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editor Fraser Nelson

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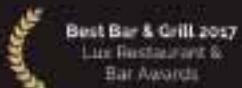
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Autumn

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Photographer: Amit and Naroop

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Work off the excess of the summer holidays by signing up to two new gyms in Victoria dedicated to personal training with a difference.

City Athletic is run by Ben Claypole and Shaun Stafford, who set up the business after growing tired of overcrowded and poorly maintained gyms. Their second London outpost at 20 Palace Street is all about state-of-the-art equipment with space and exclusivity.

Meanwhile, 360Athletic – founded by Ben West and Jordane Zammit Tabona – is all about small-group personal training, with physiotherapy and nutrition advice also available at its 170 Vauxhall Bridge Road headquarters.



An emergency notification system has been launched by the Victoria BID, safeguarding visitors and businesses in the event of a major incident.

Powered by YUDU Sentinel, it's being used to keep visitors, commuters and workers informed should an incident take place.

Business members can now receive critical information from trusted sources and decide how

- to better protect their assets and recover. It's a combination of SMS alert notification, SMS to voice, email and two-way in-app messaging.

- It provides access to relevant counter-terrorism advice, disaster recovery and business continuity documentation.

- For more information, email safeandsecure@victoriabid.co.uk*

Try your hand at pottery on Eccleston Place, catch Amélie the Musical at The Other Palace and enjoy a tipple at the recently launched Pavlova's Bar in Victoria this autumn

The dog days are over for pooches in Victoria with a stylish new fashion brand set to provide paws for thought among shoppers and their four-legged friends.

Over Glam, which recently opened in Eccleston Yards, was founded by cousins and dog lovers Ran Xie and Jerry Huang last year. The company is a luxury brand that aims to "change the way we think about the pet lifestyle market" and focuses on comfort and practicality.



IF IT AIN'T BROKE LET'S FIX IT ANYWAY

GOVERNMENT TO TINKER WITH TENANCY LAW

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If the latest proposals from the Government on residential tenancies are enacted, all residential property investors where the tenancy rent does not exceed £100,000pa (a figure which, by the way, can be raised by the government at any time with minimal parliamentary scrutiny) will be affected. There are real fears that for all their good intentions, the proposed changes will drive some investors out of the market and reduce the availability of rental units to individual tenants (corporate tenants are not affected).

Until 1989, tenancies were primarily governed by the Rent Act 1977, which gave tenants a very high level of security of tenure and controlled their rents to what were called 'fair rents', a misnomer, some would say, as they were only fair to tenants, being about 30% below market rates. The Housing Act 1988 brought in assured and assured shorthold tenancies, which allowed market rent and in the case of shortholds, an automatic right to possession on two months' notice at the end of the tenancy term. From 1996, all new tenancies were assured shortholds unless specifically agreed to be assured tenancies. That essentially is the present position.

The new proposals, pejoratively referred to as 'the end of no-fault eviction', abolish assured shortholds so that all tenancies are assured, with security of tenure, so that in the absence of fault the prime ground for possession will only be where the landlord wants to live in the flat (a ground not available to corporate landlords) or sell it, unless there is a fixed term or an agreed break clause in the tenancy agreement. The consultation on the proposals closes in October, and the Government is likely to receive a number of responses from landlords fearing real damage to the private rented sector if the proposals are enacted – the law of unintended consequences, perhaps.

By John Stephenson E johnstephenson@bdbpitmans.com
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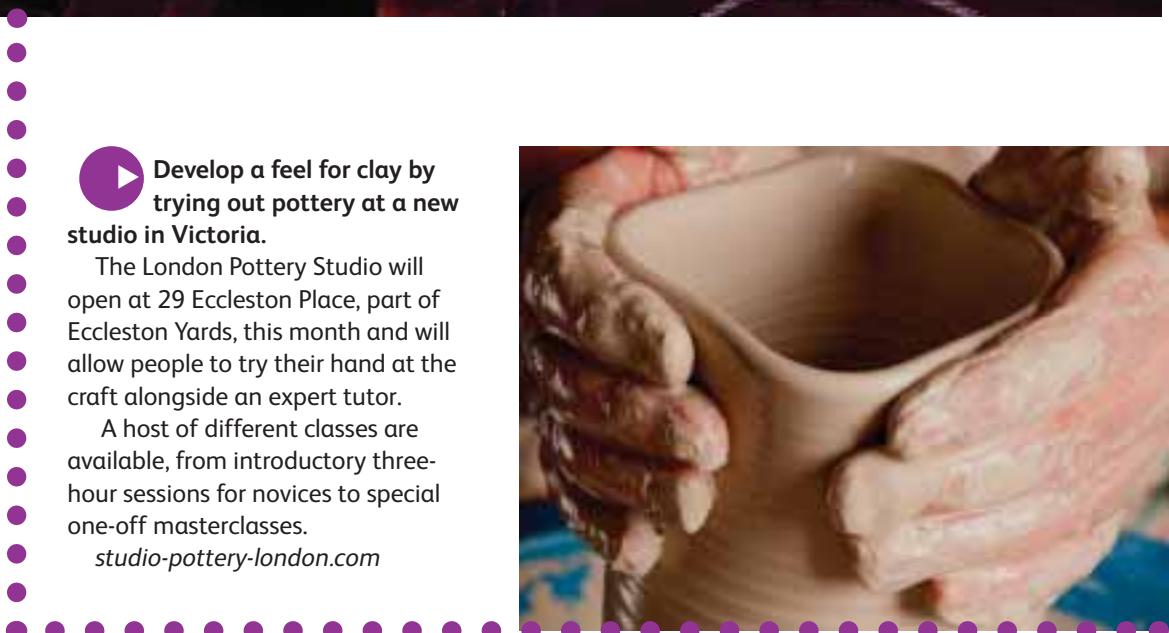


 Following a sell-out run across the UK, *Amélie the Musical* will arrive at Victoria's The Other Palace theatre this winter.

The Oscar-nominated film, a comedy about a young woman

who secretly improvises small but extraordinary acts of kindness before her own shot at love, will run from November 29 to February 1.

Tickets cost from £19.50 to £65. Visit lwtheatres.co.uk/the-other-palace



 Develop a feel for clay by trying out pottery at a new studio in Victoria.

The London Pottery Studio will open at 29 Eccleston Place, part of Eccleston Yards, this month and will allow people to try their hand at the craft alongside an expert tutor.

A host of different classes are available, from introductory three-hour sessions for novices to special one-off masterclasses.

studio-pottery-london.com



Indulge in Basque shakshuka and Florentine Breton crepes with a new brunch at Dominique Ansel Bakery on Elizabeth Street.



Chef Jason Atherton has launched Pavlova's Bar at the Victoria Palace Theatre, named after the Russian ballerina.



St Ermin's has relaunched its Caxton Grill with a new look and a new menu, using ingredients from its rooftop garden.



HUMOUR AND HEART

A new musical about contemporary capitalism and true friendship is opening at The Other Palace this autumn.

Normality tells the story of a computer and prog-rock wunderkind, Norman Goodman, and tackles some all-too-familiar challenges with humour and heart.

Writers Nige Reid and Jules Kleiser are both songwriters and musicians with a track record of successful shows behind them.

Normality runs from September 13-21 for over-15s only. Tickets cost £10 to £15 from lwtheatres.co.uk

Autumn events

There's plenty to see and do in the Victoria area this autumn, from a William Blake exhibition at Tate Britain to the London Jazz Festival, which will showcase sounds from big band to bossa nova



THE BRILLIANCE OF BLAKE

A new Tate Britain exhibition dedicated to William Blake will give visitors the chance to experience his art the way he wanted it to be seen.

The painter, printmaker and poet created some of the most iconic images in British art. Radical and rebellious, his inspiring work was set against personal struggles in a period of political terror and oppression.

More than 300 original watercolours, prints and other works will be on display, making this the largest show of Blake's work in almost 20 years.

William Blake: The Artist runs from September 11 to February 2. Find out more at tate.org.uk

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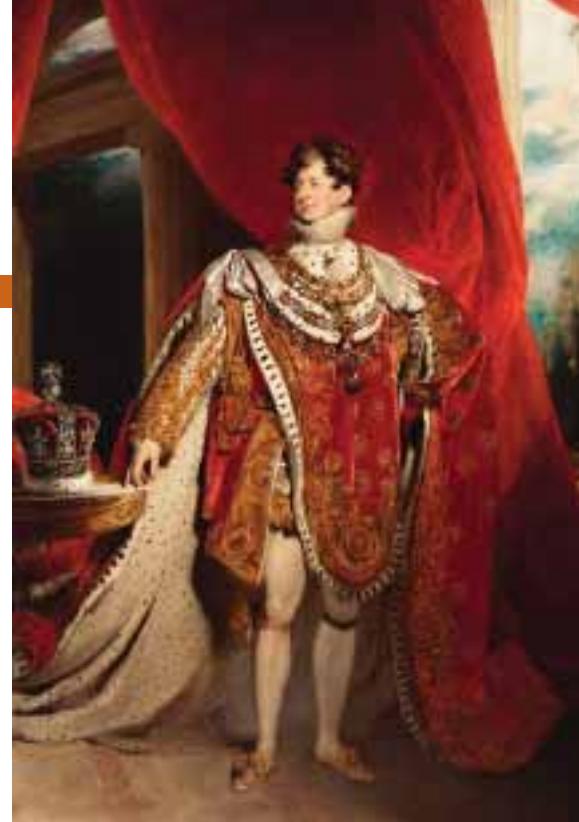
THEMED AFTERNOON TEA
at award-winning Kona Restaurant

SPECTACULAR SHOWCASE

Stunning examples of paintings, textiles, books and ceramics collected by George IV go on show at the Queen's Gallery at Buckingham Palace this autumn as part of Art & Spectacle, an exhibition showcasing the magnificence of the British monarch.

King George formed an unrivalled collection of art, much of which will be on display from November 15 for six months. He purchased a wide variety of works, from Dutch and Flemish masterpieces, to magnificent portraits by Sir Thomas Lawrence and Sir Joshua Reynolds, to delicate French porcelain and intricate goldsmiths' work.

*The exhibition runs until May 3.
Find out more at rct.uk*



George IV by Sir Thomas Lawrence

ALL THAT JAZZ



A heady mix of musical talent from around the world will converge on the capital in November for this year's EFG London Jazz Festival.

Victoria's The Other Palace is one of the venues for the event, with no fewer than 11 concerts lined up at the theatre.

A wide variety of styles are offered, including jazz funk, big band, tango and New Orleans early years jazz. Performers to look out for include the Derek Nash Funk Experience, Georgia Mancio and the Alexander Bone Quartet.

The festival programme at the theatre begins on November 15 for 10 days. Visit lwtheatres.co.uk for information

FREE ART CLASS AT THE PALACE

Ever fancied having a go at life drawing but unsure whether it's your thing? Older people will get the chance to try out a class for free at Buckingham Palace's Queen's Gallery this autumn as part of the nationwide annual Silver Sunday event, which helps combat loneliness and social isolation among the over 65s.

The event on October 11 coincides with the Leonardo da Vinci: A Life in Drawing exhibition at the palace. All materials will be provided, and beginners are welcome for either of two sessions.

Visit rct.uk for full details





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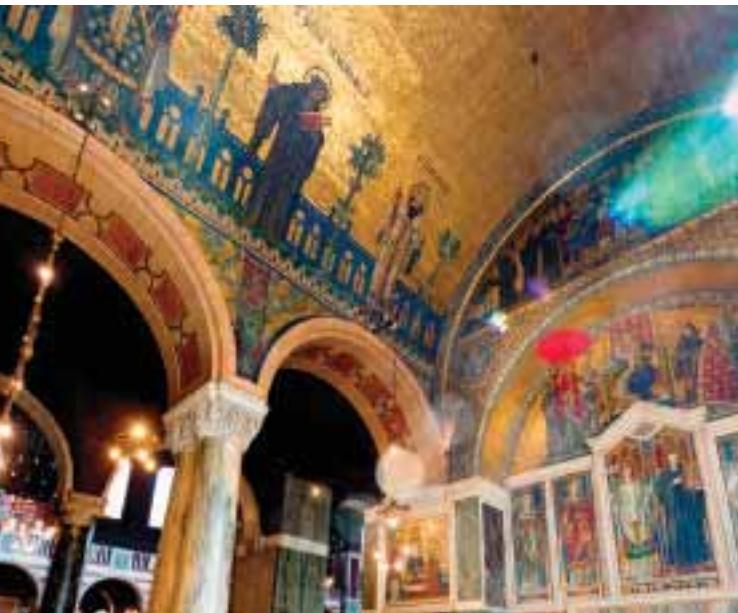




Designs for life

A dazzling display of design in all its forms will be showcased across Victoria as part of this year's London Design Festival

BY HELEN BLOW



Excellence in design coupled with major investment that has changed the landscape of Victoria over the past decade will be showcased as part of this year's London Design Festival.

As one of the capital's most well-connected and revitalised areas in recent years, Victoria has seen its biggest area-wide transformation since the Victorian era, bringing new businesses, residents, creative thinkers and visitors looking for world-class experiences.

The Victoria Connections Design District seeks to show visitors how design, in all its forms, is something that binds the area together – its people, its historic buildings and its new developments.

Victoria will showcase different forms of design in a variety of events and activities, including theatre tours, innovative installations, displays from leading designers and exhibitions exploring past and present.

Returning for its 17th year this month (September), the London Design Festival is an annual citywide celebration of design, bringing together designers, artists, architects and creators to promote London as the design capital of the world.

Last year the festival welcomed a record-breaking 588,000 visitors from more than 75 countries to exhibitions and events throughout the capital, and this year's programme is aiming to pull out all the stops again.

Festival director Ben Evans said: "Our festival celebrates and promotes London's design excellence in a period when showcasing creativity is even more important."

Highlights in Victoria will include a labyrinth installation at Westminster Cathedral Plaza, an exhibition charting how Victoria has changed through the years, a display of costumes from the musical *Wicked*, and the chance for visitors to play their part in designing Victoria.

This year Pimlico Road will have its own dedicated design district, showcasing its breadth of designers and craftspeople. There will be a multitude of mediums on display, including glass sculpture, textiles, Art Deco handcrafted lighting, furniture, art and antiques.

The festival, which runs for nine days from September 14-22, will also feature an inspirational line-up of talks, debates, daily tours and workshops.

For further information on all the events taking place, visit londondesignfestival.com/victoria-connections-design-district



Above: Ying Chang exhibition at Eccleston Yards
Opposite top: Life Labyrinth at Westminster Cathedral Plaza
Below left: Wicked costumes at the Apollo Victoria Theatre
Below far left: Byzantine style at Westminster Cathedral

VICTORIA FESTIVAL HIGHLIGHTS

LIFE LABYRINTH – a giant geometric labyrinth created by Patternity at Westminster Cathedral Piazza from sustainable recycled and recyclable materials. The bold graphic style will reflect the brickwork of the cathedral and the communal seating will pay homage to the geometries of the abbey architecture and space. September 14-22

DESIGNING VICTORIA – play your part in “designing Victoria” with a visit to Victoria Place Shopping Centre to complete the scene and help bring colour to a cube that will be installed to celebrate Victoria’s vibrancy. September 16-18

VICTORIA: THROUGH THE YEARS – experience this bustling, vibrant part of the capital through the lens of those who have lived through its transformation and celebrate its fascinating history and exciting future. September 14-22

YING CHANG x 50 – new concept store 50m has teamed up with experimental artist Ying Chang to curate an exhibition that will include an immersive installation of Chang's work and shine a spotlight on the newly renovated Eccleston Yards area in Victoria. September 14-22

MARBLE AND MOSAIC – discover the story of Westminster Cathedral, designed in the early Christian Byzantine style by Victorian architect John Francis Bentley, and the world-renowned 14 Stations of the Cross marble and mosaic work by sculptor Eric Gill. Free guided tours at 2pm on September 14-17, 19 and 22

APOLLO VICTORIA THEATRE & WICKED COSTUME EXHIBITION – view the costumes worn by the stars of *Wicked*, which has been running at the theatre for more than 12 years. September 16, 17, 19-20 and 22

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Vintage vibes

Susie Nelson, owner of Moreton Street vintage emporium Modes and More, explains why secondhand style is on the rise

BY SOPHIA CHARALAMBOUS

The UK's interest in secondhand fashion is on the increase. In fact, industry reports suggest the sector could overtake the fast-fashion market by 2029.

Finding quality vintage can often be a challenge, but not in Victoria where Modes and More, founded by Susie Nelson, offers a stunning curated selection of designer, couture and rare vintage clothing and accessories.

Opening the door of the Moreton Street store is Susie, the poster girl for vintage fashion – statuesque with a power bob and sartorially composed to perfection.

Modes and More is an Aladdin's cave of vintage, with pieces dating back to the Victorian era, and includes both designer labels and what Susie tells me is referred to as "the great unknowns", pieces that pre-date the 1960s when there was little big branding.

Susie, a former banker, initially started selling vintage as a side project, but quickly moved full-time into a space at Grays Antique Centre in Mayfair. When the building was flooded she relocated to Moreton Street.

With sustainability the buzzword of 2019 and an increasing awareness about fashion being one of the most polluting industries on the planet, Susie has noticed a rise in conscious consumers.

"Buying vintage, not only do you get something more interesting, but generally the fabrics are better, the colours are nicer and it's actually sustainable, it's got a history and there's a certain romance to it," she says.

"Trade fairs now have a sustainable section and talks. It's rather like ethical investment I suppose when that first kicked off – we hope people will follow it but you don't know."

"Rather like green issues, people are aware of the damage that is happening – and because of the internet people [now] realise the state of factories in Bangladesh. Consumers are more aware of the damage that's happening and the conditions that the workers live under."

Social media is another avenue, Susie believes, which should be used to promote the message of vintage, "having the 'green carpet' instead of the



'red carpet'," she says. "I think green investment is still not as far ahead as it should be."

As we look around the store, I spot a fashion intern taking photographs of certain items for what looks to be an upcoming magazine shoot.

The shop recently featured in *Harper's Bazaar* and celebrities such as Beth Ditto and Kendall Jenner have been photographed in its attire in the last year.

Susie tells me this sort of thing happens quite regularly, alongside requests from design teams and film and theatre work: Modes and More recently provided the frocks for Sky drama series *Patrick Melrose*.

Susie, who lives in Pimlico near to the shop, says she is often asked whether she'd leave for a more central spot.

She says: "People say, 'Oh there's an empty site on South Molton Street, would you like to go back to the West End?' But it's the rents and the rates and landlords seem happier to have empty shops, and because of the changes in retail, we do so much online now. While it would be lovely to have a huge shop in the middle of Bond Street you've just got to be realistic."

In between answering incessant calls on the store's landline, Susie shows me layers of Lanvin, Chanel, Dior, Hardy Amies, YSL, Caroline Charles, Bruce Oldfield and CC41, each piece as impressive as the last.

"It [fashion] does all go round in circles," she adds.

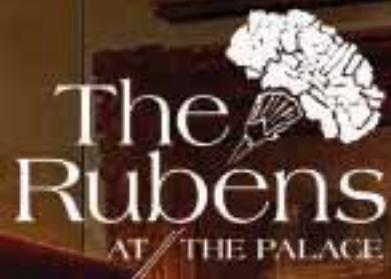
48 Moreton Street

SUSIE'S TOP TIPS FOR BUYING VINTAGE

KNOW YOUR MEASUREMENTS and take a tape measure. Ignore size labels – an old size 14 is approximately a size 10 today.

IF BUYING ONLINE, beware of anything called "vintage style" or "vintagesque". Ask for additional images of any damage or stains etcetera.

BE FLEXIBLE; be prepared to make alterations.



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Advantage vintage

We round up the latest looks from Victoria's shops that are inspired by the styles of yesteryear

BY SOPHIA CHARALAMBOUS



M&S

The first denim jacket was invented around 1880 by Levi Strauss. Keep sporting the look with this cotton-rich authentic denim jacket, £39.50.

**CARDINAL PLACE,
VICTORIA STREET**

MEN



BOSS

Step back in time in these vintage-inspired swim shorts, characterised by their short length, rounded edges and side slits, £65

78 VICTORIA STREET



Next

Also known as suspenders, braces were popularised in 1822 by London haberdasher Albert Thurston. These burgundy stripes, £14, will add an extra touch to a white shirt.

**111 BUCKINGHAM
PALACE ROAD**

Zara

The original loafer was invented in London in 1847. These brown woven loafers, £89.99, are ideal for transitional weather.

82 VICTORIA STREET





Dorothy Perkins

Ornate evening bags were first made into an accessory in 1963 by Judith Leiber. Keep the trend alive with this silver shoulder bag with chain strap, £18.

**VICTORIA PLACE SHOPPING
CENTRE, 115 BUCKINGHAM
PALACE ROAD**

WOMEN



Accessorize

Popular in the 1950s and 60s and normally worn with a beehive hairdo, try out the look with these Caris small cat-eye sunglasses, £12.50.

**15 VICTORIA
STREET**



Thomas Sabo

It was Queen Victoria who started the fashion for wearing charm bracelets among the noble classes. This vintage heart charm, £89, in 925 sterling silver, white zirconia and synthetic red corundum, will make a welcome addition to any bracelet.

**HOUSE OF FRASER,
101 VICTORIA STREET**



Hobbs

Wartime rationing and restrictions influenced a great change in women's fashion, and the Sophia dress, £299, is a modern interpretation of the 1940s utility suit.

3 CATHEDRAL WALK



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Single membership is £60 a year and joint membership is £100. Sign up for 2019/2020 membership now and come and come for free to our final 2018/2019 lecture on 2nd October 2019.

Please email 'membershipvictoria@theartsociety.org' for full membership and programme details.

 THE ARTS SOCIETY VICTORIA

www.theartsocietyvictoria.org.uk

WILD BY TART

Lucy Carr-Ellison and Jemima Jones' Tart London has created a culinary storm since landing in 2012. Starting as a bespoke catering company to stars of fashion and showbiz, Tart provides refined, tailor-made menus to clients that have ranged from *Vogue* and *Love* magazines to Louis Vuitton, Saint Laurent and Stella McCartney. The pair became regular food columnists for *ES Magazine* in 2016, taking their ethos of using seasonal ingredients and sustainably sourced produce to a wider audience.

This month they will launch Wild by Tart at Eccleston Yards, which will offer a restaurant, bar, deli and kiosk with space for events and photography. "The site is 9,000 sq ft and it used to be a power station and coal store that supplied energy to Buckingham Palace," says Lucy. "The sheer size of it gave us the chance to create the multipurpose space we had dreamed of."

"We want Wild by Tart to become a neighbourhood go-to," she says. "A relaxed, all-day dining menu with vibrant, fresh and wholesome dishes, inspired by the excitement of new flavours, the importance of seasonality and good produce and the pure pleasure of creating a delicious meal."

Lucy says the area is the perfect location for Tart's ambitious project. "It's such an exciting time to be in Victoria. We love what Grosvenor is doing and felt a real buzz around Eccleston Yards. Each week a new boutique opens; we're surrounded by great brands which makes it a real destination area."

Autumn brings with it an abundance of delicious ingredients, she says – including mushrooms. "Nothing beats a mixed mushroom bruschetta. We make ours in a frying pan over a medium heat with butter, shallots, garlic, tarragon, parsley and a swig of white wine, on to toasted sourdough with a poached egg on top."

3-4 Eccleston Yards



Dinner dates

A flurry of restaurant openings is drawing a new wave of foodies to Victoria, sealing its status as a dining destination. We sit down with four new arrivals

BY REYHAAN DAY

Below left: Clam linguine with smoked ham, cider and leeks
Below: Jemima Jones and Lucy Carr-Ellison





Above: Fisherman's stew
Below: Nathan Outlaw



SIREN AT THE GORING

Siren is empty after lunch service, and Nathan Outlaw stands in the middle, surrounded by floral print chairs, white tablecloths and windows overlooking the hotel's meticulously manicured garden. This is his new restaurant – and the first new opening at The Goring in more than a century.

Nathan has garnered acclaim from food guides, critics and diners over the years thanks to his simple yet expertly executed seafood dishes. His eponymous restaurant in Cornwall has two Michelin stars and is a constant on lists of Britain's best places to eat.

He and Jeremy Goring have talked about this restaurant for several years. "He has a passion for seafood as I do – and a passion for Cornwall, because he's half Cornish," Nathan says.

Siren focuses on cooking sustainable, ethically sourced fish, largely from Cornwall. "We didn't want it to be a conceptual thing – we're not teaching people how to eat. We wanted to create a seafood restaurant that feels like it's been here for an awful lot longer than it has."

Russell Sage has designed the room, which is relaxed but pretty. "Seafood needs a more casual environment," says Nathan.

Dishes are pared back, with flashes of inspired creativity. Monkfish, ginger, fennel and yoghurt or grilled mackerel, tomatoes and green sauce might be starters; and the likes of herbed and battered turbot with tartare sauce or red mullet with devilled shrimp butter and chicory for mains. "The specials board has different fish that we don't have enough of to put on the menu proper; but if you're lucky, you might pop in and you could share a two-kilo gilt-head bream. We endeavour to have something interesting."

Growing up around Maidstone, Nathan's dad was "a glorified pea and chip chef" – and Nathan learned from a young age what a life in cooking looks like. "What hit me was the pride he had in what he did – and the camaraderie in the kitchen. Even as a kid, it was addictive. Everyone wanted to do things right. I always think I can do better. That's stood me in good stead – right up to today."

For a chef who has built his reputation on preparing seafood, Nathan wasn't raised on it. "I was quite a finicky eater when I was younger; but my fondest childhood memories are going to the Kent coast. You'd see fishermen, or we'd be fishing or rockpooling. That's what got me interested.

"Then when I started cooking professionally at 16, I always drifted to the fish area of the kitchen. It was always where I felt more comfortable."

Nathan never felt completely at ease in London's fine dining kitchens. "When I was cooking dishes that had lots of different elements and components, I just thought it was all a bit too much for me. It was too frantic." As a result he made the decision to move to Cornwall. "It felt like home. I thought that it would wear off and I'd go back to the city – but it never has done. I still think it's the best place on earth."

He was soon working with Rick Stein, whose Padstow restaurant opened in the early 1970s. "Working in his kitchen was amazing. The biggest thing I learnt was being confident in being simple – and having a bit of fun with it as well."

After earning a Michelin star at his first restaurant, The Black Pig, he opened Restaurant Nathan Outlaw in 2007; and after two relocations, it is now a Port Isaac destination – retaining its two Michelin stars. Does he care about the accolades? "I don't think I've ever really aimed for any of that, if I'm being honest. I think the most important thing is to have a restaurant that's busy."

Aside from Siren, what else is occupying



Above: Grilled mackerel

Below: Siren at the Goring



Nathan's mind? "There is a problem with seafood stocks. I want to be at the forefront of the ethical, sustainable thing with regards to seafood. If anyone is going to do it, I feel like I should be leading the way. I feel that pressure."

"It's something I'm trying to work in to what we do – getting people to eat different species and making sure I'm buying well. We do actively buy from people we know, boats we know, fishermen we know; and that's a real challenge when you're trying to find consistency in a restaurant, because the fisherman might only have one of a particular species."

"I'd like to get to a point with Siren and the restaurants in Cornwall where the menu is just a list of fish available from the fishermen, with a short list of sauces and vegetables. That's the ultimate goal for me. That's the dream."

15 Beeston Place

CHEZ ANTOINETTE

Bringing the French touch to Victoria is Chez Antoinette – an authentic Gallic bistro serving dishes inspired by recipes from co-owner Aurélia Delclos-Noel's grandmother.

Aurelia and her hotelier husband JB Noel opened their first Chez Antoinette in Covent Garden in 2014; and their Victoria site continues the balance of relaxed, all-day dining and more refined plates, within a two-storey space with an open kitchen, cocktail and wine bar and deli.

Hearty dishes include the likes of blanquette de veau, duck parmentier and boeuf bourguignon, with lighter bites including patisserie such as brioche aux pralines de Lyon, mille-feuille and more.

"We have a philosophy of producing as much as possible ourselves. We try and keep everything affordable," says Aurelia.

"I was a former interior designer working for a local company called 1508, so I knew the area well. I always thought it was missing small independent restaurants and cafes."

"After a few years in Covent Garden, it was time for us to expand; naturally, Victoria came into the picture."

"The food scene in Victoria is already



improving, with the recent opening of Market Hall and other great places to eat. I'm sure it will only improve in the future."

22 Palmer Street

THE SOAK

Launched this summer, The Soak – part of The Grosvenor Hotel – focuses on creating delicate dishes centred around culinary techniques including fermenting, soaking, steeping and brining – housed in a grand, grade II-listed Victorian building.

The menu has been devised by head chef Chris Zachwieja, who has previously worked under Tom Aikens. Dishes include poulet noir with morels, asparagus and wild mushroom kombucha; or wood pigeon, pearl barley koji, anchovies, flat turnip and fermented mooli – with each plate using seasonal produce. "I love the way that steeping, soaking and brining techniques help to unlock the succulent flavours you can find in quality produce," says Chris.

In addition, general manager George Angelopoulos has curated a drinks menu of "soaked" cocktails, with organic and biodynamic wines also a focus.

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The three photographs below show different views of the cryotherapy process. The left photo shows a person inside a chamber with a blue light on. The middle photo shows a person in a white lab coat standing next to a large blue CryoSkin machine. The right photo shows two people in white lab coats interacting with a large blue CryoSkin machine.

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M Victoria

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED how nice it would be to have your own private sommelier? Well that's more or less what you get at upmarket wine store M if you join its My Case scheme.

"First we invite you in for a free one-hour tasting," explains sommelier Lenart Cernelic.

"We take a few twists and turns to see how adventurous you are and how much we can stretch your palate and then we keep all our notes on file. When you need some wine you tell us how many bottles of red and white you require and the budget you have for the case and

we will personally select wine that we know you will really enjoy and deliver free of charge."

You don't need to buy wine by the case to enjoy a tasting in the store. At the tasting table there's a row of enomatic wine machines with a range of bottles you can sample in a blind tasting. "You can buy 75ml glasses of all eight wines for the half-price cost of £20. If you get all eight right, you win a £50 gift card," says Lenart.

Below the shop M's subterranean steakhouse serves 120 wines by the glass along with some of the best steaks in the capital. 74 Victoria Street

Raise a glass

Whether you fancy a crisp white wine or a spicy red, Victoria's shops and restaurants have it covered

BY ANTONIA WINDSOR

Debunking wine myths

FREDDIE COBB, wine buyer for Vagabond, grew up on a vineyard in Portugal and is a trained winemaker. Here he debunks some wine myths.

MYTH: You should never put ice in wine.

Freddie says: "You can't be wrong with wine. In South Africa they regularly put a cube of ice in a glass of white on a hot summer's day. You can also chill some reds."

MYTH: A pale rosé is the best.

Freddie says: "Don't judge a wine by its colour. Provence rosé has championed the salmon pink style and people think they have to go for that colour to get a dry, light rosé. But that is not always the case. Darker rosés can have the same taste profile. If you are looking for something a little sweeter go for a blush or a white Zinfandel."

MYTH: Screw-cap wine is cheaper.

Freddie says: "Considering that nearly 90 per cent of all the wine that comes out of New Zealand is under screw cap, it just isn't true that a screw-cap is the reserve of the supermarket bargain bins. Obviously my country, Portugal, is a large exporter of cork, so it would be sacrilege for them to put anything else on their wine bottles – even the cheap ones."

MYTH: You don't need to taste the wine if the bottle has a screw-cap.

Freddie says: "Even wine under a screw-cap can be oxidised, so it is always worth tasting the wine. A corked wine will taste worse the longer you leave the bottle open. Considering that about nine per cent of wine that is served is corked, we Brits only ever send about one per cent back."



Vagabond

LIKE THE IDEA of sampling several different wines before deciding what you'll be quaffing on a Friday night? Well, that's just what you can do at Vagabond, the Nova flagship bar of the urban winery that produces wine down by Battersea Power Station. You'll find their own wines among another 100-odd bottles in the innovative wine-dispensing machines at the Nova-based bar.

Buy a top-up card and then select 25ml, 125ml or 175ml of whichever wine you choose. Wines are arranged by style rather than region so you can choose between crisp, aromatic or rich whites and between vibrant, elegant, spicy or bold reds.

Other places for a tipple

BATONNAGE

This cosy little independent wine bar is a recent addition to Eccleston Place and has a cheese counter, deli products and mezzanine bar with wines by the glass.

23 Eccleston Place

LORNE

Seasonal British produce takes centre stage with sommelier Katie Exton, formerly of the much-loved River Cafe, ensuring wine is the star of the show.

76 Wilton Road

THE DRUNKEN OYSTER

Jason Atherton's stylish cocktail bar, on the first floor of his New York-style Italian restaurant, Hai Cenato, offers a generous Italian wine list and a cosy atmosphere. Perfect for a first date.

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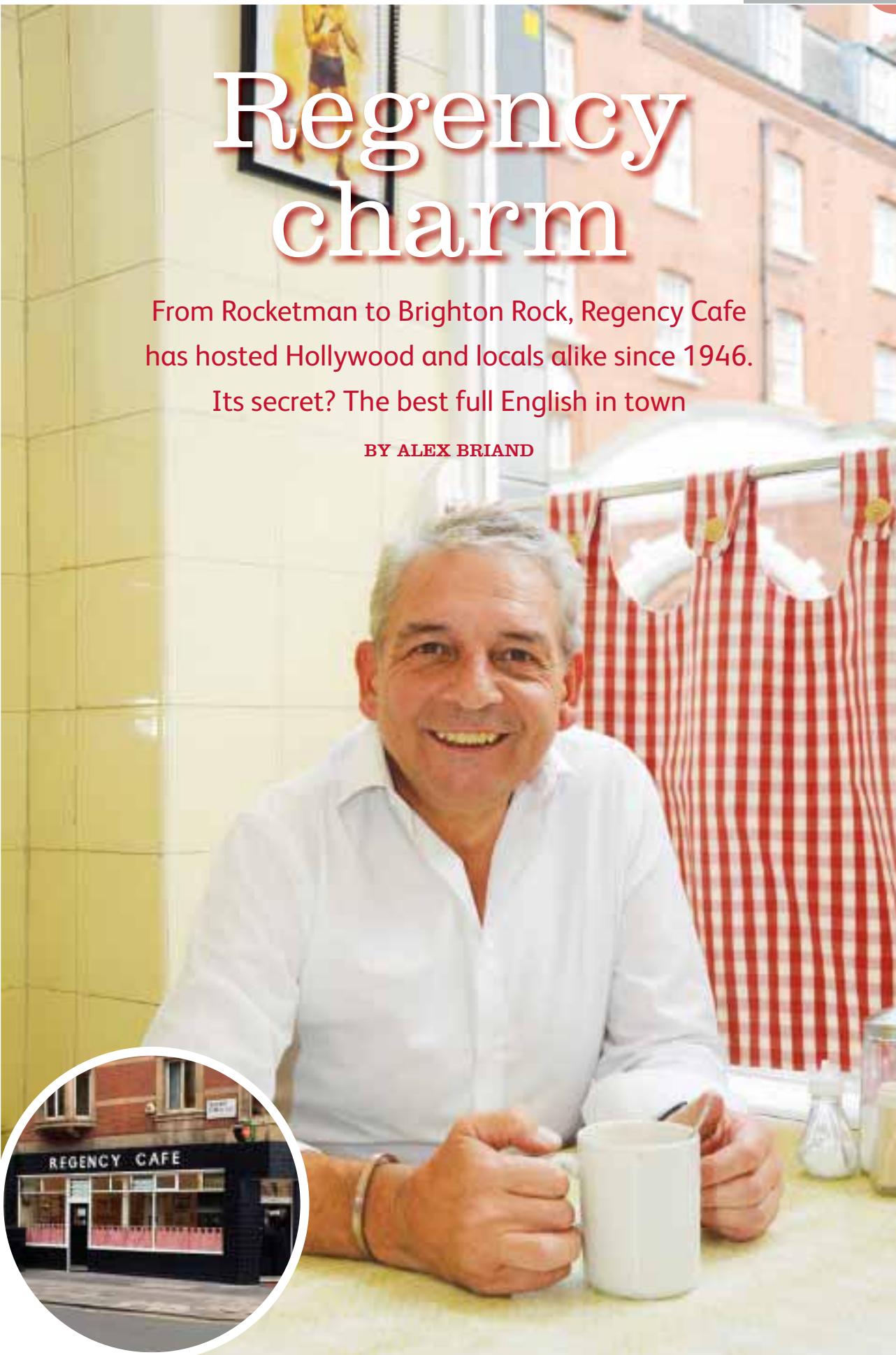
Regency charm

From Rocketman to Brighton Rock, Regency Cafe has hosted Hollywood and locals alike since 1946.

Its secret? The best full English in town

BY ALEX BRIAND

Marco Schiavetta photographed by Reyhaan Day



T

he secret to running the capital's favourite caff is simple, says Marco Schiavetta. It's 6pm on a Monday evening, and the after-work service is starting.

"My secret... that's a great cup of tea, right?"

It's a terrific cup of tea. But before I can gain any more insight a local customer enters, and Marco is already up at the counter, taking his order and catching up.

The cafe sits at 17-19 Regency Street, just off Vincent Square. It's been running since 1946, and in that time it has become a must-try destination for tourists. "I asked a table of eight Americans how they found us. They said, 'We googled "best breakfast in London" and you came up'. The internet can break you or make you; one step on the wrong side, you're done. But on the right side, we're first on the list."

A few years ago, the Regency Cafe entered the top five restaurants in the entire capital on Yelp, beating scores of Michelin-starred destinations.

It has also formed the backdrop to films including *Brighton Rock*, *Layer Cake* (yes, that tea-pouring scene – "the service has got better since then," says Marco) and, most recently, the Elton John biopic *Rocketman*.

The cafe itself is spacious, with Art Deco features and high Victorian windows. The menu presents a list of ingredients and a few suggested combinations: egg and two bacon; egg, sausage and baked beans. And, so on.

The full English, by far their most popular order, is not on the list. Its contents can be contentious, so I take the opportunity to ask the expert. "The basics are egg, bacon and sausage. You can have beans or tomatoes, toast or bread, tea or coffee, six and a half quid. If you want to add something special there's fresh mushrooms, homemade bubble and squeak, black pudding."

Marco acquired the cafe in partnership with a friend of his father's, Antonio Perotti. "I went to school here," says Marco. "I lived above the fish and chip shop across the road. Tony and my father were West End boys. Tony had always been in catering since he came over from Italy.

"I was 21 years old, and my father wanted me to have some substance in my life. One day Dad says to me, 'Go and have a look at this restaurant you and Tony are going to buy.'

"I came here and looked in the window. I was used to working in the Mayfair side of catering, which is all little boutique sandwiches and



Below: Daniel Craig in a scene from *Layer Cake*, filmed in the Regency Cafe



coffees. This was different. The rolling pin was bigger than me, and there was flour bursting into the air. I learnt to run the kitchen and cook the food, then moved to front of house and employed a couple of chefs."

Since Tony's passing in 1994 Marco has split the running of the cafe with Tony's daughter, Claudia Perotti. Though it started off serving "predominantly the cab drivers, engineers – the working man", the cafe's location, charm and timeless British character soon saw it make its way into magazine shoots for *Vogue* and *GQ*,



“You have to really care. You don’t want to serve a bad cup of tea or a dodgy sausage”



adverts, film and TV. Marco puts it down to its space and charm: “It’s a big restaurant. It’s double aspect, so they can get makeup in here, all the crew, everyone. Plus, it can be 1960, it can be 1990, it can be 2019, doesn’t matter. It’s a timeless building, so it’s a timeless cafe.”

Its location also increases the chances of newsworthy faces. Channel 4 is just around the corner, and Westminster is on the doorstep. A pre-mayoral Boris Johnson would regularly park his bike on the lamppost across the street and come in for breakfast. Cressida Dick came in for lunch before her interview to be police commissioner.

“The breakfast is fresh,” says Marco, when I ask why his food is so popular. “We use fresh oil every day. We could save a little more money if we didn’t, but we wouldn’t be quite the same. The chips wouldn’t be the right colour. You can taste it when the oil is old. Do things the right way. Buy fresh, good products, and cook them properly, and it’s that dead simple.”

“You have to really care, and have a passion about what you do,” he adds. “You don’t want to serve a bad cup of tea or a dodgy sausage. Most of the bacon in this country is cut from a frozen block, because demand is enormous. We buy ours off the rib, off a piece of fresh meat. It’s more expensive than that frozen stuff, but people love it. It looks good on the plate, and it tastes good.”

The teatime rush is building, and it’s time to leave Marco to what he does best. But first, I want to know why he thinks this kind of place is so important. “It’s real, it’s traditional,” he says. “Fresh loose tea in a pot, fresh homemade chips. An open, clean kitchen. People will always come back to the old school.”



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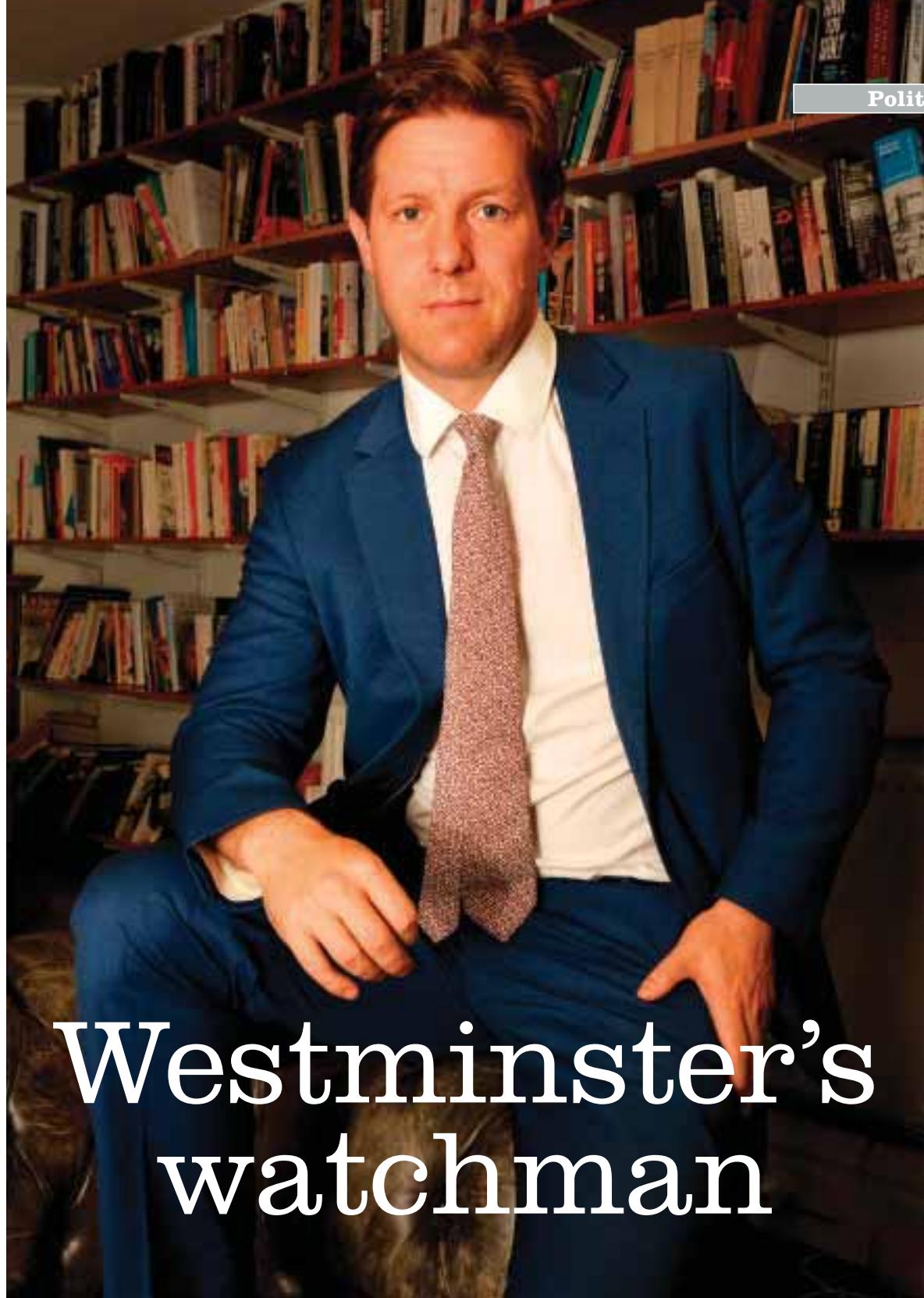
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Fraser Nelson photographed by Andy Lowe exclusively for *Victoria* magazine



Westminster's watchman

Fraser Nelson, editor of *The Spectator*, has presided over a period of unprecedented growth at the magazine. He tells how the world's oldest weekly is thriving in the digital era

BY CORRIE BOND-FRENCH



This autumn will mark a decade since Fraser Nelson took the reins at *The Spectator*, the esteemed, right-of-centre Galapagos tortoise of the publishing world which, at an impressive 191 years old, is currently thriving like a spring lamb on Guinness.

With an ever-increasing audience – recent figures indicate a further 43 per cent rise, making *The Spectator* the fastest growing current affairs title in Europe – under Fraser's tenure the magazine has positively embraced the sirens of the digital age.

While other publications skittered away to the magazine mausoleum on the winds of change, *The Spectator*, the world's oldest weekly, survived into its third century, and these may yet prove to be its salad days.

I catch up with Fraser on a historic day, when his predecessor-bar-one as editor of *The Spectator*, Boris Johnson, is moving in to Number 10 amid a media frenzy. Evidently, *The Spectator*'s 2007 relocation from Bloomsbury to offices in Old Queen Street (think Chesterfields, wood-panelled walls and jamboree welly-wanging distance in terms of parliamentary proximity) was timely.

Notwithstanding his regular attendance in the Commons' press gallery, Fraser's soft Scottish burr will be familiar from sundry media appearances; he is in plum spectating position in the thick of Westminster cut and thrust.

A native of Nairn, and an ardent Europhile who as a student had a poster of the channel tunnel on his wall where, arguably, a crucifix



"In America things got so bad that they elected Donald Trump, but in Britain we've got a very sensitive political system. We're probably the most responsive democracy in the whole world"

and lace-clad Madonna should have been, Fraser wasn't raised in a political household. "My parents never, and still don't speak about politics. I've no idea how my parents voted, ever, and nor would I dream of asking them. I don't know whether that's old fashioned, but current affairs were never a big thing in our household, and still aren't."

A chance party conversation with Andrew Neil proved the game-changer for Fraser's career, when Andrew persuaded him to move from his role at *The Times* to work at *The Scotsman* before taking the helm at *The Spectator*.

"It doesn't really feel like 10 years," he says. "The first few years were pretty tough because sales were going down and kept going down for a while. At the time it felt as if the industry was going downhill collectively and there wasn't really any way of turning that around, but then the digital world came to give us various opportunities, introducing us to a new audience."

"We have brilliant writers, brilliant journalists, brilliant commissioning editors and a very strong ID, and my role has been to protect and project that personality of the magazine at a time when there's been a huge amount of interest in the political goings on."

"We also managed to acquire, with James Forsyth, Katy Balls and Isabel Hardman, three political journalists we didn't have 10 years ago and they've brought a whole new dimension that *The Spectator*'s never had before."

With columnists as infamous as Rod Liddle and Taki, the magazine has never shied away from debate, and Fraser is passionate about ensuring readers are entertained. "We offer the widest spread of opinions of any publication, we offer arguments that you simply will not find in the newspapers and our readers like reading well-argued articles with which they might disagree."

"What has changed over the last 10 years is that with social media there's a rise of this sort of digital outrage culture, where they love to take articles they don't like, ideally a headline or a screengrab or a sentence out of context and then get outraged about it."

"It's a strange way of passing time but lots of people do it that way, and these people are never short of ammunition when they go to publications like *The Spectator*, where we don't really censor or edit our copy for fear of what our non-readers are going to say about it. We only really care about our readers and they are a pretty tolerant bunch with a pretty low outrage threshold."

So, as Boris and Brexit dominate the headlines, how does Fraser think we will view it all as a slice of history? "My suspicion is that we will look back and wonder what the f*** was it all about?"



Past editors of *The Spectator* Alexander Chancellor (1975-84), Nigel Lawson (1966-70), Dominic Lawson (1990-95), Charles Moore (1984-90) and Boris Johnson (1999-2005), along with current editor Fraser Nelson (2009-present)
Photo: Alan Davidson/Shutterstock

"I really don't think Brexit is going to make much difference one way or the other, it will be a time where a certain political establishment went into meltdown and a lot of people got worked up about something which nobody really cared about earlier on.

"Five years ago, it was a pretty unusual person who really thought that much about the EU, and now it's supposed to be this great issue which sets us brother against brother and all the rest of it. I just think it's a strange period of hyperventilation, not among the whole nation, but certainly the circles I mix in.

"What happened was that we had a political world and a political format, a sort of Blair-Cameron kind of sausage factory that eventually ran out of sausages, and it stopped producing politicians that people were interested in because time moves on, you had the crash, the waves of migration, you had people all of a sudden thinking that things like the nation state were more important to them than things like whether GDP might go up by an extra per cent.

"Our politics was stuck in this late 90s mindset and that's what's happening all over the world. In Europe it's happening with populism, in America things got so bad that they elected Donald Trump, but in Britain we've got a very sensitive political system. We're probably the

"We had a political format, a Blair-Cameron sausage factory that eventually ran out of sausages"

most responsive democracy in the whole world."

Fraser is adamant that in many ways we have never had it so good, and there is much to be positive about.

"It's still a country that's never been healthier, wealthier, there has never been a better time to live in Britain, to have kids in this country. This is nowhere near a national crisis. Look at the 70s, that was a national crisis. Look at the 50s and the era of the cold war, that was a national crisis. This is nothing, it's really a pinprick, when you look at the things that Britain has been through. It's a pinprick which is very sore at the point of the pin which is Westminster. Outside it there's a whole bunch of people who are getting on with their lives quite happily.

"To be alive in Britain right now, to be raising a family here, there's never been a better time to do it and there's so much to look around and appreciate."

22 Old Queen Street



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What are your earliest travel memories?

My very first family holidays when I was seven or eight; I was sent off to grandmas and grandpas and uncles and aunties in France. They're very nice memories, very cosy. I remember quite a few in the Dordogne, the Loire Valley and the Alsace region.

What food do you remember from that time?

I went fishing with my grandfather, we used to catch coarse fish from the rivers to eat. My grandma was a very good cook, seriously good. She would always have something on the stove. She made food from all over France and used to take hours and hours in the kitchen. It was slow cooking, lots of stews and ragus, always loads of vegetables and cheese.

That's the style of food that I think I enjoy the most. Beautifully sourced ingredients, perfectly cooked, and not messed around with too much. I think that's where you get the most joy out of food. Sometimes chefs cook for their egos or try too hard, and that's where it gets lost. It takes a heck of a lot of confidence to stop adding things to a dish.

What regional delicacies stick in your mind from your training in France?

I worked in Lyon for two years and I must say I love Lyonnais food, it's robust and rich. Pike quenelles are a speciality of that region, and they are lovely. They also eat a lot of charcuterie, a lot of tripe sausage; andouillette, which I personally adore. There's one particular maker of



Recipe for success

Michelin-starred chef Michel Roux Jr, owner of Roux at Parliament Square, shares his favourite travel memories and best foodie tips

BY ALEX BRIAND

Dim sum in Hong Kong



Quenelles in Lyon



Mussels at Kødbyens



andouillette in the market called Bobosse, and his are to die for.

When you travel these days, do you stick to what you know or do you like to be surprised?

I love to be surprised, but mostly it's a mixture. Recently I went to Copenhagen, where the tried and tested, Noma, was as good as ever, a truly amazing experience. Even better than the last time, and I can't wait to go again.

But also a place called Kødbyens, which was a recommendation from chefs in Copenhagen, and I was not disappointed. It was amazing. It's in the meatpacking district of Copenhagen, and there's nothing luxurious about it at all, but you get drawn in by the noise and the light. There's a hum in the air, and a massive bar. It just ticked every box; I would recommend anyone to go there.

It can be difficult to seek out those places. Do you use the Michelin Guide? The World's 50 Best? Or online reviews? I think you should ask the taxi driver. [London cab drivers] listen to all the conversations. They'll pick people up from a restaurant and ask, 'Did you enjoy your evening?' And they'll give you their appraisals. Nine times out of 10 cabbies love their food. It's the same in New York.

What are your top food cities?

Copenhagen is fresh in my mind, an absolutely glorious four days of eating and drinking. But there are many. London now is up there with any gastronomic city to come and visit – it edges it on one point, and that is for the choice of great ethnic food.

Paris is changing – it's thankfully undergoing a culinary revolution with some great young chefs, forging their way and recreating some great national dishes. Hong Kong I absolutely adore as a food destination. It's got a vibrancy, it's electric, it's fun – a great place to eat.

What kind of traveller are you?

It's not unusual for me to clock up 20-odd kilometres of walking in a day visiting a city, I think it's wonderful. It's a great way to see a city. Sitting on a beach reading a book? Not really for me. Many, many times with my wife we've just walked the streets until we've gotten lost.

What places would you still love to explore?

I'd love to explore South America and discover the food scene and the history of the place.

*Roux at Parliament Square,
11 Great George Street*

Lurking in the shadows



Brian Gray's spy tours of Westminster attract the intelligence community, tourists and the occasional TV star alike. He explains why they're "all killer, no filler"

BY CORRIE BOND-FRENCH

Secrets and lies have long been a stock-in-trade in the shadowy past of Westminster and its fringes, but next time you're rushing past Artillery Mansions, 75 Victoria Street, take a breather and a long, hard look.

This unassuming façade, now home at street level to a hairdressers and cobblers, is where one George Blake – who at 96 shivers still in Moscow's winter winds as MI6's most notorious traitor – clocked into work in 1959, when MI6's technical support section was situated on the first and second floors.

In just minutes, you could reach Broadway, where number 54 housed MI6's headquarters from 1924 to 1964, and where Cambridge spy Kim Philby would hang his hat during the 1940s.

There are plenty more stories of spooks and secrecy lurking in the shadows in this patch of London, from brush-pasts on its streets to dead-drops in the royal parks. From the reassuringly nondescript to the spectacular, wooden benches and landmarks alike have featured in the backdrop to espionage.

But it's not all about treachery. Tales of heroism abound too: at 21 Queen Anne's Gate, the official, yet secret residence of past MI6 chiefs, lived Frank Foley, a man whose incredible achievement of saving more than 10,000 Jews from the Nazis was acknowledged just last year – a rare public accolade and tribute, 60 years after he died in relative obscurity.

These stories barely scrape the surface, and one man's knowledge and passion for the subject is keeping them alive.

Brian Gray won't discuss some of his former employment, but suffice it to say he has an in-depth knowledge of how the intelligence service works. When he decided to start running content-rich, informed tours around Westminster with the Intelligence Trail, it was to provide a knowledgeable offering.

It became apparent early on that many of Brian's clients were themselves members of the intelligence community. And there have been brushes with the entertainment industry too – it is somehow particularly pleasing to hear that



Spooks' MI5 character Harry Pearce, or rather actor Peter Firth, is a former client. "My audience is quite bemusing because I've got one foot in the travel industry, travel tourism, and the other is really in the intelligence and security fraternity. If I'm judged by the company I keep let's just say I meet some very interesting people on tour," says Brian.

"A lot of it's from the Five Eyes partnership, which is the UK, USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. They carve up the world between them. Quite quickly there were one or two interesting private tours with people from within the community. To a certain extent it was social, but also a case of a mutual filling in of the blanks. In terms of thinking, 'Oh, I'm going to get lots of spooks or people from the intelligence community', I didn't really necessarily think that at the time, though I certainly didn't exclude them as a target market."

Ten years on and Brian's tours are going strong. "With the enduring popularity of the spy genre, and being based in the spy capital of the world, I thought it really was time somebody did something like this. There are other spy tours out there but they are very much what I would call the popcorn and candy floss fraternity. It's, 'Look, here's a Bond film location, woohoo!' I was very much positioning this as 'All killer, no filler', as an immersive, in-depth consideration of British intelligence through the decades, past and present. It's really a three-hour outdoor grad-school seminar."

EYE SPY...

NOVA, 79 Buckingham Palace Road: National Cyber Security Centre (part of GCHQ) based here.

36 ALDERNEY STREET, Pimlico: Gareth Williams (GCHQ seconded to MI6) found dead in large holdall in bath of his flat, August 2010.

ASHLEY MANSIONS, 254 Vauxhall Bridge Road: MI6 HQ, 1910 -11.

QEII CENTRE, Broad Sanctuary: Chilcot Inquiry (Iraq) hearings.

WESTMINSTER SCHOOL: former pupils include MI6 traitor Kim Philby, and Ewen Montagu (played a pivotal role in Operation Mincemeat).

THAMES HOUSE, 11-12 Millbank: current HQ of MI5, plus inter-departmental JTAC (Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre) and CPNI (Centre for Protection of National Infrastructure).

SIS BUILDING, Vauxhall Cross, 85 Albert Embankment: current HQ, MI6.

8 PALMER STREET: until a few months ago had been GCHQ's London location since 1953, although the building had been the location of wartime skulduggery before then.

Left: Frank Foley
Above: Kim Philby



The art of hospitality



The Conrad London St James is offering a vintage menu to celebrate its owner Hilton's centenary this year. Our writer checks in

BY ANTONIA WINDSOR



Left: The striking hotel lobby; right-hand page: PM Boris Johnson by Gerald Scarfe and *The House Always Wins* by artist duo Evil Robots Above: trifle forms part of the hotel's new vintage menu



My plate of smoked salmon arrives strewn with brown shrimp and gherkins and a little rack of brown toast – just as it might have done in 1919. I know this because I've ordered off the vintage menu at the Blue Boar, the destination restaurant of the Conrad London St James.

At just five years old, the Conrad is one of the area's newer hotels, but as a Hilton hotel it is celebrating the company's centenary this year. The vintage menu is just one of several initiatives to mark 100 years since Conrad Hilton opened his first hotel in Cisco, Texas.

POLITICAL LINKS

Throughout the hotel you'll find playful works of art, with many of them nodding to the location so near to the Houses of Parliament. *The House Always Wins*, by artist duo Evil Robots is a centrepiece in the lobby. It brings together elements of film, comic art and popular culture in an intricate reconstruction of the House of Commons, where the Speaker is surrounded on all sides by a cast of more than 150 characters. You might spot Guy Fawkes, Captain Hook or some of Hasbro's Transformers, but will you notice the elephant in the room?

Move into the Blue Boar bar, which is a favourite haunt of Westminster politicians, and

you'll find one wall lined with satirical cartoons penned by Gerald Scarfe and another featuring 3D statuettes of British politicians by the artist Simon Bingle. You can even order a "political cocktail"; perhaps your vote will go to Corbyn's Reign (gin, strawberry, raspberry, campari, lime, elderflower and ginger beer), or will you plump for Theresa's Kitten Heel Fizz (Absolut Citron vodka, blue curaçao, lime and prosecco). At the request of regular quaffing MPs a division bell has been put in the bar, which sounds whenever there is a vote in the House of Commons – giving them eight minutes to drink up and scurry back to cast their ballot.

BACK IN TIME

If a dinner of suet pudding and spotted dick doesn't quite get you in the Edwardian mood, then perhaps a jaunt down the river will. Guests booking the hotel's "back in time" experience get picked up in a classic Rolls-Royce and whisked off to explore the Oxfordshire countryside. On the banks of the river Thames they are met by the captain of a vintage boat ready to travel down the river through the green and glorious countryside. A spot of lunch on board will still leave room for the sumptuous afternoon tea that awaits at Cliveden House, that grand dame of hotels so loved by the royal family.

ROOMS

If you don't have a vote beckoning you away from your gin then you may well get sucked into the evening. So it's a good job that there's 256 rooms on the floors above, offering a comfy bed for the night if you just don't feel like making it home. All rooms have digital newspapers and you'll even get a free sleepcast podcast from Headspace if you need a little help winding down. Now that's something guests would not have imagined in 1919.

22-28 Broadway

In 1891, a pound of **GOLDEN TIPS TEA** was sold for the equivalent of £1,260. The exquisite blend – picked at sunrise and sundried on velvet – is now available at The Rubens. Guests can splash out on the UK's most expensive tea at £500 a pot, while savouring the view of the Royal Mews. rubenshotel.com



ST ERMIN'S HOTEL is celebrating its history in espionage by getting spy kids in on the act. Budding Bonds and Moneypennys can decipher and plot to their hearts' content at the Spy Kids weekends, where they'll receive an "iSpy for St Ermin's" pack, and could win prizes and non-alcoholic cocktails (shaken, not stirred). sterminshotel.co.uk

Do you know where **NELSON MANDELA'S STATUE** is in Westminster or why it is at a lower level than the other statues that surround it? Find out where and why on a walk around Westminster to discover the statues and monuments that represent black Londoners. avrilswalksandtalks.co.uk

The division bell at the Conrad London St James hotel isn't the only quirky element amid Victoria's streets. Corrie Bond-French seeks out the eccentric elements

WESTMINSTER CATERING

COLLEGE graduates have a tradition to bang on about at their graduation ceremony. Every year a brigade of students lines the route from St Stephen's Church, Rochester Row back to the college with pots and pans to bang in celebration. Catch the clamour at this year's ceremony on September 27.



HOTEL 41 has retained its "top hotel in the UK" title for the third year at the annual TripAdvisor Travellers' Choice awards. Guests are invited to "plunder the pantry", enjoying free snacks and treats throughout the day and one of the capital's last honesty bars, plus complimentary packed lunches. 41hotel.com



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A decade of change

With the Victoria BID approaching its 10th anniversary in spring 2020, chairman Nigel Hughes reflects on an eventful decade

BY LUCY DOUGLAS

London of 10 years ago can seem like a distant city. Gordon Brown was still in Number 10 and no one had heard the term “Brexit”. The city was reeling from the financial crash while also gearing up to host one of the biggest international events in the sporting calendar: the 2012 Olympics.

“If you think back to then, it wasn’t the best time to be asking businesses for money. But we felt Victoria needed to have the resources of a BID to bring it forward in all areas,” says Nigel Hughes, chairman of the Victoria BID.

The research carried out in 2009 by the formative BID showed there was an appetite to make Victoria a destination to enjoy in its own right, rather than simply a transport hub to pass through en route to somewhere else.

A decade on, and the area has transformed into a place of entertainment, with developments like Nova and Eccleston Yards bringing a slew of

new restaurants to the area, plus Market Halls opening with some much-loved London street-food brands. “We’ve got a new theatre in The Other Palace; we’ve got a cinema in the Curzon,” says Nigel. “So there’s a lot more here to attract people.”

The result is making the area more appealing not only to tourists and visitors, but also to the staff working in the growing number of businesses making Victoria their home. Perceptions of Victoria are beginning to change.

GREENER PASTURES

“Even though it’s bordered by St James’s Park and Buckingham Palace, Victoria has actually been perceived as quite a grey area,” says Nigel, explaining that a key objective for the BID is to boost the quality and quantity of green spaces.

“That’s why we’re working on the project in Christchurch Gardens, because that could be a



Nova



Eccleston Yards

lovely gem of a garden but it hasn't been," he says. Victoria was also the first BID to undertake a green infrastructure audit, which was followed up with a best-practice guide and another groundbreaking environmental report, Green Benefits.

Many of the improvements to Victoria driven by the BID are more subtle – such as implementing free wifi, or tables and chairs in public spaces. But there are also big public events, such as food markets or supporting the Lumiere light exhibition. "All these things encourage people to stay in Victoria," says Nigel.

Looking to the next 10 years, he says the BID is working on some large-scale, strategic projects that will transform Victoria for the better. "What we'd like to see is a traffic scheme that reduces the impact of vehicles on the area, but also of the divisions caused by these major ring-roads," he says. "We're working on the Inner Ring Road project with TfL and Westminster and various stakeholders in the area, so we can hopefully come up with a traffic solution that's looking forward to how traffic conditions are going to change in the next few years."

And then of course there's the station: the country's second busiest in terms of passenger numbers, with some 75 million journeys made to or from it in 2018 (by comparison, Heathrow Airport was the port of 65 million journeys last year).

"It's a huge volume of people and the mainline station just isn't up to it," says Nigel. "When Crossrail 2 comes, it's got to be ready to receive it. That's probably 10 years away, but it's going to take that amount of time to get the station fit for purpose."

VICTORIA IN NUMBERS

Some of the BID's highlights from the last 10 years, at a glance

50,000 m²

Victoria BID footprint is covered by free wifi

2.3 million

People welcomed by Victoria's team of ambassadors

350 m²

Size of the living wall installed on the façade of the Rubens hotel – one of the largest in London



Living wall at the Rubens hotel

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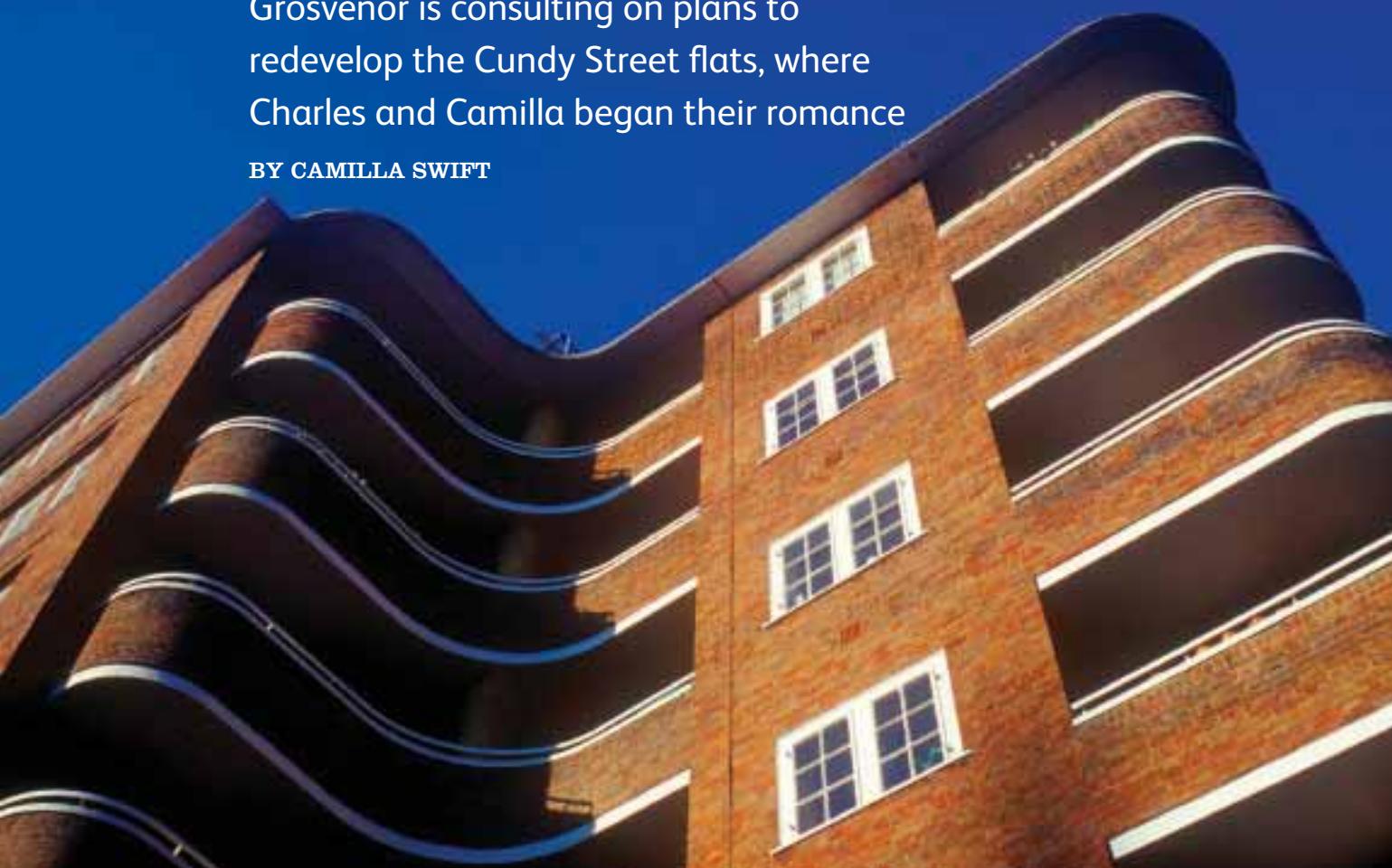
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Drawing up royal plans

Grosvenor is consulting on plans to redevelop the Cundy Street flats, where Charles and Camilla began their romance

BY CAMILLA SWIFT



Nestled between busy Victoria station and the bright lights of Sloane Square, Ebury Street is a quiet, mainly residential road. But there are big changes afoot, with Grosvenor planning a redevelopment that hasn't had the universal backing of locals.

In a triangle of land between Pimlico Road and Ebury Street sit the Cundy Street flats. Built after World War Two on a bombsite, the flats are where Prince Charles and the then Camilla Shand began their romance in 1972.

The area is made up of four blocks; Kylestrome, Lochmore, Laxford and Stack, which currently house 111 flats, and the lease on these is due to expire in 2021. One other building is included in the proposal; Walden House, which is currently leased to Westminster council and provides 40 homes. That lease was also due to expire in 2021 but has now been extended until 2023.

"We are proposing to redevelop the site entirely, and we've been communicating with our own residents for some time that a

redevelopment is coming," says Fergus Evans, project director at Grosvenor.

The current plans are for a mixture of affordable homes, market homes and senior living, which would be renamed the Cundy Street Quarter. At ground level, there would be a combination of retail, restaurants and public spaces. "We are exploring what that would look like," says Fergus. "We are considering a cinema, and something which came through strongly in the April consultation was that people would like a supermarket of some sort, so we've amended our plans in tune with that."

Grosvenor has decided to make this a "residential-led redevelopment". In practice, this means it is holding a series of consultations with residents, stakeholders and interested parties; asking them their views on the proposals, and what they would like to see from the new site.

A website called GiveMyView allows people who can't attend the consultation meetings to feed back on the proposals. But this strategy hasn't gone down well with everyone. "They should have consulted with us and other locals before drawing up their own plans," says James Wright, chairman of the Belgravia Residents' Association.

Grosvenor also plans to open up the current site, and create what it describes as a "reimagined village centre". "The fundamental of the master plan is to open up a new walking route between Orange Square and Ebury Square," explains Fergus. "This would be where

those ground-floor buildings would be orientated, and we have the opportunity to have lots of greening and good quality public space."

Due to the differing lease endings, Grosvenor expects the development to take place in two phases, with one starting in 2021 and the other in 2023. Each phase is expected to take two to two-and-a-half years to complete.

The consultation means that Grosvenor can adapt and change the proposals, and it would be fair to say that not all residents are pleased with the plans.

However, Fergus is adamant that Grosvenor won't ride roughshod over the demands of locals. "Some people are concerned about the quantum of retail on Ebury Street; they see it as a residential street," he admits. "We hear the concerns from the residents of Ebury Street in particular, and we're not just going to dig our heels in and say that's that. The whole reason why we're consulting is to hear those concerns and develop our proposals to respond to them."

The next step, then, is to convince locals, and Westminster council, that the plans are the right ones. "Our job now is to work with our architects to respond to the feedback, and we'd be looking to present our improved design to stakeholders and the wider community in September or October time," says Fergus.

To view the consultation boards and to give feedback online, visit givemyview.com/cundystreetquarter



Prince Charles and the then Camilla Shand began their romance at the Cundy Street flats in 1972



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