

VANTAGE

APRIL 2014 • £3.50

THE REAL *McCRORY*

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW:
HELEN IN THE SPOTLIGHT

STYLE TAKES CENTRE STAGE

MATCHESFASHION.COM GOES GLOBAL;
ARTISTS DOMINATE THE CATWALK;
REENA HAMMER'S URBAN RETREAT





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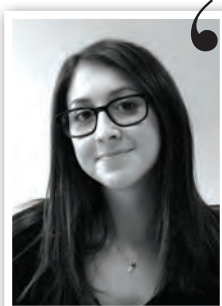


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WATCH FEATURED SUBJECT TO STOCK AVAILABILITY

From the editor



“I have no guilt about pleasure! I’m a true hedonist,” Helen McCrory tells me in our cover story. “I probably shouldn’t smoke liquorice roll ups in the evening, I probably shouldn’t drink dirty vodka martinis when I go into town, I probably shouldn’t eat entire Bries when I’m left alone in the evening with a book but I do all these things and I have no guilt.” Frank, funny, and a breath of fresh air, she

and husband Damian Lewis would choose *The Bull and Last* over *The Ivy* any day, and put family life above all else. I challenge you not to love her (p. 10).

Speaking of inspirational women, we have a handful more for you in this issue. Having sold more than three million books worldwide, author and society darling Santa Montefiore has released a novel a year since the age of 25, and is still going strong. Although, we can’t help but feel her husband Simon Sebag should pick up a copy or three... (p. 43). As the first Urban Retreat skincare line launches to the public, Reena Hammer, creative director of the renowned spa and beauty emporium, opens her Camden home to Gabrielle Lane and shares her fashion and beauty secrets. You’ll never covet a cosmetic cupboard more (p. 72).

And two weeks after the fabulous autumn/winter 2014 Fashion Weeks, Natalie Kingham, head of fashion at Marylebone-based *Matchesfashion.com*, lets us in on some inside style secrets, and explains how she chooses its edit in the wake of an online retail expansion (p. 14).

Elsewhere, Jane McGuire lunches at Hampstead’s Ginger and White as founders Tonia George and Emma and Nicholas Scott publish their first dedicated cookbook (p. 96). Or if the early spring sunshine has you hankering after the great outdoors, then follow Karen Bowerman’s example as she throws caution to the wind on a luxury, walking safari in Zambia (p. 102). And yes – Golders Hill Park is acceptable in the meantime.

Kari x

Kari Rosenberg
Editor

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The Real McCrory (p. 10)
Photography by Pip, bypip.co.uk

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THE REAL *McCRORY*

Frank, funny and a breath of fresh air,
Kari Rosenberg has breakfast with Helen McCrory

PHOTOGRAPHY / PIP (BYPIP.CO.UK)



“**H**i I’m Helen,” she says, hand outstretched, green fedora tipped back, as if I wouldn’t be able to spot her tiny ballerina frame among the handful of tables in Primrose Hill’s Greenberry Café, “nice to meet you”. Apparently, she’s used to introducing herself to the interviewer (when, for obvious reasons, it’s usually the other way round) because nobody ever recognises her – even on the red carpet next to her towering red headed husband Damian Lewis – despite the long list of film, theatre and TV credits to her name.

“Nobody ever recognises me from the *Harry Potter* movies either,” she laughs – where she played Narcissa Malfoy – although I surmise that this is probably a good thing. “I had just finished filming *Hugo* [she was the voice of Mama Jeanne in the 2011 animation] and was talking to Thelma Schoonmaker, who has been [director] Martin Scorsese’s editor for years, thinking we were getting on so well and she said, ‘so anyway, what do you do?’ And I said, ‘I’m an actress’, to which she replied, ‘oh great, are you working on anything at the moment?’ I went [cue mock-outrage] ‘you’ve just been editing me for three months!’ She didn’t even recognise me. I don’t get recognised at stage door or by anyone for that matter, which is why I came up and immediately introduced myself. I’ve sat at tables where people have been discussing stuff I’ve been in and they’ve got no idea that I’m me. It’s quite odd.”

Amazingly, this is even more pronounced when she’s by the side of her *Homeland*-star husband. “When I’m with Damian they will take pictures of him and never notice me... The six-foot red head is apparently more distracting than the dark-haired midget beside him with the kids.”

Such is Helen’s nature that this becomes the running joke throughout breakfast, where we giggle and chat as if we’ve known one another for years. Frank, self-deprecating and totally down-to-earth, I’m immediately bowled over by this decidedly tiny person and it’s easy to get side-tracked as she asks me more questions than I’m getting in to her. She’s currently working on three projects simultaneously. “On Monday I did the read through for the next *Peaky Blinders*, the Steven Knight series that has been recommissioned. On Tuesday and Wednesday I flew to Dublin and finished doing a series called *Penny Dreadfuls* which is written by John Logan, and then on Friday I was very excited because I got to play Elizabeth I. You’ll not have heard of this because you don’t have children, but I’m going to be in a film called *Bill* which is about William Shakespeare and has the cast of *Horrible Histories* in it. I’ve got a bald wig, then a red wig on top of that, so when she loses her temper it sort of slides. I’ve got really blackened teeth as it was very fashionable at the time to have rotten teeth as it showed you were rich from all the sugar you ate!

“Then of course they all had pocks marks all over them. I had 11 pieces of small pocks with white lead over it. She’s not Disney, let’s put it that way – but it was such good fun. So [to sum up] that’s a pock-ridden wooden-toothed monarch of the realm, a vicious street-fighting brummy from the 1920s and a clairvoyant from Victorian London dressed up as Cleopatra.” ●



● Known to embrace the less than glamorous roles, Helen has received a fair share of stick and admiration in equal measure for her choices. “When playing Elizabeth, there was none of that ‘make friends with the camera department’ stuff – sort of ‘hello boys here are your coffees’ – because it didn’t matter what angle you shot me from in that get-up. Either way I was going to be hideous, as it should be. There’s a great liberation and freedom in that. I always try to not be too self-conscious when I work because it’s so much more fun [when you don’t]. Men don’t do it; they don’t look at a role and think ‘how can I possibly pull in this part’, so I think you only limit yourself as a woman if you do. And women don’t thank you for it either.”

I’m conscious not to comment on her outward appearance, even though I’m thinking all of the clichés. Luckily, she moves onto the subject before I’ve opened my mouth. “So [often] if I’ve made an effort people will say you look so lovely in real life and then I saw you on that awful programme where you’re playing bla-bla-bla, and you’re like yeah, but Aunt Polly is supposed to be a ‘crim with a gold tooth who’s living on the streets of Birmingham slashing people with flick knives!’ So actually I get more letters, which is really nice, from women and girls who say that it’s really nice to see a woman that on one hand will make an effort for the red carpet when you want to look good, but won’t take this to work and pout in every part.”

She’s aghast at my suggestion that she’s a poster-woman for actresses of a certain age (Helen is in her mid-forties) and won’t be lured into name-checking any “pouting” actresses. But does she feel limited or

pigeon-holed by the roles she's offered? "I don't think [the problem] only affects women, I think it's about the fact that the American film industry relies on having a film viewed by a bunch of people at a shopping mall when the average viewer is 14 and male, because you're treating a film as a business or a product. I think this affects everything, and not just women. It affects men, and it affects the way we tell stories. I think that's why it's so great to be a British actress because you also have the influence of Europe, where film is still treated as an art form and being approved of by a 14-year-old boy is not at all what you are after," she says.

Being a mother hasn't really affected the roles Helen's gone for, other than the time that's needed away from her children. "In terms of the content, strangely, it's almost in reversal. I don't think I've ever done things that I've thought in my heart of hearts 'this is really irresponsible filming'." There are a number of people she'd love to work with including Emma Thompson – "She's the nicest person, I met her years ago doing a table read for *Sense and Sensibility* and she kept saying, 'what do you think, do you think it will make a good film?'" – and Kristin Scott Thomas, as well as her husband Damian. The on-screen couple offers have come in thick and fast, but nothing has stuck yet, although she hints this may be set to change soon. Sometimes the two will compare scripts, but industry-talk tends to be the mundane everyday chat, not unlike that of any working couple: "It's great because we both know what the other is talking about." But it helps that they are both in the field: "You understand what it means if the other one is away; you don't feel jealous of their jobs, you get the relationships that people have on set, and you understand what it takes. But equally if we are trying to juggle things and an offer comes in for Damian, I'll know what it means or doesn't mean. We give each other the support you need. My accountant sort of looks at me and says 'so this was a really good year' and then 'oh dear you're doing a bit of theatre, I'm so sorry', whereas as an actor you are saying 'you needn't apologise!'"

"For example, I'm about to do *Medea* this summer at the National Theatre on the main stage and that's really nerve-racking, so Damian's worked out his schedule so that he can be at home with the kids while I'm rehearsing, because he knows it will be a really big thing for me." Her husband's high profile hasn't changed the offers she's had – "they never phoned me and asked if I would like to play the jailor" – and the two, together with their children Manon, seven and Gulliver, six, suffer little interference from the paparazzi out and about near their Tufnell Park home. While they've been dinner party guests at the White House no less, they're happy with a low-key lifestyle. "If you come out of The Ivy, go straight to the Groucho, fall out of there and take a rickshaw down to Sketch, half-dressed, then you are probably going to get photographed, but I think if you come out of The Bull and Last at 10.30pm and walk home with a bunch of people that have nothing to do with this business, then I don't think anyone cares. There aren't a lot of paps on the Holloway Road."

They make the work/life balance, well, work: "I think as long as you realise you are never, ever, ever going to have time for a facial or get enough sleep, then



it's fine. I think it's really hard to get that balance right, but I think the alternative is not having children or not having a job, so as the American's say: 'it's a high-class problem'. The old lie that you can have it all is exactly that – a lie. But I think it's people's expectations; I wasn't brought up to always have what I wanted and where nothing would cost anything, so in a way I don't feel it has cost me anything. I don't feel I am compromising. Some people will say 'you'll never have time for this or that' but of course you won't! Or people say 'oh you've got children you must be so tired' and it's like what the hell did you think was going to happen when you had a kid? I find it odd, really bizarre when people moan."

Describing Damian as her "best friend", to the outside eye, it does seem they have it all. They spend their spare time "talking and eating" but she cackles when I ask about her guilty pleasures. "I have no guilt about pleasure! I'm a true hedonist, I don't understand when people wake up and think 'oh it's really terrible I ate this or I drank this or did this'. Lighten up! I probably shouldn't smoke liquorice roll-ups in the evening, I probably shouldn't drink dirty vodka martinis when I go into town, I probably shouldn't eat entire Bries when I'm left alone in the evening with a book – but I do all these things and I have no guilt." What about red heads? I try on for size, to which, as predicted, she laughs good-naturedly. "Half my family are red haired as they are all Scottish, so I've never really noticed. But had I ever dated one before? No!" ■

THE PERFECT MATCH:

The Style Secrets of a Growing Empire

Two weeks after the autumn/winter 2014 Fashion Weeks, *Gabrielle Lane* quizzes Natalie Kingham, head of fashion at Matchesfashion.com, about how the renowned fashion boutique chooses its edit for a global audience, in the wake of its online retail expansion

Ruth Chapman, the co-founder and joint CEO of Matchesfashion.com (alongside husband Tom) recently posted the following quote from author Anaïs Nin on her Instagram page, in support of International Women's Day: "Life shrinks or expands in proportion to one's courage." It was framed by snaps from Chapman's daily life, which inadvertently, but indisputably, qualify the statement: a picture of the Eiffel Tower, taken during Paris Fashion Week in early March; models walking the runway at Alexander McQueen; a weighty Balenciaga necklace adorned with silver pearls; and an image of a peaceful woodland walk captioned 'home today'. A life 'expanded' indeed.

In 1990, the Chapmans took a brave decision to open two boutique fashion stores in Wimbledon, to provide a discerning audience with luxury clothing and accessories which were difficult to obtain locally. The business – then titled Matches – subsequently flourished, not only there, but in 12 other outposts across London, in a way that had virtually nothing to do with retail convenience and everything to do with an astute choice of product. When

the company took its edit online in 2006, and rebranded the bricks and mortar shops Matchesfashion.com in 2013 to unify its platforms, it opened the gateway to an estimated 200 territories and 2.5million website visits per month, garnering strong customer bases as far afield as Australia, the USA, Asia and the Middle East.

"The edit is the same," says Natalie Kingham, the company's head of fashion, who oversees the womenswear buying internationally: "It's heartfelt and well-considered and it always has been. The only thing that has changed is the volume of fabulous collections we now carry. The type of customer [also] hasn't changed in itself, but we now see customers that have discovered us online who come to London and want to see the stores: across all platforms we strive to offer the best experience possible."

The Matchesfashion.com consumer is "fashion-savvy and looking to us for newness, innovation and luxury," says Kingham.

"Matchesfashion.com is different because of the strong offer of brands available from both established and new designers," she continues. The prominent houses ●

Kristie textured-crepe jacket,
£620, Emilia Wickstead;
Kristie textured-crepe skirt,
£1,400, Emilia Wickstead;
Shoes, £350, Rochas

Photography by Driu Tiago
Fashion: Verity Parker
Image taken from
'So Pretty', *The Style Report*
Matchesfashion.com



Oleander flower print dress, £960, Dolce & Gabbana;
Raipur cotton-garbadine coat, £1,520, Jil Sander

Photography by Driu Tiago
Fashion: Verity Parker
Image taken from 'So Pretty', *The Style Report*
Matchesfashion.com

of Saint Laurent and Balenciaga perform particularly well in terms of sales, as one would expect. However, Matchesfashion.com has also reaped the rewards of stocking the tribal-print designs of Stella Jean, embroidered kaftans and kimonos by Talitha and footwear from Gianvito Rossi amongst its emerging brands.

When it comes to spotting the next bestseller, the team – which includes former staffers from industry style bibles such as *Vogue* – work organically. “A collection needs to be exciting and offer something different,” says Natalie. “This is very instinctual – you see a collection and you know those women are going to want to wear it. We are known for our luxury edit, so considering quality and execution is also essential.”

One of this season’s success stories has been a collection from Central Saint Martins graduates Marta Marques and Paulo Almeida who describe their own style signatures as “raw, young, effortless and lived-in.”

“Marques Almeida creates great items in distressed denim which sold out instantly,” says Natalie. “We believed in the collection and as designers, they are pleased to have had such a great response on an international platform. Matchesfashion.com customers have great taste, so even if a designer is unknown, the collection can fly-out.”

Having taken an interest in many designers from early in their career – Ruth Chapman even sits on

WHAT TO WEAR

Vantage asks Natalie Kingham, head of fashion at



Leather backpack
£2,660, The Row

Scarlett stainless steel
sunglasses, £308
Mykita

Shift, £668, The Row

Shirt, £230, Isabel
Marant Etoile

Exclusive espadrilles
£265, Robert Clergerie

CASUAL WEEKENDER

the British Fashion Council's NEWGEN selection committee which awards sponsorship to young talent – Matchesfashion.com has been able to draw on this loyalty and forge exclusive partnerships with many creatives to keep its edit fresh. In addition to stocking pieces straight from a lookbook – or catalogue – unique styles from Erdem, Vivienne Westwood, Giles and Jonathan Saunders have been launched by the company in recent times, which has also benefitted Matchesfashion.com's own label, Freda.

In 2008, the same year that the company opened its shop in Marylebone High Street, it threw its weight behind a capsule collection of luxury basics, created in-house, which would complement its designer offering. Updated regularly, Freda pieces include shift dresses, silk blouses and cashmere jumpers, typically in block colours and occasionally given detail with flashes of lace.

For S/S14, shoemaker Penelope Chilvers was tasked with producing appropriate Freda footwear (including coral and sand-toned espadrilles) and while Natalie remains tight-lipped about the next step for Matchesfashion.com's offering as a whole, she will admit, "Freda is about to get very exciting with a new commercial director who is very talented."

Of course, even the most well-stocked rails in the world can remain a confusing riot of colour and shape for the time-poor, or those who had simply never realised how

interesting work from the likes of Richard Nicoll (who gave us the silk T-shirt dress) and Claire Barrow (illustrated leather jackets) would become. Ever the innovative business model, the company has an answer for that too.

"Matchesfashion.com operates a styling service across three platforms," says Natalie. The solution goes beyond helpful sales staff in its high street stores. "The 'My Stylist' team is our online styling team that can be contacted via the website and by telephone to recommend key pieces for each client." Then there's the enigmatically named 'No.23': behind the doors of a Georgian townhouse in central London, a trained team tend to the whims of some of Matchesfashion.com's regular – and sometimes toughest – customers. "Our private shopping team looks after clients and personal stylists who wish to shop in a private, luxurious environment and have a bespoke appointment. Your wardrobe is selected by the team based on a brief from the individual offering a seamless, one-to-one experience," explains Natalie. "Separately, we also operate a wish list service so customers are notified when a specific catwalk look or favourite collection arrives in store."

The only problem is we want them all. ■

matchesfashion.com

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Matchesfashion.com, to share her edit for key occasions



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WISH *list*

STEPPING IT UP A GEAR

Long admired as a purveyor of accessible luxury, Baume & Mercier has upped its game and stepped into the sphere of serious watchmaking. Featuring a 45.5mm

18-karat red gold case and sapphire crystal case back, the Clifton 1892 Flying

Tourbillon boasts, as you'd expect, a flying tourbillon. Launched alongside other extensions of its hallowed Clifton collection – including a Chronograph version and the stunning Retrograde Date Automatic – the watch propels the brand into a position amongst the industry's most distinguished of players. Keeping things ticking is a Val Fleurier

calibre, produced exclusively

for Baume & Mercier,

while red gold and blued-steel hands tell the time. Only 30 of the handsome pieces will be made, each priced at £38,000.

baume-et-mercier.com





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WATCH NEWS



SIMPLY SUBLIME

Prussian philosopher Immanuel Kant deemed that what was sublime was noble, splendid and terrifying – words you can certainly associate with the Midnight Planétarium by Van Cleef & Arpels. It's a timepiece we touched on last month but it's a watch we feel deserves a space of its own, so please behold: comprising 396 working parts and six semi-precious planets around a pink gold sun, the Midnight Planétarium will position the whereabouts of Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn in real time – the time on earth being readable via a moving comet on the watch's dial. Mercury and Venus will rotate every 88 and 224 days respectively, while Saturn will return to its start position every 29.5 years. Impractical, irrational and grandiose? You bet'cha. Noble, splendid and terrifying? Absolutely.

Midnight Planétarium, POA
Van Cleef & Arpels; vancleefarpels.com

ONE TO WATCH

Allun Michaels, store manager at Fraser Hart in Brent Cross, selects his watch of the month:

“At 40mm the new Zenith Pilot is beautifully balanced and offers a classic alternative to the larger 46mm watches in the collection. Featuring an automatic movement and ‘vintage’ leather strap, it works perfectly with jeans or a suit”



Pilot 40mm, £4,100, Zenith
Fraser Hart, Brent Cross, 020 8732
8459, BrentCross@fraserhart.co.uk



OCEAN-BOUND

Following a centuries-old line of watches designed to navigate the seven seas, the devilishly-clever RM60-01 Regatta Flyback Chronograph employs a rotating bezel with cardinal point indications and a graduated 360°; a 24-hour disk allows wearers to locate their position on earth. Simply direct the watch's UTC (Coordinated Universal Time) indicator towards the sun and turn the bezel so that the UTC hand lines up with the local time (engraved on the bezel's circumference). Once set, the compass headings North, South, East and West will be correctly aligned with the actual direction on the Earth's surface. Orientation can be calculated in northern as well as southern hemispheres without additional calculations.

RM 60-01 Regatta Flyback, £111,500
richardmille.com

THE FEMININE TOUCH

Designed as the ultimate male sports chronograph, the Royal Oak Offshore has become exactly that – the go-to-watch for any boardroom member appreciative of bold dimensions and bolder design. For 2014, Audemars Piguet has shrunk the legendary timepiece to 37mm and added 32 brilliant-cut diamonds. The result is the Royal Oak Offshore 37mm, a slimmer, more sophisticated reinvention of the chronograph for ladies. The octagonal shape remains, as do the prominent pushers, just in a smaller size. The watch is available in either steel (£12,300) or rose gold (£24,400).



audemarspiguet.com

From the Honeycomb Eternelle Ring Collection



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JEWELLERY NEWS

A WOMAN FOR ALL SEASONS

Having just witnessed one of the worst winters on record, sadly we Britons have not quite experienced each of the four seasons. But as luck would have it, Bulgari has remedied this with a new mini couture collection of necklaces dedicated to celebrating the changing time of year. Each piece features a foliage-inspired motif, which draws inspiration from the carved stones typical of the Mughal tradition, and bold colour combinations, a signature style of the jewellery house. The first blossoms of spring have been captured in pink gold with mint tourmalines, peridots, amethyst, round brilliant cut diamonds and pavé-set diamonds. In order to convey the subtle nuances and fluidity of nature, each stone has been crafted slightly differently so that no two look the same, and the supple pendant elements follow the movements of the body.

Four Seasons Collection, bulgari.com



CUTTING EDGE

New York Jewellery designer Kara Ross has several claims to fame. As well as having recently been awarded the GEM Award for Design, one of the most sought-after accolades in the industry, Ross' client roster includes President Obama and the First Lady. This year sees the launch of her first fine jewellery collection:



Clockwise from above:
Pangaea ring; Split ring with
raw and smooth amethysts and
diamonds in yellow gold; Ring
with pyrite and diamonds in
yellow gold

"This collection represents my passion for raw and polished stones in their purest forms. Showcasing the most spectacular precious and semi-precious stones, it is illustrative of my love for merging unique materials, in an unexpected way, with a harmonious, yet striking result"

- Kara Ross

kararossny.com

FOUR SQUARED

Boucheron has released two new editions of its highly sought-after Quatre collection. The latest development since the release of Black Edition in 2012, Radiant Edition has been created to commemorate the 120th anniversary of the French maison's boutique at 26 Place Vendôme; now the resting place of fine jewellery, Boucheron was the first jeweller to lay claim to this historic Parisian square. The monochrome rings come in white or yellow gold and have been designed like a sculpture with the staple four Quatre bands.

Quatre Radiant Edition
Available from Spring 2014
boucheron.com

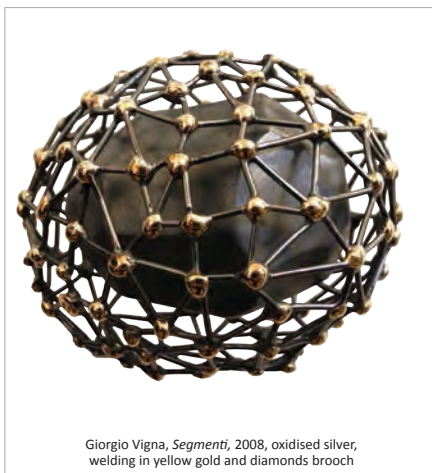


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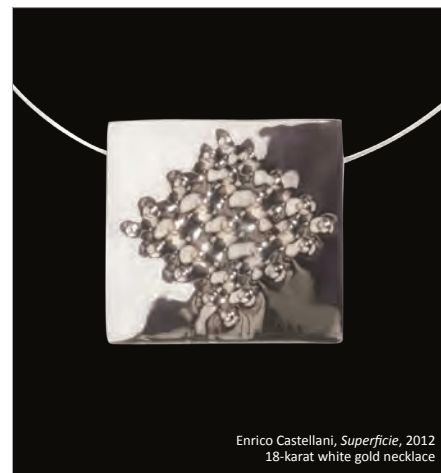




Ilya and Emilia Kabakov, *The Fly*, 2012; 18-karat yellow gold, peridot, diamonds and fire enamel necklace



Giorgio Vigna, *Segmenti*, 2008, oxidised silver, welding in yellow gold and diamonds brooch



Enrico Castellani, *Superficie*, 2012 18-karat white gold necklace



Giorgio Vigna, *Segmenti*, 2012 18-karat yellow gold rock crystal ring

Jewellery ARTISTS

Following its *Selected Jewels from Paris* exhibition, this month sees the Elisabetta Cipriani Gallery present *Sospeso* by Giorgio Vigna. Vigna is well known for blurring the boundaries between the various fields of art and design and the new exhibition comprises five unique pieces by the jewellery artist, in the form of pendants or rings, which have been designed to evoke both day and night. Materials such as oxidised silver and diamonds are used to convey the dark sky lit up by stars, while the gold segments featured in a yellow gold and crystal rock ring, for example, represent the daily passage of time. Following *Sospeso*, on 7 April, guests will be invited to view a selection of jewellery made by visual artists in collaboration with the eponymous gallery owner.

Elisabetta Cipriani: Jewellery by Contemporary Artists at Sprovieri, 23 Heddon Street; elisabettacipriani.com

Giorgio Vigna: Sospeso, until 5 April



Kendell Geers, *Stella Maris (Mater Facit)*, 2011 Silver and red gold plated nipples necklace



Jannis Kounellis, *Labbra*, 2012 18-karat yellow gold ring



Enrico Castellani, *Superficie*, 2013 18-karat yellow satin gold bracelet



Rebecca Horn, *Neshapour*, 2011 22-karat yellow gold, neshapour turquoise ring



Giorgio Vigna, *Segmenti*, 2012 Silver welding in 18-karat yellow gold bracelet



Kendell Geers, *Within Earshot*, 2011 18-karat yellow gold earrings

An Elegant TOUCH

Annabel Harrison speaks to CEO Jean-Marc Jacot about the relatively youthful but flourishing watch brand
Parmigiani Fleurier

Jean-Marc Jacot is currently sporting the Tonda Metrographe Steel Black Superluminova, which also happens to be his favourite new model from SIHH 2014 (luxury group Richemont's annual showcase in Geneva). As you'd expect from a well-informed CEO, Jacot has specific reasons for this preference. He likes the asymmetric case (this "slight imbalance gives it its character"); the black dial's aesthetics (the numbers are outlined with Superluminova material which "picks them out in the daytime and renders them luminous at night"); and the steel bracelet, which has been made slimmer and more streamlined. It's a smart and masculine chronograph from Parmigiani Fleurier, although I'd opt for the black calfskin Hermès strap.

The Parmigiani story is an interesting, and unusual, one. In an industry where companies can boast of centuries of history, Parmigiani has just 18 years under its belt, taking its name from a man who lit the spark of the brand in the little town of Fleurier in 1976. In 1996, Michel Parmigiani joined forces with the Sandoz Family Foundation (SFF) to launch his brand and he is very much still part of its 21st century face, and development. The early years were marked by the completion of several in-house calibres, including two eight-day mechanical and self-winding movements, as well as the creation of the brand's iconic Kalpa watch. Independence came from the foundation of LMH [Les Manufactures Horlogères de la Fondation de Famille Sandoz, which includes Vaucher Manufacture Fleurier, Habillage et Quadrance, ●







- Affolter, Atokalpa and Elwin] and the fact that each new Parmigiani creation could and would be equipped with an in-house movement. Despite its relative youth, Parmigiani can already lay claim to the fact that it produces every component for its timepieces apart from the sapphire crystals and watch straps, building its reputation as a vertically integrated company.

Jacot himself, now steering the 21st century course for Parmigiani, was born in Switzerland and although he had aspirations to work in the film or advertising industries, he went to business school and found himself at a watch company in Japan. A four-year stint at Cartier followed and subsequently a career that saw Jacot working for accessories brand Charles Jourdan, Omega, Ebel, Gerald Genta and Tempus Concept (behind Hugo Boss watches). His name became intertwined with Parmigiani's in 2000, having been impressed by SFF president Pierre Landolt's entrepreneurial vision and passion for watchmaking. "It was very motivating to have to build a manufacture from scratch and to find the right people to embark on this incredible adventure."

When asked the (admittedly rather vanilla)



Parmigiani boutique in Mayfair

question as to what makes Parmigiani stand out in a saturated market, I don't receive a particularly unique answer. "Parmigiani differentiates itself thanks to the three fundamentals which are crucial to the brand: quality, aesthetic and creativity." To be frank, any company worth its salt does adhere to these but while Jacot is serious on the subject of his brand, his personality shines through in his light-hearted comments about its name: "When I started at the company a lot of people asked; 'Why don't you change it?' And I said 'why? It is the name of the family. People may think of cheese but Vacheron sounds like a cheese and they haven't changed it; it is a nice name. So why change it?!' I am intrigued to learn that Jacot's interests outside horology include "art and architecture, mostly. Curiosity is fundamental to excel in your job because it allows you to think outside the box. I always push the designers to go and explore because it is essential for their artistic inspiration."

Equally, Jacot has pushed the company to explore sponsorship opportunities and Parmigiani is of course aligned with suitable events and sports (as is standard in the modern watch industry; woe betide if you don't

have a niche, sport, philanthropic foundation or ambassadors to build a brand world around your products). Rowing is a sport of choice because "we are both dedicated to a unique goal: reaching our personal objectives and breaking the limits with our partners. Precision, coordination and elegance are similar qualities that are needed both in rowing and in the craftsmanship of unique precision timepieces."

A new partnership for 2014 is with the Musée de l'Elysée in Lausanne – which aims to preserve the legacy of the past while encouraging learning and development among future generations – and it is also the tenth anniversary of Bugatti and Parmigiani's relationship; Bugatti wanted to align itself with a young brand "with a propensity towards technical excellence, but also artistic flair, a heightened awareness of design and the elegance of forms". An independent manufacture was essential, too, for "limitless creative potential". Expect also to see the Parmigiani Fleurier name at the World Cup in Brazil; it is the official watchmaking partner of the Confederação Brasileira de Futebol. More exciting arrangements, in my opinion, are the quirky sponsorship of the Château-d'Oex Balloon Festival – "We are happy to share the marvels of aerostatics with our guests and customers from around the globe" – and the Montreux Jazz Festival. This joint project, in existence since 2007, is a "real love story", thanks to a 90 m2 VIP area with a view of the lake in which the manufacture can entertain guests and top customers throughout the festival.

These customers are "defined by the following characteristics: successful in his, or her, professional life; entrepreneurial; cultivated; discreet; confident; and independent". Half of customers come from Europe and the remainder in roughly equal proportion from Asia and the Americas. And in London, why Mount Street for the UK's only atelier? "It is one of the most fashionable districts in London, attracting connoisseurs looking for a unique elegance and refinement."

Elegance and refinement are also hallmarks of the ladies collection, released in 2006, and this is when Parmigiani Fleurier launched Women of Exception. This recognises women around the world who have devoted their lives to fields as diverse as science, medicine, business, sport, art and culture and who have "been the architects of their own success; they have excelled in their field of expertise through selflessness, creativity and independence of spirit." The new woman of exception for 2014 is Fernanda Feitosa. "She's a matchmaker, in the rather romantic sense of the word. The founder of São Paulo's contemporary arts fair and its Executive Director ever since, in ten years Fernanda's event has become the third biggest of the year, after Art Basel and Frieze London. She has established herself as an essential catalyst in this increasingly globalised market."

I for one hope that Parmigiani can maintain its independence and craft its own path in the increasingly globalised industry too. ■

L'Atelier Parmigiani, 97 Mount Street, Mayfair
parmigiani.ch

Fabergé colour gemstone eggs
From a selection



GOOD *EGG*

In a tale of two cities, Fabergé is taking over Easter this April with an exclusive window display at Harrods, which will coincide with a giant Easter Egg Hunt taking place in New York. *Olivia Sharpe* reports



Marchesa
Fabergé egg

In 1885 Tsar Alexander III decided to give a jewelled Easter egg to his wife, the Empress Marie Fedorovna. Easter was the most important occasion of the year in the Russian Orthodox Church and a centuries-old tradition of bringing hand-coloured eggs to Church had evolved over the years; members of the upper classes began to bestow jewelled gifts to one

another and so the Tsar commissioned Fabergé to create a precious Easter egg as a surprise for his Empress; thus the legend of the first Imperial Easter egg was born.

To mark its historic association with the festive period, Fabergé and Harrods have hatched an exciting plan; an exclusive display of the house's celebrated eggs in the department store's windows. Fabergé Easter will tell the story of the legendary jewellery house through a series of flags showcasing the Imperial Easter Eggs which have been the gift of choice for the most illustrious royal clientele for 130 years.

In a bid to celebrate the art of gifting, for which both Harrods and Fabergé are renowned, there will be a special pop-up Fabergé salon within the store's jewellery department. One-of-a-kind, collectible pieces designed by the late Parisian artist Frédéric Zaavy are being exhibited for the first time in a fitting tribute, alongside a limited edition diamond set Spiral Tassel egg pendant. A Fabergé 'Egg Bar' will allow customers to personalise the gold egg pendants through the bespoke in-store engraving service.

As a further feather in its cap, Harrods will be given exclusive access to the original Fabergé Apple Blossom Egg. Spawned in 1901, the unique egg is crafted in gold, diamond and nephrite and was gifted to Alexander Kelch's wife, Varvara Kelch-Bazanova for Easter. Considered the apple of the jewellery house's eye, this is the first time the rare masterpiece will be exhibited in the UK outside of a museum.

While undoubtedly an impressive undertaking, the Harrods window display is by no means the only project Fabergé has up its jewelled sleeves this Easter. Following the success of The Fabergé Big Hunt in London in 2012, which set two Guinness World Records and raised more than \$1.5 million for charity, the worthwhile scheme is returning this year but has flown the nest; it will be landing in New York between 1 and 26 April.

The interactive egg hunt will see up to 300 giant egg sculptures settle throughout the five boroughs of New York city during the Easter period. Once again, the jewellery house has called upon globally renowned artists, designers, architects and brands to design the eggs, and this year's line-up includes Tracey Emin, Mark Quinn, Zaha Hadid, Ronnie Wood, Peter Beard, Diane Von Furstenberg, Marchesa, Olivier Theyskens and Bruce Weber. However, this is far from being merely an opportunity for these well-known



Fabergé Spiral Diamond and
Amethyst Tassel egg pendant

artisans to parade their skills, but a chance to raise money for two charities; Elephant Family (founded by Mark Shand) and Studio in a School (founded by Agnes Gund). Asking Katharina Flohr, Fabergé's creative and managing director, why she settled on these organisations, she explained: "Philanthropy is at the heart of the ethos of Fabergé, and so is our aim to nurture creative talent and support innovative projects."

Adults and children alike shall be expected to trawl the streets of New York in an attempt to find all the eggs, this time with the help of a magical fairytale, as well as the incentive to win one of three prizes: specially designed jewellery egg pendants in gold and diamonds set with Zambian emeralds, Mozambican rubies or Zambian amethysts, which have been donated by Gemfields, the world's leading producer of ethically sourced, coloured gemstones. Once all 300 have been found, the sculptures will then be taken to Sotheby's where they will be sold in a grand auction with all proceeds going to the two charities. Everyone, get ready; the hunt is well and truly on. ■

Fabergé Easter at Harrods, 1-21 April, harrods.com
The Fabergé Big Egg Hunt, 1-26 April, thebigegg hunt.org
faberge.com



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LOCAL *UPDATE*

Covering the whole of north west London



A PERFECT PIROUETTE

Well worth the trip across town, this month sees the prestigious Ballets de Monte-Carlo performing their UK debut at the London Coliseum. Choreographed by the world renowned Jean-Christophe Maillot, the company present LAC (*After Swan Lake*), a contemporary re-interpretation of the classical repertoire, *Swan Lake*. As part of an international tour which includes performances in New York and Paris, seven shows will take place at the London Coliseum, home to the English National Opera.

£55, 9-13 April
St Martins Lane, WC2N
020 7845 9300, eno.org



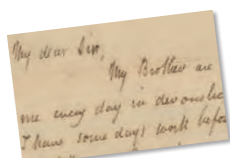
MY DEAR SIR



Too fragile to be left out on permanent display, do not miss out on the last chance to see original letters written by the celebrated Romantic

poet John Keats on display at his beautiful former Hampstead home. Keats is thought to have lived in north west London from 1818 to 1820 and is said to have composed the renowned *Ode to a Nightingale* under a plum tree in the gardens. The examples of correspondence provide a rare insight into the poet and his world during a turbulent year of his life and are on show until 27 April.

10 Keats Grove, NW3

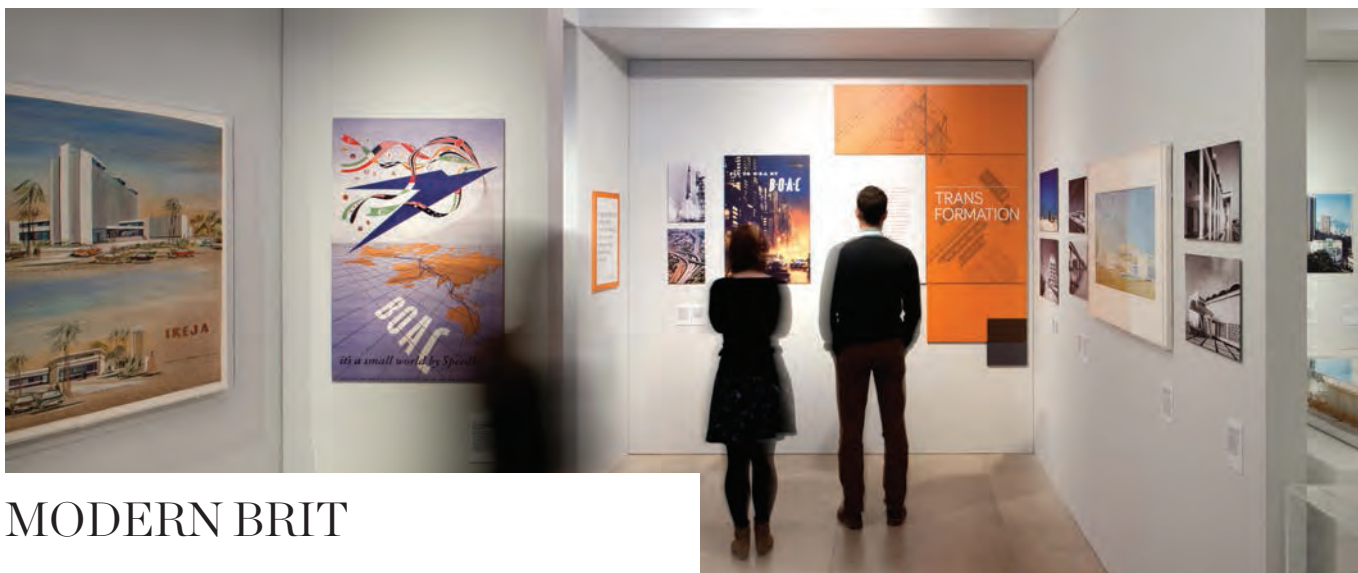


CLASSICAL CLASS

For those among us who know their Aston Martin from their Austin-Healey, or their Bentley from their Benz, the esteemed Bonhams motoring auction is a must visit. For two days the vintage motorcars can be viewed before an auction on 28 April at the Royal Air Force Museum. The sale includes a beautiful 1956 Bentley S1 Continental and 1927 2-Litre Speed Model, as well as a 1960 Jaguar Drophead coupé. Expect to go home with empty pockets.

26-27 April, auction on 28 April
Grahame Park Way, NW9
rafmuseum.org





MODERN BRIT

As part of The Brits that Built the Modern World season, a major programme of exhibitions, events and BBC documentaries this spring, RIBA has launched a new architecture gallery in Portland Place. Through drawings, photographs and models, the gallery celebrates the works of a generation of exceptional architects that gave 21st century British architecture an unrivalled reputation around the world. Redefining the world's cities and creating extraordinary buildings, the exhibition reveals the constructions, their designers and the style they inspired, in more than 190 photographs, drawings and models from RIBA's extensive collection.

Until 27 May,
66 Portland Place, W1B
architecture.com



SUNNY AFTERNOON

Many of us will remember June 30 1966, as Bobby Moore lifted the World-Cup trophy and the crowds sung *Sunny Afternoon* in unison – the summer's number one by The Kinks. Set against a truly British backdrop, the latest stage production at Hampstead theatre takes the audience back to this moment, examining one of the period's most iconic bands, their rise to stardom and the agonising lows it brought them. The play is based on the early life of Ray Davies, co-founder and lead singer of the band, remembered as one of the great innovators of British rock music.

Tickets from £15, 14 April – 24 May
Eton Avenue, NW3



THE OTHER ART FAIR

Returning for the sixth year, the leading artist-led event is back in north west London for four days only. Unlike other fairs visitors are given the chance to interact with 100 of the best un-represented artists, learning about their practice and the meaning behind their works. Alongside the art on display, the fair will host a selection of talks, workshops and events for guests of all ages. With a food market sampling cuisine from some of London's most interesting pop-up restaurants and handcrafted cocktails provided by Sipsmith, prepare to be thoroughly entertained.



Tickets from £6, 24-27 April
35 Marylebone Road, NW1



Study for Stained Glass 2/12, gouache, acrylic and ink on mounted paper, unsigned and undated

WINDOW PAIN

Jack Watkins examines Roman Halter's harrowing history as a retrospective of his best stained glass opens at the Ben Uri gallery



Untitled, oil on canvas, signed bottom right, undated

This year the air will be heavy with commemorations relating to the two World Wars of the last century. Along with it being the centenary of the start of the First World War, it's the 17th anniversary of the D-Day landings which marked the beginning of the final offensive of the Allies against Germany in the Second World War.

While the events of these times are endlessly fascinating, when it comes to Britain's role in the 1939 to 1945 period, the media sometimes seems to slip into easy nostalgia – replaying Sir Winston

Churchill's rousing speeches, or evocative newsreels of Dunkirk, or yet more accounts of the glorious deeds of Spitfire pilots. All these heroes deserve remembering, of course, but if there were more focus on the real horrors of being a war victim, we might be less keen to revisit that past quite so often.

At the Ben Uri Gallery from this month, an exhibition focuses on the stained-glass designs of Roman Halter, who was able to use his experience as a Holocaust survivor for the purpose of art. While his work is often beautiful, it also draws on his harrowing memories of life under Nazi rule in Poland and Germany, which included spells in the Lodz ghetto, Auschwitz concentration camp, and Dresden – or, as he described it, “living in hell.” Comfortable and nostalgic his art is not.

Halter, whose paintings are also displayed at the Imperial War Museum, died two years ago at the age of 85 having lived to tell his story in a remarkable memoir, *Roman's Journey*. Born in Chodecz in 1927, Halter was one of “the Boys” the 732 primarily Polish Jews who, despite having lost their families, emerged from their wartime ordeals to be brought to the UK by the Jewish Refugee Committee. Their accounts were later featured in the historian and Churchill biographer Martin Gilbert's *The Boys: Triumph Over Adversity*.

After coming to Britain in 1945, Halter studied architecture and, having qualified, opened up his own practice in London and Cambridge. He went on to design Royal Coats of Arms for British embassies and Crown courts as well as the gates to Israel's Holocaust memorial and museum, Yad Vashem. Then, in 2006, he made the journey back to Chodecz – where he had been one of only four survivors from a Jewish community which had once numbered 800 – in the company of journalist Fergal Keane for a BBC documentary. It wasn't the first time he'd been back, having returned immediately after the fighting had stopped in 1945, and “found it so empty of all the Jewish people.”

It had taken him 25 years before he had been able to face up to fulfilling the promise he'd made to his grandfather – who had starved to death in the ghetto at Lodz. As he lay dying, the latter had told Halter that he would “survive these times and live to tell the world in the clearest and best way about all our present suffering”. But the pain it must have caused Halter in the process is scarcely imaginable.

One of the works held by the Imperial War Museum is entitled *Shlomo*, the name of his brother who was hanged after trying to get extra bread for his fellow workers



The Jerusalem Window, stained glass, unsigned and undated. These two windows are at the Central Synagogue, Hallam Street, Marylebone.

“He escaped again and survived thanks to a kindly German couple who hid him and fed him in their garden shed”

in a compound while working on laying a road. Halter recalled his father reading the news out to the family “with trembling hands, his tears running down his face”. The image of his brother has overtones of Christ on the Cross.

Another is called *Man on the Electrified Barbed Wire*. When the artist arrived in Auschwitz-Birkenau in 1944, he was still only 17, and he reckoned that it

may have been his youth that helped him through. Despite the repeated beatings and kickings, nothing could take away the desire to go on. “Hope or no hope, I wanted to live,” he recalled. “I starved like the others, but I still wanted to live.” If you were older it was different, though. “A man over 30 knew what life was like before the war and what the world was like then... He could see no hope in the present or the future.” Thus his painting showed a man after the spring of his life had snapped when his children had been taken from him. The lack of hope made it easier to kill himself than to carry on living. “So he ended his life on the electrified barbed wire fence that surrounded us, where it took only seconds to die.”

Halter’s father was totally crushed by the experience of the camps, dying of starvation. His mother, half-sister and her two children were exterminated at Chelmno camp, a fate which would have befallen him too, had his mother not urged him to jump from the horse and cart in which they were transported. His trials were not over, and he would spend ten days in Auschwitz and then be sent to work, via the Stutthof concentration camp, in Dresden. He escaped again and survived thanks to a kindly German couple who hid him and fed



Jacob Wrestling the Angel, stained glass, unsigned and undated

him in their garden shed.

There are some people who say the Jewish experience in the German labour camps was so extreme that it bears little relevance to the everyday world, and that there is little point in constantly re-excavating it. But Halter was in no doubt that the memory of his experience should be shared. “The truth of our past – the history of the Holocaust – must be taught, especially to younger generations,” he argued, “for the sake of concord amongst people and for the building of a better, safer future and world.” His images, painted from memory, offered his own quietly eloquent testimony. ■

Roman Halter (1927-2012): Through the Lens of Stained Glass, Ben Uri Gallery from 10 April – 8 June 108A Boundary Road, NW8



Untitled, stained glass study sketch, annotated ink and acrylic on paper, unsigned and undated



GUEST *LIST*



Entertainment One's BAFTA After Party, Fitzrovia

16 February 2014

In the first of two BAFTA after parties hosted by Grey Goose at our favourite haunts, Brad Pitt, Angelina Jolie, Chiwetel Ejiofor, Lupita Nyong'o, Steve McQueen, Terry Gilliam and Tinie Tempah mingled at Fitzrovia's The London Edition hotel. Cocktails were suitably themed for award season and included the celebratory tippie Le Fizz, accompanied by canapés. Entertainment came courtesy of a music set by international DJ Mark Ronson.

10 Berners Street, W1T

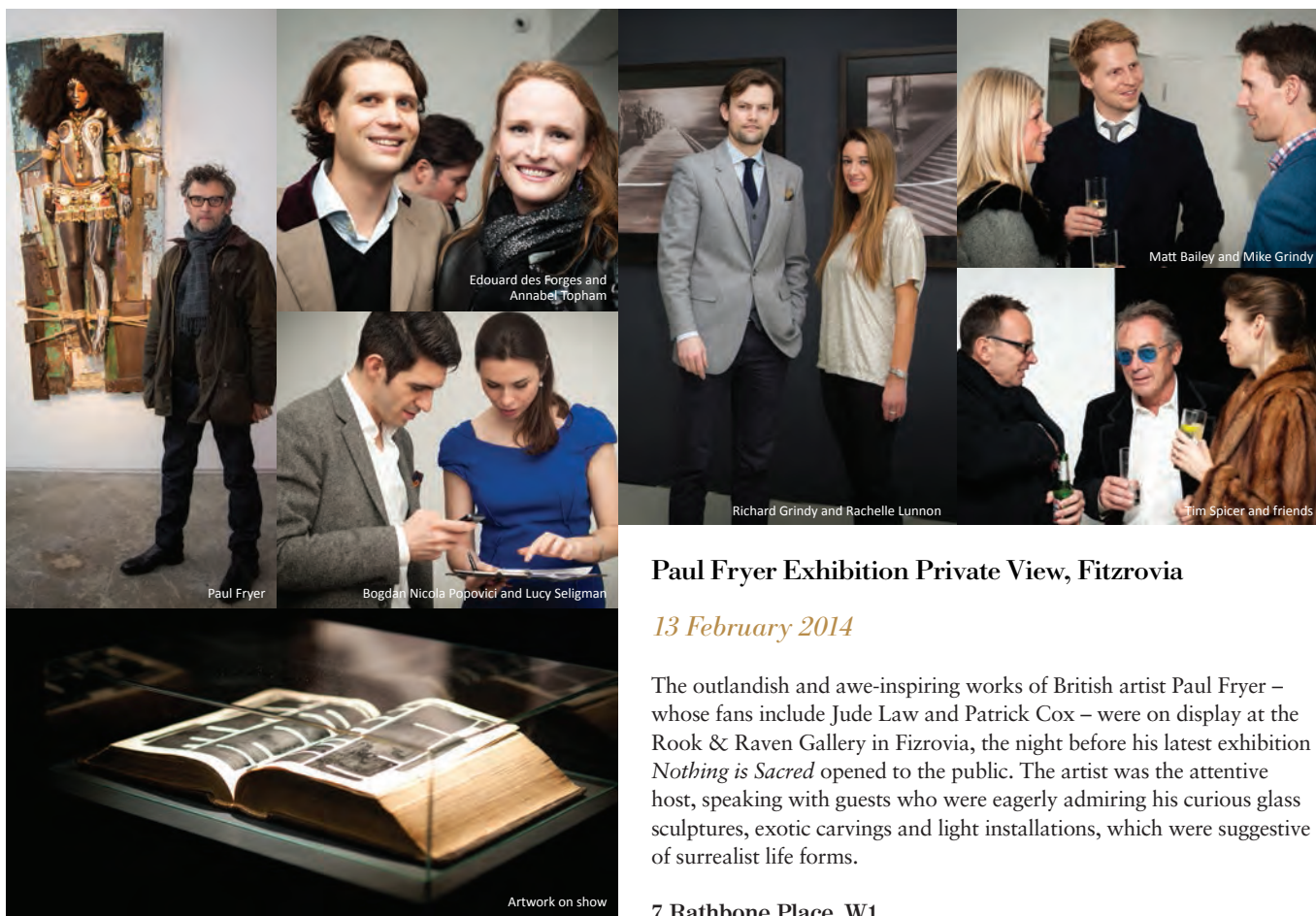


The Weinstein Company, Entertainment Film Distributors and Pathé BAFTA After Party, Holborn

16 February 2014

The second of Grey Goose's glamorous post-award ceremony soirées was held at the Rosewood London where Rita Ora and Karen Elson hopped up onto the stage for an impromptu rendition of *Piece of My Heart* and Steve Coogan provided a good dose of fun and humour with a spontaneous speech. Leonardo DiCaprio and Uma Thurman were chatting at the bar over Grey Goose cocktails, while Oprah Winfrey and Naomi Campbell were also deep in conversation. Lily Allen and Stephen Fry were among the others who attended.

252 High Holborn, WC1V



Paul Fryer Exhibition Private View, Fitzrovia

13 February 2014

The outlandish and awe-inspiring works of British artist Paul Fryer – whose fans include Jude Law and Patrick Cox – were on display at the Rook & Raven Gallery in Fitzrovia, the night before his latest exhibition *Nothing is Sacred* opened to the public. The artist was the attentive host, speaking with guests who were eagerly admiring his curious glass sculptures, exotic carvings and light installations, which were suggestive of surrealist life forms.

7 Rathbone Place, W1



Rodial Beautiful Awards, Leicester Square

11 March 2014

A string of attractive faces were invited to the St Martins Lane Hotel in honour of luxurious skincare brand Rodial and its Beautiful Awards. David Gandy – who won the Rodial Man of the Year Award – was in the company of guests including Donna Air, Jodie Kidd and Kelly Hoppen. Primrose Hill's Jo Wood and Marylebone's Lara Bohinc also saw fellow local, Daisy Lowe, scoop the Rodial Woman of the Year prize.

rodial.co.uk



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The SANTA CLAUSE

Having sold more than three million books worldwide, author and society darling Santa Montefiore has released a novel a year since the age of 25, and is still going strong. *Kari Rosenberg* is dazzled

PHOTOGRAPHY / SAREL JANSEN



“Santa Montefiore won’t want to talk about her sister,” warns the publicist at Simon and Schuster, “I hope you understand.” A vivacious and talented author, who has penned more than a dozen novels, is married to world-famous historian Simon Sebag Montefiore – and by her own admission, “sees dead people” – and journalists still want to fumble through the proverbial snow-storm that is Tara Palmer Tomkinson? Could there be any detail *less* interesting about Santa?

A blonde ball of positive energy, I make my mind up in less than a minute: firstly, I want to be Santa’s new best friend; secondly, I want to absorb every writing tip she has to offer, and thirdly; this will be one of the most honest, funny and articulate interviews I’ve ever had the pleasure of leading. Her 13th novel *Secrets of the Lighthouse* is being published in paperback this month – while her newest release, *The Beekeeper’s Daughter* will be out in July – and we’ve barely sat down before she’s drawing me into a breathy, excitable exchange, one that’s impossible not to pepper with multiple exclamation marks (dotted with hearts, if the font would allow).

Her house, on the cusp of Notting Hill and Kensington, is as regal as you’d imagine, but it’s a far cry from the show home that I was expecting: books scatter every surface along with the usual clutter that comes with two teenage children, (Lily and Sasha) and a demanding work/life diary. Artwork varies from a portrait of Sir Moses Montefiore, her husband’s great-great uncle, to a very stern looking Stalin, with a few Indian-inspired frescoes in between. The kitchen is a homely, country-house chic affair, while her office is scattered with family photographs, crystals, tealights and more of her novels, the covers of which provide a rainbow backdrop in a United Nation of languages. Her husband Simon is off to the high street for a coffee and Santa is still drying her hair while running up and down the hundreds of stairs clad in nothing but a dressing gown. “Give me five!” she shouts sunnily as we set up and she changes into something a little less comfortable.

Secrets of the Lighthouse is Santa’s first book set in Ireland, amid the castles and tight-knit community of the beautiful Connemara. Ellen, a privileged Chelsea girl, is running away from a betrothed she doesn’t love and a life she doesn’t want, as well as a controlling mother who is set on the match for its blue-blooded connections. Ending up at her Aunt Peg’s house in Ireland, she discovers a well of secrets that her mother left behind, while falling in love with the handsome rogue Conor (who, incidentally, was based on Robert Downey Jr in Sherlock Holmes), king of his own desolate, haunted castle. A whimsical, modern-day fairytale, the vivid imagery takes readers on a romantic journey through the magical landscape of rural Ireland, the picture of which stuck with Santa from idyllic family holidays growing up, noted down in her diary which she kept from the age of eight.

“I remember looking out onto the lake as a child while we were driving through the hills at these ruined cottages and castles,” says Santa. “There was an eerie sense that these were old bones left scattered over the hillside – I would stare out of the window and just wonder. There’s something quite gothic and haunting about Ireland that really appealed to me.”

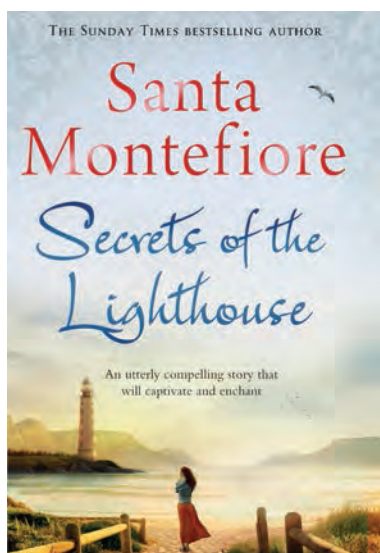
Lighthouse is “a bit of a departure” from what Santa has done before. “I needed a change,” she laughs. “I’ve been doing a book a year. It’s a bit of an effort at the beginning because I’ve got to be inspired. If it’s a chore for me to sit at my desk every day, I’m just not going to want to do it. It’s got to be fun, because that’s the whole point. I absolutely loved writing that book because it was new and different.”

She seems unphased by the constant demand to churn out new material. The manuscript for the next instalment, a three-part series set at a time of real political conflict during the troubles in Ireland, sits neatly on her desk in a crisp A4 pile. I don’t know how she does it, I say, slightly in awe, to which she replies “Neither do I... it’s so funny!”

What’s her secret? “I’ll tell you exactly how to do it,” she whispers conspiratorially. I’m all ears. “Get some music that inspires you... I downloaded the music from *Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit* when I started writing and it just took me to Connemara. Music touches you on a very profound, subconscious level and I think that’s where inspiration comes from – that part deep within you. You’re not thinking ‘how can I write a story that’s successful?’ or ‘what are the themes that people like?’ If you are being stirred by the right piece of music, the creativity will flow and you will write something from your heart.

“Once I’ve found the music – something sad – I light a few candles and close the door. Make sure the room is warm, and that you have a cup of tea and some biscuits to hand. Put some tulips on your desk – make it really lovely so that you want to go back there, because that’s your space. And then just let yourself drift; see what comes into your head. I never know how the story is going to finish when I first begin. I just know where I’m going.” She makes it sound so easy, and we lose track of time imagining various plots.

There’s no doubt that *Lighthouse*’s protagonist Ellen is based loosely on Santa’s own experience. “But most of [the book] came from my imagination because, touch wood, I’ve had such a charmed life. I haven’t had great unhappiness yet – I say yet because I don’t want to tempt fate.” She left the blue-blooded cocoon of her childhood to teach English in Argentina at the age of 19, although she certainly wasn’t running away from her family (her mother is of mixed Anglo-Argentinian origin while her father is a British Olympian skier). She’d held jobs at Ralph Lauren and Theo Fennell before becoming one of the country’s bestselling authors





(with more than three million books sold worldwide, and counting). She converted to Judaism to marry Sebag – as she calls him – at the Liberal Jewish Synagogue in 1998 and the ketubah boasts the signature of none other than The Prince of Wales, it being the first Jewish wedding he’d ever attended, as well as the first time he and Camilla had appeared in public as a couple. Her dinner party regulars include Samantha and David Cameron as well as the rest of the Notting Hill set, but she doesn’t take any of it for granted, or too seriously. “I’m not going to sit next to Michael Gove and talk about education. I talk to him about, you know, my latest fad diet or something – normal human stuff!”

Santa’s office is on the top floor of their home while

her husband gets the bigger space with the plush view of the garden: “It’s like being in the engine room while he is at the front of the boat!” They write all day and often meet for lunch downstairs – “I’ll just nibble on a lettuce or something” – but, amazingly, he hasn’t read any of her books. “He never reads my work,” she says. “In fact, he’s only ever read one book of mine – that was the first draft of the first book when I was 25. And I’m 44 now,” she smiles. “He’s so busy with his own writing that he doesn’t have time [for mine]. Also, my books aren’t the sort of thing that he would naturally read, so he thinks that by talking through plots with me, which he often does, that that’s enough. I would love him to read one of my books because I would like him to see what I do now. I’ve come a

- long way since then, so I would actually like him to read one and say ‘wow, Santa, that’s really good’.

“I’ve read all of his work. The only ones I didn’t read are his Stalin books because I’m not interested in Stalin at all – in fact I find him really creepy – so I don’t want to read about that world, it doesn’t appeal.” We discuss the sense of worth we both felt upon finishing *Jerusalem*, one of Sebag’s most famous historical tomes, which was made into a three-part BBC documentary. “It’s huge isn’t it,” she laughs, comparing the its weight to that of the table in front of us. “The thing with *Jerusalem* is that you can’t expect to remember any of it!”

When she’s not reading or writing, Santa is out with her friends or attending to mummy duties; “It’s quite a lonely occupation, you know, sitting and writing in my room. My children keep me very busy though.” She loves “being in nature” as she’s very sporty, a skill no-doubt passed down from her father. Playing tennis is a favourite hobby as well as hitting the Equinox gym, along with the rest of the local glamazons. “I also run

around the park or pop into Harvey Nichols,” she enthuses. “I love Michael Kors, but I don’t go shopping very often. If I’ve done well with my book and I’ve written a few chapters in a week then I won’t work on the Friday and I’ll go and look in Michael Kors and see what’s in there, and that’s quite nice!”



She’s currently hooked on *Game of Thrones* and *Nashville*. “Sebag and I will get into a box set and we love that. I actually like simple pleasures. I don’t go to the theatre often enough. Rupert Everett is a great friend of mine so I went to see him play Oscar Wilde recently in *The Judas Kiss* and I thought he was brilliant in that, but that’s what got me to the theatre. I don’t go as often as I’d like to go and I’m in this amazing city. I’d love to say I go to galleries all the time, but I don’t!”

Open to talking about her sixth sense, despite knowing that she sounds “a bit batty”, Santa has a way of articulating her experiences that enables her to sound anything but. “It’s part of who I am and it’s part of my experience of the world. The lovely thing about literature is that you can suspend reality even if you don’t subscribe to that belief. Or if you do then you can find it comforting to think that yes, this is about life after death, which I believe in.

“At the beginning of my career I was a bit shy about talking about my own [psychic] experiences because I thought I might be perceived as batty. I sort of put my head above the parapet a bit and thought ‘I’m going to write about what I want to write about because it’s what I want to write about!’ Yes, I grew up seeing spirits. I still see them now – they frightened me as a child but now that I really understand what it’s all about I really like seeing them. I find it comforting because it’s a magical, mysterious world that is hidden from us. But on the other hand it’s confirming what I know to be true; that we just discard our bodies like clothes and move out of them. I find that reassuring.”

She knows the stories of some of her visitors down to the last detail; how they died, and why they have yet to move on. I ask if her husband is a believer too. “No. Not at all! He thinks I’m mad,” she laughs. “You know, we get helped [by spirits] all the time. But angels don’t intervene unless you ask them to. When my son was small he used to drive a little tractor around outside and I used to hear him saying ‘please parking angel, can you find a place for me to park my car?’ imitating me. I actually had a nanny who I picked up from the station and was driving home and I said ‘hold on a second Jane, please parking angel can you just find me...’, and she said later that she almost thought of getting out of the car and not coming for the interview because she thought I was a little ‘touched’”.

Aside from the parking angel, Santa is growing increasingly tempted to reach out to the time-off spirit, freeing up some hours in the day to learn the piano and teach herself French, or ski with her sister in Switzerland. “I fantasise about taking a year off after I finish the trilogy – I’ll be 47 when it comes out – and that’ll be 17 books in total. Maybe I will just take a little break. Maybe just a year?” Maybe that’s a request for Santa’s little helpers. ■

The paperback edition of *Secrets of the Lighthouse* is published by Simon and Schuster on 24 April. Santa Montefiore will be speaking at a Literati event at Grosvenor House, a JW Marriott Hotel book club, on 8 April at 6.30pm. Tickets are £20 including Champagne, canapés and a signed copy of the book, grosvenorhouseliterati.co.uk



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WISH *list*

HANDBAGS AND GLADRAGS

Following two years of collaboration spanning campaign and catwalk, Mulberry has partnered with model of the moment Cara Delevingne to produce a bag collection which will retail from August 2014. Unveiled at the A/W14 previews, the Cara Delevingne Bag is envisaged as a “go-anywhere, do-anything” accessory that complements the model’s unmistakable *joie de vivre*. Accordingly, the design is available in three sizes and a multitude of finishes – from butter-soft, quilted Nappa leather in emerald green, to camouflage-print calf hair.

Mini Cara Delevingne Bag, from £890
Mulberry, mulberry.com



Cara Delevingne for Mulberry
Photography by Morgan O'Donovan

STYLE UPDATE

SPRING/SUMMER LOVING...



Photographed by Peter Lippman against scenes inspired by artistic masterpieces, the floral theme of the Christian Louboutin S/S14 campaign was an instant hit, looking beyond showy glitz and glamour in favour of style, craftsmanship and a touch of irreverence. The brand has now gone one further and named its Statement Styles for summer which marry function and elegance.

Among them, From Sand is its laid-back, warm weather boot and a new take on Spartan-esque sandals.

£795, Christian Louboutin
christianlouboutin.com



NEW ADDITIONS

The *Vantage* patch has become home to two very special new style boutiques. Claudie Pierlot joins the French (and family contingent) of Sandro and Majé in Hampstead High Street, offering floaty basics and casual staples with a touch of luxury; while Prism joins the lively hub of Chiltern Street with beachwear and sunglasses for the year-round jet-setter.

MIU MIU'S ARM CANDY

Miu Miu stores across the world have just taken delivery of its latest it-bag. Previewed in its seasonal advertising material and adapted from the version seen on the S/S14 runway, the new tote has a detachable shoulder strap and padded leather handle, luggage-style metal logos and invisible stitching, giving it a modern and sleek appearance. Its cornflower blue and tan versions are our favourite new neutrals.

£1,430, Miu Miu, miumiu.com





EYE FOR STYLE

In the next phase of a prolific release schedule for Burberry, the brand has launched a new collection of sunglasses and optical frames constituting the Trench Eyewear collection. In honour of its classic overcoat, the range incorporates details and colours which reflect its style: sunglasses are available in tortoiseshell, black, stone and honey, while its reading frames are available with bespoke nose pads adorned with the Burberry check, and incorporate leather-wrapped hardware, similar to the trench coat's belt buckle.

From £160, uk.burberry.com

NICOLAS GHESQUIÈRE FOR LOUIS VUITTON



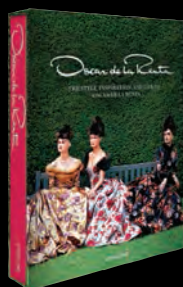
Nicolas Ghesquière had long set hearts aflutter at Balenciaga, but the excitement was palpable at the Louis Vuitton A/W14 show in Paris in March this year as the showman unveiled his vision for the house, following the departure of its previous creative director, Marc Jacobs. Defining features of the debut included a thigh-skimming hemline and A-line cuts for dresses and coats, as well as the frequent appearance of leather details – from piping and belts, to crocodile skin accessories and embroidery. Critics were in agreement that the first offering from Ghesquière was solid, well-crafted and highly wearable.

louisvuitton.com

Louis Faure © Condé Nast Archives



AN ODE TO OSCAR



Since 1965, Oscar de la Renta has styled the world with flourishes of tulle and lashings of sequins. Now, a beautiful new coffee table tome from Assouline will draw together his empire and inspirations for the first time. *The Style, Inspiration and Life of Oscar de la Renta* includes over 200 pictures, personal insights and tributes from the industry.

assouline.com



HORSE *play*

PHOTOGRAPHY: JON ATTENBOROUGH

STYLIST: RACHEL GOLD



Jacqueline dress, £1,092, Teatum Jones at Liberty, liberty.co.uk;
Effervescence Star watch, £250, and Effervescence bangle, £595,
linksoflondon.com;
Red bird bracelet with silver and rose gold charms,
from £99, Dodo, 31 Sloane Square, SW1W 8AQ

Boat neck white jersey T-shirt, £92,
J Brand at Selfridges, selfridges.com;
Embellished silk maxi skirt, £545, Camilla
Manta, matchesfashion.com, Byzance cuff
(large), £290, and green agate and black
onyx golden brass neck piece, £310, both
Sylvia Toledano at GiftLab, giftlab.com





White T-shirt, POA, Dsquared2, [dsquared2.com](https://www.dsquared2.com); Blue and white silk printed fabric beads, £95, Escada Sport, [escada.com](https://www.escada.com); Shelley woven suede bag in navy, £785, Simone Camille at GiftLab, as before; Taurus necklace, £1,025, Bea Valdes, [beavaldes.com](https://www.beavaldes.com)



Zephyr blue skinny jeans with white bleach marks, £260, J Brand at Trilogy, 52-54 Heath Street, NW3; Frieda blouse, £502, Vivienne Westwood Gold Label, Bridal & Couture, 6 Davies Street, 020 7629 3757; Assorted clasp necklaces in rose gold, from £675, and white gold with diamonds, from £520, Dodo, as before

Dazed wide pant, £900,
Fyodor Golan, harveynichols.com;
White cotton shirt with organza
inset, £605, Valentino,
174 Sloane Street, SW1X 9QG



Sequined jumpsuit with corseted waist,
£15,000, Fitriani at Harvey Nichols,
harveynichols.com





Cotton leaf print shorts, £400, Antonio Berardi, antonioberardi.com; Fringed black and off white Siren collar, £195, Ann Demeulemeester at GiftLab, as before; Caftan moon ivory Bakelite gold hoop earrings, £300, Aurélie Bidermann at GiftLab, as before; White shirt with pleated sleeves, £995, Fitriani, as before

PHOTOGRAPHY: **JON ATTENBOROUGH @ LHA REPRESENTS** | STYLIST: **RACHEL GOLD @ LHA REPRESENTS**
MAKE-UP & HAIR: **BOBBIE ROSS @ LHA REPRESENTS** USING SHU UEMURA, KIEHLS AND BUMBLE AND BUMBLE
MODEL: **ANNIE C @ MILK MANAGEMENT** | STYLIST'S ASSISTANT: **LAUREN GODWIN**
PHOTOGRAPHER'S ASSISTANT: **BEN PARKS**
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 **CHIVAS 18**

ART on your SLEEVE

With poster-paint colours and portraiture-style prints emerging as dominant trends this season, *Jane McGuire* tackles one of culture's biggest questions: does fashion belong in the art world?





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Perhaps the obvious place to start when interpreting the crossover between fashion and art is to consider what happens to a dress when it is admired in an exhibition; a concept that has become *de rigueur*, led in part by Somerset House, with the popularity of *Isabella Blow: Fashion Galore!* and *Valentino: Master of Couture*, to name but two.

But for many, fashion is a living, breathing moment in time. From the buzz of the runway to the way a garment hangs on the body; clothes are designed to be worn.

Art, at the other end of the spectrum, is often considered as a moment in time preserved. Indeed, it was (the ever stylish) Aristotle who said: "The aim of art is to represent not the outward appearance of things, but their inward significance." So can an exhibition ever fully reflect the ever-changing trend-driven fashion industry? And is a ballgown still a fashion garment when installed, static, in a gallery or exhibition space?

Coco Chanel thought not. "A dress is neither a tragedy, nor a painting; it is a charming and ephemeral creation, not an everlasting work of art. Fashion should die and die quickly in order that commerce may survive," she said. For her, clothes were not alive, and accordingly their moment quickly – and rightfully – disappeared.

For a contemporary designer, an exhibition could represent the demise of the catwalk, or as Jean Paul Gaultier puts it "a dreaded funeral". However, fresh from the excitement of London Fashion Week, Hiroko Nakajima has been recognised as one of Fashion Scout's Ones to Watch when it comes to her high-fashion knitwear designs, which have been widely described by critics as 'wearable art'. "The catwalk is the best moment in fashion," she says. "We are making pieces of clothing that go on a woman, so of course they look most beautiful on models walking down the catwalk." Hiroko believes, like Coco Chanel before her, that the catwalk has commercial value. However, fuelled by artistic passion, she eventually aims to create something equally provocative for a gallery setting. "I would like to create things that are still powerful when being displayed in a gallery. I believe fashion and art are two separate things yet at the moment they are close – back to back with one another."

The S/S14 catwalk certainly echoed this union. For Chanel, Lagerfeld was typically outlandish, emphasising this link with graffiti-print bags and splashes of colour. A male model carrying paint brushes was duly sent down the runway under the creative director's instruction. Meanwhile, Prada featured the works

of six young street artists, with bold designs both printed on the walls of the catwalk and emblazoned on the fabric, blending fashion and street art. It would be easy to recognise that, like the graffiti movement, fashion has become a modern form of individualism. As industry illustrator Jason Brooks concedes, however, this trend is nothing new: "The S/S14 art-inspired collections are the latest manifestations of an idea that goes back at least as far as Yves Saint Laurent's 1965 Mondrian collection."

Regardless of the catwalk trends, fashion as a whole is fast becoming a favourite focus for London's artistic institutions: aside from those at Somerset House, the Victoria and Albert Museum is increasingly focusing on the medium for its big-ticket displays, attracting a wide and varied audience in the process. Home to the current showcase, *The Glamour of Italian Fashion 1945-2014*, Sonnet Stanfill, curator of fashion at the museum since 1999, is clear about where the value of these types of exhibition lies:

"The visitor gains the opportunity to examine in a calm and measured way, the cut, construction and materials of the garments on show and sometimes sees things that would be invisible when a garment is worn on the body," she says. So while the elements that trigger gasps on the runway as the design moves may be lost, the hours of craftsmanship missed in the five minutes of fame are respectfully given their moment. Far from expiring after their one season shelf life, these works are being framed and appreciated for months on end by a whole new audience.

However, Stanfill also fully acknowledges that we cannot rely solely on exhibitions when viewing a garment as a subject: "When a dress is placed on a mannequin rather than on the moving body, it loses the sense



Opposite Page:
Quentin Jones for Smythson

This Page:
Hiroko Nakajima S/S14



the British artist Stephen Willats's 1965 dress with interchangeable PVC panels."

From the new Christian Louboutin advertising campaign showing shoes photographed by Peter Lipmann amidst floral displays, to the 'art' trend

dominating the season's style reports, the more obvious superficial fusion of the two looks set to stay for a while. As do the exhibitions that bring the fantasy world of the runway alive – and a relatable and exciting form

of art to the masses to enjoy. For those who don't agree, however, Aristotle has one more stylish pearl of wisdom: "It is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it." ■

of a living, breathing form underneath. It also loses the context of participation in public life," she says.

After all, fashion is a cultural movement vital to our day-to-day lifestyle. "From the rigid protocol of the 18th century French court dress, to Victorian crinolines, to today's magpie approach to mixing high and low fashions, all these zeitgeists are an expression of a desire to put oneself forward in the world in the best possible way," she adds. A moving, personal medium of expression, everyone wears clothes and therefore has an opinion on them, whether it be one of awe or irreverence. "Fashion provides an element of optimistic fantasy that suggests in our choice of the clothing we wear, we can affect the way we perceive the world."

Alongside the popularity of such displays runs the ever-growing trend for collaborations between artists and fashion brands. From Smythson's partnership with young British artist Quentin Jones, to fine art's Anh Duong and her work with John Galiano and Christian Lacroix, fashion can also be viewed as a vehicle for individuals to get their work noticed by a new market. Again, as Stanfill recognises, this is nothing new: "Fine artists have long used the medium of fashion to express their visions. Examples include the Surrealist Salvador Dalí's collaborations with fashion designer Elsa Schiaparelli, and

Clockwise from top left:

Hiroko Nakajima S/S14

Elizabeth Taylor wears Bulgari jewellery at the masked ball, Hotel Ca'Rezzonico, Venice, 1967, courtesy of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Gianfranco Ferré advert, modelled by Aly Dunne, A/W91
Photography by Gian Paolo Barbieri © GIANPAOLO BARBIERI
courtesy of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London



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PHOTOGRAPHER: IAN WALSH

STYLIST: BOO ATTWOOD



1 Coco metallic-leather sandals, £405, 3.1 Phillip Lim, net-a-porter.com 2 Hook latch cuff, £359, Eddie Borgo, liberty.co.uk 3 I am shield rings in white and in silver, £265 each, Ileana Makri, ileanamakri.com 4 Pique visor, £140, Marni, marni.com



5 Fumo wristlet, £188, Alexander Wang, alexanderwang.com 6 Striking crystal white 63D SF sunglasses, £185, Dior, sunglasses-shop.co.uk
7 PS11 classic shoulder bag, £1,365, Proenza Schouler, harrods.com



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BEST OF BEAUTY

April

1. Essential Shock Intense, the lauded skincare line from Natura Bissé, has been reformulated in line with new scientific research. Blends such as its Intense Cream for day now include additional macromolecules which have been found to increase suppleness – ideal for mature skin.

from £33.50, Natura Bissé, available at Liberty, W1

2. Very few 'sun-kissed' complexion ranges seem to give good coverage and a golden glow without stickiness or streaking. An exception comes from Guerlain with its Terracotta Joli Teint foundation: formulated with SPF 20, powder, low oil content and a little colour for the summer months, it is available in five shades this April.

£34.50, Guerlain, debenhams.com

3. Uncover the secret life of bees in the beautiful limited-edition eye and cheek palette from Chantecaille. For the past eight years the brand has created make-up compacts that raise money for endangered animals and this spring it is the turn of the honeybee. Channelling runway trends, it holds an elegant sky blue and beehive grey eye shadow, a golden honey highlighter and a coral pink blush.

£74, Save the Bees Pallet, available at SpaceNK
62 Hampstead High Street, NW3

4. The allure – and distinctive jasmine and rose chords – of Chanel's Coco Mademoiselle perfume is to be captured in a Scented Foam Bath from 21 March. Used under warm running water, the fluid transforms into a delicately scented lather to revive the senses. Treat yourself.

£75, Chanel, 020 7493 3836

5. If an advanced pigment corrector doesn't feature in your daily routine, you're doing your anti-ageing regime no favours. Choose SkinCeuticals' new wonder product by the same name to minimise the appearance of sun damage and hyperpigmentation with daily use.

£85, SkinCeuticals, skinceuticals.co.uk

6. Of all the new spring scents, Signorina Eleganza from Salvatore Ferragamo, sits on our desks. Created by perfumer Sophie Labbé, it blends notes of grapefruit, pear and almond: exactly what we'd expect from a stylish, Italian brand. Wear in Santorini.

£42 (30ml), Salvatore Ferragamo, selfridges.com



BEAUTY *UPDATE*




KARL LAGERFELD: A LIFESTYLE

In conjunction with the mid-March opening of his flagship Regent Street store, Karl Lagerfeld has unveiled his and hers fragrances. The fashion designer has spoken of his desire to create sophisticated scents which offer something new, before swiftly becoming classics. Lemon, peach, rose and magnolia notes are layered to create the female fragrance, while lavender, mandarin, apple and violet leaves fulfil the brief for the men's edition. We're told Lagerfeld has been wearing the latter religiously in the run up to the launch.

From £32, 145-147 Regent Street, W1

PICTURE PERFECT



Chanel is to launch a new generation of its Perfection Lumière foundation on 11 April. Following the success of the original, which gives both normal and oily skin a matte finish, the brand has developed a lighter version for the summer months, named Perfection Lumière Velvet, which has been shown to reduce the appearance of pores by over a third, and improve visible skin texture by 39 percent. Its secret is a blend of semi-sheer powders and mineral pigments which give a quintessentially Parisienne radiance, without caking.

£33, Chanel, 020 7493 3836





PAMPERING BY CAUDALIE

Following the opening of its signature spa at Chateaux Smith Haut Lafitte in Bordeaux, Caudalie has incorporated a dedicated treatment space into its new London flagship store. Fans of the brand, which is stocked locally in Space NK, can now visit the new stand-alone boutique in Covent Garden to enjoy quick-time facials and massages, as well as beauty rituals by appointment in its suite. London was chosen for the enhanced offering, ahead of outposts in New York, Paris and Milan.

39 Monmouth Street, WC2H

DECLÉOR TURNS 40



How does a luscious aromatherapy-based beauty brand celebrate turning 40-years-old? With one of the most deliciously-scented product ranges we've tried. Mandarin essential oil and its antioxidant power underpin Aroma Lisse, a collection designed to treat the first signs of ageing. There's an indulgent Energising Smoothing Cream with SPF 15, an Aromessence Mandarinine Smoothing Night Balm, Aromessence Mandarinine Smoothing Serum and the tester we're coveting – a two-in-one Dark Circle and Eye Wrinkle Eraser. Visitors to Kara Hair and Beauty at the Landmark Hotel in Marylebone, will be familiar with

Decleor's effectiveness. 1 April is the on-counter date.

From £33.50, Decleor, decleor.co.uk

SAM MCKNIGHT VS. VICKI SARGE



Hair guru Sam McKnight, backstage stylist at fashion shows including Chanel and Isabel Marant, has partnered one of the original founders of jewellers

Erickson Beamon to create bejewelled accessories. Vicki Sarge, known for statement costume pieces dripping with gems and hunks of Perspex, has turned

her hand to hair bands, grips and slides at McKnight's request.

Floramorta collection
from £241, net-a-porter.com

TREATMENT SPOTLIGHT:



iovera°

*Q&A with Dr Angelica Kavouni,
FRCS EBOPRAS Plastic
Cosmetic Surgeon*

How does iovera° work?

The iovera° treatment temporarily relaxes forehead muscles by using the body's natural response to cold to immediately reduce the appearance of forehead wrinkles. It uses liquid nitrous oxide that is contained within a hand piece and delivered to the closed-end needles of the device during treatment. No toxins or chemicals are left behind in the body.

Who is iovera° most suitable for?

The iovera° treatment is a fantastic choice for patients who have horizontal forehead lines, but who don't have many lines or wrinkles in the other areas of the face. It is also ideal for those who aren't keen to start using toxins or injectable treatments as a first option.

Is a course of treatments recommended?

Patients would first need to come for a consultation to ascertain if they are suitable for the treatment. If so and they decide to go ahead, the results of iovera° last for approximately three months.

Why is the treatment proving so popular?

iovera° gives a natural result in an instant and avoids a frozen look. After use, some forehead movement is maintained. It is an innovative technology and because it is toxin-free, it is a very attractive option for patients who are looking for a more subtle way to reduce the appearance of wrinkles and want to avoid a shiny appearance of the forehead.

Are there any side effects?

iovera° is a very safe treatment administered only by trained doctors. Patients have reported feeling a slight pressure and a sensation of tingling or warmth during the treatment. Post-treatment, patients may experience some slight swelling, redness or a small bruise.

eraofyou.co.uk



Reena Hammer: My URBAN RETREAT

As the first Urban Retreat skincare line launches to the public, the creative director of the renowned spa and beauty emporium opens her Camden home to *Gabrielle Lane* and shares her fashion and beauty secrets

PHOTOGRAPHY / GARY MORRISROE

A Thursday morning in late February: Reena Hammer welcomes us to her NW1 apartment with her hair in big, spongy rollers, looking fresh-faced and relaxed. At her heels is Chihuahua-Pug crossbreed Bruce, who travels everywhere with Reena and will later become an impromptu and enthusiastic co-star of our photo shoot.

"Go ahead, look around," she beams. As the photographer is given full license to explore, her hair stylist Carlos – usually based at Urban Retreat's flagship salon in Harrods – begins conjuring loose waves while Reena does her own make-up.

A contented and cultured space, Reena grew up in the apartment with her father (Urban Retreat CEO, George) and its styling owes as much to family antiques – lacquered sideboards, distressed wooden medicine cabinets and gilded mirrors – as to personal luxuries. Over-sized Diptyque candles, posies-in-porcelain and modern art adorn every surface; bookcases are stuffed as much with oriental carvings and photographs as fashion tomes, and aged chestnut leather sofas dominate the open-plan living space.

Then, of course, there are Reena's closets, befitting of someone for whom style and beauty is both a passion and a pay check. She shows us her shoe cupboard, kaftans for her forthcoming holiday in the West Indies and a vintage, diamond-encrusted watch which she received for her 21st birthday.

And as for *that* beauty cupboard? Row upon row of gleaming serum bottles, cream dispensers and rich, jewelled-toned perfumes. Even her tweezers are Swarovski-crystal encrusted, as is her Giorgio Armani lipstick, and the first seven products from Urban Retreat's own skincare line, which launched this spring, are duly nestled behind mirrored glass alongside others from Crème de la Mer, Sisley and La Prairie.

With her hair and make-up perfected, we settle down to discuss Reena's ambitions for the new range and more about her personal lifestyle: ➤





- On Urban Retreat Skincare... “My ultimate aim for the range was to create products that could be used by everyone as part of their daily skincare routine. The line was produced after listening to our loyal customers, alongside a team of experienced therapists in Harrods, to identify what people most desired. What I love most about the range is that it is affordable, but still has a luxurious feel and amazing benefits. You can customise it to your needs and use it alongside the other wonder products you read about and want to dabble in!”

On her own approach to beauty... “My Mum always said: ‘Invest in your skin from an early age.’ Many people wait far too



long before they take an interest in their skin. For me, the best motto is ‘prevention is the best cure’, so regular facials are essential. Make sure you invest in one every ten to 12 weeks or, at a minimum, seasonally. I also have manicures every two weeks as I used to bite my nails terribly as a teenager and this is the only thing that keeps them healthy and strong. My favourite body treatment is the Paraffin Wax Bath we have in Urban Retreat at Harrods; it gets rid of all of your toxins and relieves aches and pains.”

On her mother, (professional make-up artist and cosmetics entrepreneur) Ruby Hammer... “She is always giving me tips and tricks. My Mum is the most amazing looking woman for her age so I listen and take her advice very seriously. Some of her wisdom is conventional, such as always taking your make-up off before bed, but some of it I wouldn’t have known, for example putting oats in a sock and running it in the bath to help the fight against eczema and leave skin super soft.”

On health and fitness... “I swear by Bikram Yoga at Fierce Grace in Primrose Hill and make sure I go at least two to three times a week. It’s amazing for your body to sweat! I also love to wakeboard and when I’m by the sea on holiday, I try to do it twice a day – if you get up early and go when the sea is like a lake, it is beautiful.”

On growing up in the industry... “As a teenager, I was much more of a fashion girl and definitely took for granted the knowledge that I had gained from being around such passionate and successful parents. I always appreciated the beauty [industry], but now I can see that the fit is perfect and it’s a very natural career path for me.”

On fashion... “My style tends to vary depending on my mood and I’ve never been devoted to one designer or look. However, I do know what suits me and I love teaming tailored shapes with beautifully-draped pieces. I also adore colour, which luckily suits my skin tone.

Brand-wise, I wear a lot of Sandro for staples, some key Victoria Beckham pieces and I love Peter Pilotto for form and patterns. I have a beautiful orange Va Va Voom Valentino bag, but shoes and jewellery are my weakness; they can complete an outfit. My favourite jewels include my Eddie Borgo bracelet, Chanel ring and Vivienne Westwood ring.”

On her home... “I believe a home is never fully complete; it is your life and you add to it along the way. I absolutely love to collect things and have never liked anything to be too minimalistic or too perfect. I love mixing textures and colours that complement each



other and like to think that my home feels inviting, both to myself and to strangers.”

On mottos for life... “I have two that I try to live by: firstly, don’t spend time worrying about things you can’t control, and secondly, love what you do or don’t do it.”

On ideal escapes... “No doubt about it... The Maldives. The Cocoa Island by COMO resort is heaven-on-earth; they have overwater suites and villas that are inspired by the traditional dhoni boats used by local fishermen. You can see tropical fish, stingrays and even dolphins from your room. It is an understated, elegant, pure paradise that will leave you breathless.” ■

The Urban Retreat Skincare Range is available from £20
urbanretreat.co.uk/beautique

REENA HAMMER'S BEAUTY PICKS

- ♥ Laura Mercier Portfolio
- ♥ NARS Radiant Cream Concealer
- ♥ NARS Radiant Cream Foundation
- ♥ Hourglass Luminous Light Powder
- ♥ Laura Mercier Crème Cheek Colour in Rosebud
- ♥ Laura Mercier Eye Shadow in African Violet
- ♥ Lancôme Hypnose Mascara
- ♥ Diptyque Solid Perfume
- ♥ Sumita Brow Base
- ♥ Clinique Chubby Sticks
- ♥ Giorgio Armani Lipstick (customised)



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To the Ark we go

Seeking salvation from the London rain? Pennyhill Park is the 'chocolate box image' of a country house spa, writes *Gabrielle Lane*

It was the end of January. It was pouring. It had rained for two weeks. A trip to Pennyhill Park had been suggested and I'd packed even before receiving confirmation.

The 19th century country manor sits in 123 acres of grounds in Bagshott, Surrey – 45 minutes from London, but infinitely further from any gloom or drudgery. Ivy trails across its façade, there are log fires, alcoves, sweeping staircases and tapestries and the grounds play host to a nine-hole golf course, the England Rugby Union training pitch and a separate 45,000 sq ft spa.

The latter looks like an incongruously shiny, blonde-bricked detached house, but you'll get over it; the sight of its three outdoor hot tubs frothing away at up to 38 degrees is tempting enough. The spa is also mid-way through a renovation which will bequeath it with a gleaming outdoor pool and decking area for the height of summer.

Currently, the indoor facilities include a maze of herbal saunas, ice caves and relaxation areas, as well as a plunge pool and 25m-long 'ballroom' pool with underwater music. My friend and I lost track of what the various elements were supposed to be doing (heated ceramic couches for circulation, massage-jet showers for cleansing, colours for healing energy and the like) but it's fair to say pottering between the cabins in the spa's so-called Thermal Heaven

will leave you feeling fantastic. The spa is so vast that you're able to laze about with friends in near-complete privacy and, as the body is exposed to 32-34 degree heat for 15 to 20 minutes, it aids detoxification – you'll get a natural high as you leave.

Treatments here rely on Elemental Herbology products which are free from artificial colours and fragrances, parabens and preservatives which can dry out the skin. Combined with hot stones and herbal compresses, the Five Element Aroma Massage is a relaxing and indulgent treatment which uses oriental-inspired techniques to knead away muscular tension.

The spa is ideal for a day trip but if you can stay over, suites at Pennyhill Park are huge, old-fashioned and countrified in style – flock wallpaper, patterned carpet and floral curtains mesh to create a cosy hideaway: you must surface for dinner, however. The tasting menu from two Michelin-starred chef, Michael Wignall, at The Latymer is delicious. Roasted John Dory with scallops, spices and barbecued pumpkin; slow-cooked piglet with caramelised onion and chicory; and fig with panna cotta and a warm doughnut are amongst the delights on the menu. For all its flair, service is friendly and you'll find space for each and every bite.

Consequently, this isn't a spa where you'll kick-start a healthy weight-loss regime – but with great food, beauty treatments and the right company, a visit is definitely good for you. Needless to say, we woke up after a night here to clear blue skies and fresh air – just in time for a dip in the hot tub. ■

pennyhillpark.co.uk



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WISH *list*



RAF SIMONS AT HOME

Dior's creative director Raf Simons used textiles from high quality European producer Kvadrat during his tenure at Jil Sander, and again in January 2014 for his Dior menswear collection. This April, his own fabric designs from Kvadrat for the home become available internationally, ready to inspire creatives working in the worlds of interiors and architecture. The upholstery range includes *Argo*, a woven mohair; bouclés *Sonar 1* and *Sonar 2*; and the silky, fur-like *Astor*. Simons has spoken of his desire to offer a blank canvas to those using the fabrics, while infusing each with colour and texture.

kvadratrafsimons.com

INTERIORS *INSPIRATION*

AT HOME IN HARRODS

Renowned as one of the world's most distinguished luxury institutions, Harrods needs no introduction. This spring marks the relaunch of its home retail section, featuring the latest furniture brands and exclusive pop-ups. Developed to capture the imagination of the design savvy customer, the Third Floor will host a unique edit of contemporary classic pieces from brands such as Tom Dixon, Talisman and Boca do Lobo. If this wasn't enough, the fabric collection is also being revamped this month, including a London exclusive with Hermès Fabrics and House of Hackney.

87-135 Brompton Road, SW1



A POT OF GOLD

A scented candle can make all the difference when it comes to transforming the ambience of a room. New to the fragrance scene are three beautiful vessels from Feu de Beaumont; one is covered in frosted glass, while the other two – The Golden Goblet and The Porringer – are encased in 22-carat gold-plated designs, which can also be engraved. The trio is available in three flagship fragrances; (oudh, jasmine and wild fig), and unlike most candles, are completely refillable. After all, sustainable investments don't burn out.

feudebeaumont.com



ON REFLECTION

Proving that a modern home is all about those statement pieces, online interiors emporium Rockett St George has unveiled its new collection of unique designs for spring. Loving anything out of the ordinary, we are rather excited by the stylish mix of products; from gold ornate mirrors to dramatic cotton chevron throws, this season's interior trends are perfect for updating a room with one wacky purchase.

rockettstgeorge.co.uk



BLOOMIN' MARVELLOUS

For the perfect splash of sparkle, look no further than the new Waterford collection, as the crystal team pairs up with renowned florist Jeff Leatham. These floral themed designs can be grouped together, stacked, or mixed-and-matched: whatever the flower arrangement, the opulent treasures will be as beautiful as the blooms they hold.

waterford.co.uk



8 SHADES

Embrace the unseasonal sunshine with the latest ranges from online boutique Amara. These funky retro Cindy table lamps from Kartell are designed by Ferruccio Laviani, and channel an *American Hustle* 70s throwback that we just can't resist. Mix and match mint green, gun metal grey, dark gold and fuchsia for a rainbow disco vibe, or stick to platinum for a more modern, minimalist look. Just don't put them near the 'science oven'.

£154, amara.co.uk



QUAINT AS FOLK

Add a sense of culture to your living room with the new collection from luxury fabric designer, Julia Brendel. Echoing her folk and embroidery passion, the intricate patterns and refined colour palettes pay homage to a fusion of different backgrounds. The range includes a traditional yet beautiful array of cushions, tablecloths, lampshades and throws in a wide choice of sizes. From lavish silks and textured chenille, designs are meticulously created through jacquard weaving for a handmade feel.

juliabrendel.com

MODERNISING MARYLEBONE

After calling its former Battersea address home for years, leading destination for Italian interiors

Design Space London has opened its new showroom at 126 Wigmore Street, Marylebone.

Sleek, architectural concepts by Modulnova and Schiffrini show progressive looks for modern kitchens and bathrooms, while Lema's bespoke wardrobe and storage systems offer brilliant modular solutions for bedrooms and living spaces. The new showroom is London's first display space dedicated exclusively to Modulnova.

126 Wigmore Street, W1U
designspacelondon.com



Around the World in 80 ways

Interior designer Shalini Misra brings international flair to her work, writes *Gabrielle Lane*



An after dinner question (of sorts): what would you do with a 2,000 sq ft penthouse in Regent's Park? Interior designer Shalini Misra has faced the conundrum twice.

Sought by clients as far afield as Frankfurt, New York and Delhi, Misra's forte is spatial planning, aided by a background in architecture. And, when it comes to gargantuan, open-plan apartments, "making spaces *smaller* using colour, subdividing areas to create functions and playing with proportions," goes against the more common modern day urban living conundrum of making spaces bigger. "Architecture and interiors blend seamlessly to create one vision," she explains.

Misra commissions most of the furniture she uses from English artisans, but also visits the trade fairs of Maison & Objet Paris and iSaloni Milan: "I aim to design spaces that are dramatic and comfortable," she adds. "Interesting materials and textures, particularly those that are natural and organic, are a huge inspiration."

In the aforementioned Regent's Park properties, Misra opted for walnut with herringbone flooring, leather-panelled cupboards and glass door handles and tiles, advocating a mix-and-match approach. "My advice is, don't be afraid to use different sofas and chairs in the same room; use mood lighting and play with electric lighting and candles at different heights. Mix leather, wool, glass, silk and velvet." Practicality was also key: "Living without clutter, ensuring there's plenty of storage space and organising your possessions makes a home comfortable. My approach is to create a spacious feeling without being minimalistic in my design."

For Misra, her passion for interiors is matched by a love of travel, which in itself yields treasured finds. "My husband Rajeev gave me a beautiful leather and silver chest from Marrakesh where I keep all of the cards my children – Reeva, Roshni and Rohan – have given me over the years," she explains. Two armchairs also have pride of place in her St John's Wood home: "I love the pair of winged armchairs in my bedroom which I designed 18 years ago," she smiles. "They are the most comfortable chairs [I own] and have been re-upholstered over the years. I believe you should keep only the items you treasure." ■

shalinimisra.com





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WISH *list*

CANDY CRUSH

The S/S14 collection from La Coqueta replicates the bold palettes and artistic prints of the grown-up catwalk while adding a signature Spanish twist. Traditional smock tea dresses and pink baby-doll tops (the kind every little girl wants) make ideal summer-holiday outfits for lounging around Puerto Portals, while boys will feel oh-so-adult in the candy-striped shorts and braces, coloured chinos and Tod's-esque loafers. The campaign imagery is so adorable that you'll want to buy every piece even if you don't have kids.

5 Heath Street, NW3
lacoquetakids.com



NURSERY NEWS



IN THE SUMMER TIME

With more than 40 years' experience designing babies and children's clothing, French brand Catimini is best known for its lively and vibrant designs. And the summer collection does not disappoint. Oozing elegant sophistication with an adorable combination of bright checks and romantic hues, the ensembles will be as cheerful as the little people wearing them.

alexandalex.com

PET'S CORNER

EASTER TREATS

The Easter bunny's offerings are far from suitable for your furry friends, but that's no excuse to leave them out. The beautiful new collection from Mungo and Maud features plenty of tail wagging treats: think

knitted rabbits and a chick-patterned food bowl – perfect for wolfing down anything but chocolate.

mungoandmaud.com



PETS PYJAMAS

Planning a Good Friday get-a-way? Thanks to pet's lifestyle website petspyjamas.com and its fur-bulous list of pet-friendly hotels, no one in the family will be left out of this year's adventure. Highlights include the beautiful Gidleigh Park in Dartmoor, which offers dog-friendly rooms as well as complimentary heated kennels and the historic five-star Cliveden house in Berkshire for the more cultured of pedigrees.

petspyjamas.com



TOP OF THE CHOCS

Unleash your inner eggexplorer and hop along to the cracking Easter egg trail at Fenton House. Chocolatey-filled family fun is the only thing on the agenda here, as kids of all ages search the rose garden and orchard. As part of Cadbury's collaboration with the National Trust, over a dozen egg-filled adventures will take place across London. Lots of fun and games are promised for all, including an egg and spoon race on Easter Monday and delicious treats from the festive bunny to take back to your nest at the end of the day. Yum.

Fenton House
Hampstead Grove, NW3





YUMMY TUMMIES

Multi-Michelin-starred chef Alain Ducasse goes back to basics with the launch of his new book, *Cooking for Kids – From Babies to Toddlers*. Devoted to healthy eating, Ducasse rediscovers the pleasures of preparing locally sourced, natural food for your little ones in 100 simple and delicious dishes. Essential seasonal ingredients and fresh flavours are not to be saved for parents, with meals full of vegetables, fruits and grains. With useful snippets of nutritional advice and beautifully illustrated recipes, this book ensures your baby gets a tummy full of their five-a-day.

**£15.95, available from Waterstones
68-69 Hampstead High Street, NW3**



“CURIOUSER AND CURIOUSER!”

You are all personally invited to join a curious celebration of the nonsense world of Alice in Wonderland at the British Library this April. Play silly, strange or sensible games, stop for tea with the Mad Hatter and hunt for the White Rabbit in the upside-down inside-out wonderland, for two days only. Just remember rule 42 ‘All persons more than a mile high to leave!’



**11-1pm, 8-9 April
96 Euston Road, NW1
bluk**

MY BABY LOVES TO DANCE



The London Children's Ballet marks its 20th anniversary in a production of the beloved fairytale Nanny McPhee. With a cast of 56 dancers of boys and girls aged between nine and 16, the talented youngsters will chase, sauté and pirouette for four performances at The Peacock Theatre. Founded by Lucille Briance in an attempt to showcase the broad social appeal of ballet, the charity provides free tuition for children from all backgrounds. A good cause and a great day out, it's guaranteed to have your feet tap-tap-tapping all the way home.

**From £14 24-27 April,
Portugal Street WC2A
0844 412 4322
sadlerswells.com**



HEALTH & *FITNESS*

PEDAL PUSHER

Imagine a dark room, strobe lighting and an infectious techno beat: Psycle is a dance workout like no other, because for starters, you are sat on a bike. Experience the buzz of going clubbing (without the hangover) whilst burning calories and toning key body parts. Run by a collection of gymnasts and dancers, Psycle is the latest exercise craze to hit London. Be warned, this is not just a spin class with music, but a 45 minute resistance workout, where having a good time is key. Put your hands in the air...

76 Mortimer Street, W1W



THE REAL PEEL

Who wouldn't want Miranda Kerr's flawless complexion? A firm favorite of the star – as well as models Jourdan Dunn and Daisy Lowe – the newest vitamin skin peel from Destination Skin is far less terrifying than it sounds. Using acids derived from sugar cane and almonds, it clears dead cells on the surface of the skin, without damaging healthy ones, whilst combating signs of aging and those little imperfections. One peel two weeks before that special event is a perfect pick me up for a radiant glow, or a course of treatments can be booked to treat specific problems. The only thing standing between you and the catwalk.


18a Heath Street, NW3

HIGH FASHION YOUR WORKOUT

For a season of sportswear almost too beautiful for the gym, look no further than the sophisticated tailoring of the Crystalscape Collection from Lucas Hugh. Inspired by the crystal caves of Mexico, it features a scattering of bright prism prints, hot pink trims and clever ventilating panels for slimming, yet supportive looks. Fresh from the brand's *Hunger Games* collaboration, Lucas Hugh continues to prove that comfort and ease of movement does not mean compromising style, with chic figure-forming designs, engineered in breathable fabrics which guard against muscle strain.

lucashugh.com



A woman with long, wavy hair is floating underwater, her body angled towards the viewer. She is looking upwards with a serene expression. A powerful beam of light from above illuminates her, creating a dramatic contrast with the dark water. Bubbles are visible around her, and the light rays create a shimmering effect on the water's surface.

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Know the signs:

BOWEL CANCER

awareness month

Consultant Gastroenterologist at The Wellington Hospital, Dr Deepak Suri, looks at the diagnosis and symptoms of bowel cancer and how bowel cancer screening can help reduce risk

The bowel is part of the digestive system which works to absorb nutrients, water and energy from your food whilst passing out the remaining waste from your body. Bowel cancer usually refers to cancer that begins in the large bowel and is the fourth most common type.

Bowel cancer is the second most widespread cause of cancer death in Britain, which is predominantly due to late diagnosis. Important risk factors include a family history of bowel cancer and a personal history of inflammatory bowel disease such as ulcerative colitis or obesity. Lifestyle factors, such as a lack of exercise, a diet rich in processed or red meat whilst lacking in dietary fibre and habits such as smoking can aid development of bowel cancer.

What symptoms may be suggestive of bowel cancer?

- Rectal bleeding
- Alteration in bowel habit (lasting for several weeks)
- Iron deficiency (anaemia)
- Weight loss
- A lump in the abdomen (rare symptom)

Symptoms such as rectal bleeding and a change in bowel habit can be due to other benign conditions and a diagnosis only given through assessment by your GP. Tests performed by your GP or specialist can give you a specific diagnosis and enable you to receive treatment as early as possible. It is possible to reduce the risk of bowel cancer development by removing pre-cancerous polyps. Bowel polyps are small growths on the inner lining of the colon or rectum and affect about 15-20 per cent of the UK

population. One in four people will have at least one by the age of 50, with 50 per cent of people having at least one polyp by the age of 70. However, not all polyps develop into bowel cancer and the likelihood of malignant change is greater in larger polyps. Bowel polyps are removed in a simple day case procedure called a colonoscopy.

Why should I consider bowel cancer screening?

Screening should be considered in people without symptoms when over the age of 50-55, or if a close family member has been diagnosed with bowel cancer. The NHS runs a national screening programme for bowel cancer through the testing of blood in stool for people aged 60-74. A programme based on a flexible sigmoidoscopy for those over 55 is due to roll out in the next couple of years.

What does screening involve?

Before any decision on screening is made, you will have an initial assessment with a Consultant Gastroenterologist or GI surgeon. Following a discussion of the risks and benefits of each examination, you will then be sent for either a camera examination (colonoscopy) or X-ray (CT pneumocolon). Both tests will require either samples to be taken or polyps removed and sent for analysis.

In most cases, results will come back clear or show a small non-cancerous polyps. Depending on the findings, your consultant specialist will suggest further testing or treatment, if appropriate.

Sources: cancerscreening.nhs.uk/bowel/

MEET the specialist

Dr Suri is a general Gastroenterologist and Hepatologist treating patients with symptoms such as abdominal pain, dyspepsia, reflux, diarrhoea, constipation, rectal bleeding as well as assessing and treating abnormal liver tests. He is a fully accredited endoscopist and undertakes the full range of diagnostic and therapeutic endoscopy including colonoscopy and ERCP

GP SESSIONS: HAY FEVER

Private GP at The Wellington Hospital, Dr Lisa Anderson discusses the common problem of hay fever

Spring is finally in the air and the blossom is beginning to appear on the trees meaning longer evenings and more time spent outside. However, for hay fever sufferers, this can signal the start of what can be months of suffering. Hay fever is also known as seasonal allergic rhinitis, an allergic reaction to airborne substances (such as pollen) that get into the upper airways including the throat, nose, sinuses and eyes.

Different pollens cause symptoms at different times of the year

- Spring: Tree pollen including hazel, elder, elm and birch
- Summer: Grass pollen
- Autumn: Weeds and hybrid pollen

The pollens cause antibody production and the release of histamine which causes the classic symptoms of itchy and watery eyes, a runny/blocked nose and sneezing. It is often difficult to identify the exact allergen.

Treatment of hay fever often depends on which symptoms are

the most troublesome but often a quadruple therapy approach is recommended including:

Avoidance of the allergen – keep windows shut and avoid high pollen areas

Anti-histamine medications – to relieve sneezing and a runny nose

Steroid nasal sprays – to reduce the inflammation in the nasal passages

Eye drops – usually anti-allergy drops provide rapid relief from itchy and watery eyes

If the allergic substance has been identified and the above methods are not effective, immunotherapy or a desensitising vaccine is now available in the private sector. Given by injection or tablet, this treatment takes place over several years and is quite expensive.





CHAMPAGNE
PERRIER-JOUËT

Please Enjoy Perrier-Jouët Responsibly

drinkaware.co.uk
for the facts

WISH *list*



THE ROOF IS ON FIRE

Marylebone is having a spotlight moment with the hotly anticipated recent opening of the Chiltern Firehouse, the first international property from renowned hotelier Andre Balazs – of Chateau Marmont, The Mercer and The Standard fame. Michelin-starred chef Nuno Mendes has taken the gastro reins, drawing upon his formative years under Wolfgang Puck and Jean-Georges Vongerichten with a menu that represents “the diversity and seasonality of modern American cooking”. Think crab-stuffed donuts, Peruvian ceviches, maple-glazed fish and chargrilled meat, as well as a New York-style weekend brunch. It’s getting hot in here...

1 Chiltern Street, W1U

FOODIE FAVOURITES

DREAM TEAM DINING

The eagerly awaited Holborn Dining Room & Delicatessen at the Rosewood London is now open, with a rather revered team at the helm. Former head chef Lee Bull of Le Caprice and Scott's is on board as executive chef, with Jon Spiteri of Quo Vadis and St John as head maître d'. Goran Mulabdic, previously at The Ivy and Brasserie Zédel, oversees the bar as part of a vision for a classic all-day dining space with a modern twist. Sandwiches, cured meats and a cold and hot counter offer hearty fare throughout the day, but by night, it's worth tucking in to great hunks of steak, lobster and delicately seasoned scallops. Portion sizes are generous and the atmosphere decidedly laid-back.

252 High Holborn, WC1V



DELI-CIOUS

Following on from the success of its culinary-centred Fridays, every Wednesday throughout spring and summer will see Camden Lock Deli take centre stage beside Regent's Canal. Produce will include an incredible selection of artisan cheeses, homemade organic drinks, specialist breads, free range meats, cakes and pastries; don't forget your Big Brown Bag.

10am – 4pm, every Wednesday
Chalk Farm Road, NW1



SUGAR JUNKIE

Hotels across London are cashing in on Easter with a host of events and specialties. The Gilbert Scott will be concocting an exclusive cocktail using the chocolate spirit Mozart, while 10 Manchester Street's weekend package will include extra bubbles and a hamper from renowned Marylebone-based chocolatiers Rococo. The Landmark hotel has two high teas to tempt those looking for a post-Lent treat; Easter afternoon tea and a decadent chocolate version, both set in the stunning Winter Garden. Expect white chocolate and cherry nests from the former, and Caraibe chocolate and peanut tart with salted caramel from the latter. Highly recommended done back to back for an afternoon of gluttony.



SOMETHING IN THE WATER

If you thought Hampstead was the last high street in London likely to welcome an Ian Beale-style chippy, think again. The restaurateurs behind star-studded Villa Bianca, as well as local favourite Coffee Cup, have just opened the simply named Fish Café, where fish and chips are the star of the show: cod, plaice, salmon or wild Atlantic halibut. Other postcode-appropriate dishes include New England clam chowder, scallops gratin, tuna carpaccio and salmon tartar, as well as a range of simply grilled or steamed fish options. Bet you can't get that on Albert Square.

71 Hampstead High Street, NW3

RESTAURANT REVIEW

Eclectic AVENUE

Kari Rosenberg steps aboard the pulled-pork bandwagon in an altogether grown-up setting. And not an exposed brick in sight...



Four months into 2014 and last year's American diner revolution shows no sign of letting up. However, if you like your pork pulled and your shrimp-cocktail sauce more horseradish-salsa than Marie-Rose – but can't fathom drinking out of jam jars (even ironically) – then the newly relaunched Avenue is the perfect hybrid: Soho-style food, but with the expensive furnishings and attentive service you'd expect to find in Mayfair.

On entering the restaurant you're drawn to the wine glass 'chandelier' in the centre of the room where the wines are laid to rest with the vast choice of decanters. Smart, teal-coloured banquette seating nods to the diner-style experience while the high ceilings and artwork really make an impact: far more Arts Club than Pitt Cue.

A quick glance at the menu and there are options for everyone. The other half and I decided to follow the posh street-food route, for this is the whole point of the place: no frills grub in a grown-up restaurant. We ordered the

corn crab and scallop ceviche to start: fried soft shell crab in a corny crust with avocado and chipotle mayonnaise was just as you'd expect – nothing more, nothing less – and a razor-thin carpaccio topped with jalapeños and cucumber was a spicy punch to the oesophagus against the soft silky flavour of the seafood. For mains we shared the 'Boston Butt' which turned out to be a great description of how the dish looked (and how my own derriere felt post-dessert); Blythburgh pork slow-cooked for two, served with pecan cabbage and BBQ sauce. Utterly unctuous (but a touch too flabby), the macaroni cheese side was disgustingly delicious, while the winter greens provided some much needed nutrients. A grill also offers steaks and burgers as well as two tempting fish dishes; stone bass with spicy kale and cod with a habanero tartare. We were recommended a Californian wine, but the choice is huge.

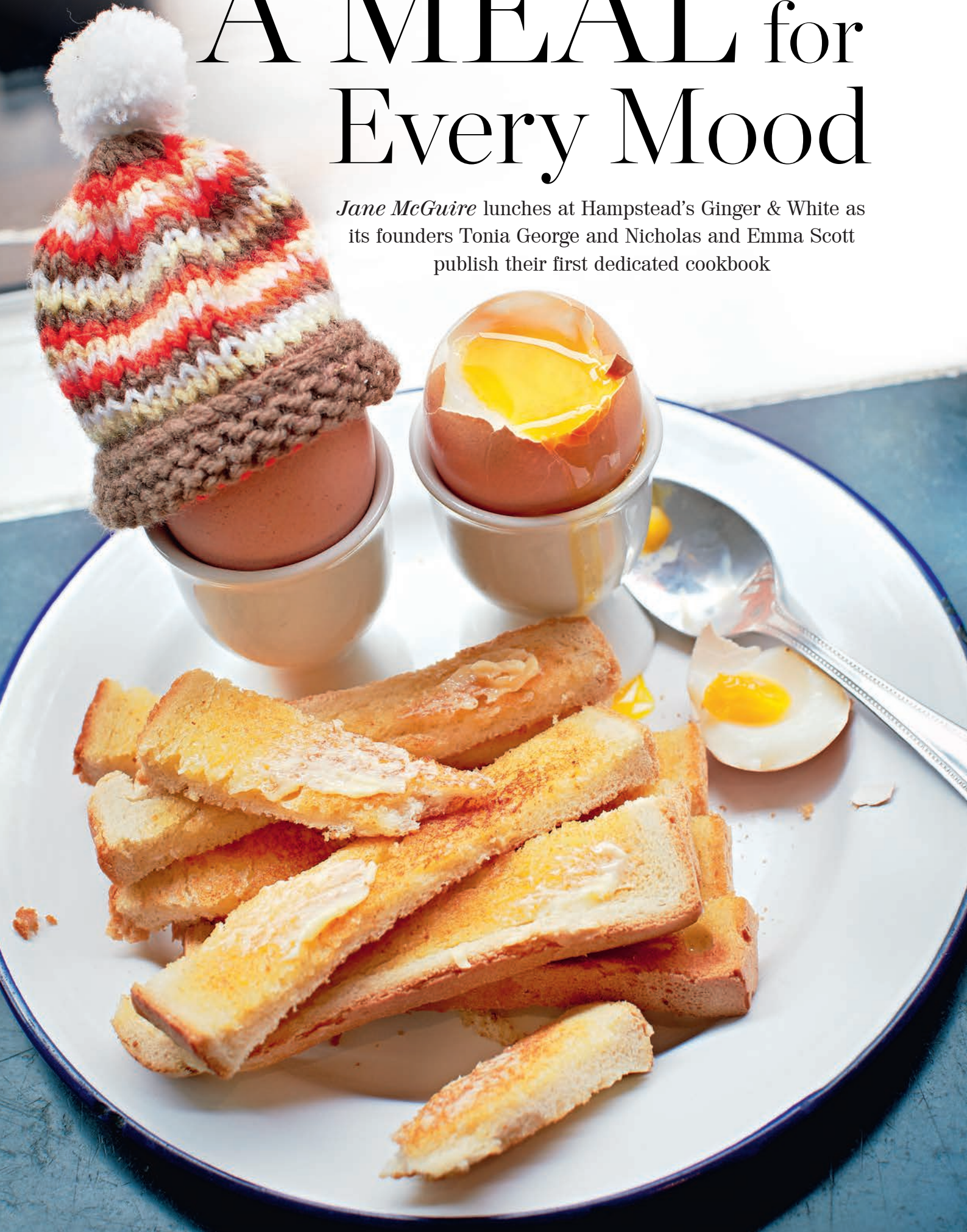
Desserts here are a seriously naughty affair and had the bloggers at the next table panting over their Canons: apple pie fritters, key lime sundae, New York cheesecake... you get the drift. We couldn't resist the 'donut holes'; smattered with cinnamon sugar and served with three dipping sauces.

If you want what the kids are eating (but wouldn't be caught dead queuing where they're queuing) then Avenue has a brioche bun with your name on it. There's nothing they can do about the bloggers, though. ■

7-9 St James's Street, SW1A
020 7321 2111, avenue-restaurant.co.uk

A MEAL for Every Mood

Jane McGuire lunches at Hampstead's Ginger & White as its founders Tonia George and Nicholas and Emma Scott publish their first dedicated cookbook



After a morning spent writing Easter-themed food pages, to say I was a little peckish as I approached the steamed up windows of Ginger & White would be an understatement. Ready to talk coffee and cookbooks with owners Tonia George and Emma Scott, I was instantly hit by the welcoming wafts of fresh jam and sounds of lunchtime chatter around the large communal dining table. Relaxing into the oversized leather sofa, with a steaming bowl of butternut squash and kale soup before me, this no longer felt like work.

“Be careful – once you sink into that thing you won’t get out,” warned Emma as I began at once discussing all things gluten-free. I am the first to moan that dining out without previously studying the menu fills me with dread; as a vegetarian coeliac, it’s hard to find a pickier customer. With bated breath I reeled off my list of allergies, waiting for the usual confusion and conferring with the chef to begin. “Oh great, I’m gluten-free too and so is Tonia’s daughter,” announced Emma, and with that I was fetched toast for my soup and offered a selection of brownies and cupcakes. Tonia’s adorable five-year-old has certainly left her mark, and thanks to her mother’s dedicated experimenting, ‘wheat-free’ here does not automatically equal a boring salad.

With two cafes (in Hampstead and Belsize Park), a new cookbook and Tonia’s growing baby bump, this is an exciting year for the duo. Meeting in Sydney through their mothers, Emma and Tonia’s decade of friendship (and the births and babies along the way) is woven into the heart of Ginger & White. Moving back to London from Australia with husband Nick (the missing member of this dream team), Emma’s insistence on a laid-back experience is entirely Antipodean. Leaving “the crazy London vortex” at the door is part of what makes them different: “It’s not just about coming and grabbing a coffee and reading your paper; you come here to hang out and have a chat or use this as an office and stay all day,” she continues. “We’re not fussed.”

“We didn’t come into this as business people,” Tonia explains, avoiding at all costs the corporate coffee shop formula from day one. “We tried to replicate our homes and share that with other people.” A self-confessed breakfast addict, Tonia is the author of several brunch-themed cookbooks and wanted to create a restaurant that served her favourite dishes all day long. Team this with Emma and Nick’s passion for an incredible cup of coffee and Ginger & White was born. Fiercely loyal to their customers, the new tome arose from conversations and feedback in the cafe, and more than anything, seems to be about sharing secrets.

Flying the flag for great British food and ingredients, it boasts a mix of fresh and wholesome dishes. Asking them to pick just one favourite amounted to cries of “don’t make me choose they are all my babies” from Tonia, before she finally settles on the baked beans on toast with feta and chorizo. After careful deliberation, Emma chooses the bacon sandwich (wheat-free bread, of course) with spicy ketchup, before quickly changing her mind and opting for the carrot cake: “The carrot cake is hands down the best thing in the world. It just is!”

Before I go, I talk to the pair about their own Easter traditions; for Tonia, homemade chocolate is the only



meal of the day that matters and she creates enough cupcakes and brownies to keep the whole brood happy. Emma, on the other hand tells me she’s “a hot cross bun girl through and through. I just love them!”

While we are on the subject, I get to the question I’ve been dying to ask all morning – who knits those adorable boiled egg cosy hats? The two look at each other and laugh, telling me Tonia’s mother-in-law lovingly made them at first, before they realised quite how many they were getting through. I’m happy to report that the job

has now been passed on to a “lovely lady called Beryl” who seems to fit the bill perfectly. ■



The Ginger & White Cookbook
by Tonia George,
Emma Scott
and Nicholas
Scott, published
by Mitchell
Beazley, £18.99,
octopusbooks.co.uk

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WISH *list*



HIGHER LEARNING

John Hitchcox and Philippe Starck set up their interior design company, yoo, in 1999 with an ambition to transform expansive neighbourhoods and communities through the concept of vertical living. "Tall buildings are more sustainable, require less real estate and have a lower overall impact on the environment than urban sprawl," Hitchcox writes in the foreword for *Vertical Living*, a new glossy coffee table book depicting international works of architectural art. From a curved library in Buenos Aires to a spa in Miami; a sky deck in Manila to a 'gold room' in New York, the likes of Kelly Hoppen, Steve Leung and Jade Jagger cover the design basics, alongside stunning photography of the world's most cutting-edge cities.

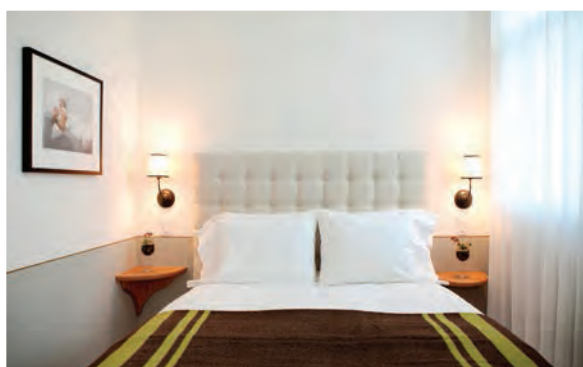
Vertical Living, by Dominic Bradbury and John Hitchcox, published by Thames & Hudson, £19.95



Icon Brickell, yoo inspired by Starck,
Miami © 2014 yoo Ltd

TRAVEL *IN STYLE*

HOT SPOT *in April*



NEW YORK, (NEW YORK...)

With shopping, shows and a Sotheby's auction not to be missed, you won't have time to sleep anyway...

why

Before the summer humidity sends everyone running to the nearest air-conditioned Bloomingdales, April is an ideal month for a US city-break. Sotheby's New York will be auctioning one of the world's most expensive books from the Indiana Historical Society on the first of the month, while James Franco, Chris O'Dowd and Leighton Meester will all be making their Broadway debuts on the 16th in a new adaption of John Steinbeck's classic novel *Of Mice and Men*.

stay

Nestled in the bustling heart of historic SoHo is The Broome, an enchanting new boutique hotel from the restaurateurs behind Jean Claude and L'Orange Bleue, two of Manhattan's most successful brasseries. Away from the hustle and bustle of the city's usual haunts sits this European-inspired haven, with 14 chic bedrooms built around a quaint outdoor courtyard. Spread over five floors in a beautiful Federal Revival style building that dates from 1825, the cool and quirky website gives a taste of what to expect upon arrival.

thebroomenyc.com

GET PERSONAL WITH GUERLAIN

Start anew this spring with the Waldorf Astoria Amsterdam and its exclusive partnership with luxury French beauty brand Guerlain. Promising its guests personalised and bespoke treatments to suit their individual needs, you can experience Guerlain's unrivalled expertise and heritage in this sophisticated haven of calm. Burrowed in the heart of Amsterdam, guests are invited to unwind in the spa's relaxation areas which overlook the property's extensive private gardens. With an impressive menu of lavish treatments, prepare to be transformed.

waldorfastoria.com



DEEP IN LOVE

For the couple with £175,000 to spare, luxury property rental specialists Oliver's Travels offers the chance to spend the night in your own private submarine. With just one guest bedroom and a glass-fronted living space, expect to be wined, dined and treated to a once in a lifetime evening. The interior décor is chosen by each couple, to ensure it is styled to their personal taste and specific experiences are arranged before departure; additional options include a midnight stroll on a deserted beach or sunset dinner on a private island. You won't want to come up for air.

oliverstravels.com



GREAT SCOT

The much-anticipated Cromlix and Chez Roux in Perthshire will open this month, the first hotel venture from tennis champion Andy Murray. After an extensive refurbishment, the Victorian mansion plays host to 15 rooms and suites, individually designed (and named) after great Scots. With 34 acres of space on the estate, outdoorsy types can enjoy clay pigeon shooting, archery, fishing, quad biking and 4x4 off-road driving before lapping up some classical French cooking, courtesy of Monsieur Albert Roux. Of course, there's also a brand new tennis court. One love.

cromlix.com



IT'S A MAN'S WORLD

SHORT HAUL:
The drive of your life

Known as the best road in Europe, the Stelvio Pass is a must-drive for the fast-car fanatic. Live the Lewis Hamilton lifestyle as your dream supercar (with programmed sat nav) is delivered to your door, for four days of racing along Switzerland and Italy's most famous roads. After the thrill of hairpin bends, drivers will spend the evenings relaxing in the Swiss Alps' most luxurious hotels.

blacktomato.com



LONG HAUL:
Desert biking in Abu Dhabi

The award-winning, five-star Qasr Al Sarab Desert resort is the first in the Middle East to introduce fast biking. This action-film style adventure allows guests to steer around the enormous, awe-inspiring sand peaks surrounding the resort – and add this to the action-packed list of day-trip options that the hotel already offers, including desert hikes to the Liwa Oasis, drives around the Empty Quarter and camel trekking, and your man won't know what's hit him.

qasralsarab.anantara.com



A Walk on the *WILD SIDE*

Karen Bowerman throws caution to the wind
on a luxury walking safari in Zambia



It was an unmistakable signature, sunk deep in the damp sand. Yet we were all peering over it, as if to make sure: a palm-sized pad with four ovals above it; the print of a big cat.

"And there they are," our guide, Malemia, said quietly, as we glanced across the low, slow-flowing Luangwa River, strewn with colossal, uprooted trees that its flood waters had claimed during rainy season. The trunks lay, stripped and bare, like a cluster of naked corpses discarded by unscrupulous grave robbers.

On the other side of the water, a lion and two lionesses padded across a sandbank: three tawny shadows against a luminescent, grey sky.

"Want to get closer?" Malemia asked.

It was dusk in South Luangwa National Park, Zambia. In the distance, the torches on the decking of our remote tented dwelling glinted occasionally through the trees. I was staying at Zebra Plains, a luxurious, seasonal camp, its location determined by annual flood waters and the resulting lie of the land. Four exotic tents presently stood at the edge of mupane woods, where the Chibembe River curved in a picturesque loop to reveal a view of the rising sun. Mine had a four-poster bed, a flushing toilet and a private terrace. It came with a personal butler who mixed water for my shower (adjusting it to whatever temperature I chose), replenished my camp thermos with tea or coffee, and appeared with a glass of wine or a G&T whenever he thought I might fancy one. His judgement was faultless and timing immaculate.

Zebra Plains offers the ultimate in safari service and the opportunity to explore on foot. After just one outing, I'd fallen in love with this simple alternative to game drives. Each morning we strolled out of camp with a backpack, had tea in the bush (our guides rubbed two sticks together, effortlessly) then wandered back.

There were no dirt roads, no jeeps and no one else. Just six of us and a couple of guides. We embraced the wilderness, encountered its wildlife by chance, and immersed ourselves in an existence where nature took its course and man's role was only to observe. Exploring on foot had another benefit too: the pace gave us time – to stand beneath the tangled nest of sparrow weaver birds and marvel, as Malemia puts it, at the "hundreds of doors leading to tiny apartments inside," to hear the gentle gallop of impala as they flee in a trail of dust, to hold the fibrous fruit of the sausage tree and share surprise at how heavy it is, and to crouch over an industrious ant lion, as it burrows backwards into the baked soil. But the greatest advantage for us was that without a vehicle we could go almost anywhere we pleased, which was why Malemia was now suggesting we rolled up our trousers and waded through the river.

This was a river I'd crossed before, in a canoe, the day I'd arrived. My conversation with Killian, the guide who'd been paddling, had gone something like this:

"So, are there crocs in this river?"

"Why, of course!" (said enthusiastically, as if I'd just asked him if the camp served afternoon tea).

"And what do we do if we see one?" ▶





● “You sit tight. And I paddle fast. Just stay in the canoe and you’ll be fine.”

As the sun set on our evening walk, the others were on the riverbank, pulling off their hiking boots with gusto. Matthews, our armed scout, stood at the water’s edge, chewing on a small stick and occasionally flicking it round his mouth with his tongue. I noticed he’d cocked his rifle and his eyes were darting in every direction.

I told myself Malemia was a knowledgeable, sensible and respected guide, one of the best in the business. He wouldn’t be walking me into the path of a crocodile: he valued his job too much. And he wasn’t that stupid. The bottom of the river was gooey and slippery. I thought it was silt but was informed, via Chinese whispers, that it was hippo faeces.

We crossed safely, of course, and no one else seemed to think anything of it. Malemia pulled on his boots and set to work, scouring the bank like a forensic scientist. Within seconds he showed us a scuff in the sand.

“It’s a drag mark from that lion’s tail,” he said. How he spotted it, goodness knows, but for me, it was a welcome sign – not that we were following the trail of the lion, but that Malemia was acutely observant, which bade well if we needed to return to the river.

The lions weren’t far away. We made a large loop, creeping through thicket and scrubland so as not to disturb them. They were lounging close to each other, their lean, muscular bodies spread across the sand. The male opened his enormous mouth, yawned, then rose quickly to his feet; he was aware of us. There was a frisson of excitement. We backed off into a veil of parched trees. Moments later the animals slunk away: the curved tip of three amber tails was the last I saw of them.

We’d trekked far that day in search of lions and it



“The male lion opened his enormous mouth, yawned, then rose quickly to his feet; he was aware of us”





was a long way back to camp. We fell silently into single file, clambering over fallen trees and cutting through woodland, our footsteps lit by a waning moon. Nesting birds, screeching wildly, shot out of tree tops, swarming across the sky like feathered vampire bats, wrapped in the mantle of the night.

Back at camp, a table decorated with quail feathers and paraffin lamps was laid for dinner. A stew was steaming in an earthenware pot, cooked on coals in the ground. I scooped it up with *nshima*, a kind of cornmeal, and ate with my hands. One of the guests asked him if it was easy to survive in the bush. He looked up, his eyes glinting in the lamplight.

"Nature has a voice," he said. "All you need to do is listen, then learn what it's trying to say." He explained how plovers make a squawking noise to ward off approaching hyena and mimicked the alarm calls of the elephants. As we rounded off supper with coffee, there was a rumble from across the river: a deep, guttural roar.

"Lions?" I whispered.

"They're water lions," Malemia announced.

("What? Like water buffalo?") He burst into

laughter. I followed his gaze and spotted two tiny lights on the riverbank, then two figures caught in the headlamps of a jeep.

"It's the rumble of plastic containers," he said.

"The boys are back from the bore hole."

He drained his coffee, looked up and smiled.

"Tomorrow, I think we'll have more lessons. Nature has a lot to teach us yet." ■

NEED TO KNOW

Sanctuary Retreats from £400 per person per night, including all meals, drinks, park fees, laundry, emergency evacuation and two guided walking safaris each day. The camp offers luxurious tented accommodation with four-poster beds and flushing toilets. It takes a maximum of six guests. Each tent has its own butler for hot water and G&Ts.

sanctuaryretreats.com/zambia-camps-zebra-plains

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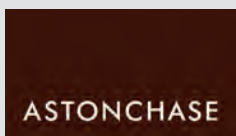
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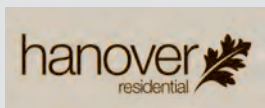


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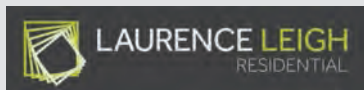
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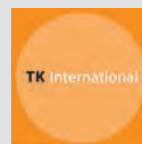


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Prince Albert Road, St John's Wood NW8

Exceptional lateral apartment opposite Regent's Park

Set within one of St John's Wood's finest mansion blocks, the apartment has been meticulously refurbished by the current owners to include a wealth of modern amenities. Master bedroom with en suite bathroom and dressing room, 3 further bedrooms (one with en suite shower room), study/bedroom 5, family bathroom, kitchen/breakfast room, sitting room, dining room, drawing room, guest WC, 24hr porter. EPC rating E. Approximately 17 Sq m (3,415 sq ft)

Leasehold: approximately 113 years 7 months

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Hamilton Terrace, St John's Wood NW8

Posing large house with large garden

Offering excellent entertaining space and an unusually large 112ft rear garden with a double width garage. 5 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, kitchen/breakfast room, 6th bedroom/office, dining room, reception room, study, guest WC, gymnasium, dining conservatory, staff bedroom, garden, private parking. EPC rating D. Approximately 410 sq m (4,414 sq ft)

Freehold

Guide price: £11,750,000

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**WADHAM GARDENS
HAMPSTEAD NW3**

FREEHOLD
GUIDE PRICE £9,500,000

JOINT SOLE AGENT

Situated on one of the most sought after roads in Primrose Hill, this double fronted, detached house (395 sq m/ 4,252 sq ft) is on the market for the first time in over 50 years. Currently arranged over three floors only, boasting spacious entertaining areas, beautiful private rear garden and off street parking for two cars. The house provides the incoming purchaser the opportunity to significantly remodel the internal layout, and reconfigure the space to suit their own requirements.

ACCOMMODATION AND AMENITIES

Principal bedroom with en-suite bathroom, 4 further bedrooms, family bathroom, upstairs kitchenette, reception room, sitting room, dining room, kitchen/breakfast room. Store room, wine cellar, mezzanine gallery, kitchenette, rear garden, off street parking for 2 cars. EPC=F.



**PARK VIEW
ST JOHN'S WOOD NW8**

**FREEHOLD
£5,950,000**

SOLE AGENT

A newly constructed town house (412 sq m/4,436 sq ft) finished to an exceptionally high standard and benefiting from a secure integral garage, private passenger lift and roof terrace. Featuring a wealth of modern amenities including a luxury kitchen and bathrooms, private cinema room and gymnasium, the house provides an incoming purchaser with a superb opportunity to acquire a fantastic turnkey home.

ACCOMMODATION AND AMENITIES

Reception hall, 2 reception rooms, cinema room, gymnasium, utility room, library, kitchen, principal bedroom with dressing area & en-suite bathroom, bedroom 2 with dressing area & en-suite bathroom, bedroom 3 with en-suite shower room, studio apartment. Lift, garage, balcony, roof terrace. EPC=B.

GREENAWAY GARDENS

HAMPSTEAD NW3



A magnificent detached residence (751.3sq m/8,087sq ft) located on one of Hampstead's most sought-after streets, perfectly conceptualised for modern living. The house features exceptional entertaining space on the ground floor with multiple French doors leading directly onto the rear terrace and beyond to the outstanding 135ft west facing landscaped garden designed by Chelsea Gold Medal winning designer Bunny Guinness.



JOINT SOLE AGENTS

ACCOMMODATION & AMENITIES

Bespoke Smallbone Kitchen/Breakfast Room, Dining Room, Orangery, Family/Media Room, Principal Bedroom with His & Her En-Suite Dressing Rooms, 4 Further Bedroom Suites, Games Room/Gymnasium, Playroom, Staff Suite with En-Suite Bathroom and Separate Kitchen/Utility Room, Wine Cellar, Provision of Cat 5e Infrastructure and Outlets to all Rooms, Systemline Audio Control System with Controls in all Reception Rooms, Principal Bathroom and Outside Rear Terrace, 135ft Landscaped Rear Garden with Pond, Double Garage, Carriage Drive. EPC/D.

FREEHOLD GUIDE PRICE £17,950,000

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North Hill House

ST JOHN'S WOOD ROAD, LONDON NW8

Discreetly situated behind a striking contemporary façade lies a brand new low built house set in a tranquil landscaped garden.

The property, which has been imaginatively designed to provide light, spacious and versatile accommodation over three floors, has been finished to an exceptional standard and has been equipped with all modern amenities including air conditioning, underfloor heating and smart technology, creating a home for the discerning buyer of refined luxury, comfort and style.

Accommodation

Principal Bedroom with En-Suite Bathroom, 3 Further Bedrooms, 2 Further Bathrooms (1 En-Suite), Reception Room, Open Plan Kitchen/Dining/Family Room, Utility Room, Guest Cloakroom.

Amenities

Lutron Lighting Controls, Underfloor Heating Throughout, Air Conditioning, Landscaped Garden, Patio, Lower Terrace.





FREEHOLD

JOINT SOLE AGENTS

PRICE ON APPLICATION

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£1,350,000

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Front and rear gardens

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Mansfield Conservation Area NW3

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Park Lodge, St John's Wood, NW8

A beautifully presented three/four bedroom apartment (1,468 sq ft / 136 sq m) situated on the first floor of this attractive period mansion style block. This bright apartment is offered in excellent decorative condition throughout and features an impressive 19'7 living room with an attractive bay window, cornicing, fireplace and parquet flooring to the hall and dining room. Additional features include passenger lift, limited off street parking, portage and a share of freehold. Park Lodge is conveniently located for the local shopping and transport amenities of both St Johns Wood and Swiss Cottage.

Sole Agent
£2,295,000 Share of Freehold



Ashworth Road, Maida Vale, W9

A charming and beautifully modernised five bedroom family house situated in this prime residential road in Maida Vale. This property boasts 2,705 sq ft of light and airy living space, comprising of two reception rooms, a wonderful L-shaped conservatory incorporating a dining and sitting area, principal bedroom with en-suite, three further bedrooms, study/bedroom five, two family bathrooms and a guest cloakroom. Further benefits include off street parking for two cars and a south facing rear garden of 71 ft. Ideally located close to Maida Vale Underground station (Bakerloo Line), the fashionable cafes restaurants of Lauderdale Parade and Paddington Recreation Ground with its numerous sports facilities.

Joint Sole Agent
£4,250,000 Freehold



St Johns Wood Office
102 St John's Wood Terrace, London NW8 6PL

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There's no place like HOME

Kari Rosenberg sits down with TK International directors Jeremy Karpel, Daniel Zimmerman and Daniel Epstein at fifty Pilgrims Lane to chat community ties, flat-to-house re-instatements, and why Hampstead has always been a safe investment



It's a beautiful spring day and the sun is shining through the south-facing floor-to-ceiling windows at fifty Pilgrims Lane, as TK International directors Jeremy Karpel, Daniel Zimmerman and Daniel Epstein show the Vantage team around. Welcoming us in with a familiar smile, the current owner has laid out a full spread; she clearly knows the guys well, and trusts that her multi-million pound property is in safe and experienced hands.

Then again, her confidence isn't

surprising given that the three directors alone have just shy of 85 years local experience between them; having set up TK International in 1998, they're fully immersed in the local community, and there's no denying that they're here for the long-haul.

Who is the target buyer for this kind of house?

DE: Potentially someone in the media or creative industry I'd say; its quirky, juxtaposed period and contemporary architecture, designed by the award

winning Eldridge Smerin practice, brings a breath of fresh air to the central Hampstead road that has the Heath and the high street at either end.

DZ: To be honest, it could be anyone: a QC, a lawyer, a head of industry; probably someone with a family. There are between eight and ten schools in walking distance from here; people are tired of sitting in traffic to take their kids to school, so that is really important. It could even attract someone who hadn't previously considered moving to the area.

JK: Whoever they are, it's likely to be a domestic buyer: someone who can spot the extraordinary and will embrace the eclectic mix of architecture on the road. There is a myth that the international Russian market is buying up all the property in Hampstead, but it isn't true. Those investors are setting their sights on places like Kenwood and The Bishop's Avenue, but not so much around the village. We have seen an influx in the continental French market, however; they really get contemporary modern architecture, and we have recently sold to three French couples in this road alone. But just like comparing a pre-Raphaelite painting to an important modern piece of abstract art, there will be some who don't understand the unique value of a house like this. Those who do will know that they're investing in a gem.

Are you seeing a trend for buyers to turn flats into houses?

DE: Under Camden's planning laws, buyers are only allowed to decrease converted buildings by one unit, so this doesn't happen as much as you'd think.

JK: People perceive Camden Council to be quite difficult when it comes to planning permission, but that's actually not true. They recognise architectural integrity and are keen to hand out design and RIBA awards to properties that really stand out; something that is quite common in the Hampstead area.

How does the demand for flats and houses differ?

DE: The two markets are very different. There is a lot of demand for low- to mid-priced flats, but there is demand across the board to be honest. It's all about timing.

DZ: At TK International, we have a dedicated department for both houses and flats to ensure a bespoke, hands on tailored service for every property.

JK: In fact, we have such good repeat business, that someone who has come in to sell a flat say five or six years ago, will then come back to sell their house. For us, it's all about repeat clients and personal referrals. That's the best kind of business; from parents to grandparents, children to friends. And we get it all the time.

How has demand in the area changed over the last 30 years?

DZ: It hasn't! Demand now is as high as it was three decades ago when we started out.

DE: The thing that has changed the most is the high street. Fortunately, the local community got rid of McDonalds. The area used to be a lot more bohemian...

JK: Now it's a melting pot of all sorts of

people. From the hippy-chic to die-hard conservatives, everyone lives happily together.

What impact do you think the next election could have on the area?

DZ: Mansion tax is the buzzword isn't it? There's no doubt that the London market is going to feel aggrieved.

DE: You have so many people whose properties have been in their families for generations and

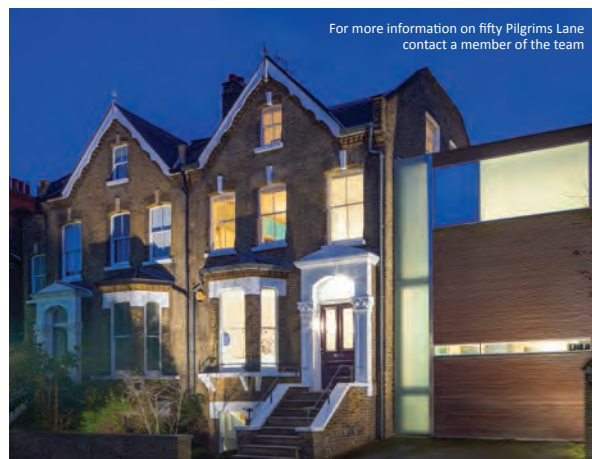
suddenly they are going to have to pay up. They may be bricks and mortar rich but they may not have the liquid assets to do this. Think of a working class family living in Kentish Town, for example, whose house has been passed down over four or five generations. It's unfair that they should have to either find the cash or sell their home.

JK: We've been a part of the community for so long that we really understand people's grievances.

What makes TK International such a unique agent?

DZ: We are hands on directors, working every day on the shop floor because we have been around for so long; we are involved with Hampstead Arts Festival, The Heath and Hampstead Society, Keats Library, school sponsorship and many other projects. Being so involved outweighs the appeal often associated with an international corporation. We enjoy being part of the theatre that comes part and parcel with selling a property.

DE: Everyone is international these days, all you need is the internet... the fact is, we know how to deal with people correctly because we do it every day. As the principals of TK, we are personally taking on clients' properties, showing them to prospective buyers and handling the day-to-day



marketing. In many cases we deal with both our clients' sale and purchase. Many of our clients like to deal with the proprietor, so that's what we offer. It's our USP.

JK: There's no school like the old school. It doesn't matter if you are buying or selling a half a million pound property or a fifteen million pound property, you will get treated equally across the board.

What would be your one piece of advice to someone looking to buy?

DZ: First and foremost, make sure your finances are in place. Only begin the search once you are actually ready! The market is so competitive that having this in place could give you the edge.

DE: Don't set your heart on the impossible. People can be too regimented on what they want, and sometimes you will need to compromise...

JK: However, Hampstead is full of blue-chip stock that will go up in value year on year. It is always worth pushing yourself for something that is unique and exclusive; be prepared to go 'ouch', because the stock is finite. ■

TK International
16-20 Heath Street, NW3
020 7794 8700
t-k.co.uk

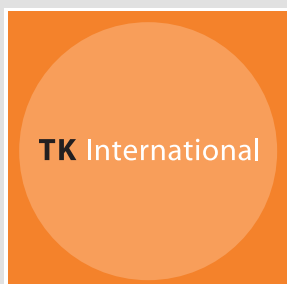


HAMPSTEAD VILLAGE NW3

A sensational eight bedroom family residence of some 7,401 sq ft (688 sq m) forming part of this impressive terrace and quietly located in a desirable and discreet tree lined road of Hampstead Village within 100 yards of Hampstead Heath.

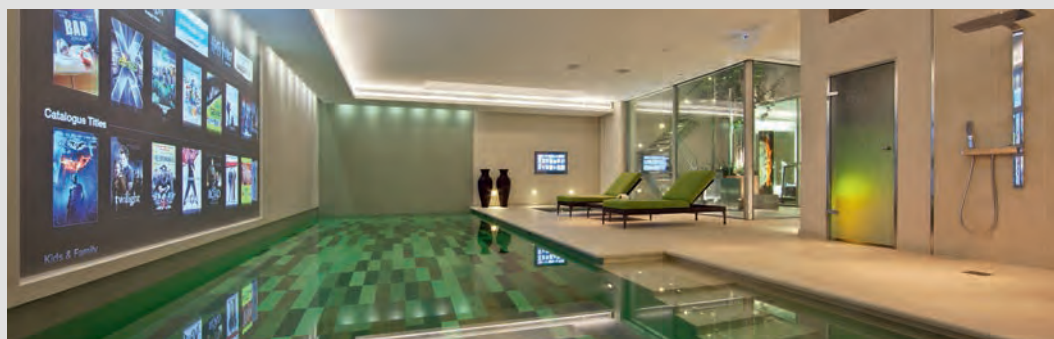


Freehold | Sole Agent | £11,995,000 | EPC Rating C



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HAMPSTEAD WAY NW11

An attractive seven/eight bedroom double fronted detached family residence of some 4,544 sq ft, superbly located directly opposite the Hampstead Heath Extension. The house offers a wide and deep 60' frontage, garage, roof terrace and a 85' West facing rear garden leading to a large communal garden.



Freehold | Sole Agent | Price on Application | EPC Rating D



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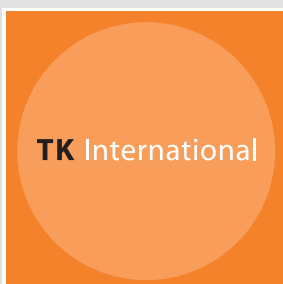
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PARLIAMENT HILL NW3

Situated on the South East side of this ever popular road within this delightful enclave close to the open spaces of Parliament Hill and the ponds of South Hill Park, a rarely available semi-detached Victorian six bedroom family house of some 5,200 sq ft arranged over five floors and offered for sale in very good decorative condition throughout.



Freehold | Sole Agent | Price on Application | EPC Rating E



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HAMPSTEAD NW3

A bright and spacious (4,123 sq ft) five double bedroom semi detached house arranged over three floors with the benefit of a delightful South West facing garden and off street parking for 3-4 cars.



Freehold | Sole Agent | £4,695,000 | EPC Rating E



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Abercorn Place, St Johns Wood, **NW8**

A very well maintained period house, situated on this popular street on the west side of St Johns Wood. The house offers excellent family accommodation comprising approx 2,227 sq ft/207 sq m, over four floors. The house also benefits from off street parking and a delightful rear garden. Abercorn Place is located within half a mile of both St Johns Wood underground station and the American School London. Both Violet Hill Park and the local shops and cafe's on Nugent Terrace are within 100m of the house.

Freehold

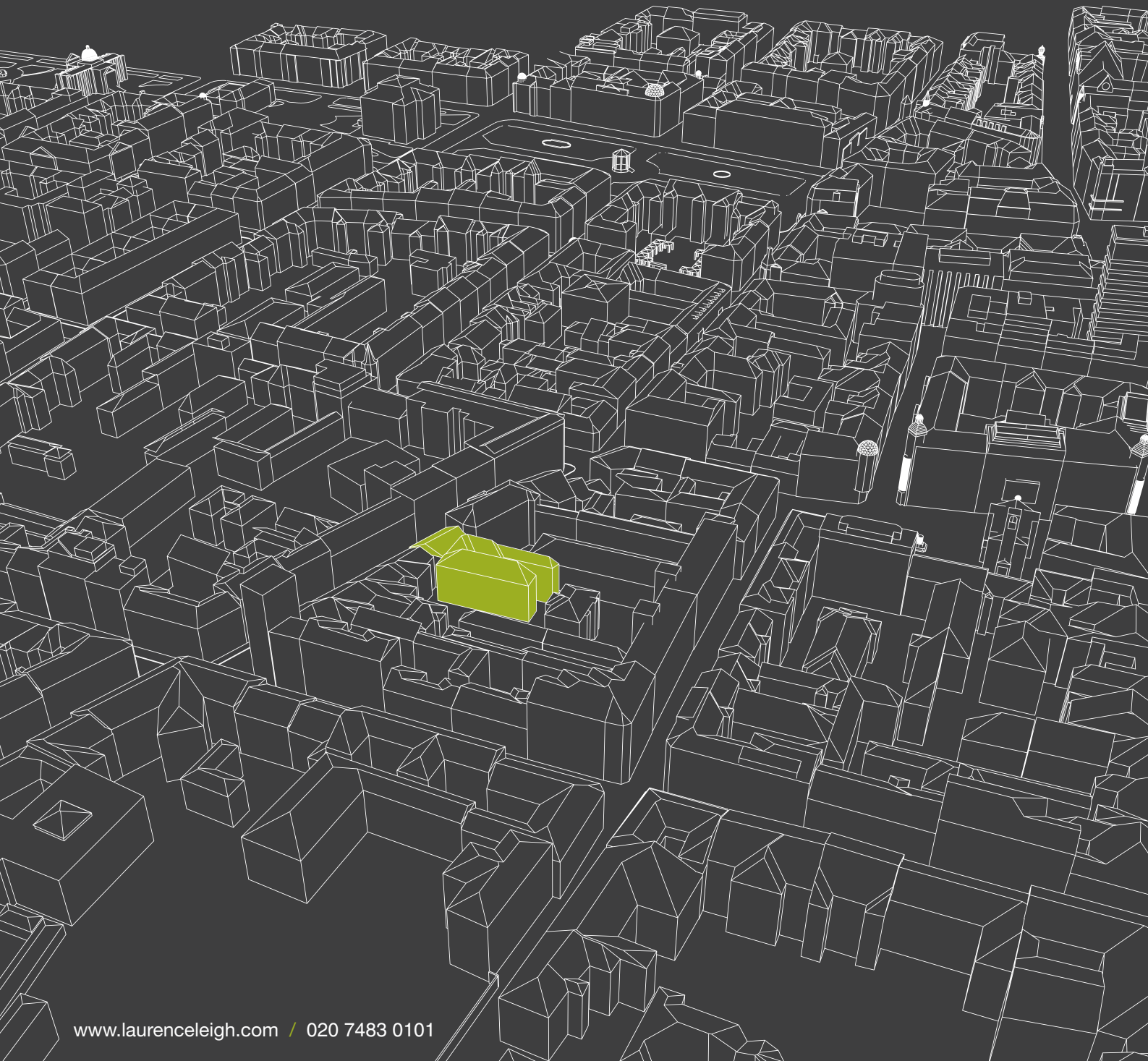
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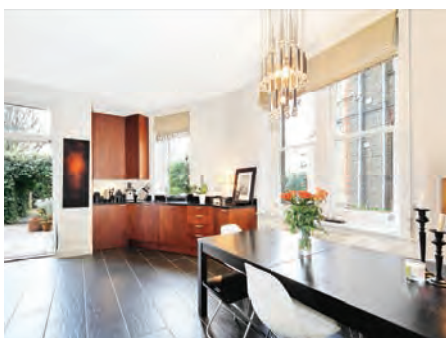
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					South Kensington



Elgin Mansions W9 £1,150,000

This spacious two-bedroom mansion flat has been renovated to an exacting standard throughout to include a large reception room with a feature fireplace, high ceilings and wooden flooring, a large kitchen/breakfast room leading directly out to lovely communal gardens, a master bedroom with built-in storage, a further double bedroom, a family bathroom and second shower room. Located a short walk from Maida Vale underground station (Bakerloo Line) and Paddington Recreation Ground. EPC=E. **Sole Agents**

LITTLE VENICE: 020 7993 3050 sales.lve@marshandparsons.co.uk

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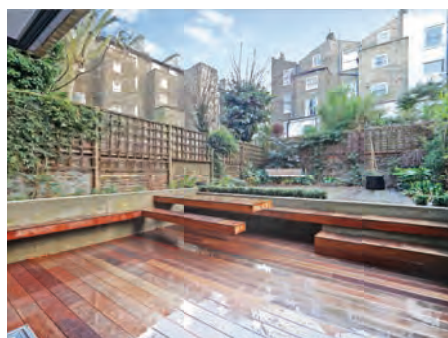
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Sevington Street W9 £850,000

This stunning, recently renovated and extended garden flat is located on a quiet residential street well located for the local amenities and transport links. The well designed accommodation comprises a large open plan kitchen/reception room with a glass wall of concertina doors opening onto a lovely south facing garden, two double bedrooms (master with en suite) and a family bathroom. EPC=C. **Sole Agent.**

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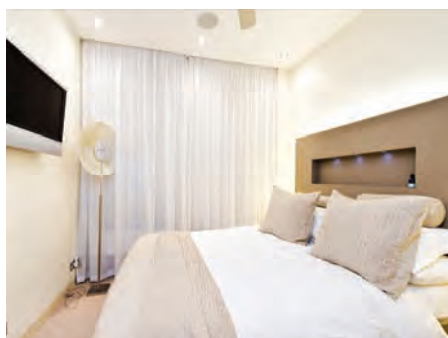
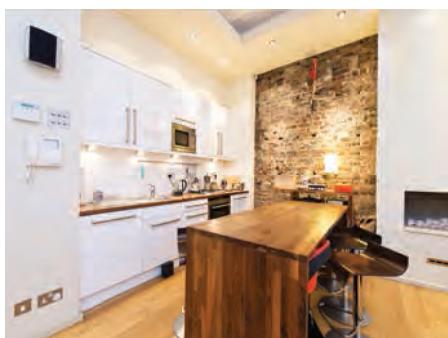
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Berners Street W1 £725 per week

Located in the fashionable Fitzrovia this stunning apartment offers high ceilings, wooden floors and exposed brickwork. The accommodation includes a large open plan kitchen/reception room with space for dining, two double bedrooms and a modern bathroom. Fitzrovia is well located for several London underground services including Tottenham Court Road, Holborn, Oxford Circus, Warren Street and Russell Square. EPC=C.

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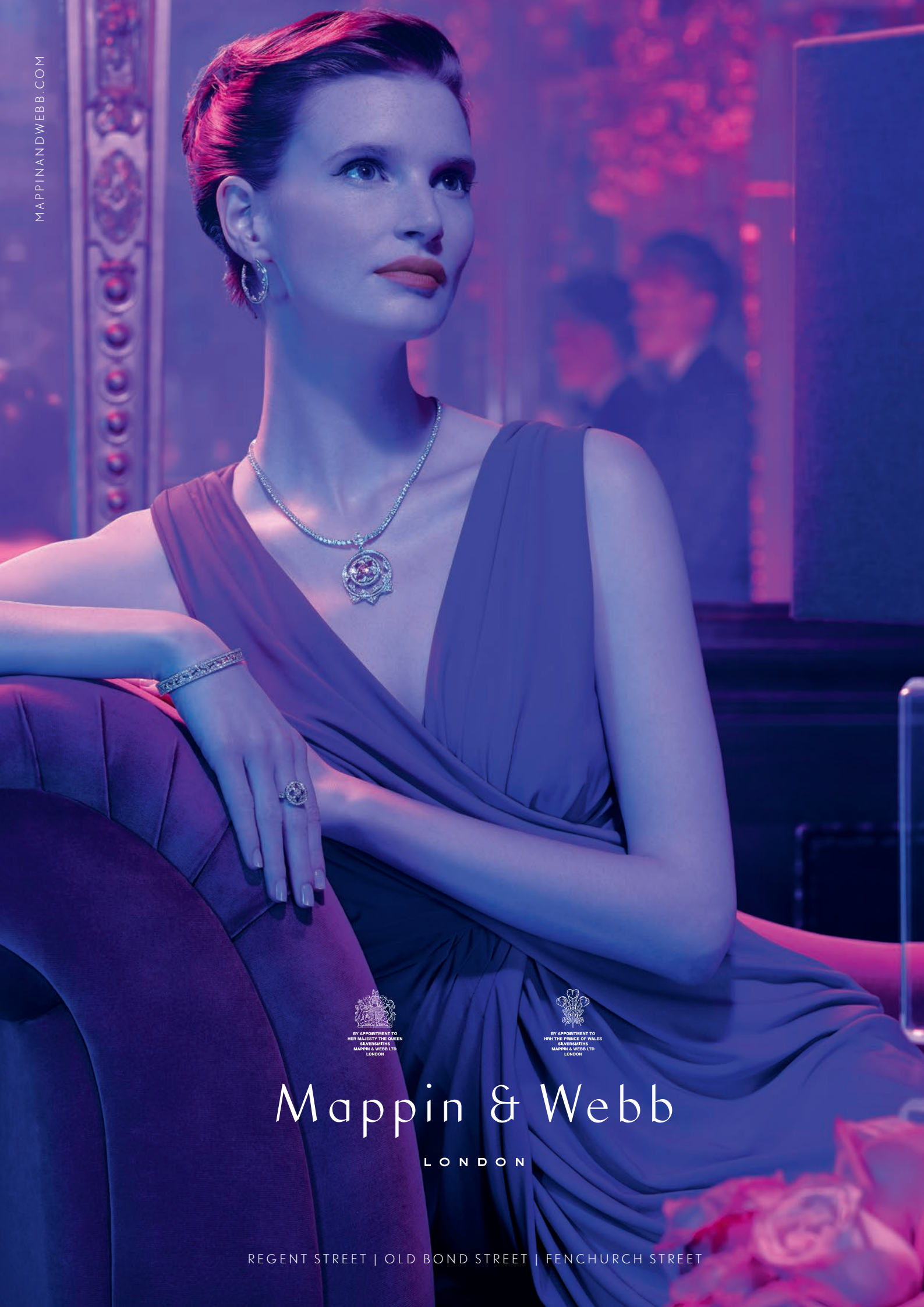
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