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Editor of the Year 2011: Mark Riddaway
Writer of the Year 2011: Viel Richardson

Cricket, let's face it, is a fairly divisive subject. To some it is the sporting equivalent of a Coleridge poem—richly textured, extremely long, sometimes gently narcotic, sometimes exploding with tension. To others, it's 22 men in jumpers hanging around in a field for five days with every possibility that neither side will ever actually win.

Some people just don't like sport, and even many of the people who do love sport (including those of every single nation not colonised by the Victorians) find cricket entirely baffling. So to devote not one but two features to this most esoteric of pass-times might seem a little indulgent. Add to that an article about ultra-marathons (although that isn't really about sport—it's about grit and guts and grieving) and there's a serious risk that the less sports minded among you might be using this edition for cat litter sooner than usual.

But in a Marylebone magazine, cricket is a subject that cannot be ignored, and for one good reason: the Marylebone Cricket Club. The MCC—ostensibly still a small local sports club—is the custodian of the laws of the game and the overlord of its most famous ground—Lord's—and hence has an extraordinary level of influence over this global sport. There aren't many local magazines that can claim as one of their own an institution with such an unlikely international reach—unless, as rumoured, the Mayfair Rotary Club really is the shadowy cabal behind the One World Government of shape-shifting lizard-men. But it probably isn't.

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ESTATE BRIEFING

STREET FOOD

For years now, the welcome presence of The Ginger Pig and La Fromagerie on Moxon Street has ensured that this little road has developed a reputation as something of a foodie destination. Now this reputation is set to be bolstered by the arrival of a handful of new but similarly high quality food retailers. The delightful wine merchant and deli Le Vieux Comptoir, whose story is told in this issue's food section, is already in place, and this summer will see the arrival, in the recently reconfigured Shoon unit, of the hugely popular Rococo chocolate shop, which is moving from the high street, and Aubaine—a restaurant, boulangerie and pâtisserie.

Every Sunday, the farmers' market adds to the flavour of the area by setting up in the Moxon Street carpark. 2013 marks the tenth anniversary of the market—a notable achievement and one well worth celebrating for the wonderful atmosphere that it has done so much to foster.

The market will be out in force for the summer fayre, as will the Moxon Street food retailers. Together with the area's many other restaurants, cafes and food stalls, they will again ensure that the event, like Moxon Street itself, is every food lover's idea of heaven.

*Toby Shannon, chief executive,
The Howard de Walden Estate*

SUMMER IN THE CITY

The Marylebone Summer Fayre is coming to town—and with your help it can provide a big windfall for a worthy cause

The Marylebone Summer Fayre is coming to town again on Sunday 16th June—now firmly established as one of the best and most engaging community events in London.

As well as entertaining vast crowds of people and showcasing the very best that Marylebone has to offer, one of the main functions of the fayre has always been to raise money for charity, and this year's beneficiary will again be Kids Company, a charity that provides practical, emotional and educational support to many of London's most vulnerable inner-city children. The charity runs two street level centres, a therapy house in south London, a drop-in provision in Camden, and therapeutic and social work services in over 30 schools around the capital. It reaches more than 17,000 children, offering them safety, support and hope for the future.

Many of the area's restaurants and retailers are again offering punters the chance to add £1 to their bill for Kids Company. The retailers have also come together to provide a spectacular haul of prizes for a huge fundraising tombola, which is being run on the day by the estate agency Sandfords and volunteers from Kids Company. There are some amazing prizes on offer—visit the Marylebone Summer Fayre website for updates on the current list of prizes.

Paddington Street Gardens, which hosts the main music stage, will again be at the centre of the fundraising effort, and this year the



bands will keep performing until 8pm, meaning even more time for the music to play and the tills to ring. As well as funding and organising the event, the Howard de Walden Estate is covering all the costs of the popular Festival Bar—this means that every penny spent there goes directly to Kids Company. There aren't many occasions in life when you can sup Pimm's or beer while feeling the warm glow of having given to charity, so this is one fundraising opportunity that can be genuinely savoured. The bar is being manned by staff from The Marylebone pub and Waitrose, whose generosity is much appreciated.

Although the fayre now has a well-established footprint, there are

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a large inflatable archway (like Wembley Stadium, but softer). Highlights include speed bikes, Spider Mountain and the Knight Frank inflatable football game. Anyone exhausted by the mere thought of such exertion might be better served visiting the Spa Area on Paddington Street, where therapists from local health and beauty companies will be offering a variety of treatments, massages and products to help visitors unwind.

This year sees the farmers' market taking to the streets again, with stalls lining Aybrook Street offering a fantastic selection of British produce. This summer marks the tenth anniversary of the arrival of the regular farmers' market in Marylebone—an anniversary well worth celebrating with the purchase of some seasonal vegetables or high quality meat.

Marylebone will, as ever, be filled with extraordinary food and drink. The now familiar cast of dancers will be returning to Devonshire Street to get the streets jumping, the Cabbages & Frocks market will be busily trading in the shadows of the parish church, and Moxon Street car park will again be filled with children's activities and fairground rides, including for the first time a kids' maze in which your children can be mislaid just long enough for you to have a good sit down. Marylebone Lane sees the return of the acoustic stage, providing a mellow soundtrack to a street filled with food and al fresco dining.

The Estate will also have its own marketing tent on the high street, with staff on hand to answer your questions. And of course the Marylebone Journal will be there as always, providing readers with the opportunity to pick up back issues and share their thoughts with us.



some subtle changes to this year's set-up. New Cavendish Street is becoming more of a focus than ever before—a result of the recent influx of some fantastic new retailers and restaurants. There will be plenty of outdoor tables along this stretch, allowing the likes of Fat of the Land, Galleria, Nordic Bakery, Amanzi Tea and the new burger specialists Slabs to cater to al fresco diners. Energetic entertainment will be provided by the Salsa Dance Arena while gentler thrills will be on offer thanks to a selection of buskers. Some small fairground rides, child-friendly retailers and a good selection of cake make this a perfect spot for families.

The Sports Area will return to the top of the high street, decorated with

LINKS**Marylebone Summer Fayre**

16 June

10am-5pm (streets)

10am-6:30pm (fairground)

11am-8pm (Paddington Street Gardens)

marylebonesummerfayre.com

PEOPLE

LOCAL LIVES
BRUCE FOGLE

Bruce Fogle is a veterinary surgeon, best-selling author of pet care books and travel narratives, and the father of the adventurer and presenter Ben. He lives in Notting Hill with his wife, the actress Julia Foster, and works at London Veterinary Clinic on York Street, which he founded in 1973

We have been local for coming up to 40 years now. Our kids—Emily, Ben and Tamara—were born in the same obstetricians, on Welbeck Street, and they grew up playing in the gardens in Portland Place. I'd take the paddling pool there and use the community pump to fill it—honestly, I really think they thought playing in a pool circumvented by red buses was normal for a while—but when we'd decided, at my wife Julia's insistence, to settle in London, it was on my condition that we rent a small cottage in the countryside, which we did. We stayed at weekends. I grew up in Canada in a remote place by a lake in the middle of nowhere, and it was important to me that while my kids were growing up they'd wake up to cows outside the window at least once a week.

I still think of that lake in Canada as my spiritual home. When I finally kick the bucket I want my ashes scattered there. Ben, too, always says the summers spent with my dad, fishing and hiking, were the most formative in determining his future career. Now he lives in Scotland with his wife, and I can see the appeal—but my wife is an urban girl, and when we met in 1972 she'd been



Image: Joseph Fox

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LOCAL LIVES



For no conceivable reason that I can remember, I announced that I wanted to work in a zoo for a bit and got offered a choice between London and San Francisco zoos. I chose London simply because I'd never been before and it sounded exotic—but I don't even like zoo animals

working at her career (as an actress) in London far longer than I had. It wasn't fair that just because I was a male, we should move back to Canada, so we stayed.

We met across an operating table in Knightsbridge. She'd brought her golden retriever, Honey, in for treatment in the surgery I was working at, and, after seeing I was rather slow on the uptake, she asked me out. We celebrated our 40th wedding anniversary last year. I've had a clinic in Marylebone almost all that time: first in Seymour Street, where I moved because I didn't want to tread on the toes of my former employer, then here on York Street. In those days, people who lived south of the parks would never venture north, so I knew that if I was based in Marylebone none of his customers would come here.

I'd also found that, aside from a man in Swiss Cottage who had a

temporary surgery in a basement near to where he used to meet his mistress, there weren't many vets. Vets would only set up in wealthy areas: Marylebone wasn't, and for the first few years I had all of north London, including the City, to attend. My clients were mainly pub cats and dogs, and when I took blood samples from these pets they would have extraordinarily high liver enzyme levels from the beer they'd drunk. That tradition of pub pets has gone now, which is a pity—not least because if you looked after their dog as a vet, then they would look after you when you came into the pub—it's a lovely way to do business.

There was a lot of old fashioned bartering back then, and when I worked on Seymour Street we had a wonderful relationship with the plumber, the electrician and the delicatessen that way. Those were the days when Marylebone High Street was the most boring in London. New Quebec Street was where all the plumbers and builders were, and neither Julie nor I could have imagined this dull pedestrian area, which you went to for convenience, could change so much. When we treated ourselves every Sunday to breakfast at the Greenery in the Churchill Hotel it was full of locals and terribly parochial. Now the same place is Locanda Locatelli and has a Michelin star.

I grew up surrounded by animals—my dad was always bringing injured animals home and leaving my mum to look after them—but when I started veterinary school I didn't love the subject at all. I'd only signed up because my best friend had, and when he switched to medicine I failed my first year. I only reapplied to prove them wrong, really—but in my year out at a virology business I became fascinated by viruses and how they travel, and by the time I started again at vet school I was hooked.

From then on it was easy, because when you're interested in something it's not work at all. The academic dean took an interest in me because I did so well, and when I'd finished

he had actually lined up a job for me in virology, which is what I wanted to do. But I turned it down. For no conceivable reason that I can remember, I announced that I wanted to work in a zoo for a bit and got offered a choice between London and San Francisco zoos. I chose London simply because I'd never been before and it sounded exotic—but I don't even like zoo animals. I stuck it out four months before moving on to be an assistant in the surgery where I met Julie.

Nowadays I divide my time between my clinic on York Street, where I work four days a week, and my work for charities—Hearing Dogs for Deaf People and Humane Society International—which I do at weekends and evenings. I've just got back from Cuba, where the situation is dire because it's such a poor country, with no government support for veterinary care. The vets there are brilliant, but they just don't have the money or the equipment. My task this afternoon is to make a few calls and try to source old x-ray machines for them. Most clinics are switching to digital here.

When you're old like me, getting involved with things like that, and with Hearing Dogs (which I co-founded with another Marylebone resident, Lady Babs Wright) is really satisfying—in part because it's easier to do. You're inherently respected, because you're older, and you feel quite happy not beating around the bush, so you can get away with more. More importantly, when you've been in this business as long as I have (and I'm 70) there's bound to be somebody you've met over the years who can help you out.

The funny thing is, I'm the baby in the partnership—my colleagues are 74 and 75. It makes you wonder what it is that makes us still want to go to work each day. And the answer, of course, is the bundle of fur that has just hopped up into my lap here. To spend all day with dogs and cats, and to be able to do something for them and the people who want to take care of them is the most rewarding thing there is.



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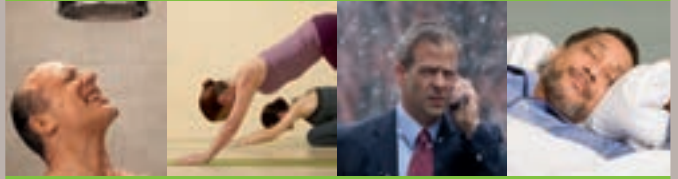


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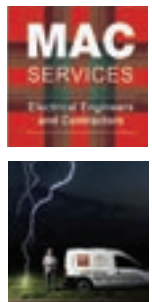
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FEATURES



HARD YARDS

*The extraordinary tale of a
restaurateur, a desert and a
ridiculous test of body and mind*



Tony Kitous has been a prominent Marylebone restaurateur for 20 years, having opened his first establishment in 1993 at the tender age of 22. His burgeoning stable of restaurants, which have done much to popularise Middle Eastern cuisine, includes Levant on Jason Court and the hugely popular Comptoir Libanais chain. In April this year, driven on by a family tragedy, Tony took part in the Marathon des Sables, one of the world's most ridiculously intense physical challenges—running 250km in just six days in the middle of the Sahara desert. It's the equivalent of running to Dover and back, carrying a heavy rucksack, while being slow-roasted in a large oven. Most people spend two years preparing. Tony had six months. And was fat. This is the inspiring, moving and, quite frankly, completely bonkers story of a man with absolutely no sense of his own limits

Day four of the Marathon des Sables is the stage that makes you or breaks you—75.7km, 47 miles, in the searing heat of the Sahara, after three days of intense physical punishment. If you finish that day, you'll finish the race. But plenty of people don't make it. You start at 8am, and it takes at least 12 hours—for some runners it's 24 hours or more. Your body is punished, but it's your mind that's really tested—despite the agony, you have to find ways to keep your legs going. One of the top runners counts the whole way: one, two, three, four, up to 100, then back to one, on and on and on. Another runner I spoke to said that he imagined someone had taken his daughter away and was keeping her captive at the finish line. For me, I thought about why I was there—about my cousin.

When my cousin Nassim was 15, he was diagnosed with a brain tumour. For the next few years, he went up and down, sometimes doing well, sometimes very ill. Then last May we heard that the cancer had become extremely aggressive and he only had weeks to live. It was a huge shock. He was very young—just 20 years old. He was such a lovely kid, and hadn't really had a chance to experience life. And yet now he was going to die.

I left Algeria more than 20 years ago, but we are still a very close-knit family. When his parents managed to find Nassim a place in a hospital in Paris, lots of the family travelled to France to be with him. When I went out there, I knew that it was going to be a tough experience, but I wasn't prepared for just how tough it would be—there he was, drifting in and out of consciousness, with a

HARD YARDS



tumour the size of a grapefruit, half the size of his head. The whole family suffered—it was really hard to see. When the day came that he passed away, I was there in the room. You can feel it—it's like a candle going out. There is nothing you can do, nothing you can say. You go numb. This is life, this is reality.

We take life for granted—we really do. If you spend just an hour on that ward, seeing those kids, hearing their stories, it makes you realise that you have to make the most of every moment you are given. You get sucked into everyday life, dragged along by it. You complain about petty things, you worry about work, you get upset by the football results—it's all just so pointless. When I got back to London, I knew I had to do something—a tribute to my cousin, but also something that would change my own life. I had become fat and complacent. I was almost 100kg,

“

Day two was even tougher, with steep, steep hills. Sometimes you had to pull yourself up with a rope. You're grappling along, digging in with your feet, your knees, even your hands, with your face up against the rocks. It's loose underfoot, you're worried you're going to fall

eating out every night. So I decided to run the Marathon des Sables. I knew it wouldn't bring my cousin back, but it might raise some money for Macmillan and for the hospital in France where he'd passed away.

Usually you have to book a place two years in advance, but I knew someone I could call. It was the beginning of September, and I had just over six months to prepare. I had barely done any exercise for five years. That first day at the gym it was like an elephant on that treadmill. I managed 5km, but only just.

I was disciplined, driven, eating properly, in the gym every day. The weight began to fall away, and my fitness began to return. I was running 5km, then 8km, then 10km. Then in mid-December I picked up a calf injury. When I was told that it would take six to eight weeks to heal, I was heartbroken, but after a week I started training again—just cycling

and rowing. I still had this vague hope that I would be okay.

By mid-February, when I was able to start running properly again, I had less than two months left. Every day I was there on the treadmill. The guys at the gym told me that I was pushing it, and I said, “I know, but I have to.” In March alone I lost around 16kg—no exaggeration. By the end I was averaging 32km every day. I would wake up, drink four shots of coffee and go.

I wanted to raise £10,000, so I set up a JustGiving page and I emailed everyone I knew. When you see the donations starting to come in, when you read all the messages of support, it really motivates you. In less than four weeks I had £40,000 pledged to me and I felt like I was flying. I was running on the treadmill watching the TV, and I heard the manager of Tottenham Hotspur being interviewed, and he said something I’ll never forget. He said: “It’s the mind that controls the body.” At that moment, my body was doing everything I wanted just because I wanted it so much. That day I ran 50km in 5 hours and 5 minutes. And the next day I got up and did it again.

When the day came to fly to Morocco, I felt awful, like I had flu. I had no energy at all. I had completely overdone it, training for six weeks without a day off. After we arrived, the competitors were driven for five or six hours on nice air conditioned buses towards the desert. When the terrain became impassable, we were picked up in army lorries that drove us into the wilderness. It felt like going to war—except the conditions were worse! You think you’re a soldier, fighting your way through just to stay alive.

That night we were allocated our tents and met the people we’d be sharing with. It was a rough night, sleeping on stones. The organisers pick up the tents each morning and drive them to the finish line of that day’s stage, but everything else you have to carry, so it’s up to you how comfortable



you want to be. You can take a mat, you can take a pillow, you can take a hairbrush if you really want. But you have to carry it all. Some people want to sleep rough at night and run light the next day, others want it the other way round. I tried to sleep as comfortably as possible and run as comfortably as possible. Somehow I managed to do neither—I slept rough and ran with a huge weight on my back.

We started running at 8:30am. The first stage was 37.2km. I knew I was fit, but the conditions could not have been further from my gym—sand dunes, stones, steep hills, dry rivers, all at temperatures of up to 55°C. Blisters are a major problem. And if you run on those blisters, you get blisters on your blisters. I wrapped my feet every day, then ran in ski socks, compression tights, gators, and shoes three or four sizes too big. The heat was extraordinary, but I’d rather be too hot than have blisters.

I began suffering almost immediately. My back was hurting, because I hadn’t trained enough—all I had done was run on a treadmill—and the weight of my rucksack was giving me trouble. You’ve got to carry so much—distress flares, whistle, knife, anti-venom, foil blankets. You can’t take any chances—in 1994 one of the competitors got lost. He started in Morocco and was discovered in a hospital in Algeria. He survived by drinking his own urine. People have died. If you were in Europe, this race would be illegal. No government would allow it.

Day two was even tougher, with steep, steep hills. Sometimes you had to pull yourself up with a rope. You’re grappling along, digging in with your feet, your knees, even your hands, with your face up against the rocks. It’s loose underfoot, you’re worried you’re going to fall. One of the runners had a prosthetic leg.

HARD YARDS



When we were battling up those hills, seeing these army guys, these iron man runners, really struggling, I kept saying, “Think about the guy with one leg!” He managed it as well—an extraordinary man.

Day four was a beast. That day, more than any other, I needed help. With two checkpoints left to go, I was running next to this French guy. He wasn’t in the mood to chat, but I kept talking at him. I could feel him wishing that I would shut up, but I needed that distraction. I needed somebody to help me. It goes in cycles when you run with someone else—sometimes you’re stronger, sometimes he’s stronger, and you keep pushing each other—so in the end I had to bribe him. Technically you’re not allowed to share food, but I gave him some smoked almonds. Then he felt like he had to bond with me. Eventually we saw the finish line—you can see the light in the

distance like a mirage, sometimes it disappears from view and you get a bit scared, then you see it again and it boosts you, but it never seems to get any closer. That last 5km is the longest hour of your life. At the end, the Frenchman and I hugged like we were brothers, then the adrenaline was flooding me, it was like I was high. That day I came 182nd out of 1,000 people. That was the day that defined it all for me. You see a woman who’s 74 years old finishing that stage and you realise that fitness is not so important. It’s how strong you are in your mind. You see people who are hurting more than they’ve ever hurt, but who are doing everything they can to help their colleagues. You make a bond out there in the desert. You’re like comrades in a war.

It sounds ridiculous, but the final two days were easy. Every kilometre we ran was a kilometre closer to the end.

After I’d finished, I wanted to do more. That Sunday, I ran a half marathon in Agadir. I tried to get a place in the London Marathon the following weekend, but I couldn’t get one.

Back when I was 10 I was a street seller in Algeria, so I’ve come a long way in my life. I’ve seen a lot, I’ve opened nine restaurants, I’ve travelled all over the world. But for me, this is the best thing I have ever done—the single best thing. It was just me, on my own, exposed. It gets you closer to who you are. You have a choice—you can give up if you want—but you have to spend every minute of every day refusing to make that choice. That’s what I did. And I’ll do the same next year.

Tony is preparing to run next year’s Marathon des Sables, and is aiming to raise £100,000 for cancer charities. To contribute to his mission, visit: justgiving.com/Tony-Kitous



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BIG INTERVIEW

LORD OF THE MANOR

This summer, all eyes will turn to Lord's, the home of the Marylebone Cricket Club, as one of the world's most intense sporting rivalries resumes. England fast bowler Stuart Broad talks to Viel Richardson about the Ashes, responding to pressure, and playing at the historic home of cricket

His grandfather was a member of the MCC, and his father scored three half centuries for England at Lord's. So you would think that, such is its familiarity, coming to the 'home of cricket' might not hold quite the same magic for Stuart Broad as for someone like me, whose childhood experiences were filtered solely through the dulcet tones of Test Match Special—but you would be wrong.

"When my granddad brought me down to the ground for my first visit aged about 12, I was so excited about a trip to Lord's that I was out of bed at 5am," says the England fast bowler. It is a feeling that has never left Stuart, even though the ensuing years have seen him make the trip to the famous ground on many occasions since. "I have been fortunate to play quite a few games here now," he says, "and it is an amazingly special place to play. My first Test match was here in 2008, and I have been lucky enough to have a bit of personal success here."

When Stuart says this, it is with a touch of classic English understatement. In his last visit to the ground, in May this year, he turned

what had been a finely balanced match with an extraordinary burst of seven wickets in just 11 overs, leaving New Zealand completely shattered. At Test level, his three best innings with the bat and his two best innings with the ball have all come at Lord's. To say that he's had "a bit" of success here is like saying that Mike Gatting has had "a bit" of lunch.

There is a tradition at this famous old ground that every player who scores a century, takes five wickets in an innings or 10 wickets in a match has his name etched onto the Honours Boards that hang in the dressing rooms at the heart of the historic pavilion. It is one of the game's greatest honours to see your name up there, recorded for posterity; an honour many of the world's greatest players—Sachin Tendulkar, Muttiah Muralitharan, Brian Lara, Shane Warne, Ricky Ponting—have been denied. Getting onto one of these lists is impressive—and Stuart Broad's name sits on all three, one of only four people ever to achieve this, dating all the way back to 1884.

"It is incredibly special," he says. "I looked it up and the last person to

get on all three boards was Sir Ian Botham in 1978; I was eight at the time. I never dreamt that I would get a Test match hundred so to be able to get one at Lord's was incredible. If most people could choose to score a century anywhere in the world it would probably be here. I remember just how much it meant to Freddie Flintoff to get a five-for and get onto two of the boards. So to get on all three will live with me forever; it is something that no one can take away from you."

He is full of praise for how the MCC turns an appearance at the ground into an even more special occasion. "If you get five-for or a 100 here they give you a picture of the board, a picture of you celebrating, and a scorecard. Also if you win a Test match here they give you a score card imprinted in gold writing. Lord's is a lovely place to come—you are treated like cricketing royalty."

But for all its grandeur, Lord's is at heart a raw sporting arena—a place where the wide open spaces leave a cricketer with nowhere to hide. And it's not an easy place to play.



Stuart Broad is an ambassador for the Investec Ashes

LORD OF THE MANOR



Stuart Broad celebrates a wicket at Lord's for England against South Africa in 2012

LORD'S A-LEAPING

Jean-Paul Aubin-Parvu on Thomas Lord and the birth of the Marylebone Cricket Club

The exclusive White Conduit Cricket Club, which played its matches on White Conduit Fields in Islington in the 1780s, boasted several members of the aristocracy among its number. Apparently unhappy at the watching hoi polloi shamelessly voicing their opinions, they turned to Thomas Lord, a practice bowler and attendant at the club, to find them a new, more private place to play.

Lord, a Yorkshireman, was a shrewd entrepreneur who traded in booze and dabbled in property. He agreed to develop

a ground provided the club indemnify him against any financial loss. He leased land from the Portman Estate and built a pitch on Dorset Fields, the area now covered by Dorset Square. He named the ground Lord's and erected a high perimeter fence, while grazing sheep kept the grass short. The first match played at Lord's was between Middlesex and Essex on 31st May 1787.

The Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) was founded that same year. In 1788, the MCC played its inaugural game against its 'parent', the White Conduit Club. The MCC laid down a Code of Laws, requiring the wickets to be pitched 22 yards apart and detailing how players could be given out. These laws were quickly adopted throughout the game.

With land values rising, the ground was sold in 1809. Lord dug up the pitch and relocated to North Bank, Regent's Park. He was on the move again five years later as the Regent's Park Canal was about to be cut through the middle of the wicket. The ground was moved to its present site, with

the first game played between the MCC and Hertfordshire on 22nd June 1814.

In 1825, at the age of 70, Lord sold the ground to the cricketer and Bank of England director William Ward. Lord's transformed over the years with taverns, grandstands, a new pavilion and scoreboards. The grazing sheep were finally evicted and replaced with a mowing machine, and in 1864, the first groundsman was appointed to push it.

In 1877, the MCC invited Middlesex to adopt Lord's as its county ground. Seven years later, in the first Test match played there, England beat Australia by an innings.

Lord's remains the home of the MCC, which retains a prominent role in the game, especially in promoting the laws of cricket and safeguarding its spirit. Lord's remains the world's foremost cricketing venue. Australian legend Sir Donald Bradman summed up the special appeal of the place. "It does not have the best of pitches, it does not have the best of playing fields but it has got an atmosphere you can feel."

Something that might surprise those who have only seen those wide open spaces from afar is that the most revered cricket ground in the world isn't level.

"There is a five or six foot slope running from the northwest to the southeast of the ground," says Stuart. "The slope can make this a difficult place to play. If you are not used to it, it can put you off your game. So while there is an awareness of the special nature of the place, on game day you are concentrating on how you're going to deal with the conditions in front of you. It is something that can really put bowlers off. I had to learn how to bowl here. A great deal of batting and bowling has to do with being well balanced when making a shot or bowling. As a bowler you are arriving at speed after a long run-up and some bowlers really struggle with the slope pushing them off balance in their delivery stride."

The honours board would suggest that the slope suits Stuart, but there has been some serendipity involved in his affinity with the conditions. He has taken most of his wickets running 'down the hill', as most cricketers call it. Initially he struggled, but had no choice but to persist—Jimmy Anderson, England's premier strike bowler, always gets first choice of ends, and he prefers running up the hill. Unfortunately for his many victims, Stuart's perseverance with the slope bore dividends, and now he wouldn't have it any other way.

The century he scored here—169 against Pakistan in 2010—is his only hundred in Test cricket. "It is a great place to bat because you get such value for your shots," he tells me. "If you play your shots and the ball beats the infield it is far because the ground is so fast. That suits my style of play because I like hitting boundaries."

When I ask if there is any downsides to this famous old venue, a quick smile flashes across Stuart's face. "The only bad thing I suppose is the dressing room balcony, because you can only fit five people on it. I'm a

terrible watcher, a really nervous one. I'm fine when I'm on the field and can influence the game. If there's a particularly tense period going on, you can find yourself watching things unfold on the dressing room telly because there's no space on the balcony. There's always a bit of a delay on the television pictures, so you'll hear the roar of the crowd and then there's a short lag before you know what it's for. It not a situation designed to keep people like me calm!"

A high level of tension is almost certain to be in evidence when it comes to the main event of this summer—the Ashes series—during which Australia will visit Lord's to do battle for the soul of English cricket, the ghost of which resides in a terracotta urn first presented in about 1882 in Melbourne—possibly the world's smallest and most delicate trophy.

The contest is one of the oldest in international sport, and one of the most fiercely fought. "You have to tell yourself that it is just another Test series, but the English love beating Australia, they have a real passion for it and the media attention is off the chart," Stuart explains. "In international cricket you get used to facing the highs and lows, but in an Ashes series because of the increased interest and pressure those highs and lows are much more extreme. If you win, everyone is, 'Wow it's amazing!' And if you lose, everyone is, 'What's going on?' So things are just intensified. It is fantastic, and a great experience to play in."

So how does he see things in the Australian camp, where there has been some very un-Australian confusion of late, resulting in several surprises in the squad chosen to tour England? "I don't read too much into any problems the Aussies may have at the moment," he insists. "Any issues they have had will make them stronger as a team, and they will arrive fully ready to beat us in our own backyard. We have held the Ashes for a few years now and they want them back. Besides it is always dangerous

if you start to think too much about what's happening in the opposition team. I have always taken the view that whether I am playing league cricket on a Saturday for my county or in front of 80,000 people in an Ashes Test, it doesn't change my routine of how I get the ball down the other end. As a bowler, I still have to aim for the top of off stump, as a batsman it doesn't change where you are going to play your shots. When you are out there in the middle you have to try and not let the whole circus surrounding the event affect your game."

But for all his claims of ignoring the hoopla and treating every game the same, Stuart is a sportsman who comes to life in the big moments, the big games, the big series—that second inning burst against New Zealand being a case in point.

"I would say I'm a 'grab the bull by the horns' type cricketer. I always want the ball, and if I can change momentum with the bat I'll try and play a few shots. Changing the momentum in cricket can turn a game. So if we're on the back foot, I'm the type of cricketer who will throw a few punches to get back on the front foot. It is about trying to get momentum back in your favour, and then pushing on. I really love it. I thrive when the pressure's on and you are expected to perform"

So Australians be warned: this hugely talented, combative cricketer will—all being well—be ready and waiting to continue one of the longest-running rivalries in sport. And when he faces them at the home of their chosen game, he will be doing so in an arena that has so far been very good to him indeed.

"It will always be a place that is very close to me," he says. "It has a great feel even when there's no one in the stands. When you walk out there as a player, there is a general buzz about the ground, with the champagne corks flying. I've been out fielding at third man kicking champagne corks off the outfield. There really is no other place like it."

CULTURE

AUSTEN MAESTRO



Image: Ellie Kurtz

*Clare Finney meets Simon Reade, the writer who took on the daunting task of adapting *Pride and Prejudice* for the stage—an adaptation that provides the centrepiece to the Regent's Park Open Air Theatre's summer schedule*

It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man or woman looking to adapt *Pride and Prejudice* does so in the shadow of the BBC. Not only does the image of Colin Firth in a wet shirt remain inextricably associated with Mr Darcy, but the possibility that anyone could surpass Andrew Davies's sensitive and intelligent handling of one of the best-loved books in English seems remote at best. Yet when the Theatre Royal Bath asked Simon Reade to adapt Jane Austen's masterpiece, he didn't even hesitate.

A freelance writer and producer who has adapted numerous novels for stage and television, the existence of Firth's Darcy proved no more of an impediment to Simon Reade's taking on Jane Austen than the curious fact that, when he first came across the author's work in the form of *Mansfield Park*, he hated her. "We studied her at school when I was 17," he sighs, "and I was so bored." Consigning her and her "trivial, enclosed world"—or so he thought then—to the shelf, he pursued his theatre career, first as literary manager at Notting Hill Gate, then



There is always an expectation when you are working with familiar material, but it's about reinventing it, telling a familiar story in an unfamiliar way

at the Royal Shakespeare Company, where he adapted his first book, *Tales from Ovid* by Ted Hughes. Not once did Austen touch him. Then, in 2009, Theatre Royal Bath wanted him to bring *Pride and Prejudice* to the stage.

Before he knew it, Simon was writing out Austen's tome by hand—his tried and trusted approach to adapting books for stage—and discovering for the first time that this “trivial” melee of marriage concerns contained more than he realised. “Suddenly, I was looking at it again and thinking, gosh, this is

deeply political, with class war and interfamilial crises,” he laughs. Partly, he attributes this to him not being “an arrogant 17-year-old boy”. While by no means averse to the teaching of Austen to schoolchildren (“the more familiar you are, the more there is to rediscover”) he thinks it shouldn't be done without heed for Austen's political and social vision. His school's choice of text didn't help: *Mansfield Park* might be a worthy piece of fiction, but a heroine referred to by Austen as “my Fanny” was “guaranteed to raise titters among 17-year-old boys”.

Though wary of putting too personal a stamp on his work, as the father of three daughters Simon couldn't help but bring his own experiences to bear in adapting *Pride and Prejudice*. “There's a lot about Mr Bennet and his relationship with his daughters in the play,” he says, “particularly Elizabeth.” You'll find a more sympathetic interpretation of Mrs Bennet than you're perhaps used to, too. While the prospect of being left destitute if her daughters aren't all married off is not one that Simon will ever face, having care of four children means he is conscious of how distressing that must have been—and, together with director Deborah Bruce, he is determined to do justice to a lady who, for all her faults, was “pretty tenacious, and had a big task on her hands”.

Casting for Regent's Park will be everything. When I speak to Simon, only the roles of Mr Darcy and a few sisters have been assigned, but he has a pretty good idea of what they're looking for. “One of the things that's important with this play, particularly the Open Air Theatre version, is that it needs good classical actors with welly in their voice.” This doesn't necessarily mean older performers, but it does mean a good ability to enunciate—“to

get teeth round Austen's language,” as Simon calls it—and to project. In fact, the protagonists of *Pride and Prejudice* are pretty young—nearer school-leaving age than the comparatively ancient 35 that Colin Firth was when he pulled on those famous breeches. Their coming-of-age is one of the main filters through which Simon distilled the 350-odd page novel into a two hour play. “Elizabeth Bennet, and to a certain extent Darcy too, are young people discovering the adult world and bringing their childhood zeal and imagination to bear on it.” Together, they embark on a learning experience encompassing everything from sexual attraction to the chopped logic and coded formalities of monsters like Catherine de Burgh, and it is through this lens that the audience will see them in Simon's play.

The second key filter for Simon was Austen's political awareness—so deeply embedded in her glittering sentences it has often been overlooked. “Looking back, I think it was mainly this political part I didn't appreciate,” Simon says. “The criticism at the time was quite dismissive—it was generally believed that her society and politics were only to do with inter-parish issues and that she wrote in a bubble—but there were many clues to the contrary which have only come to light in the past 30 years.” Revisiting the novel with the benefit of maturity, he was able to identify these nuggets and bring them, quite literally, into the spotlight.

One of these clues in particular stood out for Simon: a comment from

LINKS

Pride and Prejudice
20 June – 20 July

Regent's Park Open Air Theatre
openairtheatre.com

AUSTEN MAESTRO

Mr Darcy about the importance of keeping up family libraries “in such days as these”. “He is an aristocrat of old family who, up until recently, were the only ones educated and rich enough to own and read books,” Simon explains. “Austen wrote this just after the French Revolution—a time when the middle class had been rousing the rabble and looking to cut off the heads of aristocrats a few years previously. That phrase ‘in such days as these’ gives away Darcy’s belief that it is his duty as an aristocrat to hoard culture lest the middle classes get a hold.”

This throwaway remark offers a vital clue to Darcy’s brand of snobbery and Austen’s knowledge of contemporary affairs, and such clues are everywhere. Far from leaving the Napoleonic wars out of her writing (as she is often accused) the troops are brought right into the heart of Longbourne—and indeed the Bennet girls—in the deceptively attractive shape of Wickham, a young officer who has been stationed in Meryton, a nearby garrison town. It was, says Simon, the 17th century equivalent of Wooten Bassett. “If you set a story today in a garrison town and you talked about meeting these soldiers in a pub and them having affairs, you wouldn’t need to explain about Iraq or Afghanistan,” he continues, “because we’d know about it. It’s only because we don’t know the history that we don’t realise how specific she’s being.”

The lure of the Redcoats for middle class ladies and the revolutionary fears among landed gentry were the backdrop for a novel which, while not published until 1813, was actually written 16 years earlier. Austen’s brother was an active member of the militia at that time and, as Simon knew from reading the author’s manuscripts, letters and other trivia, wrote home often. Such immersion in Austen’s life was vital in informing Simon’s adaptation. “I know other people try to keep their distance, but I’m the opposite,” he tells me. “I respect my writers, and I love having



The criticism of Jane Austen was quite dismissive—it was generally believed that her society and politics were only to do with inter-parish issues and that she wrote in a bubble—but there are many clues to the contrary

their involvement.” In the case of Michael Morpurgo, whose books Simon has adapted, this involves chatting on the phone and visiting his home in Devon; in the case of Austen, it was reading as much as possible about her life and work.

She was a prolific letter writer, and a number of lines in Simon’s version of *Pride and Prejudice* come not from the novel, but from her epistles to Cassandra. “I have been enabled to give a considerable improvement of dignity to my cap, which was before too nidgetty to please me,” she writes in one. This line is resurrected in the play in Lydia’s mouth—an endearing tribute to the young author and the bright, sparkling manner in which she communicated on paper. Novelist she may be to the core, but “it’s a dramatist’s punctuation and dialogue” that Simon sees, and brings to life in his version for the stage.

Looking back, this is not very surprising. Going to the theatre was a major pastime in the pre-screen era, and this and the practice of reading aloud in the evening would have inevitably influenced writers.



“Novels were written to be a shared experience, as well as a personal one,” Simon says, “and that’s inherent in the text.” Austen would almost certainly have been in the reading seat: doing the voices, acting and bringing to life the text in a way that, according to Simon, can still be heard in the rhythm of her letters and novels. For the man charged with adapting it for stage, this seems a blessing. But I still find myself wondering how much the BBC’s totemic version has turned this otherwise hallowed challenge into a curse.

Simon smiles patiently. “There is always an expectation when you are working with familiar material,” he shrugs, “but it’s about reinventing it, telling a familiar story in an unfamiliar way.” While our favourite lines and your favourite characters will be there, he reassures me, “the hope is that you’ll hear it as if for the first time”.

Colin Firth in a white shirt it won’t be, but with such intelligence, sensitivity and insight as Simon patently possesses, that won’t necessarily be such a bad thing.

OPEN SEASON

Timothy Sheader, artistic director of Regent's Park Open Air Theatre, on the pleasures and challenges of staging plays out in the elements

How does weather affect your job?
My job is to select and then plan the shows from the artistic side of things, so the weather comes into play from the very beginning of that process. What show are you going to put on? How might it be affected by different types of weather? It's no good doing a sun-bleached version of some Shakespearean comedy. When I first started I directed *Twelfth Night* and set it in Brazil, with pirates throwing their heads under fountains and throwing melons around stage. It was great when the weather was great, but it didn't really work when shivering under blankets. You have to pick things that will benefit from being exposed to the elements rather than relying on a particular one. You want something organic and visceral, so that whatever the weather it adds an intensity. It's basically picking plays that aren't going to fall apart from being outside and that are going to reach out into this big auditorium of shared light and benefit from the audience seeing the nightfall together.

Anything you would absolutely avoid?
I try to avoid naturalism. I don't think it's good to do a kitchen sink drama, or something set in a drawing room. I wouldn't choose to do

Pinter. For me it's about big casts, big stories, big plots, shows that have an epic quality.

What's the best weather for performance?
We don't just say we perform in good weather, we perform in most weather—and weather affects your live experience. Theatre is about being live and present in that space and that time—something being uniquely created for that evening. It's even more the case in outdoor theatre because the performance is affected by the quality of light and the weather. If it's been raining all day and the rain stops 10 minutes before the show starts there's an electricity in the air. The acoustics are amazing and the quality of light is amazing and everything is just that much sharper. So rain doesn't put us off.

Any particularly memorable weather events?
The weather in this country changes so fast. I remember on a production of the *Crucible* I had 20 girls sat on tree stumps throughout most of the play. They just had to stare and make small and very specific movements for almost three hours. And in one performance one of the girls couldn't go back on after the interval because she was getting sunstroke, and then that very same night they were all

so cold they had to come off at the interval and be wrapped in silver foil blankets.

How do the actors cope with the extremes?
Unfortunately you can't design costumes around the weather. In *Into the Woods* the set was mulch and wood chip barks on the floor and it rained a lot, so the stepsisters wore brogues instead of high heels which were slipping into bog. But when we did *Lord of the Flies* the second half opened with an eight-year-old standing in his y-fronts and a life belt—and even if it was 10pm and wet and cold he was there in his pants to do the scene. We take care of them as much as possible—you have someone waiting off stage with blankets and a hot water bottle and all the rest of it—but getting cold and wet and sunburnt is just part of the gig.

Any advice for the audience?
Most of our audiences do their research—follow the weather, check what's going to happen, work out what to wear and how many blankets to bring. Sun hats and sun cream can be important. Basically you have to think you are sitting for two and half hours in any weather, and you will have a better experience by being prepared.



Image: David Jensen



LAROQUE AND ROLL

Christina Laroque is the leader and vocal coach of the Marylebone Rock Choir. This year sees her release her first solo single and perform with the choir at the O2 Arena. Jean-Paul Aubin-Parvu hears her story

You may never have met her, but the chances are you've heard her. Marylebone resident Christina Laroque, a talented singer, pianist and performer, is the leader and vocal coach of the Marylebone Rock Choir. For the past four years this hip-swinging choir has performed melodious marvels at the Marylebone Christmas Lights. "That's always one of our favourite performances," says Christina. "We absolutely love it, especially the snow coming on when we sing Let It Snow."

Marylebone Rock Choir is open to everyone and currently has 150 members. "You don't need any previous singing experience or be able to read music," says Christina. "And there's no audition. People find that their voices improve within the first few months, so my role is to ensure everyone has a great time while also teaching them about music and vocal technique. We sing feel good songs—

pop, gospel and motown—and meet every Thursday during term times at St Cyprian's on Glentworth Street. The church has lovely acoustics, so you really get to hear how good we sound."

Christina is now set to make sonic waves as a solo artist. "I've started working with a new manager, who's also an excellent songwriter in the R&B, pop genre. He wrote a song for me which he believes is going to break me into the industry. So when this single is released, which should be sometime in May, we're going to find out how people react to me as Christina Laroque."

The single is called Fade Away. "The song is about not letting your dreams fade away," explains Christina. "It actually goes quite well with my story. The lyrics are: 'No matter what religion you are, or where you come from, believe in yourself and don't let your dreams fade away.'"

So is Christina looking forward to the single's release? "I can't wait," she beams. There's a lot happening right now." Such as making the promotional video: "Just a simple video to show how I look and to show the song," says Christina. This won't be her first time in front of the camera. "I have also done a few promotional videos at Paul Weller's Black Barn Studios. He offered me a day in his studio where I recorded two rock songs with a full-on band—an amazing experience. But they were cover versions of other people's songs, which on You Tube is very useful to have. Hopefully people like those versions and then start following you."

Christina came up with her stage name—Laroque—while on holiday in the south of France. "I was driving through the mountains with my brother and his friend. We were trying to come up with a good stage name, thinking along the lines of Florence and the Machine, Marina and the Diamonds. One of the guys suggested Christina on the Rocks, which I thought sounded like a cocktail, and then we drove through a little village called Laroque des Alberes. And I said: 'Oh my goodness! How about Christina Laroque?' It has the word rock in it, but because of the spelling it's also quite jazzy, which is perfect, because I love all styles of music. My real name is Dmytryk, which is not as musical sounding."

Ah yes, for though Christina is now Marylebone to the core, she hails from the Ukraine. When Christina arrived in London with her mum and brother at the age of 12, the extent of her English amounted to saying thank you, hello and goodbye. "It was a real culture shock, coming from a

little town in Ukraine to the capital of England, Europe, the world. The first year was really hard because I didn't speak any English."

It was through music that Christina, the daughter of classical musicians, would find her confidence. She had given her first performance at the age of six and started piano and music lessons aged nine, as well as singing in children's choirs. "And when we moved to London the first thing my mum did was put me into a music school," remembers Christina. "She looked for a music school even before she looked for an academic school."

Christina attended Trinity College of Music (then in Marylebone), before joining the Junior Academy ranks at the Royal Academy of Music to study voice and piano. "It was a real inspiration to be surrounded by the older musicians," says Christina. "You could hear all sorts of music in the rooms. It's such a lovely building and there is also the museum."

Aged 18, Christina left the sixth form at St Marylebone School intent on doing a classical singing degree at the Royal Academy of Music, but was told she wasn't yet ready for the physical demands required in classical singing. 'You have all the potential but you're just a little too young,' they said. 'Come back in three years. We'll take you on. So go off and do something else.'

Christina did exactly that, graduating with a BMus in Popular Music Performance from Vocal Tech in 2008. "Switching from classical to pop singing has led to some fantastic opportunities in the pop world. One of the best decisions made for me."

Christina joined Rock Choir in February 2009. Started in 2005 by musician and singer Caroline Redman Lusher, Rock Choir now boasts upwards of 16,000 members in 240 towns nationwide. Christina looks after Marylebone, Ealing, Hampstead and Woodford and Wanstead—just under 500 members. "I'm very happy with Rock Choir. For a musician to find a paid job and a job that you love is really difficult."



Laroque has the word rock in it, but because of the spelling it's also quite jazzy, which is perfect, because I love all styles of music. My real name is Dmytryk, which is not quite as musical sounding

These 16,000 singers know how to rock. "A few years ago we managed to fill Wembley Arena with choir members," says Christina. "You have the whole arena singing and moving and it's just such a huge buzz. Then we got invited to Wembley Stadium in September 2012, to support the Saracens match. We sang three songs at half time. There were 3,000 of us and it was an amazing sound."

Rock Choir is preparing to fill the O2 Arena later this summer. "I will be taking centre stage in the opening of the show, singing live and performing specially choreographed dance routines," says Christine.

But not even Wembley and the O2 Arena can compete with the Marylebone Christmas Lights in terms of sheer spectacle. So does the Marylebone Rock Choir hope to perform for a fifth time this November? "Yes," replies Christina. "We have the date in our diaries."

LINKS

Christina Laroque
christinalaroque.com

Rock Choir
rockchoir.com

BY SASHA GARWOOD



The truth that “the manifestation of racism has changed but the language hasn’t” is demonstrated repeatedly through relationships, professional encounters, education, and continual meaningless gestures toward inclusivity

ALL REVIEWED TITLES AVAILABLE FROM DAUNT

Daunt Books

83 Marylebone High Street
020 7224 2295
dauntbooks.co.uk

BOOK OF THE MONTH

Americanah

by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
Fourth Estate, £20

Americanah is glorious—part love story, part social comedy, part pitch-perfect discussion of racism in contemporary culture, and part meditation on home, identity and returning. It is the story of two young Nigerians: Ifemelu, high-flying student turned notorious race blogger, and Obinze, her first love, lost after the traumatic demands of survival in the US shatter their long-distance bond.

I genuinely felt educated by this novel: Adichie does much to undermine Western assumptions about ‘third world’ countries, and pays keen attention to the politics of privilege—evident both in some wince-inducingly believable scenes (the white woman who calls all black women beautiful, the roommate who expects Ifemelu to “kill her dog with voodoo”, or the college receptionist who responds to Ifemelu’s assertion that “I speak English...” with “I bet you do, I just don’t know how well”) and through Ifemelu’s blog, which discusses everything from solidarity with Michelle Obama to the hazards of “travelling whilst black”. The truth that “the manifestation of racism has changed but the language hasn’t” is demonstrated repeatedly through relationships, professional encounters, education, and continual meaningless gestures toward inclusivity: “The point of diversity talks was not to inspire real change, but to make people feel good about themselves.” For a reader sufficiently mired in white privilege to never have considered the politics of hair, for example, or the finer implications of gradations in skin colour (“And now, he’s with a sister, and a chocolate sister at that!”) it borders on revelatory.

This is far more than polemic, though. It’s a romance, and a sensitive exploration of identity and belonging, written with wisdom and grace. Adichie has empathy and perspicacity as well as wit: Ifemelu is complex and clever and multi-dimensional and Obinze and the supporting cast are drawn with an acute, compassionate eye. The culture clash, too, is there in all its glorious complexity. Ifemelu’s friend points out, “I didn’t know I was supposed to HAVE issues until I came to America”, while her aunt laments of her son’s inner conflict, “That is the kind of thing they teach them here. Everybody is conflicted, identity this, identity that.” As Ifemelu writes in her blog, geography profoundly changes identity: “in America, you’re black, baby”, not Jamaican, Ghanian, Nigerian or anything else.

All that, and she can write. Her style is engaging and almost conversational, but with a directness and intellectual acumen that brings her characters and their thought processes vividly to life. Her ear for dialogue and comic timing are pin-sharp, and she manages the neat trick of combining criticism, humour and insight.

Adichie has written about being criticised for the “implausibility” of various world-colliding scenes in the book, and come back tartly with the assertion that, basically, life is stranger than fiction. Certainly, the fluency of Americanah is such that even the odd stretch of credulity—a blog financially lucrative enough to fund an assistant as well as a real estate purchase?—fails to detract from its intelligence, insight and sheer human warmth.

Blood & Beauty

by Sarah Dunant
Virago, £16.99

A new Sarah Dunant novel is always a joy, but a Sarah Dunant novel about the Borgias is on a whole other level. Blood & Beauty follows the family of Rodrigo Borgia, Pope Alexander VI, as he enters the Vatican and embarks on a campaign of powerbroking and nepotism that will see his children rise to positions of power all over Renaissance Europe. As the novel opens, Alexander's mistress Giulia Farnese, possessed of an improbable mass of golden hair and a husband (in)conveniently secreted in the country, is living with his daughter Lucrezia, a pretty, good-natured and generous girl on the brink of womanhood, and her two brothers, cocky Juan and troublesome Jofre. His eldest son, the beautiful and dangerous Cesare Borgia, is the new Pope's sounding board and secret weapon. Currently Cardinal of Valencia, his enforced vocation by no means limits his indulgence in the pleasures of the flesh.

Dunant's skill is to bring both this variant and melodramatic cast of characters to vivid and infinitely believable life. While Lucrezia, with her



affectionate sweetness and regrettable subjectivity to family whim, is easily the most sympathetic, Alexander's energy and generosity render him likable despite his cruelties and insensitivities, and Cesare is as perilously compelling as he must have been in life. The closeness between the siblings is both touching and bordering on the sinister. Lucrezia's hard-won maturity and Giulia's skilful use of sexuality and feminine wiles to navigate a patriarchal society profoundly uninterested in their needs or desires are intricately and realistically woven into the circumstances of their lives and the social realities of Renaissance European aristocracy.

Dunant's research is meticulous. Battles, household routine, early modern bathing practices or the rituals of papal elections are all described in precise and (sometimes uncomfortably) sensual detail, and the whole Borgia family spring fully formed off the page. There's humour too; Cesare in particular maintains an ironic and often bitter detachment amid his theatrical flourishes that's both disquieting and blackly funny. As both period piece and engaging human melodrama, Blood & Beauty is superlative: immersive, atmospheric, exciting and infinitely believable.

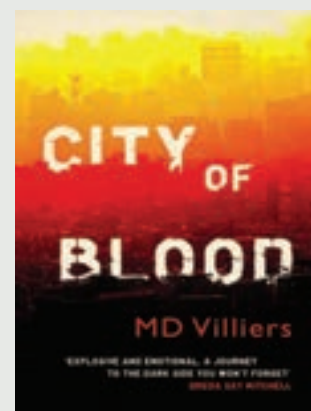
City of Blood

by MD Villiers
Harvill Secker, £12.99

My family come from Johannesburg, South Africa, and I have the kind of strange relationship with the city that anyone might with a place that both represents safety and happiness (I loved my South African family), and one of the most dangerous environments in the world. Anyway, when City of Blood arrived on my desk, complete with cover featuring what looked like the view from my grandmother's retirement flat, I fell on it with both joy and trepidation. Apart from anything else, this wasn't my Jo'burg, full of long low white villas and bougainvillea, high walls and electric fences. It was another world entirely—one of gangsters and violence and poverty and pain. Sipiwe, an orphan still grieving for the violent death of his brother, witnesses

an elderly woman being stabbed. Alone of the spectators, he rushes to help, and finds himself drawn into a shadowy underworld of murder and coercion.

MD Villiers writes with a deceptive simplicity, fluid and direct, his evocation of Sipiwe's thoughts no less compelling than the gangsters' assumptions of violence and greed. Conversations between Sipiwe and his adopted little brother Msizi are moving precisely because of their candour; their child-adult dynamic is perfect. Sipiwe spends quite a lot of the book being coerced in various ways, and his openness in response serves only to heighten the tension. When he turns the tables with Msizi's help, it's hard not to cheer. Add that to the atmosphere of Joburg, all heat and car parks and fruit stalls and the smell of sunlight on tarmac, and City of Blood is as evocative as it is engaging.



CULTURE: IN BRIEF



01

A NOBLE
ART

Nick Potter, brother of Marylebone map dealer Jonathan Potter, has two great loves: antiques and cricket. Having been a member of the MCC since that far off era when membership didn't mean a decades' long wait, Nick spent 20 years on the Arts and Libraries committee at Lord's which is charged with caring for the MCC's extraordinary collections of photographs, pictures, lithographs and ephemera—a role that sat perfectly with his day job as a dealer in antique sports memorabilia. This summer, to coincide with the Ashes Lord's Test match, Nick along with book collector Mike Down is taking over Jonathan's George Street gallery for an exhibition of cricket-themed rarities.

"I started by dealing in antique prints but my main interest was always in sport," says Nick. "With cricket being my main love I started specialising in that area." Dealing in original sporting engravings is more challenging than you might think. The popularity of cricket images meant that they were always being reprinted, and it takes a long time to learn to differentiate between a first impression of an 1820 print and one made in 1880 or 1950 using the same plate. "You are looking at things like the nature of the paper, tracing the provenance," says Nick.

Nick picks up many of his pieces from auctions, and as he has a trusted reputation in the business, people will approach him if they have something to sell. "I have people throughout the country who know the kind of thing that I am looking for and let me know if they see something they know I might like," he says.

The most valuable item Nick has sold directly was a portrait of WG Grace which went for somewhere in the region of £150,000. "But I did help acquire for a client a painting by Lowry with cricket being played as



02

part of the urban townscape. The final price for that worked out at just under £1,000,000. There was another Lowry with cricket being played which went for even more, but I didn't get my hands on that!"

His favourite item was a set of five lithographs of cricketing strokes by a great Victorian artist called TS Watts, who was very closely connected with the Pre-Raphaelites. "These lithographs are extremely rare, and to have had a complete set was wonderful," says Nick. "They are actually one of the few things that I regret selling, because they were just so beautifully drawn."

With the Ashes still seen by many as the pinnacle of Test cricket, there is a little extra cache to anything with an Ashes association. And with Lord's being known as the home of cricket, memorabilia with a connection to the ground can extend beyond those with a deep interest in the game. Both elements will feature heavily in the exhibition, *The Noble Game of Cricket*, just a hefty slog away from where the summer's main action will be taking place.



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- 01 Victor Trumper, 1902
 02 WG Grace at his prime, 1895
 03 The Prince Regent at Lord's, 1887
 04 MCC Pavilion at Lord's, 1899
 05 1930s postcard for Ashes series
 06 Bronze figure: Waiting his innings



06

LINKS

The Noble Game of Cricket
 18-22 July

Jonathan Potter Ltd
 52a George Street
jpmaps.co.uk

CULTURE IN BRIEF

Miloš Karadaglic



Image: Margaret Malandrucolo

THE LATE, LATE SHOW

On most occasions at Wigmore Hall, if you leave at 9:30pm it's a bit of a late one. Come Friday nights in the summer, however, and you'll find 10pm is the hour when people, far from leaving, start arriving—with eyes open and ears itching to hear the latest the Wigmore Lates @36 programme has in store.

Established in 2011, these nights have helped to capture an audience for whom the hall, or chamber music in general, was once a no-go. Throughout the summer hour-long concerts at 10pm are followed by free musical soirees in the Wigmore bar from 11:15pm until the small hours. Director John Gilhooly says: "There is a real buzz and sense of excitement in the air as we start the weekend in style."

American art songs, an intimate evening of storytelling, a dynamic reed quintet and some buskers are just a few of the highlights demanding to be heard.

First up is Miloš Karadaglic, one of the finest young ambassadors for classical guitar and an exclusive Deutsche Grammophon recording artist. He opens the series on 31st May at 10pm, followed downstairs by a cool stroll through the swing era courtesy of clarinettist Julian Bliss and his band. On 7th June, countertenor Yaniv d'Or and Ensemble NAYA celebrate the strong connections between early western music and works from other musical traditions. The winners of the 2011 MOBO Award for Best Jazz Act, Kairos 4tet, will then accompany the audience to the bar area for a set once described by the Evening Standard as "cerebral, peaceful and yet still swing".

Much more can be found in the Guide, and on the Marylebone Journal website nearer the time.

Wigmore Lates @36
wigmore-hall.org.uk

THE
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deWALDEN
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IN SUPPORT OF
KIDS COMPANY



June–July 2013

CULTURE: GUIDE

MUSIC

Wigmore Hall

36 Wigmore Street

020 7935 2141

wigmore-hall.org.uk

The world famous concert venue has a packed schedule of the very finest chamber music. Here are some highlights from the coming months. Visit the Wigmore Hall website for more detailed listings.

14 June

Patricia Routledge (reciter); Piers

Lane (piano): Admission, One

Shilling

Award-winning actress Patricia Routledge and pianist Piers Lane tell the extraordinary story of Myra Hess and her famous wartime National Gallery concerts. In Dame Myra's own words with piano music by Bach, Beethoven, Schubert, Brahms, Schumann and Chopin.

10pm

Tickets £12

21 June

Classic Buskers

The Classic Buskers' secret weapon is to convey their passion for classical music in two of the best ways possible—virtuosity and laughter. Michael Copley plays more than 40 woodwind instruments at incredible speeds, ranging from recorders, flutes, panpipes, crumhorns and ocarinas to a pico pipe and a rubber trout. Ian Moore accompanies on a small but perfectly-formed accordion, either pink or yellow. It doesn't matter how much you know about classical music—you just need a sense of humour, and ears.

11:15pm

Free, no ticket required

5 July

Iestyn Davies (counter-tenor);

Thomas Dunford (lute); Jonathan

Manson (viol): Robert Johnson, John

Dowland, John Danyel, Thomas

Campion, Nico Muhly

Iestyn Davies closes his Wigmore Hall residency with a voyage around the thrilling world of late Tudor and Stuart lute songs and a new work by Nico Muhly.

7pm

Tickets from £18

The Royal Academy of Music

Marylebone Road

020 7873 7300

ram.ac.uk/events

The Royal Academy of Music has a large and varied programme of public concerts, including many that are free of charge. Here are some highlights from the coming months. Visit the Royal Academy website for more detailed listings.

13 June

Joe Locke (vibraphone); Academy

Percussion Ensemble; Academy Big

Band; Joe Locke

The Academy's percussion and jazz departments, under the direction of Neil Percy and Nick Smart, welcome international visiting professor of vibraphone Joe Locke for a celebration of Joe's substantial contribution to jazz music.

7:30pm

Tickets £7

20 June

Lucas Jordan (flute); Fabricio Mattos

(guitar); Serge Vuille (percussion):

Pixinguinha, Ernesto Nazareth and

Chiquinha Gonzaga

The Brazilian choro genre is traditionally played in a bar: musicians sit around a table while the audience gathers around dancing, singing and drinking—and while Academy students may not be able to recreate the Brazilian bar (or indeed weather) the lively, upbeat atmosphere will be there in force.

8pm

Free

EVENTS

Asia House

63 New Cavendish Street

020 7307 5454

asiahouse.org

19 June

Xuefei Yang Performance

Born following the Cultural Revolution, an era where western music and instruments were banned, Yang was the first guitarist in China to enter a music school, and the first to launch an international professional career. Here she plays pieces by both Western and Eastern composers.

6:45pm

Tickets £15



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01 Joe Locke, Royal Academy of Music
02 Classic Buskers, Wigmore Hall
03 Error, Ishinomaki, 2012 by Chris Wainwright, Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation

27 June
Contemporary Arab Fiction
 Authors Jana Elhassan and Mohammed Hassan Alwan discuss their work and the contemporary literary scene.
 6:45pm
 Tickets £10

Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation
 13-14 Cornwall Terrace
 020 7486 4348
dajf.org.uk

25 June
Cross Cultural Partnerships and Environmental Engagement
 Engaging with other cultures is centered on recognising differences, and the mutual benefits of dialogue and innovation that come from better understanding those differences. Focusing on the role of artists, this talk will explore existing models of cultural cooperation between the UK and Japan, and the need to find new ones to deal with environmental issues.
 6pm
 Free, but booking essential

Until 10 July
A Catalogue of Errors
 Professor Chris Wainwright is the chair of the trustees of

Cape Farewell, an artist-run organisation that promotes a cultural response to climate change. His photographic series advances that aim, incorporating an illuminated version of the semaphore symbol for 'Error' within places where there have been natural disasters or sites of environmental fragility caused by human exploitation: in this case, the Tohoku region in Japan before and after the 2011 tsunami.

Mon-Fri 9:30am-5pm

Hellenic Centre
 16-18 Paddington Street
 020 7487 5060
helleniccentre.org

19 June
A Princess, Two Books and an Icon: Another Byzantine Puzzle?
 A lecture by Professor Elizabeth Jeffreys on illustrated manuscripts from 12th century Byzantium.
 7pm

29 June
Julietta Demetriades (soprano) and Alla Sirenko (composer, pianist)
 A celebration of Greek and Ukrainian culture through songs and poetry.
 7:30pm
 Free, but confirm attendance

Regent's Park Open Air Theatre
 Inner Circle, Regent's Park
 0844 826 4242
openairtheatre.com

20 June – 20 July
Pride and Prejudice
 Simon Reade's adaptation of Jane Austen's ultimate rom-com, now in its 200th year.
 Tickets from £25

29 June – 20 July
The Winter's Tale
 Shakespeare's classic story of a lost princess raised by a shepherd and of her secret romance with a prince, re-imagined for everyone aged six and over.
 Tickets £15

Royal Society of Medicine
 1 Wimpole Street
 020 7290 2900
rsm.ac.uk

8 June
Medical Innovations Summit
 RSM's seventh medical innovations summit will offer a range of presentations by speakers from the UK and overseas, including Professor Simon Kay, who led the surgical team that undertook the UK's first ever hand transplant, Professor Paul Anderson of Glasgow School of Art's Digital Design Studio, who will be speaking about his computerised model of the human anatomy, and Professor Peter Friend and Professor Constantin Coussios, who will be talking about their work in developing the technology that allowed British surgeons to transplant 'live' livers.
 9am
 Free, but booking essential

6 July
Medicine & Me: Cleft lip & palate
 Organised in association with the Cleft Lip and Palate Association, this meeting invites patients to talk about their experiences of living with cleft lip and palate. There will be advice from plastic surgeons, a speech and language therapist, psychologist, orthodontist and audiologist on the diagnosis and management of the condition.
 12.30pm
 Free, but booking essential

GUIDE

ART

A&D Gallery

51 Chiltern Street
020 7486 0534
aanddgallery.com

July

John Piper

John Piper is one of the best known artists working in Cornwall today. His paintings of the cars, cliffs, farm buildings and moors of West Penwith have been exhibited throughout the UK and abroad. Featuring a large body of recent work, this is John's first solo show for several years.

Mieko Meguro

Mieko Meguro returns to the A&D Gallery with new sculptures, entitled *Icy Hearts*, and portraits of her husband, the artist, Dan.

Mon-Fri 10:30am-7pm
Sat 10:30am-6pm

Atlas Gallery

49 Dorset Street
020 7224 4192
atlasgallery.com

6 June – 6 July

The War Photographs of Robert Capa

A selection of images from the most famous war photographer of the 20th century. Together with shots from Spain, Cambodia and D-Day, the exhibition will include the Leica camera that launched Capa's career and saw some of the most momentous reportage photographs.

Mon-Fri 10am-6pm
Sat 11am-5pm

Graham Hunter Gallery

81 Baker Street
020 7935 7794
grahamhuntergallery.co.uk

Until 30 June

Spirited

Three series from fine artist Anna Loveday Minshall, exploring real and imagined journeys, in colour and form, where figurative elements rise to produce symbol and story.

Mon-Fri 9:30am-6pm
Sat 10am-5pm
Sun 11am-4pm



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- 01 Robert Capa, Atlas
Gallery
02 Ros Rixon,
Heartbreak
03 Rich Simmons,
Imitate Modern
04 Charlotte Hodes,
jaggedart

Heartbreak Gallery

17 Bulstrode Street
020 3219 5710
heart-break.co.uk

6 – 31 July
Massimo Poello and Ros Rixon
Massimo Poello and Ros Rixon explore the written word—the former, a master calligraphist, uses text to create stunning paintings, the latter uses antique texts and hand-blown glass spheres.

Mon-Sat 10am-6pm
Sun 11am-4pm

Imitate Modern

27a Devonshire Street
020 7486 9927
imitatemodern.com

3 June – 31 July
The Inner Outsider
Rich Simmons is used to seeing things differently. An artist whose career was born not of formal training but of autism and self-discovery, he has always felt himself outside the art world. His exhibition reflects that: from its ripped billboards, to its juxtaposition of sketches and mass-produced images, it asks the viewer to see beauty in all things.

Mon-Sat 10am-6pm

jaggedart

28a Devonshire Street
020 7486 7374
jaggedart.com

Until 15 June
Re-found
Collage, a variety of printmaking techniques, intricate paper cuts and ceramics allow Sara J Beazley, Charlotte Hodes and Maria Noël to respond to art, history and landscapes and textiles in strikingly different ways.

Wed-Fri 11am-6pm
Sat 11am-2pm

Lisson Gallery

29 & 52-54 Bell Street
020 7724 2739
lissongallery.com

Until 29 June
Rodney Graham
Canadian artist Rodney Graham is renowned for his photographic recreations of historical, fictional

and conceptual scenarios. The show includes new works that give his photography a cinematic and sculptural presence.

Mon-Fri 10am-6pm
Sat-Sun 11am-5pm

RIBA

66 Portland Place, W1
020 7580 5533
architecture.com

Until 14 September
Charles Correa
The first major UK exhibition showcasing the work of this renowned Indian architect. Rooted both in modernism and the rich traditions of people, place and climate, Correa has designed some of the most outstanding buildings in India and has deservedly received many an award for them.

Mon-Sat 10am-5pm
(Tues 10am-9pm)

Thompson's Gallery

15 New Cavendish Street
020 7935 3595
thompsonsgallery.co.uk

19 June – 5 July
Edward Haslam, Charles Rowbotham and Emma Green
An exciting exhibition featuring three emerging artists tackling different traditions. Each artist is new to Thompson's Gallery.

Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri 10am-6pm
Wed 10am-7pm
Sat 10:30am-5:30pm
Sun 11am-5pm

Wallace Collection

Manchester Square
020 7563 9500
wallacecollection.org

20 June – 15 September
Discovery of Paris
Turner, Girtin, Bonington and many more offer views of Paris from a time before ours. They chart the remarkable contribution of the British to the iconography of the city as it became a major tourist destination, and while varying hugely in style, they are widely considered to be some of the most beautiful depictions of Paris ever put to paper.

Daily 10am-5pm

STYLE

Shannon Denny meets Charlotte Simpson, the young Marylebone-based designer whose elegant, flowing designs have marked her out in the fashion world as a serious talent to watch out for

LET IT FLOW



When you were five years old, what did you want to be? An astronaut, a policeman, a popstar? I wanted to work as a nurse by day and as a tightrope walker by night. As you can probably extrapolate, those particular dreams did not come true for me. But Charlotte Simpson was altogether more realistic—not to mention focused. At five she was wandering the shops behind her mother entranced by the clothes, and by 13 she'd designed her first collection.

"My mum taught me to sew," she reveals as we sit down in her Marylebone home that doubles as a studio. "When I was at school we had a fashion show once a year. When I was 13 I came home and said, 'Mum I want to make all these things!' At the time I was just learning, so she was like, 'Oh my goodness, she's got such grand ideas, how are we ever going to do this?'" But Charlotte managed it, and the result was the fledgling fashion designer's debut on the Repton School catwalk.

After finishing a BA in fashion and winning the Zandra Rhodes Catwalk Textiles award at Graduate Fashion Week, she went on to complete an MA at London College of Fashion. Her graduate collection won her a spot on the shortlist for the Womenswear of the Year Award at the college's famed V&A show, after which she was named among Vauxhall Fashion Scout's Ones To Watch for spring/summer 2013 at London Fashion Week.

It clearly pays to get started on your professional path early, but in this line of work you also need a unique aesthetic and a fairly tireless work ethic. Charlotte it seems has a bounty in both areas. As for the aesthetic, this is how the designer herself sums it up: "It's a minimalist look but with quite heavy embroidery in places—an unusual combination. It's sleek and simple, but with the added draw."

Her current collection hangs on a rail within view, catching the sunlight and drawing our attention. There are fluid-to-the-floor silk dresses in a pastel colour palette of ivory, pistachio, pale yellow and powdered blue. Hemlines are dipped in sequins, while short, simple shift dresses in an ivory wool and silk mix appear to soak up colour through a scattering of citrus sequins around waistlines and hems.

There's a relaxed feel to the tailored separates, which include ivory silk suit jackets and silk trousers designed to be worn high on the waist. Tailored city short suits in pastel and soft citrus shades feature a contrast bronze silk slip. Meanwhile, the collection's scene-stealers include a citrus jumpsuit with beaded sleeves and a fully embroidered floor-length gown drenched in all-over sequins.

The enduring effect is elegant, understated chic—an unusual blend of the contemporary with classic. "It's supposed to be quite an effortless way of dressing. How I dress myself is with things you can really just throw on but look like you've put a lot more effort in than you really have," she laughs. "That's what I apply to my designs as well."

It's first thing in the morning, but Charlotte looks immaculate in smart trousers, killer heels and a silk blouse. "I tend to wear a mixture of high street with designer, which normally includes a piece from Joseph—their basics are great. Sandro is another label which features heavily in my wardrobe. I have quite a few of their tailored jackets."

This is what she calls her "standard uniform", and it hints at her disciplined approach to work. For most of us, having a studio and office in our home would be license to wear a dressing gown around the clock—but that's not Charlotte's style at all. "I'm quite strict with my starting

“

My mum always said, 'There are good, basic rules for dressing: always keep it simple, the more simple the better.' That rings in my head when I'm designing



LET IT FLOW

time,” she says. “I never just think, ‘Oh, I’m just going to stay in bed a bit longer.’ On an evening it depends on how much I’ve got to do. If I’ve got a lot, then I might be in there till the early hours of the morning. If not, then I try to keep a balance so that I don’t totally lose my mind. But it doesn’t always go that way!”

The world of fashion is often considered frivolous, but Charlotte’s love of hard work turns this notion on its head. Before starting her company last year, Charlotte gained experience with heavyweight designers in both New York and London, and I imagine they must have been very happy to have her. Her postings included DKNY (admired for minimalist silhouettes), Julien Macdonald (known for his attention to beading and embroidery) and Amanda Wakeley (a favourite of the Duchess of Cambridge for both day and eveningwear).

While these stints honed her skills in the business of clothes, it was a figure closer to home whom Charlotte cites as her real inspiration—her mum. “She’s always said, ‘There are good, basic rules for dressing: always keep it simple, the more simple the better.’ It always rings in my head when I’m designing.”

Charlotte’s MA tutor also had a huge influence on her approach. “Our tutor was really strong on the process of design,” she explains. “We spent a lot of time researching and developing large projects rather than just designing something for the sake of it. Having a real, solid methodology means that when you get to that stage a few months in where you’re feeling a little bit like, ‘I’ve been thinking about this for ages and I’m a bit dry on ideas,’ you’re not totally scratching your head.”

The current collection is a case in point. “The embroidery is based on

scientific imagery—quite random!” she reveals. “All this is based on sense mapping of your tongue and the tastebuds.” She’s currently sketching her next collection, and the basis for that is equally mysterious and abstract—all she’ll say is that it has something to do with photography. She keeps a lengthening list on her iPhone of ideas and themes for future collections.

Which part of the long process of creating a collection does she like best? “The design bit really, the sketching—which sadly is kind of the shortest,” she says. “You don’t really get a huge amount of time to do it. You have a few weeks where you sketch everything through, then you have to start on the toileing process and the patterns. But yeah—those few weeks are great! The ideas part is the best.”

When it comes to switching off from the demands of the job, Charlotte’s a keen baker. While I munch on a muffin she made earlier in the morning, she tells me she buys her supplies at Waitrose, specialises in chocolate cake, and can even make macaroons. “I get quite carried away,” she laughs. “I like really fussy things—anything that takes a lot of precision.” Outside of the kitchen, she’ll head to Regent’s Park to unwind. Other local haunts include Bricole for Italian cuisine, the Conran Shop and Matches.

As for the fashion designers she admires most, she says, “I love the combination of luxury fabrics with embroidered detailing such as Elie Saab. His collections are always beautiful. In contrast, the sleek, sharp aesthetic of Phoebe Philo at Celine is always at the top of my list.” And when asked to name the modern style icons she’d be keen to dress, the designer reveals she has her sights set on Tilda Swinton and Emma Stone. Now, if I were to aspire to such a thing I must admit the idea would soon go the way of my defunct tightrope-walking career. But when it comes from Charlotte’s mouth, let’s just put it this way: I wouldn’t bet against her.



LINKS

Charlotte Simpson

charlottesimpson.co.uk

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There is nothing new about the flat ballerina as a fashion accessory—it's a style that has been with us since Brigitte Bardot and Audrey Hepburn first embraced its simple charms. But under the auspices of Jane Winkworth, the founder of French Sole, this most humble of styles has become a genuine phenomenon. The secret of her success, comfort factor aside, is that Jane is constantly innovating, updating, expanding and evolving, lending a new twist to a well-trodden classic, introducing fresh colour palettes and adding new styles to the collection.

Jane bought her very first pairs of brightly coloured ballet flats as a teenager on holiday in St Tropez. "I first fell in love with them when I was 17 in the south of France, where I bought three pairs—in black, emerald green and white—and I was hooked," she recalls. During the sixties and seventies, Jane sought out this often elusive style from the classical dance shoemakers of the day such as Anello & Davide, Freed and Gamba. Michael Gamba would customise some shoes for Jane, and Anello then followed, creating a capsule range for the teenager with little teddy-bear eye buttons fastening the ankle straps.

After leaving school, Jane went to art college, and a series of jobs followed, including a stint selling feather boas at the legendary Biba on Kensington Church Street. The 1980s saw Jane working at the V&A as a fine porcelain and china restorer, but then another holiday, this time to Marbella in 1988, would bring her closer to her vision. Here, she bought up the entire stock of a shoe boutique that was closing down, resulting in her arriving home with a suitcase full of shoes, none of which were her size. From a table-top business in a Chelsea basement in 1989, Jane would go on to build a global empire. "I have made the ballet pump a true fashion classic," she says, "and I have achieved this single-mindedly without too much hard work."



FLAT EARTH

Jackie Modlinger catches up with French Sole founder Jane Winkworth

How did the balletic inspiration come about? I have always loved ballet—everything about it. It makes me cry. As a little girl, I did ballet at The Kate Walker School in Temple Market, Weybridge, Surrey. Those were the gentle days of the angora bolero and hairband. I loved my childhood and my schooldays at St Christopher in Hertfordshire, where all I did was art, pottery, painting and sculpture—it was the happiest time of my life. I have always worn ballet shoes, first when I was dancing, then as regular footwear. I loved ballet pumps and other eclectic flat footwear, like



gold monogrammed velvet smoking slippers. And I have always loved fashion—I remember wanting to work for Biba as a Saturday girl at her first shop in Abingdon Road. I didn't get the job because I was still at boarding school, but she did give me a dress with a zip from neck to hem, with little puff shoulders and a skirt so short that I had to wear two pairs of knickers!

French Sole is very much a family affair—is that part of its success?

I love working with my family. My two sons and my husband John all

work with me and my eight-year-old granddaughter is longing to start working in the stores! Loyalty, honesty and trust are the key words which spring to mind—I know that I can completely trust my family and that their support never wavers.

What inspires your designs?

Most of my creativity comes from spending so much time at my LA home, as all my team there are highly creative. When I am at my home in Portugal, it is a time to spend on colour and new ideas, as I go there for peace and tranquillity, not the mad, hectic life I lead in California.

Businesswoman, designer, wife, mother, grandmother—how do you manage to juggle all these roles?

I juggle everything with ease, because I love what I do. I love dipping in and out of my different lives—I have a lot of staff and am lucky enough to have a huge amount of help both at work and in my homes. I also get bored extremely quickly and so rushing around from one place to another suits me fine. I never get bored, although I do get quite tired.

As the undisputed queen of ballet flats, how many do you have in your wardrobe?

I have over 400 pairs of ballet flats and about 20 pairs of heels, all of which are French Sole heels made especially for me. I wear our Cocktail style, mainly in snake and black.

How would you define your style?

I am classic with a twist. I used to love Chanel and still have a wardrobe of jackets, but about a year ago I discovered Zara and there has been no looking back. I buy everything I can from Zara and Haute Hippie and mix them up. Zara is great value, great style and super-cheap. If I hate a jacket after a couple of outings, I give it away and what have I lost? Seventy pounds, whereas if you're bored with a Chanel jacket and are waving goodbye to £5,000. It is ridiculous—those days are over for me.

Are flats eclipsing heels in the style stakes?
Our sales have steadily increased and we've seen a huge shift away from heels. Tamara Mellon got out just in time!

You could have hung up your ballet pumps a while ago, yet you continue expanding the brand. Are you just irrepressible?

I would love to retire and spend time with my grandchildren or at my wonderful new home in California, but there is always a new challenge or new direction I want to go in, and as the creative concept is still my responsibility, I just have to see new projects through.

What are you most grateful for?

My children, my grandchildren, my husband, my family, friends and my temperament—I am always happy, I always see the best in every situation and my glass is permanently half full! God made me a happy person and nothing dims my pleasure when I wake up every morning. I am longing to retire, but until I find the right people to take over from me, I will continue for as long as I am able to.

What does Marylebone mean to you?

I have always loved Marylebone Village for the remarkable diversity of cultures that seem to co-exist so happily. Marylebone is a great melting pot of artists, writers and media people and has some of the best restaurants in London. It has become a destination shopping area now, as a result of the long term plan put in place by the Howard de Walden Estate. As landlords they are truly visionary—they inspire and encourage new business ventures that start up in the area, which has made it possible for some great retailing names to exist side by side with small entrepreneurs.

LINKS

French Sole

61 Marylebone Lane

020 7486 0021

frenchsole.com

STYLE: IN BRIEF

OSKA WINNERS

Oska, the German brand which first made an appearance in Marylebone in a concession in Shoon, is back—and this time there's a whole shopful to choose from

The appeal of German womenswear brand Oska, which has been open on New Cavendish Street for several months now, is pretty apparent. For one thing, it is consistent: in quality, in sourcing, and in its design philosophy, which is based on continuity and remains “true to its line” as well as inspired by trends.

“Clear simple shapes and choice materials stand for an unostentatious but unique look,” stipulates the Oska brand statement. More importantly, in these days of collapsing factories and dodgy supply chains, all Oska suppliers are carefully overseen by the company's staff and fit the European Life Cycle Assessment requirements. For Oska and its customers, it means a conscience as clean as their sharp



silhouettes. Indeed one of its facilities, a dye factory, is located just up the road from its Munich headquarters, creating the brand's unique colour palettes. This is just one of the things that sets Oska apart from other labels. The second is the shape of the clothes, designed by Stefanie Schmitz, which are flexible, forgiving and often Asian-inspired. Intricate details such as buttons and collars set accents; colours bring them to life.

LINKS

Oska
27 New Cavendish Street
020 7224 0676
oska-london.co.uk

TREASURE HUNT

Rebecca Jones is the jewellery buyer for Oliver Bonas, the eclectic new boutique selling clothing, accessories, homeware—and the odd item that resists categorising

Is being a professional jewellery buyer as much fun as it sounds?

It is actually—I love my job! The role is fairly varied, from travelling to the Far East to source beautiful designs, to working with suppliers on development, working with new trends for collections, analysing sales, negotiating prices and planning quantities. No two days are the same!

How did you get into it?

I did a degree in jewellery design and silversmithing and came down to the bright lights of London. I worked in the industry for various fashion jewellery designers, and joined the buying team here six years ago when Oliver Bonas was starting to expand.

What do you look for when you're sourcing jewellery for Oliver Bonas?

I'm an Oliver Bonas customer, so that helps, and of course in six years of working here I have been able to see what people love. When looking for styles and developing collections, it is important that I select amazing gifts for customers to buy as well as things they'll want to treat themselves with.

How do you find new suppliers?

I source my suppliers from all over the world. There are big fairs in Hong Kong three times a year, where suppliers from all over the world are gathered under one roof. The whole process involves a lot of walking so high heels are a no-no!



Who do you love most at the moment?

I love the jewellery collections by Lulu Frost: big, bold, colourful statement pieces. At the other end of the spectrum, I love the cute vintage style of the jewellery in CatbirdNYC.

Do you make your own jewellery?

I still make a few bits and pieces in my spare time—mainly presents for friends and family, though over the past few years I have made a few hair pieces for friends for their weddings. I am currently working on a floral head piece for a friend for her wedding later this year.

Where do you shop, other than Oliver Bonas?

I love anything vintage so I love exploring Alfie's Antique Market. I also love Kabiri! It is one of my favourite jewellery shops and have been pawing over their jewellery collections for many years.

Do you wear a lot of jewellery yourself?

What are you wearing now?

You should see my jewellery boxes! Jewellery is my weakness (this helps with my job) and I love buying new jewels, from vintage treasures to the latest statement piece. I am loving our Atlantic Resin and Wood necklaces—I'm wearing them now. I have one in violet and one in green, and wear them both together—a girl can never wear too many necklaces!

Any countries or people which particularly inspired you to go into fashion?

My mum! Mum has always been so stylish, and has inspired me from a young age. I always knew that I wanted to work in the creative industry. My focus and passion turned to jewellery and metal work at school. I am very lucky in my job that I get to travel and see the world, which is a great way to get inspiration!

Oliver Bonas

63-65 Marylebone Lane

020 7487 3779

oliverbonas.com

What's in?



THE GUIDE TO WHAT'S HOT ON THE HIGH STREET. THIS MONTH, 10 CROSBY AT KJ'S LAUNDRY

Described by the designer as “the collection to take you through every aspect of modern life” and by certain members of the press as “like pyjamas”, the only way to really know 10 Crosby by Derek Lam is to wear it yourself. So it is just as well that it is one of the labels which KJ's Laundry will only make available in store, rather than online. After all, anyone venturing out in shorts such as those shown here (left), should really try them first—not everyone will rock them quite like this lady. But if leather shorts are what you're after, there's no better pair than these.

In fact everything from 10 Crosby is quality, from the Lace Up dress (bottom right, £450) to the Stripe Shirt (top left, £340), which fits effortlessly and whispers sexiness and chic. Pair with the Print trousers (£360) or with jeans. As Lam points out, this is his main brand's “little sister”: free spirited, sometimes slouchy, but always “super stylish”. “Crosby Street is so unique—it's one of my favourite streets in New York,” he says. With his studio based at number 10, and his cigarette breaks spent “blowing smoke out of the window”, it seemed only natural that the label take its inspiration from the place.

The result is a distinct departure from his eponymous label, in which he could never have such vivid colours as those on the Embroidery Blouse (left, £340) or such graphic shapes as adorn the Snake Print trousered legs (top right, £340). Designed to “skim the body in a subtle, sensual way” they demand to be tried on immediately. Head to KJ's before we buy them all.

LINKS

KJ's Laundry
74 Marylebone Lane
kjslaundry.com



FOOD

Since opening in December Le Vieux Comptoir has brought an authentic taste of France to the middle of Marylebone. Glyn Brown meets owner Laurent Faure and hears how a mid-life crisis spawned this hidden haven of culinary and vinous delights

I'm late for the interview at Le Vieux Comptoir, which is a very poor show. At 10am on a warm spring morning, I huff toward the door of this tiny hideaway, squirreled at the very end of Moxon Street just where it meets Paddington Street Gardens. Someone is outside, looking at their watch and texting—possibly texting me. It's Laurent Faure, the owner, but he dismisses my excuses with a wave of the hand. "Relax, relax," he says, twinkling with Gallic charm. And adds: "Come and see a brand-new secret."

It was back in February that I noticed a little wine merchant had materialised here. You step inside, past the wooden cask hanging above the shop sign, and it feels as if you've stumbled on some intimate boîte in the Marais. Amid shelves of wines, beers and spirits, a smiling and knowledgeable chap was helping an American couple choose a wine for diner à deux—and, in French, a Swiss family picked something perfect for a big deal Sunday lunch. It was bespoke service, like being in an intimate jeweller's with carefully selected, beloved items to sell.

At the time, there was mention of a downstairs café or breakfast area, but it wasn't quite completed. I expected a cramped, dark room, since it was a basement. Now, however, Laurent leads the way down an airy staircase and... crikey. A huge other world reveals itself: a wine cellar, a cheese and grocery area and, leading off these, a coffee room with a glass ceiling—cream wooden chairs, chaise longue, think rustic Versailles—plus two rangy dining rooms and a low-lit mahogany bar. What is this, the Tardis? Laurent is clearly delighted. "It's been open just four days, and already we have breakfast regulars." With gourmet coffee, and a breakfast menu including melt-in-the-mouth croissants, farm eggs and French honeys, I see why.

Laurent is not your regular *patron*. With swept-back grey streaks in his hair, he has the look of a handsome but businesslike badger. It's no surprise to find that, after growing up in the French Alps, he moved to Paris and for 20 years was a successful barrister. But five years ago he quit law and moved with his barrister wife Sally and their young daughter Baya to New York.

"Why? Because when you wake up in the morning and you are not that happy, you have to ask the big question—am I ready to do this, the same thing, for the next 25 years? And you think, if I don't make the change now, it'll be too late."

He sips his water. "I mean, we had a good life—good money, a nice townhouse in Montparnasse. Every morning, I crossed the Seine on my moped, looking at probably the most exciting town in the world—architecture, monuments... And I thought, pfft, I'm just not happy. We had to do something. So we left."

You even sold your home, instead of renting it out? Laurent shrugs. "Selling everything—that's a way to give you courage; to say, 'There is no return.'"

You have to respect such a radical solution to a mid-life crisis, but Laurent had a good idea of what the next step could be. As a lawyer, he'd travelled widely. "And in America, Asia, Africa, people would say, I love France, I often go, but when I come home I can never find the fantastic products I used to eat or buy there. I thought, why's that? But once you look at the distribution, you



PETITE FRANCE

“

At wine tastings, I say, don't be too technical. The important thing is pleasure, so keep it simple—your eyes, your nose, the palate. And the only question: do you like it or not?

understand exactly why people can't get, say, a really nice piece of cheese—the same quality, the same artisan item you'd have every day on your trip to Provence or wherever. It's because things are imported for supermarkets and big stores in bulk—and local farmers and winemakers don't produce in those quantities.”

The family bought a flat in Manhattan. It was a place Laurent knew well. “And we knew that we could have the time we needed—to think, to breathe again, to smell and taste, and to really decide what to do.”

Laurent settled on a wine business, importing artisan wines, beers and champagnes from France and selling to hotels and restaurants. It went well—but after 18 months, the family knew they couldn't stay. There were problems sourcing and supplying over the distance, but more importantly, relatives at home were missing Baya, then 12. “I couldn't go back to France and admit defeat. So we came to London, where you can simply jump on Eurostar. And it was so much easier.”

At the start, Laurent again ran a wine merchant's from his home,

now in Islington. But he soon began to think about a retail outlet. He was selling to the Dorchester and L'Atelier de Joel Robuchon in West Street, “and the clients of my clients wanted to buy the wines, and they couldn't find them”.

The UK retail market is, he says, “quite closed” when it comes to wines. “The UK has such massive duties on alcohol, and buyers don't want to lower their margins, so the quality of the wine has to drop. It's impossible to get a quality bottle of wine for £10.” So how can Laurent help? “By cutting out the middleman. By importing from the areas I know so well and small, devoted producers; by selling them myself; and by dealing with all the paperwork myself.” There are benefits to having been a lawyer. He nods. “So now, I can show you it's possible to get a very good wine for £10 to £15.”

Excited about a shop, Laurent considered Chelsea and Hampstead, but chose Marylebone “because it's the only place in London with a French feel, a French attitude—concerning the design of the streets, the feeling in the air. A French ambience.”



The Howard de Walden Estate impressed him by minutely researching his background. “They came back and said, ‘We believe in you.’” Laurent was told about a tucked-away space on Moxon Street.

“And it's perfect. It's hidden, it's a little gem, a chez-soi, as we say in France—so you can step inside Le Vieux Comptoir and feel that you're at home.” Not any home I've ever had, mate. He signed the lease in December and opened the upstairs 17 days later.

And why the name? “Because ‘comptoir’ means so many things. It can be a bar, or a spot where you can buy everything you want. And that's the idea. As you see, we have more than wines. There are lovely things from the Atlantic coast, soupe de poissons, terrines, French teas. We'll have spices, jams, honeys—all known by the French but unknown in London. You know, I see so many ‘French’ things in the UK, but they're not authentic.” He gives me a name or two of well-known French purveyors and rolls his eyes.



Supplies are still arriving—from Corsica, Alsace, Savoie and other areas you might not expect. On shelves by one of the big wooden dining tables I find delicacies from l'Isle d'Yeu, a tiny island off the Vendée—king crab with seaweed soup, lobster and cognac terrine, thonâiade, a kind of tuna pesto, and one with squid. In the tea area, pretty tins of every kind of tea and tisane—thé noir, menthe poivre—jostle with bold-looking coffees produced by Parisian family firm Terres de Café.

Laurent by now is gazing with love at the cheeses, from the Alps, the Loire, Alsace, and I glimpse a comté, some crumbly goats' cheeses and a ripe, resplendent Roquefort before we move to the bakery area.

"Every morning, we get our special delivery of Poilâne bread." He hauls up a vast warm paper sack, full of aromatic loaves, and picks out a walnut bread. "For every three kilos of bread, you add a kilo of walnuts." He breaks off a chunk. The scent is intoxicating. "Would you like to share a croissant? Baked for us this morning." It melts in your mouth. There's also charcuterie,

pastries, tartes and big hay-filled bowls of farm eggs.

But it's the wines I'm most interested in, and that's also the case for Laurent. "I know all our suppliers personally, and I visit the vineyards three or four times a year. To taste the grape, to crush it, to pick the perfect thing for your palate—not mine, but for yours."

How does he know what I like? After taking a four-year diploma at London's Institute of Masters of Wine, he believes that "the American palate doesn't like acidity, but in general the English like crisp minerality for white wines—and for red, chablis."

The plan is to set up a wine academy at the store, but Laurent already runs informal tastings. "I say, don't be too technical. The important thing is pleasure, so keep it simple—your eyes, your nose, the palate. And the only question: do you like it or not?"

LINKS

Le Vieux Comptoir
26-28 Moxon Street
levieuxcomptoir.co.uk

Some of the winemakers will attend, "totally dedicated people, who every day wake up at 5am, go into the vineyard, check each vine. You can't do these things mechanically, though some winemakers try. You need someone who cares, who will crush the grapes slowly to avoid too much pressure, who will cherish them. And in your glass, you taste the difference."

Laurent tells me about the brandies and cognacs, about the artisan beers, particularly from Brasserie du Mont Blanc, high in the Savoie mountains near Chamonix, where the beers are brewed with glacial water and blended with alpine flora, herbs, violets. He tells me about his ciders, one of which is aged in calvados barrels.

By now the breakfast folk are leaving, and the café is preparing for lunch. Dragging myself away, I just have time to see what's being chalked on the blackboard—croque monsieurs, gazpacho, a raspberry and apple tarte in all its golden glory.

Go for brunch. Go for an early evening (it's open until 8pm). But you know, you really should go.



PURL JAM

Marylebone's Purl bar—named after an old English drink consisting of warm ale, gin, wormwood and spices—has been at the forefront of London's recent cocktail renaissance. Clare Finney meets general manager Emanuele Genovese

Purl bar. As a name, it could not be more apposite. Not that the surrounding Marylebone Village should be compared to a gnarly grey oyster shell, but there are a wealth of similarities between this subterranean speakeasy and a pearl. Hard to find and delightful to discover, it nestles beneath the placid pavement of Blandford Street.

Purl does cocktails. Serious cocktails, of the type that make you suspect all the other cocktails you've had were merely imposters. These are the forgotten cocktails, cooked up in the 19th century and prohibition era by men who wore white tie, had worked behind bars in posh hotels for 40 years, and who knew their whisky from their whiskey.

Then came the 1970s, and the “bastardisation of our industry”, to use operation manager Keiran Cusker's term. Before the 1970s, bartending was, explains general manager

Emanuele Genovese, “cheffy”. “It's not a science, it's an art. It's hard to cook, and it's hard to make a cocktail.” Yet during the 1970s and the 80s it seemed the quality of cocktails paled into insignificance next to demands that they be colorful and strong.

“Cosmopolitan, pina colada, sex on the beach—big, bright, showy cocktails that looked impressive and got you drunk,” says Emanuele, grimacing. Needless to say, you won't find such travesties here. These guys know their history, their liquors, what makes a marriage in mixology—and how and where to serve it.

How did you come into making cocktails?
My dad in Italy used to run a restaurant bar, and I always said, ‘I will never work in that business.’ But then come the summer holidays I would always be there helping. After school I worked for my dad for two years before moving to London. I went to

the UKBG bartender school for four months, then started working in bars. One day, a cocktail consultant from Fluid Movement was brought into the Notting Hill bar I was working in—and that was it for me. He showed us how to think about cocktails, be creative, make theatrical drinks. From then on working for Fluid Movement was the dream. After opening my own bar in Italy with my brother, I moved to The Gilbert Scott and worked alongside Marcus Wareing—and it was while I was there that Fluid Movement asked me to help with Purl.

What makes a good bartender?

The thing is to basically be a chef. Instead of cooking food, we cook spirits. There are two types of bartender: the one who just does his job—shaking, with no expression or heart in it—and then there's the bartender that gives an experience to the customer, who creates a show.

Surely you can just follow a recipe?

You can. But never forget, it's a guide—if you are an artist you will slightly change it and make it your own.

I always think that's true of mojitos—the recipe is simple, but hard to pull off...

A mojito is a simple drink made badly by a lot of people. Essentially it is a peasant's drink from Cuba, shaken quickly and served on ice, but most people these days monkey around with muddling lime wedges and mint, when all that does is makes it bitter, and then add far too much sugar to compensate. It's a symptom of the bastardisation of our industry. The 1980s destroyed the cocktail scene. It wasn't really until the early part of this century that bartending had a bit of a renaissance.

And is Purl part of this renaissance?

Purl was the second prohibition-style bar to open in London, after Milk & Honey in Soho. The idea was to reintroduce the forgotten cocktails of the 1880s and 90s, when bartending was in its golden age. We have been successful firstly because it's a really

cosy bar, which is well hidden but accessible, and secondly because we do good cocktails, presented well.

The cocktail renaissance seems to have proved immune to the recession. Why?

People will always gamble, people will always drink. We're in England—one of the countries that drinks the most in the world. What you don't see, since the recession, is people coming out and whacking loads on the company card. They're out as frequently, but they don't spend as big because it's their money. We used to get suits coming in and it was all, 'Champagne! Champagne!' Now it's a bit different, because of the financial constraints.

Do you work much behind the bar these days?

Not really. It's a shame, but I do like to focus on the floor and delivering cocktails—because if a good cocktail is delivered poorly, it's only 50 per cent complete. If I bring you this amazing cocktail, with fog billowing out of it, in an amazing vessel, then walk off without telling you what it is or what to do with it, it's half finished. It could be the best thing ever, but you won't be impressed. It's the same if you go for a Michelin starred restaurant and the waitress doesn't tell you what's on the plate.

How do you develop new cocktail recipes?

All new ideas come from old ideas. Sometimes it's a new spirit, sometimes it's reading a book and seeing an old recipe, sometimes it's just seeing how someone serves me a coffee. Bartenders work methodically, like chefs, trying different combinations to bring out a flavour or mask another. We recently acquired Old Tom gin, a popular drink in gin palaces in the 1880s, which would be served under a cat-shaped plaque hung outside.

LINKS

Purl

50-54 Blandford Street
purl-london



Passers-by could drop a coin in the cat's mouth. The proprietor would then dispense a shot of gin from a tube under the paws. It's slightly sweeter than London dry gin. We can't wait to use it.

What's your poison?

Depends on how I feel. I quite like a Manhattan, but I also like wine, beer, negroni, martini—I'm pretty moody. It often depends on the weather.

How did growing up in Italy influence your approach to cocktails?

It's had a lot of influence. For a start, I know the drinks from there—vermouth, prosecco—so tend to use them. Also, we are the people who love food. In Italy I developed this passion. I like smell, I like flavour, I like the feel. Being a bartender and being a chef go hand in hand, because both are about matching flavours. Working here is the dream because they understand that.

FOOD & ME

MICHAEL DALLAWAY OF DALLAWAYS CHERRIES

How long has your family been in the cherry business?

In 1985 my dad bought land in Sandhurst, Kent, and planted a cherry orchard. We also had apple trees back then. Though I helped dad throughout my teens I didn't actually intend to go into farming. He was letting the orchards come to the end of their commercial life before winding things down. But dad passed away in 2000, so I inherited the farm—at the time I was temping up in the City. I didn't want the farm to be sold and decided I was plenty young enough to give it a go. There was loads of replanting and other things to be done and I couldn't have managed without my mum's help. We now have another two orchards in Kent, which I rent off neighbouring farmers. Our fourth orchard is at Cooks Yard Farm, where I'm actually based, just across the border into Sussex.

Do cherry trees take much looking after?

Yes, and it's all year round, pretty much. January and February are our quiet months, so we use that time to repair the nets to keep the birds off and to repair the supporting framework. From March we start putting on a bit of weed control and fertilisers. We also do tree manipulation at that time of year when the sap is starting to rise, bending branches down so they grow horizontally rather than straight up into the sky. This eases picking and also makes the tree crops heavier, because it forces the sap to grow through the tree rather than up the tree. We also send off leaf samples to find out if the trees are lacking any nutrients, for example, nitrogen

or phosphorus, and then spray the orchards every week to feed them those missing nutrients. And that goes right through until harvest time.

How long does harvest last?

Five to six weeks, and as soon as harvest is over we have to prune the trees, which takes another six weeks. We then feed the trees again, so they have the food ready in the bud for when they burst the following spring, and we put another fertiliser on. So it's pretty full on. It's properly hectic six days a week for most of that time and seven days a week during harvest. And we start playing around with our cherry brandy and cherry vodka over the quieter winter months.

What factors result in great cherries?

Our climate. We tend to get a bit of everything, without too many extremes, and that lends itself to them having a great flavour. But it's really just looking after the trees and making sure they have all the nutrients they need, and then we only pick the cherries when they're actually ready, because it's all about the taste when people buy at farmers' markets. Most cherries are picked probably a week before they should be, so their sugar levels aren't really up and are quite bland. And the difference that extra week makes—a cherry being probably 10 to 15 per cent bigger and twice as sweet, just a world apart quite frankly.

How many varieties do you grow?

Around 30. Each has a slightly different flavour, as my regulars at the Marylebone Farmers' Market have come to discover. They are all sweet, but some have a bit of tartness

to them. Our season usually starts in late June with a variety called Merchant, followed by Vanda and Samba, both big, firm, dark cherries. We have a white cherry called Vega. We didn't have any last year, because they got frosted, but the year before we had a great crop and people were falling over themselves to get them. White cherries are quite rare these days, you don't sort of see that many. And for the generation over 50, white cherries remind them of their childhood, so they get very excited when they see them.

When can we expect to see you at the farmers' market?

The cherry season lasts six weeks and I think we'll be there from the last Sunday in June. As well as fresh cherries we'll also have our 100 per cent pure cherry juice, which has proved very popular at Marylebone. This will be our fifth summer there, which also happens to be the 10th anniversary of the market.

How does it feel to base your entire livelihood on just six weeks?

Your question answers itself—utter insanity, some people would suggest, especially when you get a year like 2012. I don't think we've ever worked so hard for what turned out to be such a poor crop, just because the weather was against us. There wasn't a day where it didn't rain during picking—it was ridiculous. You need to be able to accept that everything is geared up for those six weeks. You can make what some people would consider a fortune in six weeks, but obviously you don't take any more money for the next 46 weeks. And you need some discipline, so you don't get overexcited and run out of money in January—six months before the next lot comes in.

LINKS

Dallaways Cherries

Marylebone Farmers' Market
rentacherrytree.co.uk



FOOD: IN BRIEF



Chris King's recipe

RIB OF BEEF WITH A WARM SUMMER TOMATO AND GRILLED COS SALAD

**Chris King, chef de cuisine,
Roux at The Landau**

Also known as a 'côte de boeuf' in France, a rib of beef is a perfect cut to grill or barbecue. Thanks to the generous amount of marbling, as the beef cooks the fat renders to keep the meat beautifully tender—plus there's a bone to gnaw on too! A fresh, tangy tomato and grilled lettuce salad is all that's needed to accompany the beef to make a lovely summer lunch, hopefully outdoors!

Tomatoes are at their very best in the summer months and for this salad you need them perfectly ripe. Choose tomatoes that are just yielding to the touch. Often the best tomatoes are the ugly, misshapen ones and a little light bruising is nothing to be afraid of.

The single most important thing to make this dish work is great quality beef.

Look for a good butcher selling best quality, dry-aged beef with a good amount of marbling. Remember, also, that rib of beef shouldn't be served too rare—it needs time on the grill to let the fat render and work its magic.

Serves 4

Ingredients

2 ribs of dry-aged best quality beef, bone in
Sea salt
Cracked black pepper
1 head of cos lettuce
2kg mixed ripe heritage tomatoes
1 bunch large spring onions, thinly sliced
½ small loaf sourdough bread
1 clove garlic
Extra virgin olive oil
Sherry vinegar
1 tbsp fennel seeds, lightly toasted and crushed
Basil leaves

Method

A few hours before you intend to cook the beef, remove it from the fridge and allow to come up to room temperature—this will help to cook the meat evenly. Remove the tomatoes from the fridge to take the chill off.

Heat your grill or barbecue until very hot—you want to get a nice char on your beef. Season the rib generously with cracked black pepper and sea-salt. Lightly oil the beef—not too much or it will flame on the grill and end up with an acrid taste. Place on the grill.

After a few minutes turn the beef 90 degrees to achieve that classic crosshatched look. Cook for about 8 minutes on one side.

Remove the rib to a tray and allow the grill to come back up to temperature—you might need to drain off some of the excess fat. Return the rib to the grill and repeat on the second side. The beef is cooked when it feels just springy to the touch in the centre.

Remove the beef, cover with tin foil and leave to rest in a warm place for at least 15 minutes—the rule is to rest the meat for as long as it has cooked.

Cut the cos lettuce lengthways into quarters, oil, season and char on the grill for a few minutes. Remove the cos and cut widthways into wide strips and place in a large bowl.

Roughly dice the sourdough then toast in a hot frying pan with a little olive oil and a clove of crushed garlic. When golden brown, add the croutons to the lettuce.

Rinse and roughly dice the tomatoes, pips and all, and again add to the bowl along with the thinly sliced spring onions.

Season generously with salt, sherry vinegar and plenty of olive oil. Sprinkle on a few crushed fennel seeds and ripped basil leaves and mix everything gently.

Serve the beef carved into generous slices with a little more olive oil and sea-salt.

Roux at The Landau

1C Portland Place

rouxatthelandau.com

Top tippie**Malacca Malacca**
Après London

- 40ml Tanqueray Malacca Gin (Limited Edition)
- 10ml Aperol
- 25ml lemon juice
- 10ml passion fruit syrup
- 1 dash of peychaud bitters
- 10ml sugar syrup
- A little orange zest

This is a cocktail that has its origins right here in Marylebone, created by Après mixologists Jez Jewitt and Dani Sanchez. According to Dani the pair wanted to create something summery, that would be launched as a Cocktail of the Month and then move on to become a staple on the Après menu through the summer.

“We called it Malacca Malacca because we wanted to call attention to the limited edition gin we were using,” says Dani. “Malacca gin is a very floral

gin from Tanqueray, which uses the finest botanicals. We chose the Aperol, which is an Italian sweet liqueur, as the herbs and roots used in the liquor, such as bitter and sweet oranges, are ones that suggest summer. The Peychaud bitters and the bitter oranges keeps the balance right and stop the cocktail becoming too sweet.” The result is a light flowery easy to drink cocktail with a long finish. Perfect for those long Marylebone summer evenings.

Combine all the ingredients in the base of a Boston shaker and dry shake without ice to make it extra fluffy. Then fill the shaker with ice and shake hard. Double strain the cocktail into a frozen glass, sprinkle some orange zest over the light foam on top and serve.

Après London

31 Duke Street

020 7224 3452

apres-london.com

FOOD IN BRIEF

World of Wine

WINE CONSULTANT **ROBERT GIORGIONE** ON THE SOMETIMES TRICKY TASK OF MATCHING WINES WITH VEGETARIAN FOOD

Looking for harmony and balance between food and wine can at times be quite a challenge, particularly when it comes to certain vegetables. Asparagus and artichokes, both of which are in season right now, are tricky to pair with, as are tomatoes, due to their acidic nature.

For me, fresh, crisp and elegant white wines, sparkling, lightly-fortified or aromatic, are perfect for drinking with vegetables and salads. Most of all, I'm looking for freshness and texture in the wine that comes from having good acidity (normally on the finish) and being made in a fruit-driven style, not over-laden with too much oak or alcohol. A good example would be the **2011 Three Choirs "Annum" (£8.99)**, an aromatic blend of four or five grape varieties, which is perfect alongside English asparagus or Thai green curries. The **2011 Hatzidakis Assyrtiko Santorini, Greece (£10.99)** is a fresh, floral, minerally white, produced from old Assyrtiko vines grown on the steep volcanic slopes of Santorini. The Assyrtiko grape contributes to a pristine and spicy palate, with fantastic acidity. The white wines of Greece are of course excellent with Mediterranean dishes—try this with fresh seasonal salads, grilled halloumi and a selection of marinated vegetables. Other wines from the Eastern Mediterranean—a region blessed with fantastic vegetarian cuisine—are also worth a look. Countries such as

Turkey, Israel and Lebanon have a wine heritage that goes back centuries and their quality has improved considerably, especially since the widely-available **Chateau Musar** first blazed a trail back in the mid-1960s.

I am especially passionate about beautiful, fresh and fragrant German Rieslings, with their apple and citrus-scented aromas and mouth-watering acidity, and the peppery and aromatic Gruner Veltliners that are native to its neighbour, Austria. For me, Gruner Veltliner, with its hallmark notes of white pepper, especially on the nose, leading to spicy aromas of fresh ginger and ripe stone fruits, is a no-brainer for challenging vegetable dishes. Waitrose has an excellent selection, ranging from the easy and approachable **2011 Domaine Wachau (£9.99)** or the **2011 "Moosbrgrn" (£11.99)** from the Felsner family estate to a couple of more sophisticated examples. For the more adventurous among you, I suggest you try the **2010 Rotgipfler from Heinrich Hartl** in Thermenregion, just south of Vienna. At £16.99 it's quite pricey, but trust me, not only will you find this traditional Austrian grape variety interesting, but also its richer, fuller flavour on the palate should combine well with spicy dishes and exotic vegetable curries. Zierfandler and Rotgipfler grape varieties flourish in Thermenregion despite rarely growing elsewhere, and



the region is also known for its fine red wines. Pinot Noir, St Laurent and Zweigelt thrive here. The following two Austrian reds would work really well with dishes such as mushroom stroganoff or risotto—**2009 Heinrich Hartl, St Laurent (£16.99)**, similar to a Pinot Noir, and the **2009 Feiler Artinger Blaufrankisch**, with its lovely savoury quality and good acid on the finish.

Don't overlook the English **2010 Bolney Estate "Dark Harvest"** either. At £9.49, not only should this home-grown, approachable red grab your attention, but also provide you with an interesting discovery. It is a medium-bodied wine with wonderful red-fruit flavours and a slightly smoky finish, made from a blend of Dornfelder and Rondo grapes. A complex set of aromas including red berry fruits and spicy oak are balanced by a gentle freshness. Perhaps lightly-chilled, this would work well with a plate of roasted vegetables, 'meaty' aubergine and mushroom dishes or even a classic ratatouille.

LINKS

Robert's blog

robertgiorgione.com

twitter.com/robertgiorgione

Consultancy, advice and bespoke tastings

robert@robertgiorgione.com

Robert's book, *An Epicurean Odyssey: Sommelier Stories*, is out now. Visit his website or Lulu.com



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HISTORY

AT HOME WITH THE GENERAL IN VICTORIAN MARYLEBONE, ONE OF THE AREA'S MOST GLAMOROUS CELEBRITIES WAS THE VERY MODEL OF A MODERN MAJOR-GENERAL

BY TOM HUGHES

We have, with some very good reasons, lost the taste for venerating our military leaders, present and past. The great commanders of yore, the generals and admirals of the fleet, may still strike a determined pose from atop their various plinths around the city but the civilian population often scuttles by without a thought or look, let alone a silent salute. But it was so different in the simpler days of Nelson and Wellington and Wolseley.

Wait a second, I hear the cry, Wolseley? I have never heard of the man. Tell me more.

General Sir Garnet Wolseley was ever at the ready for his imperial Queen. “With portmanteaus packed and warpaint always fresh,” he was prepared to serve. Whether it was on the wild western plains of Canada or the steaming tropics of Africa, Sir Garnet sallied forth to crush any resistance to the spread of British red across the map. Wolseley believed that

the best way to advance his military career was to try to get himself killed. He put in the effort. When a teenage subaltern out in Burma, in his first military action, a formidable gingall ball passed through his leg and he nearly bled to death. In the Crimea, at Sebastopol, an exploding Russian shell destroyed his right eye. His greatest campaign came in 1874; though struck down by fever, he led his forces against the rebellious Ashantees in West Africa. From Kumasi (Coomassie), he returned to London to a reception worthy of a national hero. Disraeli called him “our only soldier”. Victoria knighted him and the expression “all Sir Garnet” was coined to mean that everything was ready and correct, bang on. He was, as Gilbert wrote to Sullivan’s score, “the very model of a modern major-general”.

Soon after the conquering hero’s return to London, Wolseley and his

wife purchased 23 Portman Square, at the northwest corner of the square. It was one of the most aristocratic purlieus in the capital. The Hyatt Churchill Hotel occupies the entire block today. The Wolseleys were a remarkable couple. He was strikingly slight—in his youth, he was even thought to be “girlish”. But, of course, he had the requisite bearing. He spoke in a strong voice, “its tones quite suave and courteous, but tinged with the decisive authoritative utterance of the soldier accustomed to command and to be unhesitatingly obeyed”. Lady Wolseley, the former Miss Louisa Erskine, from a military family herself, was a renowned beauty. She once boasted that she had the exact figure of the Venus de Milo. To be sure, some of the neighbours thought the Wolseleys were arrogant and snobbish. But Henry James, the novelist (and snob), who became a regular visitor to “exquisite” Portman Square, found



AT HOME WITH
THE GENERAL

The reporter praised the elegant style of the home that her ladyship had made. But rather than the tapestries and Chippendale chairs, the high point was the general's gracious invitation to enter his private sanctum, a room festooned with the trophies of war

them delightful company. "Sir Garnet is a very handsome, well-mannered and fascinating little man with rosy dimples and an eye of steel; an excellent specimen of the cultivated British soldier." Lady Wolseley, James wrote to his brother, "is pretty, and has the air, the manners, the toilets and the taste of an American". Toilets, by the way, meant something rather different back then.

In March, 1878, the general and Lady Wolseley opened their home to Edmond Hodgson Yates, editor of the society weekly, *The World*. Yates created that ever fashionable genre of the glossy magazine, the 'Celebrity at Home'. The reporter described 23 Portman Square as a comfortable mansion of the old-fashioned type. He praised the elegant style of the home that her ladyship had made for the general. "It is an artistically-planned abode, furnished and decorated with the charming taste that speaks

of a refined lady's governing hand." But rather than the tapestries and Chippendale chairs, the high point for Yates was the general's gracious invitation to enter his private sanctum, a room festooned with the trophies of war. Alas, most of Wolseley's collection of loot had gone up in flames when the Pantechnicon, a massive Victorian self-storage pile in Belgravia, burned to the ground in 1874. Nevertheless, the visitor to Portman Square was begged to admire "the quaintly-carved wooden stools of African kings, trophies of arms, Kaffir assegais, and cowhide shields. Many other memories of the stirring scenes through which Sir Garnet has passed are to be found scattered here and there up and down the house."

Though the general was happy amid his uxorious comforts at home, smoking and pouring over his maps, he freely admitted, that "without a moment's hesitation", he would leave for service if called. Yates thought the empire was in good hands: "It would be difficult to find a man more absolutely free from what is commonly called 'nerves'. This faculty of high courage, combined with a perfectly cool head at moments of great emergency, augurs most strongly Sir Garnet's probable success as a commanding general in the days to come."

His rivals thought the article was typical toady puffery and slated Wolseley as a self-promoter. While at home, although ostensibly employed at the India Office, the general used Portman Square as the base camp for 'the Wolseley ring', his cadre of like-minded young officers. The 'ring' railed and plotted against "the false gods of worm-eaten tradition and reactionary routine" they saw crippling the army. The symbol of all they loathed was that "disgusting anachronism", the aging commander-in-chief, the Duke of Cambridge. The old duke, however, had the un-assailable good fortune to be the Queen's cousin. Hence, HRH did not care for the Wolseleys. He was "full of

new fancies", she grumbled. She was delighted when he was sent out to run Cyprus, a place he loathed. But Wolseley was soon recalled from the Mediterranean. Hicks-Beach, the colonial secretary and neighbour at 40 Portman Square, needed the general to hasten out to crush the Zulus who had recently thrashed the British army at Isandlwana. Wolseley returned in triumph escorting the captured king, Cetawayo, who—if anything—was the greater celebrity of the season.

The Wolseleys sold 23 Portman Square in 1879, making something like a 25 per cent profit. They moved to Mayfair and we shan't follow them there. In truth, the general was rarely at home. Lady Wolseley tired of socialising without him: "I really felt as if every Jill had her Jack, and I belonged to nobody." While he was away, they corresponded daily, his letters to "beloved Loo" reaching London from cantonments afar.

Worseley went on to command a victory at the great battle of Tel-el-Kebir in Egypt, for which the Queen, however reluctantly, made him a viscount. But his greatest disappointment came when he was too tardily given command of the expedition to march up the Nile to save General Gordon, besieged by the Mahdi's army in the Sudan. They arrived too late, of course. Wolseley had quite fancied the idea of being someday the Duke of Khartoum. He died a field marshal but "just" a viscount in 1913. In one of his journals, he had written, "All other pleasures pale before the intense, the maddening delight of leading men into the midst of an enemy." The Great War, which began soon after his death, and ensuing wars, has given such talk a decidedly outmoded ring. Today, Wolseley, no longer bronzed by the imperial sun but by the sculptor, the greatest of the now forgotten colonial commanders, sits placidly astride his steed outside the Horse Guards. But he had once pitched his tent in Portman Square.

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Photos (clockwise from top left): Southbank Sinfonia in the UK; EFG Bank Mandrake Sailing Team; Marina Mattsson, a member of Knytkalaset in Sweden, riding Beckham; Gianluigi Qunizi, a member of the EFG Junior Tennis Programme; the private bank for historic motor racing; Team Argentina (centre), winners of the Coronation Cup 2009.

Practitioners of the craft of private banking



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HEALTH

A WORD IN YOUR EAR AUDIOLOGIST ADAM SHULBERG ON TREATING HEARING LOSS IN THE 21ST CENTURY

BY VIEL RICHARDSON

"The biggest misconception people have about hearing impairment is that the hearing aid is the solution," says Adam Shulberg, managing director of Cubex. "The important thing to understand with hearing loss is that it is a communication disorder. And as such it doesn't just affect the person, but their friends, family and everybody surrounding them. So we believe it is vital to involve those people at the outset."

This approach sums up the way that Cubex has been approaching the task of helping people with hearing issues since it was set up by Adam's father Monty over 40 years ago. While the word 'audiologist' will not be familiar to many people, the services they offer most definitely will be.

"Audiology is a very broad field covering diagnostics, treatment and rehabilitation of hearing impairment issues," Adam explains. "The kind of audiology people will be familiar with is the high street private hearing aid audiologist. They can examine ears in a fairly rudimentary way, and prescribe and fit hearing aids, and provide a certain amount of follow-up service."

By contrast, the way that Cubex works is firmly based around this central belief that its focus should be

upon communication rather than just hearing.

"The first time a patient comes to see us we spend a good hour to 90 minutes interviewing them, and if possible a relative or a significant other as well," explains Adam. "We really explore from the outset the way their communication disorder impacts on them and those around them—how it makes them feel, how it makes the family feel."

Hearing impairment can often lead to people disengaging, such as the stress involved in trying to communicate. They might begin to say things like, "I'm not going to go down to the social club this week because people don't speak clearly," or "I'm not going to go to church this Sunday, because the vicar doesn't speak properly anymore." As their lives become narrower and narrower, they become increasingly socially isolated.

Cubex sets out to break this downward spiral. "We build a plan that we think will increase their ability to communicate," says Adam. "One of the ways this approach manifests itself is in the fact that we use speech audiometry in making our assessments. Most audiologists test using pure tones—asking people to press a button when they hear





the beep. That test has been around for 100 years. In my view, using it in the 21st century is wrong when the technology has moved on so much. People don't go to an audiologist because they can't hear beeps and tones, they go because they can't communicate, and the most important part of communication is speech."

Speech audiometry tests a patient's facility for identifying words. "Initially the patient is asked to repeat monosyllabic words like cat, sat, sit, which are short and out of context, so there are no clues. What the patient repeats is normally exactly what they hear, so it is a very accurate test. We also check the physical condition of the middle ear during initial consultations and use microscopes to examine the area very carefully. We need to make sure that nothing is wrong that we might need to refer onwards, as there are some medical conditions that manifest themselves in the ears."

Although not the whole story, hearing aids are often an important part of the solution to hearing impairment. But fitting a hearing aid is not as straightforward as fitting a pair of glasses. "If the solution involves some kind of hearing system, we will fit one, but it won't be a case of simply putting on the hearing aid and saying, 'How does that sound?'" Adam explains. "We know the environments that they have had problems with, be it in the theatre, the office, a restaurant, chatting with friends, and we re-create those environments here using speakers and sound files. We then do independent verification of what the hearing system is doing. We will place tiny microphones in the ear before fitting the system and then introduce a series of set sounds, be they speech or background noise,

and measure what is happening at the eardrum level. This gives us a very accurate measure of what the system is delivering to correlate with what the patient tells us they are hearing. When they leave we will get them to keep a diary, or fill in a structured questionnaire about when they are hearing well or not so well. We may ask them to pay particular attention to those problem areas they identified when they first came in."

Adam also points out the importance of managing the expectations of both the patient and their family. "It is important to recognise that we don't hear with our ears, but with our brains, and this could be the first time in a decade or more that the brain is getting this level of sound information. Like any other under-used muscle, it will be a bit rusty. It will take a while to reconnect with the improved signal and translate that into improved understanding."

In many cases, prevention can be better than cure. "I would say that for anybody who works in a job which could put their hearing at risk, it is important to have a test in order to establish a baseline," says Adam. "It means that if they develop concerns they have a reference point to check their hearing against. Musicians are a good example. They can get very worried and upset if there is a hearing issue to be addressed. Some feel their career is on the line, while others might worry about a loss of confidence from their peers. An annual check would

The important thing to understand with hearing loss is that it is a communication disorder. And as such it doesn't just affect the person, but their friends, family and everybody surrounding them

catch any potential issues early. It's possible to conduct tests with sound frequencies beyond those used in speech. If we spot a developing problem at those frequencies the only thing we might have to prescribe is a change in behaviour to alleviate the issue."

But for those people whose hearing is not at particular risk, the question is, what signs should they look for, and what should we do when we find them? "There are signs—they might begin feeling more fatigued or comment that people around them are not speaking clearly. They might start to avoid certain situations. And if any of this is happening, they need to be quite honest with themselves and it is probably a good idea to have a hearing test. If you recognise these traits in others, you have to be very careful about how you broach the subject, because often if you tell people they have a hearing loss they tend to immediately go onto the defensive. Maybe suggest that you know someone else who was having similar issues and that they had a hearing test. Either way it is better to do something—we can now do much more than many people realise to improve their communication abilities after some hearing loss."

LINKS

Cubex
25 New Cavendish Street
020 7935 5511
cubex.co.uk

HEALTH: IN BRIEF

SMALL IS
BEAUTIFUL

*Angela Anastassopoulos
of MV Fitness talks to Viel
Richardson about setting up
a boutique wellbeing studio*

“I really don’t like gyms,” says Angela Anastassopoulos owner and founder of MV Fitness (the MV stands for Marylebone Village). “I don’t like the large classes, the rigid timetables, and to be honest I don’t like the smell.”

Despite her dislike, Angela finally found a place which suited her needs. Then one day came the news that it was closing. The thought of trawling through another series of unsuitable establishments filled Angela with horror. Instead, her background in the City led her to take a rather unusual step. “I decided to look into taking over the business myself. It turned out that the premises were being sold and the staff were leaving so that was not an option. But the idea of owning my own place had been planted.”

Finding a premises proved tricky, but the answer presented itself when Angela happened across a space in a lovely Georgian house on Upper Montagu Street. “It seemed to be the perfect solution. I wanted an intimate studio space with an atmosphere that was different and not intimidating. It is relaxed and cosy—I deliberately didn’t alter the building so it retains the feeling of a home. It doesn’t look like a gym and it doesn’t smell like a gym.”

Angela was very clear about the type of equipment that was going to be right for her studio. “I am a real advocate of the Power Plate, and they



are the only machines we have. It is great for those who do not have a lot of time. All of our trainers know how to get the best out of the machines for our clients. My mother, who is in her seventies, uses it when she comes to visit and thinks it is great. We also offer TRX, which is a style of physical training developed in the American military. It is based on using your own body weight as resistance instead of weights and machines. Any exercise you do during training uses all the associated muscles which leads to a more effective general workout. We also offer pilates, zumba sessions and yoga. We even run a wellbeing retreat in the Austrian mountains with our regular trainers.”

There are three full time trainers: Aristeia, Kyriakos and Maria. “Aristeia has a degree in physical education and sports science, with over 10 years designing training regimes. She also has a background in nutrition. Kyriakos is a certified psychologist specialising in clinical and exercise psychology. As well as being a qualified fitness instructor, he has conducted extensive research on the benefits of physical activity on psychological health. Maria is an enthusiastic but patient trainer who uses her qualifications as a personal trainer to design personal programmes for her clients. Everything is conducted in a

relaxed and informal atmosphere with clients getting to know all the trainers.”

Like many people, Angela spent years paying fees to gyms that she never used, as the timetables did not fit with her lifestyle. So with MV Fitness she decided to dispense with memberships altogether. “You just book sessions with a trainer at a convenient time between 7am and 9pm. There are no formal classes for the client to have to fit around. Your timetable is totally fitted around your needs.”

Once all the hard work is over MV Fitness has a resident beauty therapist, who offers a full range of beauty treatments. “The last thing I want to do is move from one place to another—to get my nails done in one place, waxed in another, my workout in another. Here you have the whole thing under one umbrella. It offers convenience. I think MV Fitness was best summed up by one of my regulars,” Angela says. “She said it was like having a private members club without the private membership. It is the kind of experience I think I always wanted.”

LINKS

MV Fitness
49 Upper Montagu Street
020 7723 8768
mvfitness.co.uk



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SPACE

CARE IN THE COMMUNITY

Preparations are underway for a major refurbishment of the crypt below St Marylebone Parish Church—a space dedicated to healthcare and community activities. Reverend Stephen Evans talks to Viel Richardson about the plans

When in July 1987 the Prince of Wales opened the newly refurbished crypt at St Marylebone Parish Church it was the culmination of a two year programme designed to create a community space based around the tenets of physical and spiritual healing. Now, over two decades later, the passage of time and the changing needs of the community mean that the nature and function of the crypt are being looked at once again. This time it is Reverend Stephen Evans who faces the task of shepherding this new project through to completion.

What is the project in hand?

In 1987 the church was able to offer a brand new space beneath the church, which contained a doctors' surgery and a psychotherapy centre, along with a series of other organisations dealing with the whole question of wellness and healing. But 25 years on people's needs have changed and the space needs looking at again, both to bring about a coherence to its use and turn it into a 21st century space as opposed to a modification of a 19th century space.

Where did the idea come from?

I came to the church two and a half years ago, and a change of leadership is a good time to look at how the church delivers its privileges. We are in an enormously privileged position to serve an area with such a diverse number of communities and institutions.

We set up a review group to see how we use this extraordinary building and to understand how the various stakeholders who use the crypt relate to each other and the wider community. We discovered a belief that one of the things preventing activities from taking place was a space that was tired and compromised. Over the years various stakeholders had shifted their spaces and were now using the crypt in a different way to that initially envisioned.



Who are the stakeholders here?

We have a great many. There's the Marylebone Health Centre with about 10,000 patients; the St Marylebone Healing and Counselling Centre, alongside which we have a group of spiritual directors who meet with people to discuss their spiritual journey; the St Marylebone School—they use the church as their school chapel among other things. A stakeholder that must not be overlooked is the congregation that worships here. We have a very large Young Church, and a junior choir which needs space to meet. We are also home to the Guild of Health—an ecumenical body dealing with issues of illness and healing in people's lives. Our organ is the main practise instrument for the Royal Academy of Music and their students are here daily. We have a close involvement with the hospitals in the area. Part of the driving force for this project is to provide a more accessible and pleasant space that will give us much more flexibility in accommodating a large number of people in a very confined 19th century building.

What stage are you at now?

We have employed Caroe Architecture to carry out a feasibility study. Oliver Caroe is the surveyor to the fabric of St Paul's Cathedral, and worked for me on a project in my previous parish. He is very good at using some quite awkward spaces very creatively. He headed up the feasibility study and that has now been produced. We have since had the first public meeting to share what he has suggested.

What was his brief?

Oliver's task was to increase the space where possible but really to come up with a more coherent space within the limits. We wanted to increase the space available to the Marylebone

surgery because the changes that are happening in primary health care mean that a lot more services are to be delivered on the premises.

Hospitality is another area in need of a rethink. For many years we had a café, but it closed last year because of a suspected structural issue. We would like to go back to having some way of providing a refreshment space.

Also the access created in the 1980s doesn't meet any of the present access legislation. The lift is very small and needs replacing, and the only access staircase is a very small spiral staircase which was never designed to take the huge numbers that use it at present.

We also wanted to reconnect with Marylebone High Street. Unusually this church is not orientated east-west but north-south. This was to do with the design of Regent's Park and York Gate, but it means we turn our back onto the high street. We wanted a way of connecting the new space to the high street and the church garden, which is a very popular area with locals.

What's the next step?

The feasibility report will be worked up into a set of plans and alongside that process there will be a range of public consultations. While churches have something called an Ecclesiastical Exemption and have their own planning controls and authority, we still have to go to Westminster council. We also have to go to people like the Georgian Group, the Victorian Society and other groups who have a right to comment on what we do with the building.

These consultations will result in the application for a Faculty, which

is the church equivalent of planning consent, and also applications for planning consents from Westminster for aspects affecting the appearance of the building and for working in a conservation area. If all of those are successful, we will move forwards with the project with Caroe Architects.

Is the Howard de Walden Estate involved?

The Estate has always been supportive of the work of the parish church—we are actually about to begin some work in the main church space which is partly funded by the Estate. They have also been represented at the presentation of the feasibility study, so they are taking an interest.

How will the funding work?

That is still all to be discovered. I think we will seek some grant aid, and we will revisit some of the individuals and agencies that helped 25 years ago. We have some funds available but it will hopefully be a joint venture with as many stakeholders as possible. Not least because it is a space for the community, and the community needs to get involved rather than simply sitting outside the process.

This will be difficult and time-consuming. Why undertake it at all?

If churches are going to retain a place at the centre of their community, which they have had in this country for 1,500 years, then they have to keep on engaging with those communities.

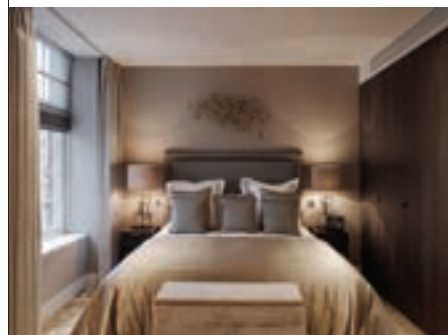
It is extraordinary how people connect with this space. They see it as sacred, but also as welcoming, and we want to retain this while giving access to even more people. If the church is to have a place within any community, then I believe it has to be seen to be proactively engaging with those who see themselves as part of the church community, and extend that welcome to the wider community as a whole.

LINKS

St Marylebone Parish Church
stmarylebone.org

SPACE: IN BRIEF

PROPERTY OF THE MONTH 30 LANGHAM STREET



Simon Hedley from Druce on five spectacular new apartments in Marylebone

This series of five luxury apartments—marketed by Druce and Knight Frank—has been converted from an old BBC building into some of the most desirable dwellings in the capital. These lateral apartments run the length of the building, ending in large double-aspect reception rooms with views of Langham Street and Great Portman Street. Floor to ceiling windows throughout the apartments flood them with natural light, making for bright and open-feeling interiors.

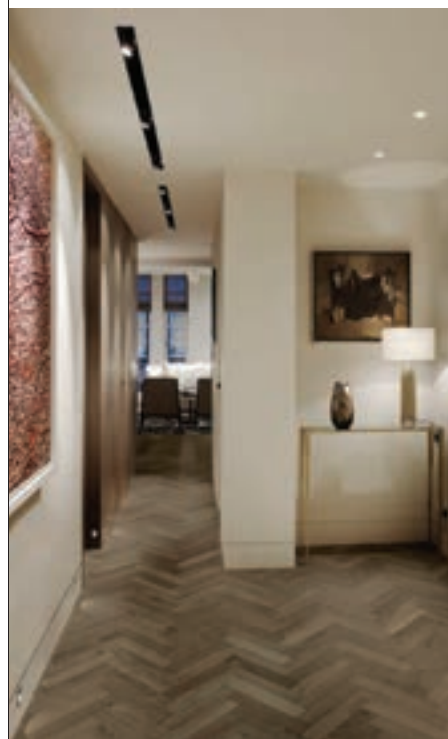
In keeping with the art deco exterior, the interiors have a stylish art deco design which gives the apartments real character and deliver the wow factor wherever you look. The materials used throughout the apartments are as stunning as the designs they express.

There is oak herringbone patterned flooring throughout, Italian veined marble in the bathrooms, while arabesco marble dresses each kitchen island. The reception is a world of Belgian blue cornerstones, polished plaster and smoked glass.

The top apartment is a stunning duplex penthouse. The lower floor follows the same design ethos as the rest of the apartments, and the upper floor has a glass sided sky lounge with 270 degree views of the city. There is also a large two-sided terrace for those sunny city afternoons. It's a stunning series of apartments adding a real touch of glamour to Marylebone living.

LINKS

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SPACE IN BRIEF

AGENT PROFILE

TIM FAIRWEATHER



Tim Fairweather is one of the directors of independent estate agency Sandfords

How long has Sandfords been here?

We have been in the local market for over 25 years. We were originally set up dealing in the Regent's Park market and have expanded to have two offices in the Marylebone area, one covering south of the Marylebone Road and the other covering the north. I joined in 2006 as a partner and a director.

What makes Marylebone a good place to live?

So many things. Marylebone is quite compact so everything is within easy reach. The high street is very condensed, but has all the necessary amenities. You are surrounded by great food and culture, and you're half way between Regent's Park and Hyde

Park. All in all, Marylebone is just an easy place to live. I have been here for nearly 20 years and fundamentally it is a very happy place to be.

What do you like about working in Marylebone?

This is a very easy area in which to be an estate agent because you can walk everywhere. I walk to all my appointments, you meet people as you go along who you would miss if you were in a car.

What makes Sandfords stand out?

Sandfords has four offices in total: three residential sales and lettings,

LINKS

Sandfords

6 Paddington Street
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sandfords.com



and one dedicated to property management. The way the company is structured means that each office markets every property, which no other agent seems to do. Another difference is our dedicated office for dealing with management services. Setting that up was quite a bold move, but we wanted to take complete control of the process so that we could guarantee the quality of service, and it is now paying dividends.

What is your personal specialism?

I specialise in the Marylebone market. This is where I have built a lot of relationships. I deal with everything from studio flats to big houses. I know people who started in the area with studio flats and are now in five bedroom houses.

There is a lot of technical knowledge you need to do this job well, and I have honed my

knowledge in these areas in relation to the Marylebone area.

Does working here present challenges?

One of the main challenges of working in this area is that you have to take your due diligence very seriously. A lot of the properties sold here are cash sales, so there is no mortgage involved. This means that a lot of responsibility falls to the estate agents, and it is not always easy. More than once we have had old clients come to us saying things they were told during sale negotiations that turned out not to be the case, and asking us to take on the sale.

Anything else?

Then there's the whole range of things like enfranchisement. This is about your rights in relation to extending a lease. We know the way the law works, we can recommend you to good local lawyers, we know the freeholders in the area. I think it is vital to know the local market and to know other people who specialise in working here. I know when to roll out the right lawyers, I know when to roll out the right surveyors. I have built up relationships, which I like to share with people. But I also know when to give advice from in-house.

What has been your favourite sale?

It was a mews house on Devonshire Place. It was a complete mews property with both the large house and the mews house behind. It was just a lovely property and a nice sale process to go through—all parties were nice people, and I happen to know it has made a lovely family home.

How is the market now?

The Marylebone market has become a lot more global now. London is attracting more people as a place to live and they are homing in on Marylebone. Quite frankly I think it should have happened a long time ago. It is a fabulous place. My advice is if you have the means then move quickly, because I think things are only going to keep going up.

Places of Interest

THE JOURNAL'S REGULAR GUIDE TO THE BEST HOMES AND OFFICES AVAILABLE TO RENT FROM THE HOWARD DE WALDEN ESTATE



23-25 Weymouth Street

This bright, spacious apartment is situated on the first floor of an Edwardian mansion block, complete with distinctive period features and a lift. Beautifully refurbished, it has three bedrooms, two bathrooms and a large reception room. It is perfectly situated—close to the amenities of Marylebone High Street, and just a stone's throw from the entrance to Regent's Park.

Howard de Walden Estate

020 7290 0912

hdwe.co.uk





DEVONSHIRE PLACE

MARYLEBONE, W1

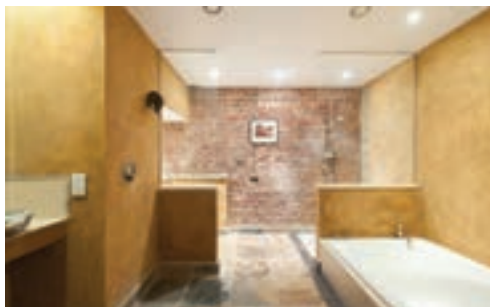
ASKING PRICE £1,795,000
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JOINT SOLE AGENT

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Marylebone Village,
London W1U 5QG
T: 020 7224 4994
E: mvsales@sandfords.com

A bright and airy two bedroom, two bathroom second floor flat situated within this attractive Georgian house conversion which is located in the heart of Marylebone Village.

The apartment comprises two double bedrooms, two bathrooms, a reception room and a separate kitchen.

Devonshire Place is well positioned for the amenities of the West End as well as being situated within close proximity of Marylebone High Street and Regent's Park. EPC= C.



£1,950 per week
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GARDEN FLAT, DEVONSHIRE PLACE

MARYLEBONE, W1

An extremely spacious and beautifully presented, three bedroom, garden apartment set within this period conversion in Marylebone Village.

The accommodation benefits from wood flooring and ample natural light throughout and comprises a double reception room with access to private decked terrace, a fully equipped kitchen, master bedroom with en-suite bathroom, second double bedroom with en-suite bathroom, third double bedroom with additional play room/office and en-suite toilet, guest cloak room and utility room. The property further benefits from a wine cellar and excellent storage throughout.

Devonshire Place is located within a few minutes walk to the shops and restaurants of Marylebone High Street and the open spaces of Regent's Park. Excellent transport links are provided by Baker Street and Great Portland Street stations and the A40 for motorists.

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**George Street,
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£3,500,000

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2 reception rooms / 4 bedrooms / 2 bathrooms

Leasehold



**Montagu Square,
Marylebone W1**
£4,925,000

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George Street, Marylebone W1 **£1,600 per week**

Located within a prestigious portered mansion building, this apartment is decorated to an exceptional standard with stylish, high-quality fixtures and hardwood floors.

reception room / 3 bedrooms / 2 bathrooms

Furnished



Portman Close, Marylebone W1 **£1,925 per week**

Beautifully presented apartment with 24 hr concierge, secured underground parking, air conditioning, underfloor heating and enclosed courtyard garden.

reception room / 3 bedrooms / 3 bathrooms

Furnished



Lancaster Gate, Hyde Park W2 **£2,000 per week**

Modern spacious townhouse with hardwood floors throughout, situated in quiet residential location overlooking Sussex Square private garden with off street parking.

reception room / 5 bedrooms / 6 bathrooms

Furnished



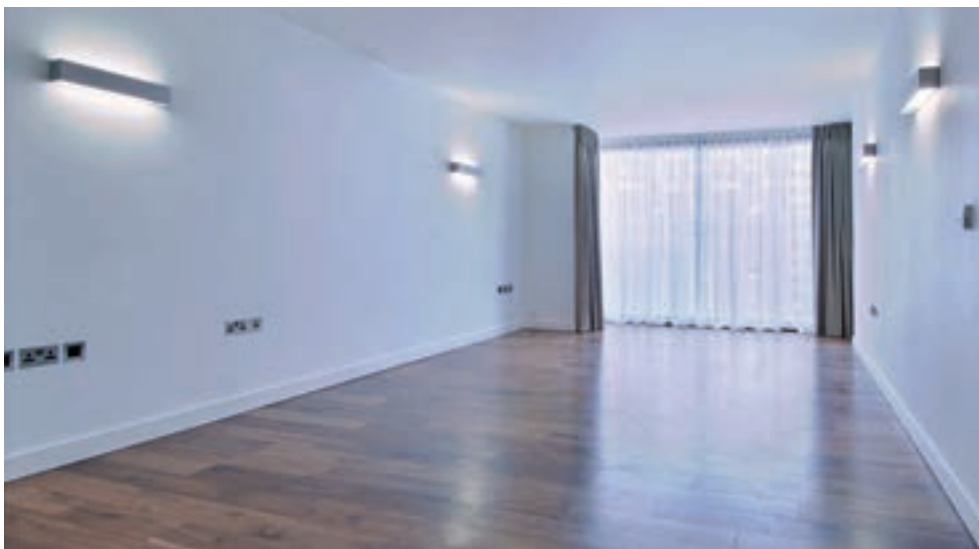
Chiltern Street, Marylebone W1 **£1,250 per week**

Modern flat on the fifth floor of this popular 24 hour mansion building with access to the resident gym and is close to the fashionable Marylebone High Street.

2 reception rooms / 3 bedrooms / bathroom

Unfurnished

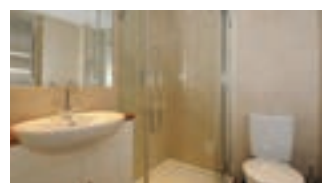
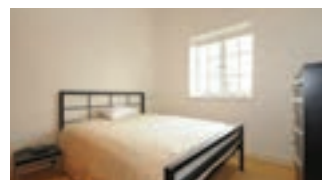
DRUCE



FITZROVIA APARTMENTS, BOLSOVER STREET, W1

A stunning apartment in the second phase of this ground breaking development in terms of design and flair, created by two of Central London's finest property developers; Ridgeford and Manhattan Loft Corporation. The property is finished to a modern high standard specification throughout and benefits from a Concierge. Fifth Floor • Spacious Reception Room • Kitchen • 2 Double Bedrooms • 2 Bathrooms • Wood Floors • Approx 922 Sq Ft • EPC Rating C
Unfurnished

£1,250 per week



THE EXCHANGE, NOTTINGHAM PLACE, W1

A fantastic bright and quiet uber-chic two bedroom apartment on the fourth floor (with lift) of this modern building located just off the popular Marylebone High Street. The property benefits from high ceilings, wood flooring to hallway and spacious reception area open plan fully fitted modern kitchen with breakfast bar. Long let Minimum term 12 months • Spacious Open Plan Reception • Kitchen • 2 Double Bedrooms • 2 Bathrooms • Approx 847 Sq ft • EPC Rating C
Furnished/Unfurnished

£795 per week

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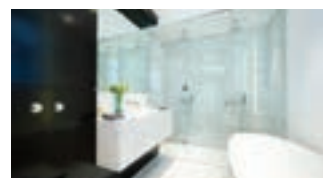
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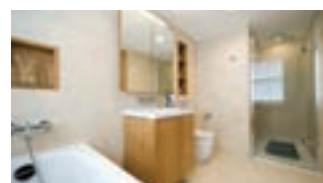
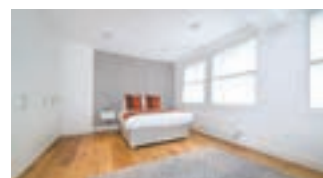
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Share of Freehold
£3,500,000 Subject to Contract



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A stunning duplex penthouse apartment with direct lift access on the 3rd and 4th floors of a period building in the heart of Fitzrovia. There are only 3 apartments in the building which have just been created out of former commercial space. The property has a "warehouse" type of feel and is extremely bright. EPC Rating C
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175 year lease
£2,495,000 Subject to Contract

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£750 per week unfurnished/furnished EPC – D



De Walden Street, Marylebone W1

An amazing 1st floor two bedroom lateral flat, drawing room with study area, gas fire, bespoke kitchen with dining area, 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms

£1,350 per week furnished EPC – C



Portman Gate, Lisson Grove NW1

A first and second floor maisonette which has been newly refurbished, reception room, kitchen, master bedroom with en-suite bathroom, double bedroom

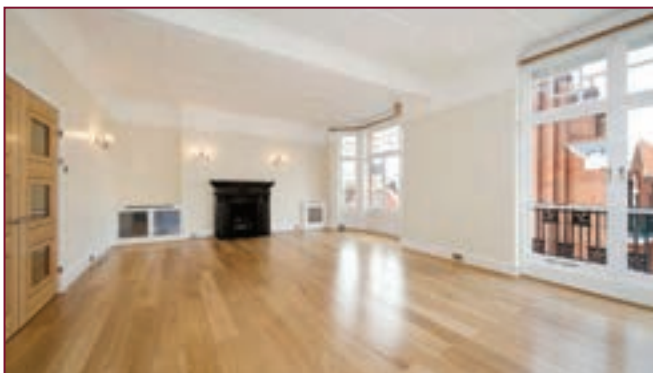
£600 per week furnished EPC – C



Gloucester Place Mews, Marylebone W1

A stunning loft style mews house with huge vaulted ceilings, living/dining room with gas fireplace, kitchen, 2 double bedrooms, 1 stunning bathroom

£925 per week unfurnished EPC – D



Chiltern Street, Marylebone W1

A 4th floor flat in a period mansion block, double reception room, eat-in kitchen, master bedroom with en-suite bathroom, 2 further double bedrooms

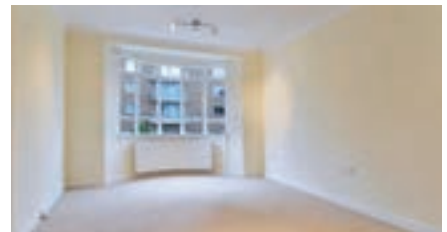
£1,950 per week unfurnished EPC – D



Wimpole Street, Marylebone W1

A newly refurbished 3rd floor, spacious apartment in a beautiful period building (with a lift), living/dining room, open plan kitchen, 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms

£825 per week unfurnished EPC – C



Montagu Street, W1

A bright and well presented one bedroom on the 2nd floor of an elegant, purpose built block in this highly sought after location in Marylebone. The flat features a separate kitchen, spacious reception room and a double bedroom. The property is ideal for a pied-a-terre or buy to let investment. Montagu Street is a quiet street situated very close to the bars and restaurants of Portman Village and Portman Square and is within walking distance to the shops and facilities of Marylebone High Street and Marble Arch tube station. EPC=D

£390,000



Albion Street, W2

A well presented, second floor, two bedroom apartment which is discreetly positioned at the rear of this highly desirable mansion block overlooking the picturesque mews houses on Albion Close. The property offers a spacious reception and dining room with a feature bay window, two spacious bedrooms, bathroom, kitchen and guest WC. The block benefits from porters and a lift. Albion Gate is a centrally located mansion block which is situated immediately off the open spaces of Hyde Park. EPC=C

£1,295,000

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£795 Per Week

Recently refurbished raised ground floor flat with 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, reception and kitchen.



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£695 per week

This is a well proportioned three double bedroom, two bathroom apartment opposite Regent's Park.



Blandford Street W1

£595,000.00 Leasehold

A lovely bright first floor walk-up property, with one bedroom, kitchen/reception and bathroom.



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Entrance hall ♦ reception room ♦ dining room ♦ kitchen/breakfast room ♦ master bedroom suite ♦ 2nd bedroom suite ♦ study/3rd bedroom ♦ shower room ♦ lift ♦ 24hr porter
♦ 195 sq m (2,009 sq ft) ♦ EPC=D



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DEVONSHIRE PLACE, W1

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♦ study ♦ kitchen ♦ master bedroom suite ♦ 4 further bedrooms (3
en suite) ♦ further bathroom ♦ 2 guest cloakrooms ♦ roof terrace
♦ patio ♦ 346 sq m (3,729 sq ft) ♦ EPC=F



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BIRD STREET, W1

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♦ kitchen ♦ lift ♦ porter ♦ underground parking
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♦ Council Tax=H ♦ EPC=C

£825 per week **Furnished**



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A CONTEMPORARY DUPLEX APARTMENT

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2 bedrooms (1 en suite) ♦ further bathroom ♦ reception room
♦ kitchen ♦ guest cloakroom ♦ lift ♦ porter ♦ 80 sq m (862 sq ft)
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WIMPOLE STREET, MARYLEBONE VILLAGE, WI

Three bedroom for Sale with Garage Space

The purpose built block is located on the east side of Wimpole Street close to the junction with Weymouth Street. The shopping facilities of Marylebone High Street and the open spaces of Regents Park are within close proximity. Bond Street and Baker Street underground stations are also close by.

Accommodation comprises:

Entrance hall • Reception room • Three bedrooms • Bathroom • shower room • Kitchen
Sixth Floor - Top Floor

Leasehold

£1,250,000



MILFORD HOUSE, QUEEN ANNE STREET, WI

Two Bedroom for Sale

This purpose built building is in the heart of Marylebone Village. The flat is located on the third floor. The shopping facilities of Oxford Street, Oxford Circus underground station together with the open spaces of Regents Park are all within close proximity.

Accommodation comprises:

Reception room • Two bedrooms • Bathroom
Separate cloakroom • Kitchen

Leasehold

£795,000



MARYLEBONE

WIGMORE PLACE W1

An exciting opportunity to acquire a superb three storey mews house, with development potential, situated in Prime Marylebone.

Reception room ■ 3 bedrooms ■ 2 bathrooms
Utility room ■ Roof terrace ■ 2 large garages

GUIDE PRICE £3,250,000



Marylebone & Regent's Park 020 7486 8866
marylebone@carterjonas.co.uk



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URL: cjview.me/mjmr1



MARYLEBONE

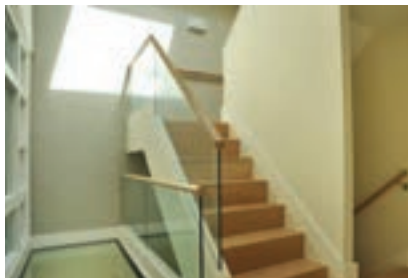
WELBECK WAY W1

A rare opportunity to rent a completely refurbished, contemporary mews house of approximately 1,600 sq ft.

Open-plan kitchen/reception room ■ 3 bedrooms
3 bathrooms ■ Energy efficiency: Band C

**£1,500 PER WEEK*
£6,500 PER MONTH***

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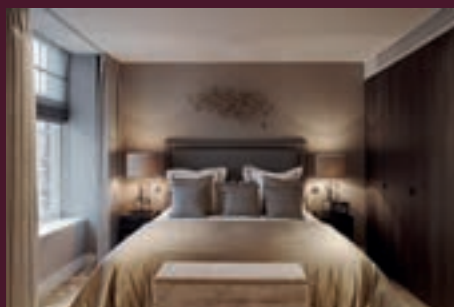


30 LANGHAM STREET W1

A LUXURY DEVELOPMENT OF TWO AND THREE BEDROOM LATERAL APARTMENTS & A DUPLEX PENTHOUSE

Located in a beautifully renovated art deco style building with Portland Stone exterior, interiors have been architect designed to an exacting specification. Each apartment occupies its own floor and offers open plan dual aspect living space. The Penthouse also benefits from a stunning roof terrace of over 75m² (800 sq ft) and direct key card lift access.

30 Langham Street occupies a prime central London location just moments from the newly redeveloped BBC Broadcasting House and it's open air 'World' piazza and within walking distance of Marylebone High Street and the green open spaces of Regent's Park. Nearby transport links also enable access into the City within minutes.



Sizes from
146m² (1,578 sq ft) to 174m² (1,877 sq ft)

PRICES FROM £3,135,000

Bulthaup Kitchens
Gaggenau and Miele appliances
Underfloor heating and air cooling system
Lutron lighting
CAT 6 wiring
Day porter
Secure video entry system
Leasehold 905 years approximately



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Montagu Square, Marylebone W1

An elegant split level apartment on garden square

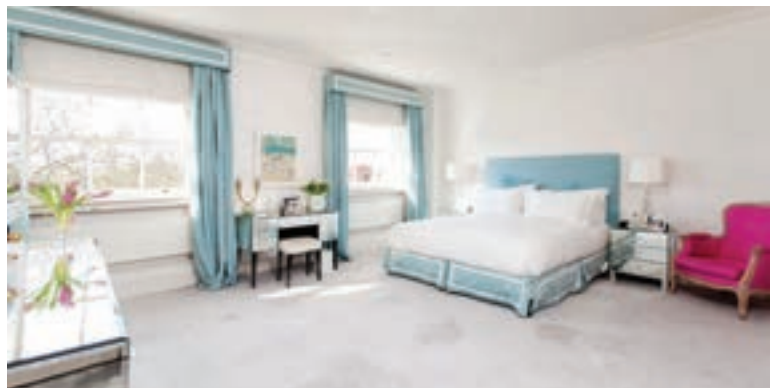
A beautifully renovated duplex apartment combining period features with contemporary design. Benefitting from generous ceilings heights throughout and its own private patio terrace. Master bedroom suite, 2 further bedroom suites, reception room, dining room, fully fitted kitchen, guest cloakroom, patio terrace. Approximately 172 sq m (1,851 sq ft)

Leasehold

Guide price: £2,550,000

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marylebone@knightfrank.com
020 3641 7937





Park Crescent, Marylebone W1

A beautiful three bedroom lateral apartment

A three bedroom lateral apartment located on the third floor (with lift) of an elegant Nash designed crescent. Comprising master bedroom suite, 2 further bedroom suites, spacious reception room and interconnecting dining room, kitchen / breakfast room, guest cloakroom. Energy rating E. Approximately 229 sq m (2,465 sq ft)

Leasehold

Guide price: £4,750,000

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Montagu Square, Marylebone W1

Luxurious apartment

A beautifully presented duplex apartment, refurbished to a high specification. 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, shower room, reception room, dining room, kitchen, cloakroom, garage. Energy rating C. Approximately 205 sq m (2,203 sq ft)

Furnished

£2,500 per week

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(MRQ176976)



Hallam Street, Fitzrovia W1

Choice of apartments

A selection of contemporary apartments in a well-maintained period building with lift. 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, reception room, fully integrated kitchens. Energy rating D-G. Approximately 83-96 sq m (900 - 1,044 sq ft)

Unfurnished

From £750 - £895 per week

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(MRQ128283)

The difference between

I like it and I'll take it
x

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Whether you're selling, letting or buying, we can make the difference.
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