

WINTER 2024

ALL FIRED UP
Warming winter
menus

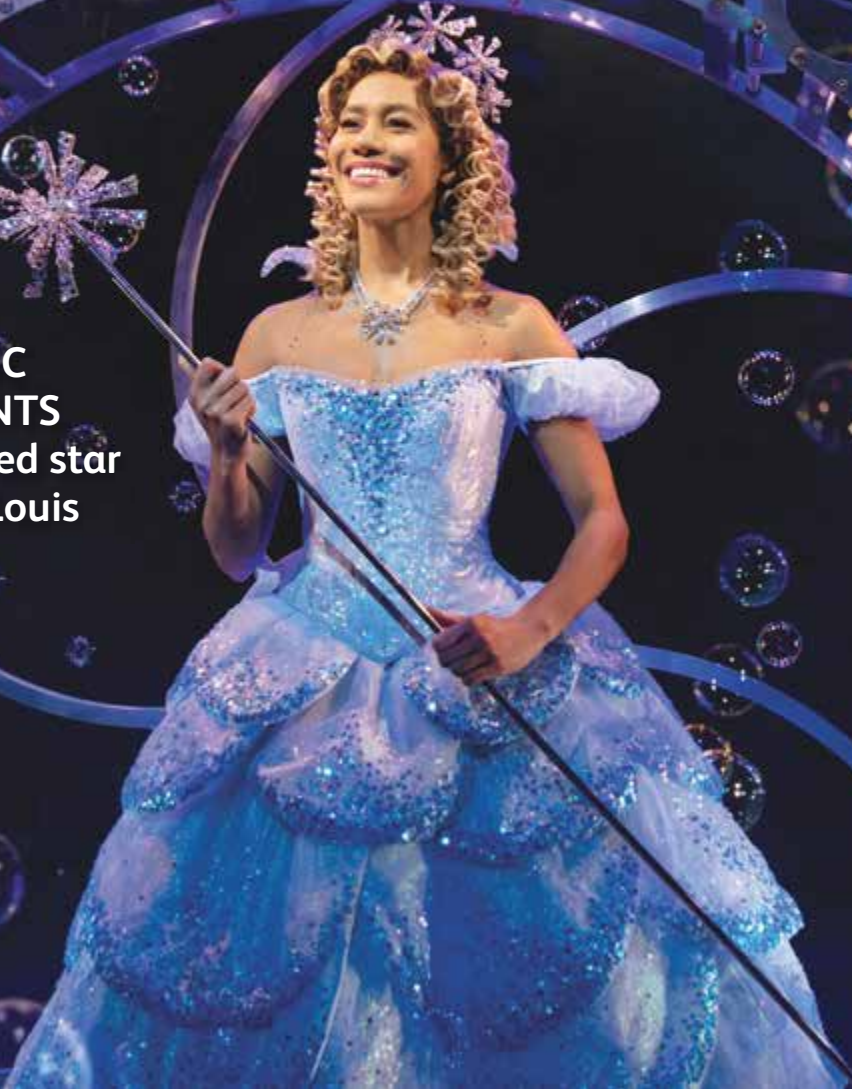
FESTIVE FARE
Prepare to indulge
this Christmas

UNDER THE TREE
Your local gift
guide

Victoria

LONDON STARTS HERE

**MAGIC
MOMENTS**
Meet Wicked star
Lucy St Louis



OTHER BITES

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HOMO ALONE

Written by
Bobby Delaney & Jodie Prenger

Directed by
Alex Jackson



29 NOV 2024 - 5 JAN 2025

THEOTHERPALACE.CO.UK
12 PALACE ST, LONDON, SW1E 5JA

**OTHER
PALACE**

WINTER



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Wicked star Lucy St Louis on her favourite local places

Cover: Lucy St Louis (Glinda in *Wicked*).
Image by Matt Crockett
Top: Christmas gift guide
Below: *Cinderella* at The Curzon



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Wicked fun

The *Wicked* movie is released in the UK on November 22, and plenty of local businesses are celebrating.

The Clermont London (101 Buckingham Palace Road) is offering a themed afternoon tea, including plenty of green treats such as a lime cheesecake, pistachio bombe and lemon meringue pie. Meanwhile, M&S (Cardinal Place) is selling a selection of *Wicked*-themed gifts including Christmas baubles, cosy PJs and toys.

Robinsons has also collaborated with *Wicked* to create two limited-edition squash variants, available from Waitrose (Bressenden Place). Finally, this is the perfect time to revisit the stage production at the Apollo Victoria theatre, now taking bookings until January 2026.



What's new in Victoria

BY ALICE CAIRNS



Royal residence

Tickets are on sale for 2025 tours of Buckingham Palace, and now include the east wing, which is home to the palace's famous front facade and central balcony.

For the first time, visitors to the east wing will enter through the palace's front gates and forecourt, just like guests at official royal events. Tour groups will have the chance to see the view from the iconic balcony, explore the Yellow Drawing Room and enter the newly restored Chinese Dining Room.

Read all about it

Former government lobbyist Lou Gilmond has published a new political thriller set in Westminster. *Palisade* explores government corruption, big tech and the impact of artificial intelligence, as chief whip Esme Kanha and backbencher Harry Colbey race to bring down a political plot. Settle down with a cup of hot chocolate for a wintry read.

Waterstones, 88 Victoria Street





Sustainable style

Did you know that Victoria Station is home to a preloved clothing store? Good London sells a handpicked selection of vintage and designer pieces that have been sourced from recycling centres, offering an amazing alternative to fast fashion. If you're looking for an environmentally friendly Christmas present, this could be the perfect place to start your search!



Birthday boat

Happy birthday to The Tattershall Castle, which recently celebrated its 90th year. The floating pub was built in Hartlepool in 1934, and was used as a tethering vessel for barrage balloons during the Second World War. In the years that followed, the boat became a passenger ferry and a floating art gallery, before transforming into the river pub we know and love. Visit for one of the weekly comedy nights or monthly jazz evenings.
Victoria Embankment



Box fresh

Already thinking about your new year's resolutions? For those who are hoping to boost their fitness, why not pay a visit to the new boxing gym that has opened its doors on Buckingham Palace Road. Jab takes its inspiration from the late 1970s – the golden age of boxing – with mid-century design and retro touches.



There's a fully equipped boxing studio, a state-of-the-art recovery suite for hot and cold therapy and a well-stocked health bar.
151 Buckingham Palace Road



TAKE THE BISCUIT

Visit the Biscuiteers cafe to make your very own *Hansel and Gretel* gingerbread house. Your private icing tutor will guide you as you build and decorate your festive creation, which you'll be able to take home with you at the end of the session (£150 per person, for a minimum of four people). Biscuiteers will also be offering a festive afternoon tea, featuring macarons and cakes as well as a signature hand-iced biscuit.

November and December, 14-15 Eccleston Yards

FESTIVE CHEER

Fancy an adult alternative to a Christmas pantomime? *Homo Alone* is a laugh-out-loud musical parody of *Home Alone*, which follows the fate of young Kevin after he's left at home by his forgetful family. This cheeky festive extravaganza is recommended for audience members aged 16-plus.

From November 29 at *The Other Palace*, 12 Palace Street



Winter events

BIG SCREEN BALLET

Get into the Christmas spirit by enjoying beautiful Royal Ballet productions from the comfort of your local Curzon cinema. On December 10, you can settle back in the plush cinema seats – popcorn and a cocktail in hand – to enjoy a performance of *Cinderella*, everyone's favourite rags-to-riches story. Then on December 17, experience *The Nutcracker* – the festive classic that comes complete with sparkling costumes and awe-inspiring sets.

58 Victoria Street





NUTCRACKER MAGIC

Raffles London at The OVO is collaborating with the English National Ballet this festive season. Original costumes from *The Nutcracker* (including a tutu embellished with 400 Swarovski crystals) will be on display on the hotel's grand staircase and in corridors, and a pianist will perform music from the ballet while diners enjoy a themed afternoon tea. Guests can also opt for packages such as Nutcracker Nights, which includes a two-night stay with breakfast, festive treats, a three-course pre-theatre menu, cocktail and two tickets for the English National Ballet's performance of *The Nutcracker* (from £1,154).

December 12 to January 12, 57 Whitehall

From prize-winning art to beautiful ballet, there's plenty to enjoy this winter

BY ALICE CAIRNS



ART ATTACK

Explore the work of the four artists shortlisted for the Turner Prize 2024. Pio Abad has created artwork inspired by unshown museum artefacts sitting in storage, while Claudette Johnson's large-scale paintings of black men and women ask questions about identity and race. Jasleen Kaur uses music and objects including cars, cassette tapes, tracksuits and stickers to interrogate collective memory, and Delaine Le Bas has created an immersive environment with the walls and floors draped in fabric. The winner will be announced on December 3.

Until February 16, Tate Britain, Millbank



CLAUDETTE JOHNSON, PROTECTION, 2024. © CLAUDETTE JOHNSON. COURTESY HULBUSH GARDENS, LONDON. PHOTO: ANDY KEATE

FAMILY FUN

Families are invited to Westminster Abbey for a morning of crafts, singing and storytelling. Create a Christmas angel, explore the historic abbey cloisters and join the choristers as they sing favourite carols by candlelight. The event is suitable for children aged three-plus.

December 7, 10am-1pm, Chapter House, Westminster Abbey



CHRISTMAS CHARACTERS

From December 11-15, Victoria Station will be home to a traditional Christmas steam engine. Visit for a festive photo op and for an opportunity to meet Santa himself! Meanwhile, a cheeky elf will be popping up at Cardinal Place, Nova and Victoria Street. Spot him for the chance to win prizes!



LET THERE BE LIGHT

This is the perfect time to enjoy twinkling Christmas lights in the local area. On November 14, the Christmas tree in Christchurch Gardens was switched on by the Lord Mayor of London, while children from St Matthew's school choir sang Christmas carols. On December 3 between 4.30pm and 6.30pm there will be another exciting switch-on event in Cardinal Place, starring the Snowman from the Peacock Theatre. The Strand and Villiers Street also has a new, fairy-themed lighting scheme, and to celebrate The Clermont will be holding a festive fairy workshop on December 14 teaching children to create wings and a sparkly headpiece.

Christmas events

Fill your diary with festive fun

BY ALICE CAIRNS

PUPPY POWER

Fighting off the winter blues? This festive edition of Cuddle Club could be the perfect solution. On November 28, you can head to The Passage on Carlisle Place to hug some friendly pups – proven to lower your heart rate and elevate your mood. Best of all, the event is completely free!





40 Grosvenor Gardens Mews
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opposite Victoria Station.



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enquiries@tuckerman.co.uk



Future proofing

The Victoria Business Improvement District (BID) has served the area for more than a decade since its establishment in 2010.

This February, it will go to ballot to secure its fourth term.

We spoke to Ruth Duston OBE about what the BID has to offer

AS TOLD TO ALICE CAIRNS

WHAT DOES THE VICTORIA BID DO?

As the voice of businesses in Victoria, we are committed to working closely with our partners to enhance this vibrant area as an exceptional place to work, live and visit. We're dedicated to promoting sustainable business practices, creating accessible green and open spaces, and ensuring safety and community engagement remain key priorities of our work. Through these priorities, we champion a thriving and resilient Victoria.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR LATEST PROJECTS...

This year has been a truly landmark one for the Victoria district and London Heritage Quarter. Our summer campaign, Journey Through Time, attracted thousands of visitors who explored all 11 London-themed sculptures across the area. I loved the phone box on Westminster Cathedral Piazza, the guard at The Guards Museum and the teapot in Lower Grosvenor Gardens.

Beyond our events, we continued making strides in our long-term strategic projects such as Future Victoria and Project SWAN [South Westminster Area Network]. With Future Victoria, we've brought key stakeholders together to shape a forward-looking vision for Victoria Station and the surrounding area. Meanwhile, Project SWAN

is pushing forward as an innovative low-carbon heat network for Westminster, exploring renewable options such as harnessing the River Thames to heat buildings, in partnership with AECOM and the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero.

WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR PROUDEST ACHIEVEMENTS WITH THE BID?

One of the standout achievements early on was in 2012, when the BID organised an unforgettable Guinness World Record attempt ahead of the Queen's diamond jubilee. In a truly spectacular display, 91 trumpeters from seven military units, all in full ceremonial dress, assembled at Wellington Barracks to form the longest line of fanfare trumpeters. They played the *Wedding Fanfare*, which resonated all the way to Buckingham Palace – it was a breathtaking scene!

In 2013, we had the honour of unveiling The Diamond Garden outside the Queen's Gallery to Queen Elizabeth II, creating a lasting legacy in the heart of Westminster.

Another pivotal moment came in 2020 with the unveiling of Christchurch Gardens. This historic site, which dates back to the 13th century, is a key local green space, but over time it was clear that its layout and condition limited its potential as a welcoming





community space. After a thorough redesign, formally backed by Westminster City Council with a £2.5 million investment, Christchurch Gardens has been transformed into a beautiful space that locals can enjoy year-round.

WHAT DO YOU LOVE ABOUT THIS AREA?

I'd have to say its vibrancy. The area was once dominated by government buildings, but now hosts a thriving fashion hub with Tom Ford, Giorgio Armani, Burberry and Jimmy Choo all in SW1. We also have an increasingly vibrant leisure offer to complement these changes; Flight Club, Harry's Bar, The Alchemist, Bam Karaoke Box and Lane7 all bring a new energy to the mix around Victoria Station.

What is truly remarkable is that there is still so much in the pipeline! Over 1.15 million sq ft of prime office space will come on stream within the next three years, alongside improved public spaces and more destination restaurants, such as Cornus in Eccleston Yards.

WHERE IS YOUR FAVOURITE PLACE TO EAT LOCALLY?

That is a hard one, but I am going to have to say The Pem at The Conrad London St James. The fine-dining experience there is nothing short of remarkable, from the elegant decor to the impeccable service.

AND YOUR FAVOURITE PLACES TO VISIT?

Westminster Cathedral is perfect for a lunchtime escape – its remarkable Neo-Byzantine architecture and tranquil interior draw you in for a quiet moment of reflection.

Meanwhile, The Guards Museum offers a journey through nearly 400 years of history.

WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR FUTURE GOALS?

Our vision is about building a vibrant business district that's fit for the future. We're fully committed to supporting Westminster's ambitious goal of achieving net zero by 2040, with a focused, practical approach to reducing emissions and tackling climate challenges.

At the heart of our efforts is a drive to make the area a prime destination for emerging industries. We're working closely with key players to create a business landscape with an office and after-work offer that responds to their needs.

As a vital link between the private and public sectors, we're fostering partnerships that bring genuine, long-lasting benefits to the community. And through the collective strength of the London Heritage Quarter, we'll champion investment to keep London at the forefront as a world-class city defined by collaboration, innovation and resilience.

Eat & drink Directory out & in



RUBENS HOTEL

This festive season at The Rubens at the Palace offers a magical celebration from 18th November to 5th January. Enjoy unique festive receptions, social and corporate dinners, festive family gatherings and delicious Christmas lunches with menus tailored to your requirements. Indulge in our Winter Wonderland Afternoon Tea featuring seasonal delicacies and mulled wine. Experience Christmas Day with a sumptuous seven-course meal and toast the New Year with live music and gourmet small plates. This festive season you are cordially invited to enjoy the best in 5-star hospitality in one of the most iconic settings.

The Rubens at the Palace
39 Buckingham Palace Road, London SW1W 0PS
Tel: 020 7834 6600
<https://rubenshotel.com/>

STICKS'N'SUSHI

Located in Victoria Nova close to Victoria Station, the Victoria Palace Theatre and the Apollo Theatre, our restaurant combines Danish “hygge” and Japanese minimalism. Enjoy classic and creative sushi along with sticks from the grill, perfect for pre or post theatre dining. Spread across two floors, mirrors and lamps highlight the nooks and crannies of the restaurant, and if you go up to the first floor, it feels as though you are walking into a church, thanks to all the elegant arches. A sushi restaurant, even for those that don't like fish.

Sticks'n'Sushi Victoria
02031418240
www.sticksnsushi.com



BOISDALE OF BELGRAVIA

Boisdale of Belgravia has been delighting guests since 1989 with its vibrant blend of tradition, live entertainment, and exceptional cuisine. Experience live music Monday to Saturday nights and a jazz-filled Sunday lunch. Boisdale offers a Negroni bar with complimentary Aperitivo hour (Monday-Saturday, 6-7pm), an extensive whisky selection, a hidden cigar terrace, and elegant private dining rooms. The Scottish-inspired interior features leather chairs, plush tartan carpets, and original artwork. Specializing in British cuisine with a focus on Scottish flavors, highlights include dry-aged Aberdeenshire steaks, Hebridean seafood, and traditional haggis—all in a relaxed yet sophisticated setting.

13-15 Eccleston Street, London, SW1W 9LX
020 7730 6922
<https://www.boisdale.co.uk/>

THE PEM

Led by one of London's most esteemed chefs, Sally Abé, The Pem is all about fine dining with a difference. The menu showcases the best of British food, with a focus on seasonal flavours that brings a modern twist to classics. Served in the sophisticated surrounds of the Conrad London St. James, the spectacular 70-pax dining room is enhanced by a 20-seat private dining room. The décor is bold with crimson reds, pale pinks, art deco details and expressive art. The Pem is Westminster's most spectacular dining destination.

Conrad London St James.
22-28 Broadway, London SW1H 0BH
0203 301 8080
Nearest stations: St James's Park,
Victoria and Westminster
Thepemrestaurant.com





Christmas with a twist

Looking for something extra special this Christmas? The Alchemist's three-course festive menu includes bottle service and plenty of theatrical flourishes, as well as seasonal cocktails such as a glittering bellini and the Trifle (think vodka, jelly, Advocaat cream foam and sprinkles). The food offerings are just as tasty, from Christmas classics such as pigs in blankets to vegan options including a garlic and soy baked aubergine. As ever with The Alchemist, expect the unexpected! | 52 Grosvenor Gardens

Egg-cellent news

Quality fast food restaurant Yolk has opened its doors in Cardinal Place. Known for its delicious brunches and sandwiches, Yolk serves up baps, poached-egg pots, salad bowls, hot pots and freshly baked ciabatta stuffed with tasty fillings, as well as baked goods and fudgy brownies. You can order for delivery or via click and collect – join Club Yolk to collect points and receive freebies. | Unit 14, Cathedral Place



From festive feasts to creative cocktails, enjoy a taste of winter

BY ALICE CAIRNS

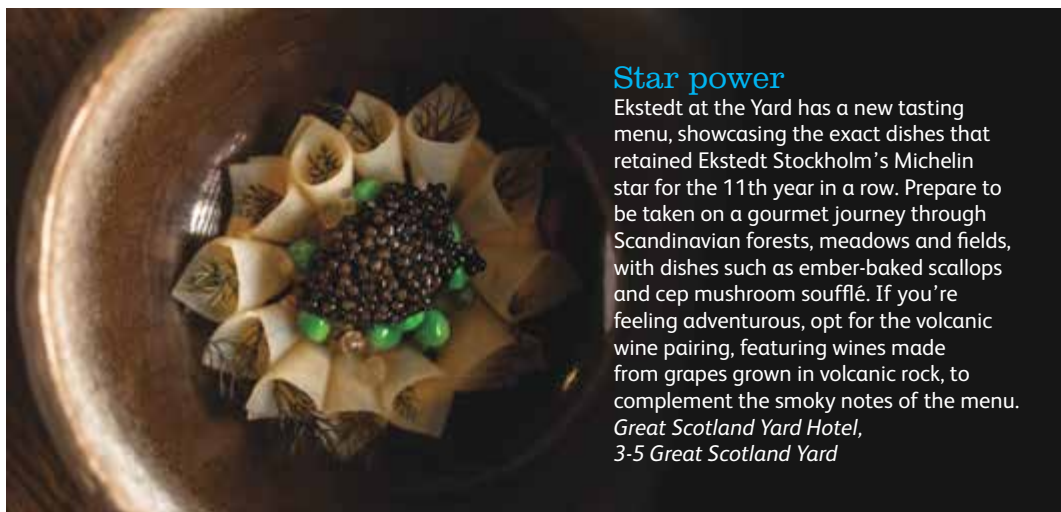
Fine fare



A slice of Italy

Acclaimed Italian chef Francesco Mazzei will open a new restaurant at the Corinthia London next year. The hotel's grand Northall restaurant will undergo a transformation to become the chef's signature establishment in London from summer 2025. Thomas Kochs, the hotel's managing director, said: "I am so happy to be able to create a restaurant with Francesco and the team here at the hotel, which will be for Londoners and hotel guests alike. Francesco's personality and his spectacular Italian food will be irresistible for sure." Calabrian-born Francesco has worked in five-star hotels and Michelin-starred restaurants over the past four decades and describes his style as "Mama's cooking with a chef's hand". The Northall will remain open until late winter this year, when it will close for a full refurbishment for the relaunch.

Whitehall Place



Star power

Ekstedt at the Yard has a new tasting menu, showcasing the exact dishes that retained Ekstedt Stockholm's Michelin star for the 11th year in a row. Prepare to be taken on a gourmet journey through Scandinavian forests, meadows and fields, with dishes such as ember-baked scallops and cep mushroom soufflé. If you're feeling adventurous, opt for the volcanic wine pairing, featuring wines made from grapes grown in volcanic rock, to complement the smoky notes of the menu.
*Great Scotland Yard Hotel,
3-5 Great Scotland Yard*

Spanish surprise

Looking for a fun gift for a food lover? Look no further than the experience gift cards from Ibérica in Cardinal Place. The restaurant offers a range of exciting food and drink events, including a sherry tasting led by the in-house sherry ambassador, a Spanish gin and tonic masterclass, ham carving led by a master carver, and an evening of wine and cheese pairing. Gift cards cost £45 per person and are valid for a year.
Cardinal Place



Go wild

Wild by Tart will open on Mondays for lunch and dinner throughout the festive period. Groups of nine or more can enjoy the festive feasting menu, made with sustainably and locally sourced ingredients. Highlights include whipped feta, honey and crunchy chilli oil, and a sticky date pudding with cardamom and gingerbread ice cream.
3-4 Eccleston Yards



Eat & drink
Directory
 out & in



MILDREDS
 LONDON'S ICONIC VEGAN RESTAURANT LAUNCHES FEAST FOR TWO

Mildreds has recently launched the 'Taste of Mildreds' at £25 per person - an affordable tasting menu of perfectly curated range of dishes. Each dish complements the next, creating a vibrant journey of flavours. Your meal arrives in three stages: snacking dips and bread, followed by small sharing plates, including Biber Patatas Bravas (spicy triple-cooked potatoes), Arancini Rosso (smoked mushroom risotto balls) and finally a delicious main centred around long-time favourite Kiri Hodi - Sri Lankan coconut curry with sweet potato. Diners can also add a dessert for £5, completing this flavourful journey.

Mildreds is open for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Hours: Monday - Friday, 8am - 11pm, and weekends from 9am.

Heading to the theatre? Enjoy 2 courses for £24 or 3 for £32, weekdays 3-7pm.

IRIS & JUNE

Celebrating their ten year anniversary this year, Iris & June is a beloved independent neighbourhood cafe located on Howick Place in the heart of Victoria. Open Monday-Friday 7.30am-4.30pm, come for the coffee roasted by long term partners Ozone Coffee and an ever changing guest roaster line up. Also serving up delicious breakfast, lunches and baking prepared by their kitchen team fresh, on site, every day.

**1 Howick Place
 London SW1P 1WG
 Tel: 020 7828 3130
<https://www.irisandjune.com/>**



MAISON GIGI OFFICE CATERING

Maison Gigi now offers catering! Treat your team and clients to delicious handmade morning bakes, breakfast bowls, sandwiches, and salads. Available for pick-up or delivery to your office in the Victoria Street area. Email us at Bonjour@maisongigi.co.uk to place an order.

**Open Monday to Friday 7AM to 5PM
 143 Victoria Street, London, SW1E 5NH
Bonjour@maisongigi.co.uk**

THE JONES FAMILY KITCHEN

The award-winning Jones Family Kitchen is one of London's leading steakhouses, serving grass fed dry-aged steak from Yorkshire alongside that from its own farm in Devon. The large menu doesn't just cater to the steak lover however, with fish arriving daily from Cornwall and the South Coast from small day boats. Situated in lovely Eccleston Yards, with a large and peaceful outdoor terrace. Jones Family Kitchen also offers a pre-theatre set menu till 6pm.

**The Jones Family Kitchen
 Restaurant & Bar
 7-8 Eccleston Yards
 London
 SW1W 9AZ
 020 3929 6000
www.jonesfamilykitchen.co.uk**



Eat & drink
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THE PARLOUR AT GREAT SCOTLAND YARD

Discover a unique Afternoon Tea at Great Scotland Yard Hotel, where history and culinary artistry converge. Once the first home of the Metropolitan Police, this iconic building now hosts an afternoon tea inspired by its storied past with creations that pay homage to literary legends like Arthur Conan Doyle, who found inspiration for Sherlock Holmes within these walls, as well as Charles Dickens and Lewis Carroll. Each dish reflects the building's rich history, offering guests a taste of nostalgia and storytelling. Join us Monday to Sunday 12-8:30pm.

The Parlour at Great Scotland Yard Hotel
3-5 Great Scotland Yard | London SW1A 2HN
Direct Line: +44 (0) 207 925 4760
www.greatscotlandyard.com

CHOPSTIX NOODLE BAR

If you're bored of bland and crave a bit of different, then you're Chopstix through and through! Come one, come all and come hungry, because the game is up! This is Chopstix, For the Flavour Cravers!!

Chopstix Noodle Bar
Victoria Place Shopping Centre,
115 Buckingham Palace Rd, London SW1W 9SJ
Opening times: 11am – 10pm
www.chopstixnoodles.co.uk/stores/london-victoria



We publish 25,000 copies of *Victoria* magazine every issue. A very conservative estimate is that between four and eight people will look at each magazine. **To be a part of the Food & Drink Directory please email Julie@pubbiz.com**

John Lewis

This beauty advent calendar contains skincare, makeup, haircare and fragrances from iconic brands such as Charlotte Tilbury and Sol de Janeiro.

£195, available via [click and collect](#) from Waitrose, Bressenden Place



ADVENT CALENDARS
START THE CHRISTMAS COUNTDOWN

Oliver Bonas

This beautiful velvet advent calendar is bound to become a yearly staple – just fill the pockets with sweets or decorations.

£55, Unit 48-49, Victoria Station



Lush

The 29 High Street advent calendar is packed with 25 bath products – including some exclusives – and comes in a colourful, reusable box.

£130, 42b Buckingham Palace Road



Christmas unwrapped

Our ultimate guide to gifting

BY ALICE CAIRNS AND BIBI COOPER

Hotel Chocolat

Discover a new hot chocolate for every day of Advent, from classic flavours to limited-edition options such as pecan cinnamon danish.

£50, 133 Victoria Street



Biscuiteers

A limited-edition collaboration with Emma Bridgewater, this cloth calendar is inspired by biscuit tins and can be filled with tasty treats from Biscuiteers.

14-15 Eccleston Place



Marks & Spencer

Inside a reusable zipped case you'll find 25 beauty surprises from brands such as Benefit and Aveda.

£315, Cardinal Place





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Looking to switch up your catering options?
Ole & Steen are now offering an all new catering menu
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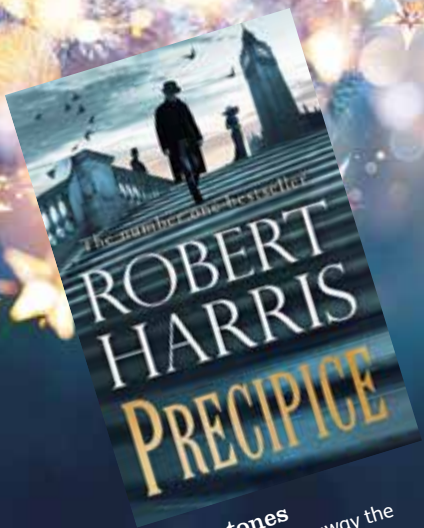
International women in London
kcwc

New to London, or find yourself here with some time on your hands, and want to live London better?

KCWC is a vibrant community of friendly, dynamic women from over 50 countries who enjoy London life to its fullest! Brighten up this winter by filling your diary with exciting events in the company of new friends, such as the 'Know before you go' group prior to visits to exhibitions, pairing food and fine wines class, book clubs, tennis clubs or just to chat over a coffee in beautiful surroundings. Discovering London's most historic, architectural secrets and visiting fashion houses with a group of kindred spirits makes it so much more fun!

Have a look at our event calendar, full to the brim with daily activities on KCWC.org.uk and join us as part of London's most active British and international women's social club.

Now the fun and friendships start. We can't wait to meet you!



Waterstones
 Readers can while away the commute with a political thriller that explores the inner workings of Westminster.
 £17.99, 88 Victoria Street



Westminster Abbey shop
 Decorate your desk with this festive felt Westminster Abbey.
 £21.95, Dean's Yard

SECRET SANTAS
 OPTIONS FOR EVERY COLLEAGUE



Sweaty Betty
 Gym buffs will love these sporty socks with a varsity stripe detail.
 £15, 90 Victoria Street



Pimlico Trove
 Pet lovers can sip their morning cuppa from this bone china mug.
 £15.95, 20 Upper Tachbrook Street

Curzon
 Give the gift of cinema with a Curzon gift card.
 £20, £30 or £50,
 58 Victoria Street



Accessorize
 This beaded velvet bow will look great at the office Christmas party.
 £25, 92 Victoria Street





Gertrude Fashions

It's statement coat season – this one by Joseph Ribkoff will do nicely.

£299, 69 Wilton Road



Oliver Bonas

Shine at the party with this iridescent chainmail bag.

£60, Unit 48-49, Victoria Station



Zara

Slingback party shoes feat. sparkles and pearls.

£55.99, 82 Victoria Street



New Look

No ugly Christmas jumpers here.

£35, Victoria Place shopping centre

FESTIVE FASHION

FOR DISCERNING DRESSERS



Claire's

Get in the Christmas spirit with these cute earrings.

£5.50, Victoria Place shopping centre



Buckingham Palace shop

For a traditional Christmas tippie, this Buckingham Palace sloe gin can be mulled as an alternative to wine.
 £30, 7 Buckingham Palace Road

1Rebel

Give someone the gift of fitness with five sessions at 1Rebel, known for its fast, furious and fun workouts.
 £120, 5 Allington Street

AND FOR THOSE WHO HAVE EVERYTHING



St Ermin's

The champagne afternoon tea for two includes fresh baked scones and award-winning teas.
 £130, 2 Caxton Street



Ted's Grooming Room

Treat a loved one to a VIP grooming experience, from beard design to traditional Turkish ear-flaming.
 From £45, 3 Butler Place



Houses of Parliament shop

Own a piece of history with an original tile from the Palace of Westminster, removed as part of a conservation project.
 £200, 12 Bridge Street



Directory

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Luxuriant Thai Herbs

Haircare and skincare powered by nature.
 We create the highest quality natural solutions to reverse hair loss and improve skincare.
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change

It was only in July that Rachel Blake was elected as MP for the Cities of London and Westminster, becoming the first Labour MP in the constituency's history. How is she getting on?

AS TOLD TO ADRIAN DAY

SO WHAT IS IT LIKE BEING THE NEW KID AT SCHOOL?

It is quite like that. I have to say, it is going to take a while before it all really sinks in. Learning all of the procedures in the chamber is something I'm really going to have to get used to.

BUT IT MUST BE DIFFICULT JUGGLING POLITICAL WORK AND CONSTITUENCY DEMANDS? HOW DO YOU HANDLE THAT?

There's always a round-table discussion on this, or a briefing on that, or a debate in the chamber, or questions in the chamber. And then that's in addition

to the work that I really enjoy and value doing, which is in the constituency, with the community, talking about what needs to change and thinking about the different approaches that we could be taking with public services.

YOU DON'T HAVE ANY PARTICULAR PORTFOLIOS TO LOOK AFTER JUST YET.

No, I don't, although I secured a debate about short-term lets and what they're doing to our local area. I also believe that e-bikes and e-scooters must be regulated in a way that is appropriate for the local area. I believe that local authorities should have the

powers to fine riders who park in a hazardous way and to fine the companies who fail to remove hazards.

SO HOW ARE YOU GOING TO DEAL WITH THE CHALLENGE OF REPRESENTING BILLIONAIRES AND BINMEN?

Well, I think there are a number of issues that really unify the very diverse constituency that I represent, and one of the things that I've talked really consistently about during the campaign and am continuing to do in parliament is housing. Lots of people have a real concern about the rise of rough sleeping. So I'll be wanting to work on that as an issue. That's something that affects the whole community. Another issue that consistently comes up for me is crime, and again, that's something that affects everybody. Everybody wants to live and feel safe on the streets, so those core issues about living together side by side are issues that I'll be [working] on.

BUT DOESN'T CENTRAL LONDON OFTEN PAY THE PRICE FOR CHALLENGES OUTSIDE THE CITY?

We do have the highest levels of rough sleeping in Westminster and actually within the very central wards of my constituency as well. We need to have the right homes for people to move into that have stable and reliable tenancies, and there's just such a shortage. But also, we need to have the right support services for those individuals to make sure that they're moving off the street.

THAT'S A BIG ASK, ISN'T IT?

It's really big. And I think that delivering on new homes is something that we have to deliver at pace. It takes time to identify places, to build homes, to get things moving. And this won't all be within our constituency, but it is part of the bigger picture about the overall availability of affordable housing, and that is something that I think will make a difference to us too.

Another of the issues that is raised with me by parents and the local community is actually the falling school roll in the very centre of London. It's a real worry, because primary schools hold communities together. It's where you meet people from different

backgrounds, and it's where you connect with people. But also it affects community.

One of the ways in which we can do something about that is to make sure that schools don't lose the buildings themselves, and they use the school buildings for other services. I think that will help, but we do need to do what we can to make sure there's still a residential community. It's a structural issue, and the way round it is to make sure that there is still some residential housing in the area.

WHAT IS YOUR POSITION ON REINSTATING TAX-FREE SHOPPING AND ATTRACTING INCOME FROM VISITORS FROM OVERSEAS?

Well, I am quite unusual, probably unique, in terms of the number of businesses that I represent. And [the constituency] is the centre of commerce. I am elected to represent the residents, but I know that a lot of the residents I represent are working in those sectors as well.

I get the argument. The argument is, people come here, they do tax-free shopping, and then they go to the theatre, they go out for a meal [and] there's an overall net benefit to London. I understand that, but at the same time, if we reintroduce it, we're losing a tax revenue. And the question for me is whether or not it would really replace itself through additional spending. And I'm not convinced.

HAVE YOU FOUND YOUR RECEPTION LOCALLY HEARTENING?

I get out and I speak to people most weekends. And we get a really positive reception. There is a recognition of the state that the country is in. And also a desire for economic stability to reap the benefits that we've been talking about, whether people want to be able to get an appointment with their GP, or they want to feel safe on the street. And for too long, people haven't felt that. So now's our chance to really deliver. I think people are wanting to see the impact. People are saying: "OK, we voted you in. Now it's up to you," and that's why we are being responsible and taking some of the tougher decisions.

“Primary schools hold communities together. It's where you meet people from different backgrounds”



CORINTHIA LONDON

Five-star hotel the Corinthia is housed in a building that dates from 1885, when it opened as the Metropole, a 600-room hotel on Whitehall Place that was the epicentre of high society. Balls and parties were frequent and in 1922, the hotel launched a cabaret show, *Midnight Follies*. The lavish supper entertainment ran nightly from 11.10pm. It became a hot topic of debate – at one stage London County Council threatened to close it down – but even the Queen Mother couldn't resist paying a visit in 1924.

Even after the hotel closed – from 1936 until 2004 it was occupied by the Ministry of Defence – “*Midnight Follies*” remained printed above one of the ballroom doors and in the 1940s, chiefs of staff nicknamed late-night meetings after the show. During its time as the administrative offices for the MoD, Churchill wrote of Big Ben striking on Armistice Day as he stood at the window watching Londoners pour on to the streets in celebration.

In the Second World War the building was used as the headquarters for MI9, a government organisation that coordinated prisoner-of-war escapes in Europe. There are a number of tunnels and passageways under the road to the hotel that remain locked and are classified as top secret, having once taken officials to nearby government offices. Perhaps most intriguing is the existence during that time of Room 801 – an office that monitored UFO sightings and held government records. Having been decommissioned and put up for sale by the Crown Estate in 2007, the building reopened as a hotel in 2011, restored to its former glory after extensive renovation.



If walls could talk

With connections to figures such as Jack the Ripper and Charles Dickens, the historic hotels of Whitehall brim with secrets and intrigue. We find out more

BY JONATHAN WHILEY

**GREAT SCOTLAND YARD HOTEL**

The former HQ of the Metropolitan Police opened as a hotel in 2019. The Grade II-listed building dates back to the 1820s and is full of intrigue. The Jack the Ripper murders were investigated here, Charles Dickens was a regular visitor and Sherlock Holmes author Arthur Conan Doyle often used it as inspiration for his detective novels. Playful nods abound; the hotel bar is named after the all-female Forty Elephants gang who specialised in shoplifting.

THE ROYAL HORSEGUARDS

The original idea behind the building in Whitehall Court was to create “the first American hotel for Americans”. But in 1883 it became clear that there wasn’t the money to match the vision. A decision was taken to build luxury apartments instead, and to share the site with the National Liberal Club.

The building, whose residents included the likes of HG Wells and Lord Kitchener, was one of the first in London to have electricity and had water-powered lifts. The foundation stone, laid by the prime minister William Gladstone, can still be found in the hotel’s cellar.

During the First and Second World Wars, different government institutions commandeered the building; during the second, the Russian embassy was located on the fifth floor, the American embassy on the sixth and the Air Training Corps on the seventh. The eighth floor is notorious as the place where the Secret Intelligence Service – MI6 – was founded.

Smith-Cumming was the agency’s first chief; an extraordinary man who wore a gold-rimmed monocle and carried a sword stick, and is reputed to have cut off his own leg with a penknife after a car accident.



Smith-Cumming lived and worked here from 1911 to 1922 and in 2015, a blue plaque was unveiled at the hotel to commemorate him by English Heritage. Today the hotel’s signature pen is green with green ink; a nod to Smith-Cumming, who wrote in green ink and signed his correspondence “C”.

Among the many films connected to the hotel is the 2012 James Bond film, *Skyfall*, which features M (Judi Dench) filmed from the staff entrance and shots of the exterior.



RAFFLES LONDON AT THE OWO

Built on the site of the old Whitehall Palace – royal residence to monarchs – the property was originally constructed for the British army in 1906. It has since witnessed some of the biggest events in British and world history. Churchill was among those who had an office here during the Second World War, where he planned the D-day landings (now the hotel’s Haldane suite – the very room where John Profumo would go on to entertain a 19-year-old Christine Keeler). Author Ian Fleming was inspired to write James Bond after his time in the naval intelligence department here and fittingly the hotel has a Spy Bar (with an unmarked door in the depths of the hotel) and a selection of suites named after spies and notable figures.





BODY

If you're looking for some post-party pampering, Belle Cour is the perfect place. The salon offers a menu of massages, including hot stone, deep-tissue and Swedish. Aside from being super-relaxing, there are tons of health benefits to a massage – they can promote better sleep, improve circulation and alleviate stress.

4 Upper Tachbrook Street

Party season is officially upon us, so it's time to up our beauty game. Whether you're the life of the party or RSVPing "no" and opting for a quiet night in, here's how to look – and feel – great

BY BIBI COOPER

Get ready to party

BROWS

Whether you're after a brow tint, a simple reshape or you want to hop on the brow lamination trend, Better Brows is the go-to place. Anything you can do with brows, the team will do it. And while you're there, why not opt for one of the more unique services, and get a tooth gem to really get that smile sparkling. Victoria Place shopping centre, 115 Buckingham Palace Road

HAIR

Hair-wise, we're heading over to Adem, where the award-winning hairdresser Adem Oygur brings 15 years of experience to his flagship salon. The ethos is simple: specialising in creating lasting hair designs founded on the basic principles of clean geometry and gorgeous, multidimensional colour. Whether it's a dramatic "new year, new me" haircut or a bouncy blow-dry, Adem is the place to treat your tresses. 61 Ebury Street





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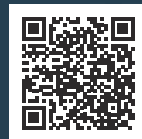
While some rules are made to be broken, dress codes are most definitely not. And with a host of festive events and parties on the horizon, we'll make sure you hit the brief - every time. From dinner suits and blazers down to the sharpest shoes, we've got the whole look from head to toe.



Book a personal appointment and an expert from our Victoria team will help you find your dream fit and style for every festive gathering, big or small.

You can also treat yourself with **15% off everything**, exclusively in our Victoria store - simply quote **VICTORIA15** at the till. Get ready to turn heads in Tyrwhitt.

Find us on the Ground Floor at
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Scan to book an
appointment



FACE

Our skin is always in need of some TLC – especially during the winter season. Exclusively available at the Thérapie Clinic, Skin Theory offers a wide selection of science-led clinical peels that do the job and are designed to offer significant results with instant benefits. We're talking radiance, improved skin texture and refined pores. Skin is assessed by one of the many experts, who will look at your skin type and concerns and will tailor a personalised course of peels to cater to your skin's needs. From a vitamin C peel to a mango radiance peel, we're ready for our skin to glow.
147 Victoria Street

NAILS

Often overlooked, nails should never be forgotten. If you want to sport the trendiest nails at the party, head over to Townhouse Victoria, where you'll find a group of incredible nail artists who can do anything from your regular minimalist-chic French tip to amazingly intricate nail art to whatever is trending (we're told burgundy is big this season).
129 Victoria Street



MAKEUP

Avoid the heavy-handed blush and any contour-related disasters and let the professionals handle it. Over at Fab Hair and Beauty, the team will get your face glammed up and install some lashes for you. Win-win.
75 Wilton Road





Sing Loud

This Christmas

BAM Karaoke Box Victoria provides an exciting new karaoke experience with 22 private rooms, 2 cocktail bars, dining and live entertainment!

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Everyone Welcome



SHOP & DONATE

This social supermarket offers low-cost, discounted goods to support low income families and to fight food waste. It has one location on Vauxhall Bridge Road, but is now seeking £30,000 in donations to help open a second shop in Victoria with a community hub for classes and support groups and a community cafe with an affordable menu. As the cost of living crisis makes it more and more difficult for families to afford a Christmas meal, this could be a great time to support a charity bringing affordable food to people in Victoria.

Shopanddonate.org



THE PASSAGE

Want to give back while enjoying Christmas carols, festive readings and beautiful surroundings? The Passage's annual Christmas service takes place at St Margaret's Church on December 13, with tickets costing a suggested minimum donation of £25. After the service there will be a reception at The Supreme Court for a £65 entry fee, with drinks and tasty canapes. The money raised will go to support The Passage's work with vulnerable people in the local area, working towards a future where street homelessness no longer exists. passage.org.uk

Give back this Christmas with these wonderful local charities and initiatives. Christmas is the perfect time to give back to your community. We've found some exciting ways to get involved with local charities, bringing festive cheer to local people in need.

BY ALICE CAIRNS

Santa's little HELPERS



WESTMINSTER CONNECTS

The Sir Simon Milton Foundation is collaborating with the Victoria BID to deliver Christmas hampers to more than 800 people across Westminster with support and care needs. Starting from a base in Dryburgh Community Hall, volunteers will be asked to make deliveries by foot or by car to addresses in the area between December 9 and 12. The scheme will bring Christmas cheer to some of the most isolated, disadvantaged and vulnerable people in the city.

To volunteer, visit london-hq.co.uk



BLUE CROSS

The Blue Cross Victoria animal hospital provides essential care to thousands of pets every year. One brilliant way to help this Christmas is by donating to the pet food bank, which collects unopened wet or dry pet food; hay, straw and substrate; litter and bedding. These donations will go to support pets in need, so that no one has to choose between feeding themselves and feeding their pet this Christmas.
1 Hugh Street



ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY

The 2024 Christmas appeal is dedicated to opening the 'Doors of Hope'. This year, local families will face hardships and uncertainty, which is why every donation made during the festive period will be doubled. Your money will be used to give back to the community with volunteer visits to the vulnerable, youth programmes and camps, support centres, supported accommodation and shops selling preloved and affordable goods.
svp.org.uk

AGE UK WESTMINSTER

This year, Age UK Westminster will be participating in the Big Give Christmas Challenge 2024. This means that between December 3 and 10, any donation you make will be matched - one act of generosity with twice the impact for local people in need. The money raised will be used to fund Age UK Westminster's 'digital inclusion project', which helps older people to improve their digital skills and confidence.
ageuk.org.uk/westminster; biggive.org



ST MUNGO'S

The winter period is especially challenging for those experiencing homelessness. The St Mungo's Christmas campaign is called 'Now is the time to respond', and asks for donations to help to end the homelessness crisis. Donations of £200 could fund employment support services, which help people to find work and stay off the streets. A £65 donation could fund frontline teams out on the street, offering hands-on support to those in need, while £29 could be used to provide warm and nutritious meals.
mungos.org



Spreading the love



Marvellous market

From black business owners, with love London Heritage Quarter partnered with Landsec and Pop Up Africa to create a pop-up market in Cardinal Place. The event was a celebration of Black History Month, and showcased some amazing black-owned businesses selling food, crafts, textiles, shea butter and much more.



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***"He sings like Elvis,
looks like Elvis, hell he
even walks like Elvis."***

**Ed Bonja – Elvis Presley's
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LUCY ST. LOUIS, LEFT



Why do people love *Wicked*?

Wicked is one of those special shows that has so many powerful messages. Inclusion, acceptance, grief, friendship and growth to name a few. I believe everyone of all ages, no matter who you are or where you are from, can connect and relate to the themes within this beautiful show at some point in their lives.

Tell us about your character, Glinda.

There are many layers of Glinda to play, which as an actress is great to rediscover every night. I love that Glinda is such a free spirit and a larger than life character.

I love that she learns a lot about herself and grows so much from her friendship with Elphaba.

Do you have a favourite moment in the show?

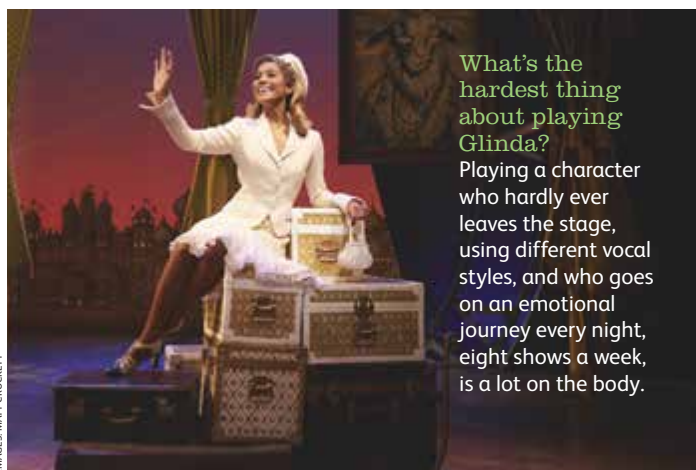
I love quite a lot of moments in the show. But I'd say performing *For Good* alongside Elphaba is a truly special moment each night. Plus flying in the bubble is also pretty awesome.

What does it mean to you to break records as the first black Elphaba and Glinda playing opposite each other?

It's a huge honour and one that I don't take lightly. But in my eyes it's more about the future of theatre than just about me. It's hope and representation for our next generations, so that they can believe in their own abilities to be where I am today.

You must spend a lot of time in Victoria these days. Are there any local spots that you would recommend?

For coffee it has to be Ole & Steen. When it comes to dinner, I love Timmy Green and also Vagabond Victoria.



What's the hardest thing about playing Glinda?

Playing a character who hardly ever leaves the stage, using different vocal styles, and who goes on an emotional journey every night, eight shows a week, is a lot on the body.

IMAGES: MART CROCKETT

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