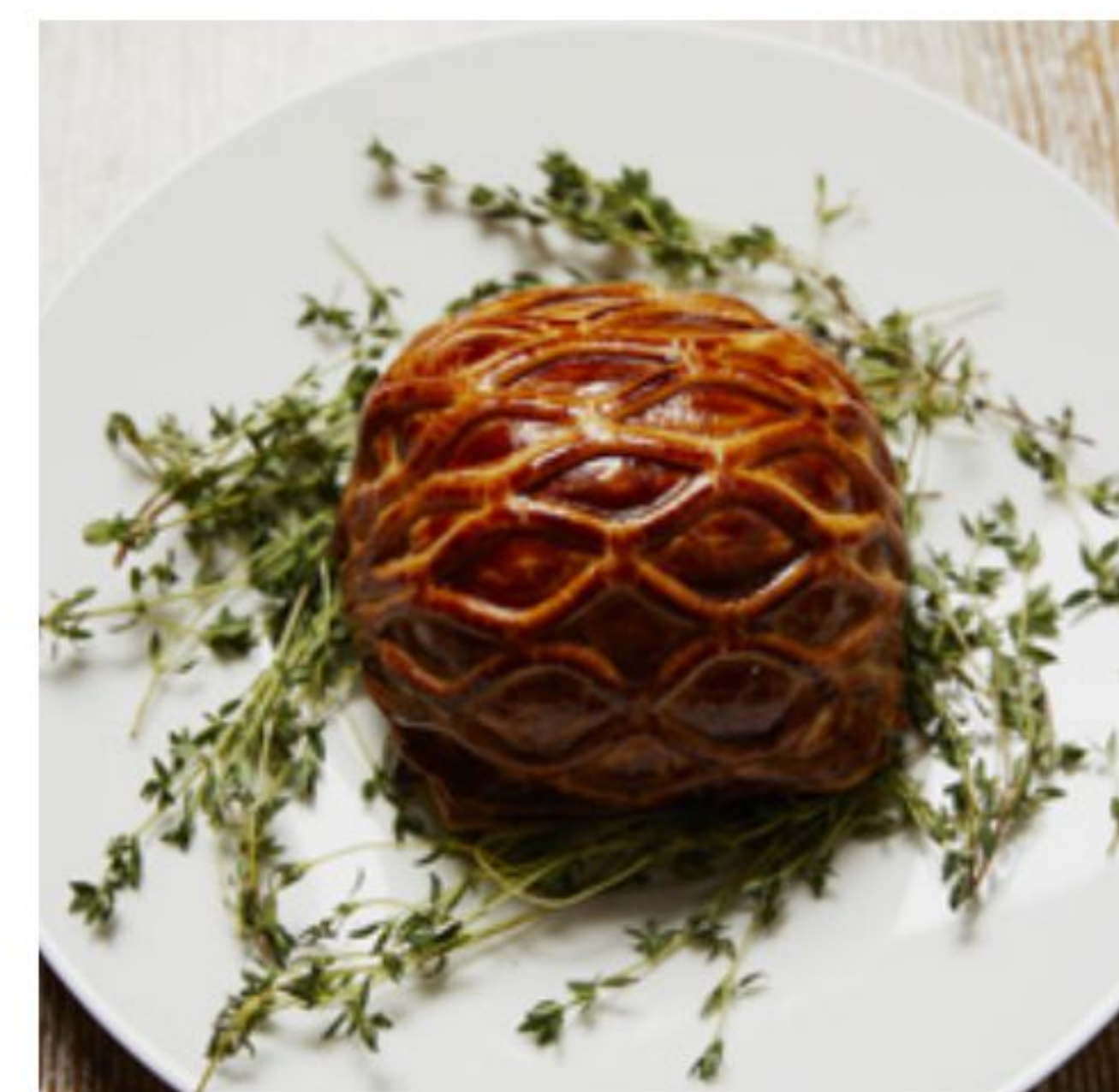
“A lot of people in hospitality don't actually have the most important value at the core, and that's that the customer is the most important. If the customer wants it, we will make it happen - I never want to hear, “let me just go and ask the chef”.

It seems The Grill has fallen into the right hands to steer it through the next era, complete with Pudding Bar, inventive cooking and a passionate brigade. ♦

Lunch menus are priced at £23 for two courses and £30 for three courses.

Dinner menus are priced at £60 for three courses and £75 for four courses. All include a vegan and vegetarian menu.

Sunday Roast is priced at £65 for three courses, dorchestercollection.com.



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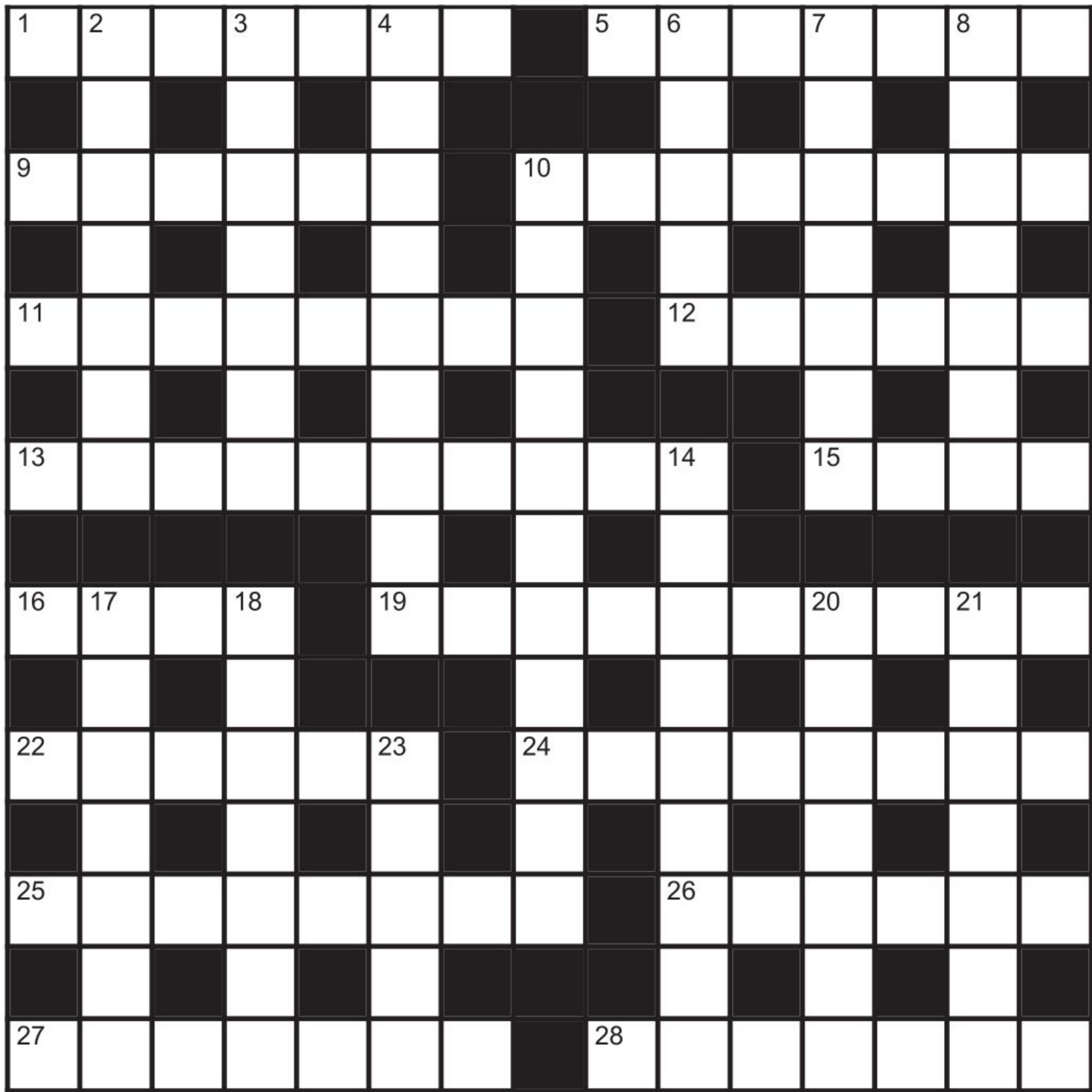
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BRITISH TRAVEL JOURNAL CROSSWORD 05



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ACROSS

- 1 Nail polish remover (7)
- 5 Warm welcome (7)
- 9 Not so fast (6)
- 10 Skye castle (8)
- 11 Crack (8)
- 12 Stalactite of water (6)
- 13 Sits (5,1,4)
- 15 Overflow with enthusiasm (4)
- 16 Softest mineral (4)
- 19 Four-faced solids (10)
- 22 Beefed-up banger (3,3)
- 24 Coloured like the middle traffic light - sort of (8)
- 25 Such as Wallis Simpson or Meghan Markle (8)
- 26 Hops and proms (6)
- 27 Welsh castle with a railway museum (7)
- 28 Toughens by heating and cooling (7)

DOWN

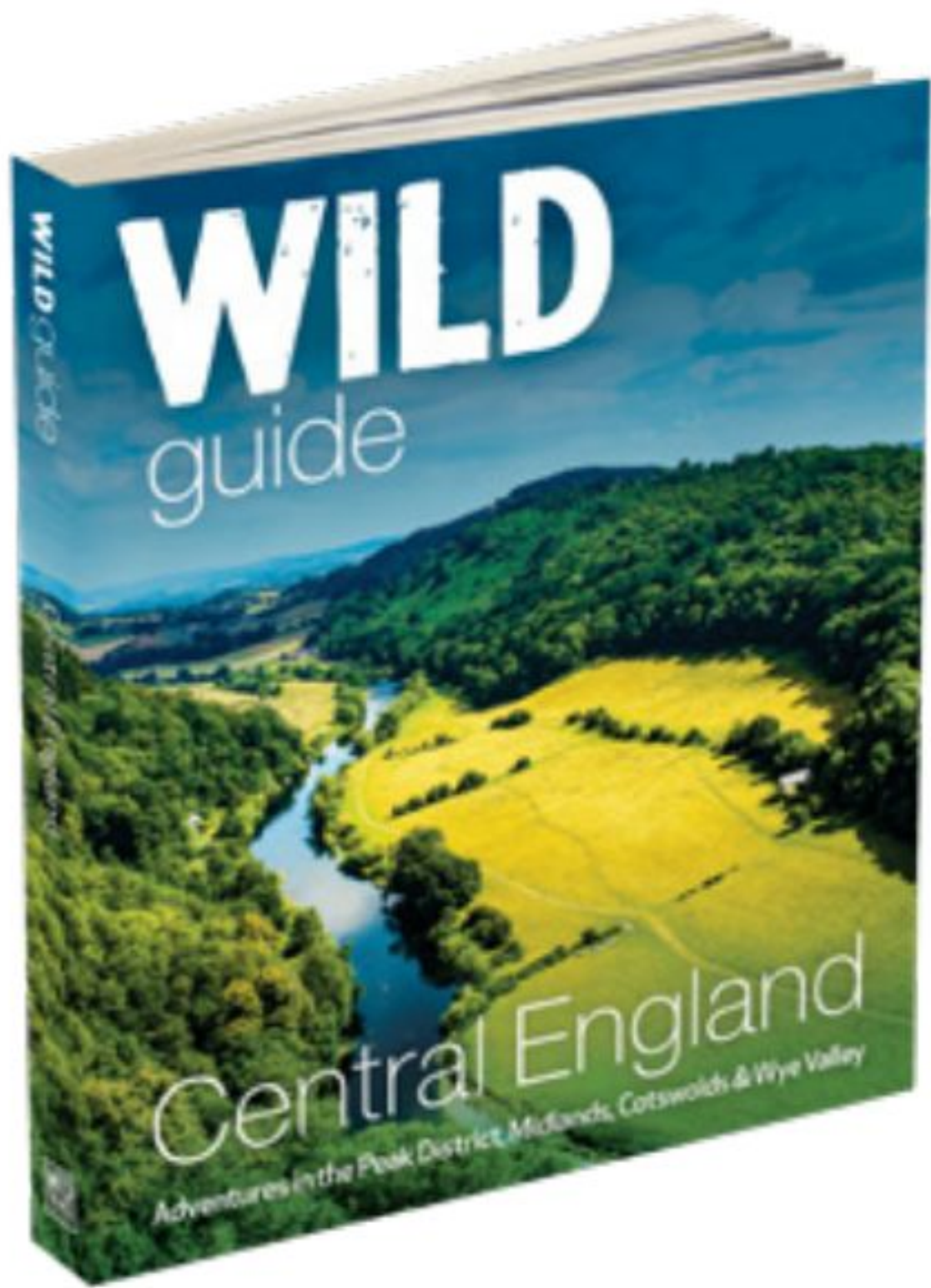
- 2 --- Atrebatum, Iron Age/Roman town at Silchester (7)
- 3 Town at one end of the Buttertubs Pass (7)
- 4 Lindisfarne's region (5-4)
- 6 Strait between Anglesey and mainland North Wales (5)
- 7 Malodorous (7)
- 8 Boz's first name (7)
- 10 Earliest British steelmaking furnace (11)
- 14 Place for light summer refreshments (3,6)
- 17 Worry intensely (7)
- 18 Highest-altitude British mainline railway station (7)
- 20 A cousin of Prince William (7)
- 21 Family name at Woburn Abbey (7)
- 23 Cornwall or Rothesay, for example (5)

Answers will be printed in the Summer Issue

ANSWERS TO CROSSWORD 04 | WINTER 2019

- ACROSS: 9 Heeding 10 Axially 11 Leger 12 Aldeburgh 13 Eccleston 14 Rondo 15 Skillicorne 20 Mario 22 North Cape 25 Accidents 26 Uncap 27 Grudges 28 Sleeves. DOWN: 1 Chelsea 2 Belgic 3 Disraeli 4 Aghast 5 Sardonic 6 Bibber 7 Clarence 8 Typhoon 15 Struck up 16 Langness 17 Rehouses 18 Embargo 19 Bedpost 21 Old age 23 Resist 24 Alcove.

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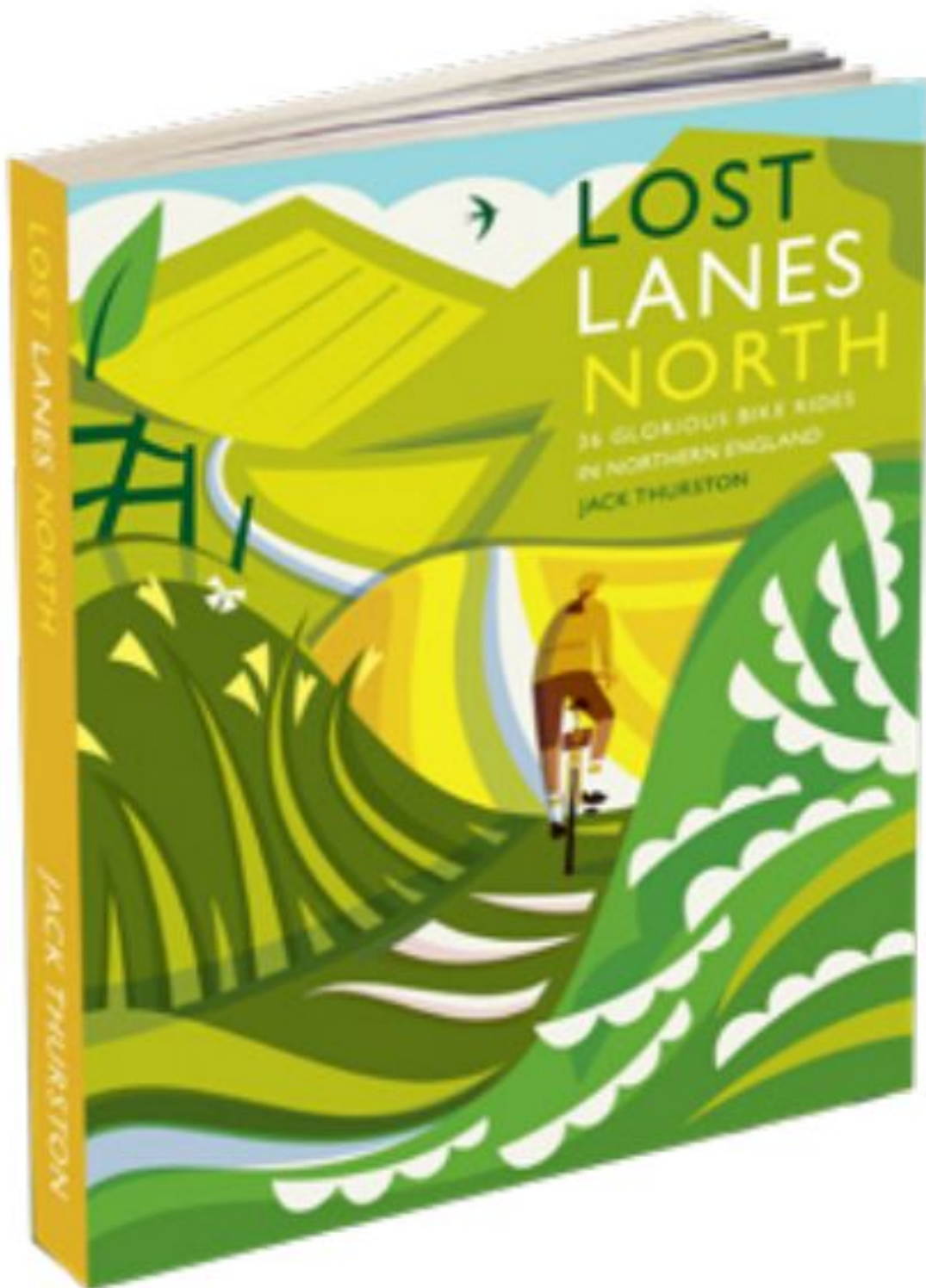
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