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# WEEK

September 2021

**DIGESTED**  
London's  
underground  
dining scene

**RODEO QUEENS**  
Riding with the  
queerest cowboys  
in the West

## Stan the man

How Stanley Tucci  
became everyone's hero





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## Cameos



### Ayodeji Rotinwa

Who better to guide us through Lagos's alternative art spaces than Nigerian art critic Ayodeji, whose work has been published by the likes of *Artforum*, *The New York Times* and *Vogue*. See p18



### Lucy Richards

Lucy has shot for *The Sunday Times*, *Harper's Bazaar* and *Tatler*, among others. She took her camera (and appetite) to the hidden foodie gems of her city for our feature about London's other food scene. See p48



### Kevin EG Perry

Kevin is an LA-based feature writer for *The Independent*. We sent him to Las Vegas to meet the friendly folk from the Nevada Gay Rodeo Association in the run-up to their annual BigHorn Rodeo. See p40

**TAKE ME, I'M YOURS**  
Enjoy this magazine onboard and at home



30-38

# IN THIS ISSUE

11-28

### Red Hot

Everything you need to get obsessed with right now, from Pharrell's brand-new Miami Beach hotel and Barbados's eco scene, to celebs you can sleep with and fashion inspired by sandwiches. Spicy.

30-55

### Features

Cinematic stories, celebrity chats and travel tales. Get to know Stanley Tucci in our in-depth interview; dribble in delight at the incredible food served in London's lesser-known restaurants; buckle up for Nevada's gay rodeo. Yee-haw!

56-75

### What's On

The low-down on our onboard entertainment system. Whether you want to watch a snort-worthy sitcom, a tear-jerking Oscar winner, or simply listen to some great new music, you'll find all you need to know here.

77-82

### Credits

Important news and views from the Virgin Atlantic world. This issue it's all about the teams of the Operations Control Centre, the introduction of cargo-only flights and how our company is tackling mental health issues.

COVER PHOTOGRAPH: NEALE HAWKES STYLING: CHERYL KONTEW AT THE WALL GROUP GROOMING: JOJO DUTTON PAISLEY DESIGN SHIRT AND BURGUNDY SUIT TROUSERS BY PAUL SMITH; TAN TEXTURED BELT TUCCI'S OWN

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# Red Hot

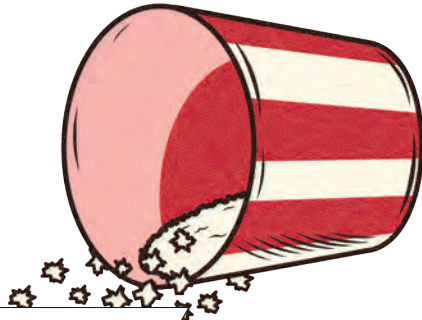


COMING SOON

## THE ACADEMY MUSEUM IN LOS ANGELES

The 8m-long fibreglass antagonist of Steven Spielberg's blockbuster *Jaws* dangles high above a Renzo Piano-designed space. Dorothy's ruby slippers from *The Wizard of Oz* sparkle nearby. A motion-capture dinosaur from *Jurassic Park* looks menacingly high-tech. The new Academy Museum of Motion Pictures on Wilshire Boulevard is pure Hollywood history – with exhibitions for both highbrow cinephiles and popcorn-blockbuster buffs, it's a real crowd-pleaser. *Opens 30 September*

✈ Fly to Los Angeles



FIRST TAKE

# HOLLYWOOD'S RETURN TO ACTION

Finally we're getting the movies we've been waiting years to see, says **Al Horner**

**B**etter late than never, Hollywood. This autumn sees the start of a wave of "what took them so long?" movies: those that, frankly, it's insane Tinseltown didn't get around to sooner. Take the long-awaited sci-fi *Dune* - heralded as a slick counterpart to David Lynch's cult 80s edition. James Cameron's *Avatar* is getting a sequel next year, 12 years overdue, while *The Exorcist* will return as a new trilogy in 2023 - a mere 50 years after the original - the same year that Marvel will release its reboot of *The Fantastic Four*.

Ahead of the curve on the matter were two skyscraper-clattering mythical monsters. *Godzilla vs Kong* was almost 60 years in the waiting: it was 1962 when the angry ape and fire-breathing enormo-reptile last collided on the big screen, with slightly less convincing special effects on that occasion. What took them so long?

Who cares when the ultimate showdown proves this impressive. Like a giant lumbering lizard, sometimes slow and steady wins the race.

 Watch *Godzilla vs Kong*





Timothée Chalamet takes on the role of Paul Atreides in *Dune*, out in October.

THE ZZZ-LIST

Celebs are sending us to sleep



Fancy some pillow talk with **Alexander Skarsgård**? The *Godzilla vs Kong* actor has teamed up with the Sleep Cycle app to narrate an ocean-traversing tale called *The Lighthouse*. Bright idea. **Sleepiness rating: ZZ**



Speaking of wet dreams, **Laura Dern** has recorded another original tale, *The Ocean Moon*, for the Calm app. Imagine being gently lulled by *Little Women*'s Marmee March. **Sleepiness rating: ZZZ**



Our fail-safe sleep solution is actually meant for little ones, but why should they get all the zeds? Drift off to director **Taika Waititi**'s *Sleepy Head* on Chris Hemsworth's Centr app. **Sleepiness rating: ZZZZZ**

Kids can nod off to David Walliams reading his book *The Bear Who Went Boo!* in the Audio section of Vera

ILLUSTRATION: DIEGO PATINO PHOTOGRAPHS: GETTY IMAGES



**“I’M STILL IN THE MIDST OF  
MY COMING OF AGE”**

# Industry newcomer Myha'la Herrold

THE 25-YEAR-OLD PLAYS A FEARLESS BANKER IN ACCLAIMED DRAMA *INDUSTRY*. IS SHE AS BRASH IN REAL LIFE? NOT QUITE, SHE TELLS VICTORIA BEARDWOOD

**FOR MYHA'LA HERROLD** getting a part in the HBO/BBC show *Industry* was a shock. Not only was it her first lead role, it was also to be her first time leaving the US. The one-time stage musical performer now splits her year between home in New York, and the UK (bringing her cat, Salad, with her). Her fearlessness is perhaps what landed her the role, given that it's also a strength of the show's main character, Harper Stern. Viewers follow as the NYC native from humble beginnings competes with a determined, diverse bunch of graduates for a coveted job at a London investment bank. We caught up with her during the filming of *Industry's* second series.

**If there was a movie script of your life, what would your character description be?**

This is hard as I'm still in the midst of my coming of age. How about: girl with a lot of love in her heart and big dreams of sharing joy makes her way through a fast life?

**Did you identify with your character, Harper?**

Absolutely. Harper works in finance, but we're both young, mixed, American women at the start of our careers. I identify with her drive, her independence, her tenacity and how she never takes no for an answer. We both had imposter syndrome, too. When I first started on *Industry*, I had to take on the responsibility of leading actor, pretending to know what I was doing even though I'd never been on a set of that scale. It was a "fake it till you make it" situation. On the last day of filming, they called "cut" and I burst into tears. My body could finally relax and address the fact that I just did a crazy thing.

**Lena Dunham directed the first episode - what did you learn from her?**

Lena makes everyone feel appreciated, seen, and heard, all the while making sure we're all on the same page and she's getting what she wants. It's such a beautiful way to lead and I really respect her for that. I try to emulate that in my work.

**Did your role get you thinking about a career change? Goodbye acting, hello finance?**

That's my worst nightmare! Although, it's funny: when deciding to be an actor, I said, "I don't want to sit at a desk all day, I want to do something active and creative." But here I am, working my first long-term job, sat at a desk for nine hours a day.

**The show is intense - was it the same on set?**

No we're definitely a bunch of goofballs. We're always doing silly things like calling each other through the phones we have on the desks.

**What prompted your move from stage to screen?**

The stage is my first love but I realised my style of acting is much more suited to TV and film. In theatre, your performance has to be big and loud but I love naturalism and reality.

**You're going to be in hyped slasher flick *Bodies*, *Bodies*, *Bodies*, with SNL's Pete Davidson. Can you share any details, details, details?**

I'm going to err on the side of caution and say no. What I *can* say is that I play a really sick character and everyone's going to love it. She's a badass.

 [Watch Myha'la Herrold as Harper Stern in \*Industry\*](#)

Herrold's character smashes targets at Pierpoint & Co, *Industry's* fictional bank



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## DRINKS



## Good Negronis don't grow on trees

But trees do grow on good Negronis. At Manchester's Tattu bar and restaurant, a Borrower-sized tree emerges from the signature Cherry Blossom Negroni. Celebrate this year's Negroni Week (13-19 September) by planting yourself down in the chic, Chinese-inspired spot on Hardman Square. Sip on this marvellous mix of gin, cherry blossom vermouth and Campari – a twist on the classic Negroni, which became the drink of the moment thanks to our cover star Stanley Tucci's viral tutorial (more on page 30). The floral drink is also available at Tattu's other, erm, branches.



## SNACKS

## SUNDAES IN NYC

Legendary dessert bar **Serendipity 3** has reopened with the backing of Selena Gomez. Life just got sweeter

### NOTHING SAYS "PARTY"

like a fat wedge of multicoloured cake with sprinkles, three scoops of ice-cream and a literal cherry on top. This kaleidoscopic dessert – the "It's My Birthday Cake Sundae" – marks the reopening of Serendipity 3, New York City's pre-eminent treat vendor. Its new menu also features a juicy truffle burger with Boursin cheese and exciting versions of its coveted

frozen hot chocolate. Since 1954, it's been a fave of celebs from Marilyn Monroe and Andy Warhol to Beyoncé and Selena Gomez (who's come onboard as a co-owner), so is deserving of a refurb. The space at 225 East 60th Street has been splashed liberally with candy colours, but still retains the historical Tiffany lampshades and the iconic winged unicorn (now with a neon horn). Talk about a sweet spot.

✂ Fly to New York



# LAGOS'S UPSTART ART SCENE

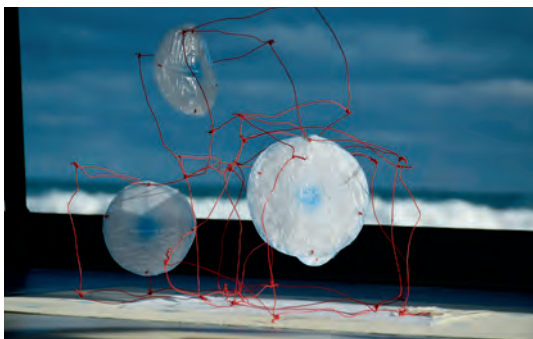
Alternative spaces are springing up all over the Nigerian city in a reaction to mainstream galleries. Scene expert **Ayodeji Rotinwa** has the lowdown on West Africa's most exciting art movement

**I**n Lagos, uncertainty doesn't get you far. Whether you're choosing a career or a bus route, the megacity demands confidence. Everyone is in a hurry. If you don't drive off the second a traffic light turns green, you'll be serenaded by the honks of hundreds of cars. If you're queueing in a shop, or at the ATM, or anywhere, stay alert. Someone will jump ahead.

The principle has traditionally applied to art too. Lagos is teeming with artistic energy: slick galleries host exhibitions with a sharp eye towards sales; openings in salons are toasted with champagne. The artist has to be certain of what they are doing and experiment little. But this is not the whole story.

Enter alternative art spaces. Usually not driven by commercial interests, and founded by resourceful enthusiasts (or artists themselves), they've become part of the city's art industry. They give artists time to try, fail, try again. They embrace uncertainty – a rarity in Lagos.

All the talk is about British-Nigerian artist Yinka Shonibare's Guest Artist Space (GAS), set to open in 2022, with a soft launch planned for this November during the Art X fair. But GAS is not alone. There's also the Alter Native Artist Initiative on the beachfront, founded by local artist Peju Alatise, with a strong bias towards ceramics. Aderemi Adegbite, an artist who works with Alatise, also runs his own grassroots venue, Vernacular Art-



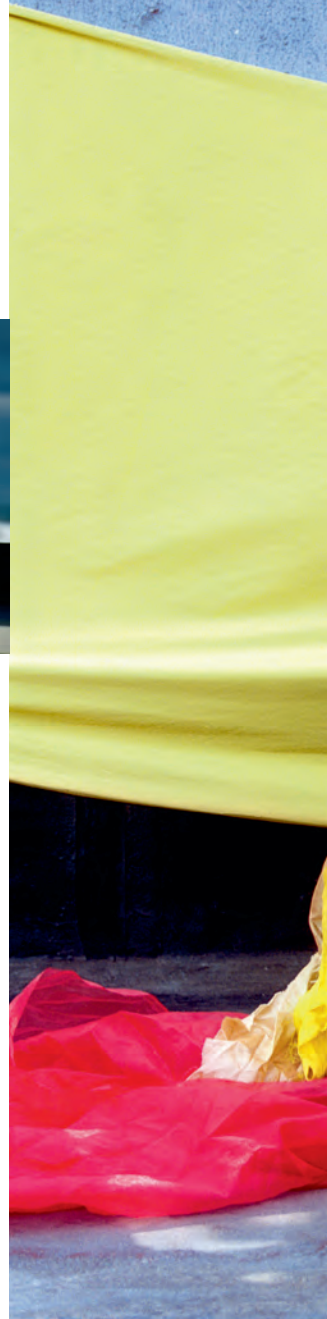
space Laboratory Foundation in Iwaya, which exhibits artists often overlooked by the sometimes staid exhibition gallery scene. The foundation also holds Iwaya Community Art Festival, a showcase with installations and performances.

And then there's hFactor, a collective founded by a fashion designer, a graphic artist, a community organiser and an art entrepreneur. Combining their knowledge and networks, they've created an accessible multidisciplinary space in Lagos Island. "We're not just an art space, we're a mirror," says

Tushar Hathiramani, one of the co-founders. If Lagos looks in that mirror, it'll see itself – vibrant, dynamic, with a disregard for rules. These spaces show Lagos in a way it never has been before.

✂ Fly to Lagos

hFactor supports work shown around the world, including Bubu Ogisi and Jesse Navarre Vos's collaboration (main image) and Tiffanie Delune, below right





**Alternative art spaces have become part of the city's art industry. They give artists time to try, fail, try again**



PHOTOGRAPHS: COURTESY OF HACTOR, ARTWORK FOREIGN RESIDENCES, QUEENING SPACES, HAMBURG, ARTWORK SUMNER RESIDENCY CAPE TOWN AND JOHANNESBURG, COMME DES GARÇONS JUNYA WATANABE MAN



ROLL CREDITS

## The spread of sandwich couture

People say fashion is circular, but the latest trend is actually loaf shaped.

Sandwiches, it seems, are now stylish. We're not suggesting you don a BLT beret, of course. Rather, two bread-based London eateries have become so cool they've collaborated with designers. Dom's Subs launched a T-shirt with Carhartt WIP, while an illustration of Max's Sandwich Shop's "ham, egg and chips" sarnie features on a top and jacket in Junya Watanabe's Comme des Garçons collection (*pictured above*). We're calling it - next up is a Pret baguette embroidered onto a Bella Freud jumper.



SLEEPER HIT

# Pharrell's Goodtime Hotel

THIS MIAMI RETREAT IS OUR NEW HAPPY PLACE

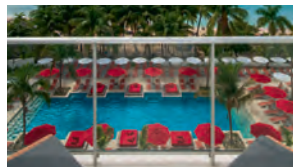
**"IT'S A WHOLE** new setting, a whole new mindset," gushes hitmaker Pharrell Williams about his latest collab – a South Beach hotel launched with hospitality king David Grutman. The Goodtime Hotel's swooping Art Deco revival contours, pastel paintwork and scalloped seating are a head-turning combo. It's instantly recognisable as typical historic Miami architecture, but it's made for fun, not just for looking at. Inside/outside restaurant Strawberry

Moon blurs the lines between poolside haunt and upscale small-plate bistro, while the likes of Steve Aoki spin tunes. There's also a whacking great gym and 4,200m<sup>2</sup> of retail, plus 266 bedrooms with retro rotary phones and blackout blinds for if you – ahem – get lucky.

✂ Fly to Miami



## 3 MORE ART DECO DIGS



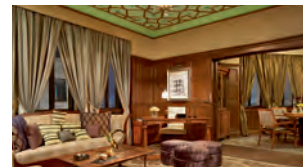
### S HOTEL JAMAICA, MONTEGO BAY

Art Deco details, dark oak and wicker mingle with Jamaican features at this swish Montego Bay stay. We love the pool lined with red parasols and day beds.



### HOTEL NORDOY, TEL AVIV

Opened in 1925, this pink landmark is Tel Aviv's oldest hotel. The Art Deco facade remains, but it's had a recent refresh. For architecture fans, Bauhaus Rothschild Boulevard is just five minutes' walk away.



### FAIRMONT PEACE HOTEL, SHANGHAI

Did you know Shanghai had its own Art Deco movement? This swanky spot on the north end of The Bund is one of the city's most iconic examples and now includes a spa.

WORDS: ANDY HILL. PHOTOGRAPHS: ALICE GAO, GETTY IMAGES, ASSAF PINKHUK

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## LOCATION SCOUT

# FRONDS WITH BENEFITS IN BARBADOS

Eco-friendly spots are popping up all over the Caribbean island and helping to protect its natural beauty, says local travel expert **Caleigh Alleyne**

**F**rom the Animal Flower Cave in the north to the soft Silver Sands Beach in the south, the coral island of Barbados is a natural wonder in the Caribbean Sea. Unsurprisingly, its preservation is a top priority for environmentalists and locals in general, who would like its fragile ecosystem to remain – like the music of Bajan pop queen Rihanna – absolutely timeless.

This environmentally conscious approach doesn't just involve residents: with around 40% of Barbados's GDP connected to tourism, it's vital that it extends to visitors too. The island's sustainable tourism is anchored in supporting local businesses, minimising waste and regenerating the natural environment, with tour companies such as Eco Dive Barbados teaching divers how to care for the ocean while exploring it.

For those looking to engage with the greener side of Barbados, here are a few sustainable spots to add to your itinerary.

**1. ECO Lifestyle + Lodge** is a boutique hotel near Bathsbeba where sustainability is woven >





**Environmentalists would like its fragile ecosystem to remain – like the music of Rihanna – absolutely timeless**



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into every aspect of the property. The lodge is decorated with upcycled mahogany furniture; water is solar heated; reception sells such eco products as organic mosquito repellent; and the restaurant is meat-free.

**2.** Founded in 1893, **The West Indies Rum Distillery** is the island's second oldest and largest distillery, and now the first in the Caribbean to achieve the Bonsucro Chain of Custody, which recognises responsible sourcing and trading. You can find – and taste – its famous rums all over the island. Look out for Cocksbur Rum, Stade's and Plantation Rum, which is made from local sugar cane molasses.

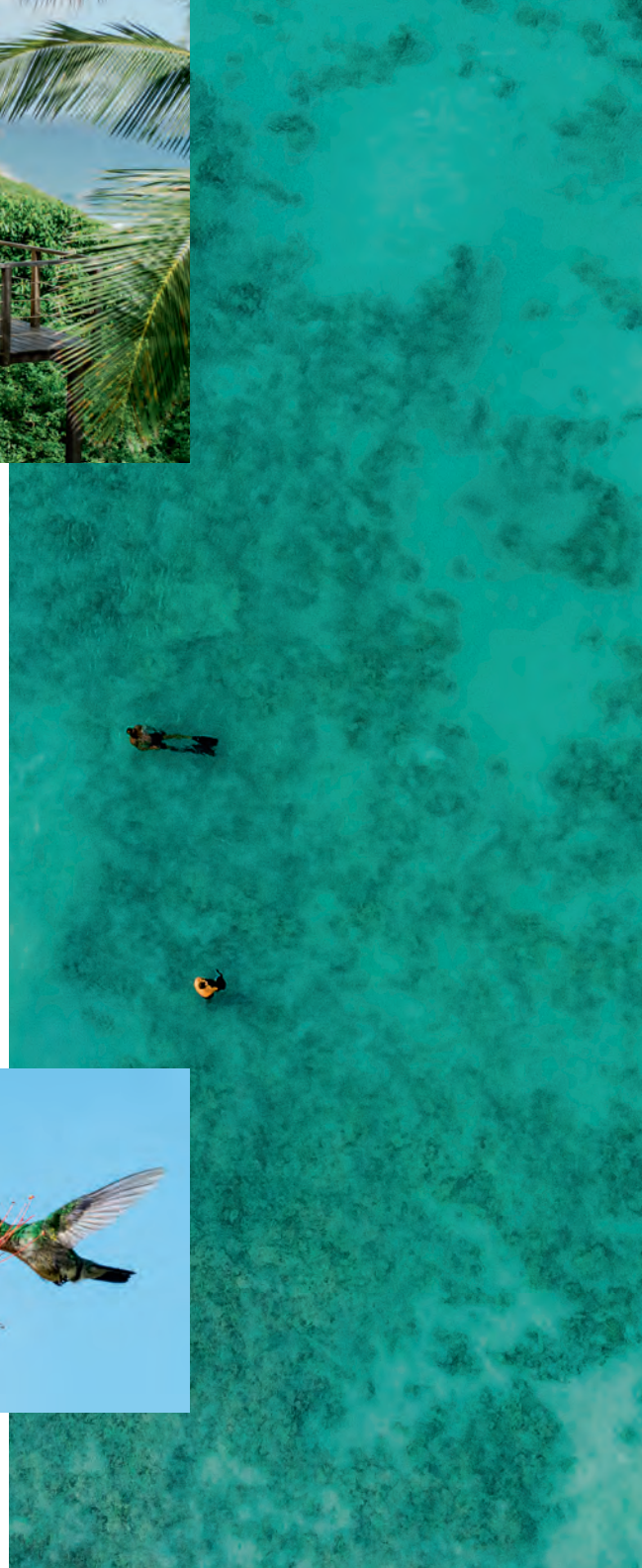
**3.** Pair a rum cocktail with a modern take on Bajan cuisine at **Cocktail Kitchen**, in St Lawrence Gap, Barbados's nightlife hub. Executive chef Damian Leach is all about sustainable sourcing and is a multiple Barbados Chef of the Year winner.

**4.** Join one of the Barbados National Trust's Sunday hikes to discover the cane fields, gullies, tropical forests and coastal communities that make up this beautiful island. Choose between a sunrise, afternoon or moonlight walk that explores natural areas like

**Coco Hill Forest.**



Below left: Cocktail Kitchen's hearty pulled pork, served with Bajan bakes and coleslaw, and topped with a crunchy onion ring







Barbados has more than 80 beaches, many considered some of the world's most beautiful.

The 21-hectare St Joseph site is home to more than 80 different types of plants – from the Jamaican ackee to cocoa and pineapple. Coco Hill Forest's ethos aims to reintroduce

crops and vegetation that were once staples of the Barbados landscape, including coffee and mahogany trees. Signs highlight the best of the forest's curiosities, while lookout points boast premium views of the Atlantic Ocean.

**5. Naniki Barbados** is a blissful wellness retreat perched in the verdant hills of St Joseph Parish, just a short drive inland from Bathsheba. First opened as a flower farm, it's now a calming hideaway with yoga and meditation classes, regenerative treatments, a nature trail, hiking trips and a restaurant. Visitors can just explore Naniki for the day or stay in one of its quaint wood-clad cottages (some have pools).

**6.** One of the island's top tourist attractions, Harrison's Cave has recently been transformed into an activity centre for outdoor enthusiasts and adrenaline junkies. The new and improved **Harrison's Cave Eco-Adventure Park** offers zip-lining, a suspension bridge, a nature trail and an adventure zone. For first-time visitors, it's also well worth joining the signature tram tour to travel underground and explore the magnificent crystallised limestone caves.

**7.** Barbados's **Flower Forest** is 21 hectares of eye-poppingly beautiful rainforest blooms and buds to wind your way through. Once a sugar plantation, it was redeveloped in the 1980s. Settle back afterwards at the Forest Café with a rum punch or Bajan beer.

✈ Fly to Barbados

WORDS: CALEIGH ALLEN/VE. PHOTOGRAPHS: LINDSEY UPSON/STOCKSXY, ANDREW IRWIN, IZBEK, ADDBE/STOCK, IZBEK, ALAMY

## 3 MORE ECO INITIATIVES IN THE CARIBBEAN



### HERMITAGE BAY ANTIGUA

This comfy five-star resort is dedicated to sustainability: an organic garden provides the kitchen with herbs and veg, and there's a special programme for the mangrove lagoon and forest that make up the property.



### GRENADA CHOCOLATE COMPANY

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### THE TOBAGO MAIN RIDGE FOREST RESERVE

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# Could anyone survive in A Quiet Place?

IS IT POSSIBLE TO LIVE IN A NOISELESS WORLD, OR WOULD TOAST, DIY AND SNEEZING CATCH EVERYONE OUT?

OLIVER KEENS TESTS 24 HOURS OF SILENCE

**I**t's estimated that 45% of the world's adults snore in bed. Though that's annoying for the other 55%, it's rarely a problem that proves fatal. But in the horror movie *A Quiet Place*, and its sequel *A Quiet Place Part II*, sawing logs in your sleep would summon more than the ire of your partner. Any wisp of noise is liable to bring a horde of violent creatures with excellent hearing down on your sleepy head before you could apply a single strip of nose tape.

So long practically half the population, then. But what about the rest of us? Is it possible to exist without generating any decibels, or would the necessities of eating, washing and, indeed, going about one's business mean humanity was toast?

Appropriately, my experiment begins with breakfast. Crunchy foods are off the menu, which is a shame as toast is a passion of mine, along with swearing loudly and playing guitar through two distortion pedals. The quietest breakfast in my fridge is yoghurt, which I realise afterwards is cheating, unless mine came from a mute cow.

How about exercise? Running for your life while inwardly screaming is the daily routine for Emily Blunt's matriarch and her softly padding children in *A Quiet Place Part II*. I opt for yoga, on three mats. A shower would be nice but running water is out of the question, unless it's cascading from an already noisy waterfall. Doubtless everyone in *A Quiet Place* smells like it's the last day of Glastonbury.



For entertainment: books. For company: also books, at least until I master sign language. For cooking: I haven't got the skills needed to smoke a whole fish in an underground firepit, as the family do in the first film, but I find a candle is enough to heat up a can of tentatively opened beans. You might question my choice of beans, and you'd be right to.

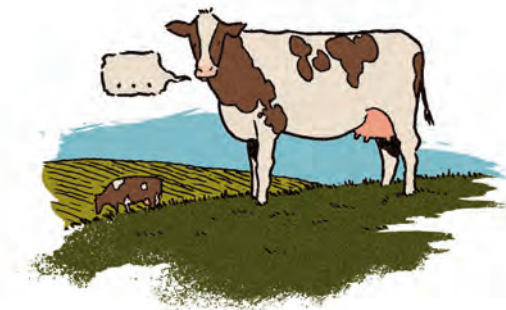
Put simply, we humans are not as in control of our own bodies as we'd like to think, and by the afternoon I have: hummed mindlessly three times, slapped my thighs like a cowboy once, sneezed twice and said the word "wow" out loud before I was able to stop myself. And this is all before attempting the real challenge of the day: silent DIY.

By bedtime I've decided I don't trust my unconscious self to keep his mouth shut. In *A Quiet Place Part II* life does find a way somehow, but my experiment suggests that – carnivorous super-beings notwithstanding – humans are our own worst enemies.

 [Watch A Quiet Place Part II](#)

## THE VERDICT

Even Trappist monks on a vow of silence would struggle to keep completely schtum for a whole day. You hear me?





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“  
ALL I HAD  
TO DO WAS  
JUST BE  
MYSELF  
”

Hollywood legend and lockdown guru Stanley Tucci may have discovered the meaning of life. All we know for sure is it involves making the perfect Negroni. He lets **Ed Cumming** in on the secrets of great food, close family and staying sexy in your sixties

PHOTOGRAPHS: NEALE HAYNES



Navy shirt by *Giorgio Armani*. Wool flannel checked jacket and trousers by *Paul Smith*. Burgundy socks by *London Sock Co.* Oxford shoes by *Louboutin*. Glasses by *David Beckham*



ollywood is fickle, you can never tell what's going to work out. Stanley Tucci knows that better than most. Over a career of nearly 40 years he has done it all. There have been indie classics (*Margin Call*), megawatt comedy (*The Devil Wears Prada*), Oscar-winning drama (*Spotlight*), globe-conquering sci-fi (*The Hunger Games*), Marvel monoliths (*Captain America: The First Avenger*) and extravagant flops (*Jack the Giant Slayer*). He has done stage and song and documentary. He has been nominated for every award going and won most of them. To his millions of admirers, Tucci has long been one of the most welcome on-screen presences, dry, wry and spry, able to conjure an ocean of warmth and intelligence with an impish glance. ▶

White shirt by *Eton*. Green cord jacket and trousers by *Ralph Lauren*. Burgundy socks by *London Sock Co.* Tan buckle shoes by *George Cleverley*. Red and bee print tie by *Favourbrook*









For all that, however, he has never quite crossed over from “that guy from that thing” to leading man. “I’m the guy where producers will say, ‘We love him, but we’re going to come to him once we’ve cast the lead,’” Tucci says, with one of his frequent laughs. “I’m not the guy they need to make the movie.”

On a warm morning in Barnes, west London, near where Tucci lives with his wife, Felicity Blunt, and their two young children, he gives every impression of a man with reasons to be cheerful. His favourite restaurants are open, travel is getting easier, the sun is shining.

“[Lockdown] ended up being OK,” he says. “There was the horror and confusion of so many people getting sick and dying. I haven’t seen my parents for two years. But I got a lot done. We made do.” In some ways, he says, the simpler life of cooking, working and hanging out with his family “was a vision of the way life should be”.

What’s more, despite Covid halting film and TV production around the world, Tucci is emerging from these strange months with his reputation not only intact, but enhanced. At 60 – an age when other actors are moving into the autumn of their career – Tucci’s star has never been brighter. As the new virus stalked the planet, Tucci twice managed to go unexpectedly viral himself. In March last year he posted a clip Blunt filmed of him making a Negroni in their kitchen at home. Whether it was thanks to his familiar gravelly voice, measured cadences, twinkling eye, large biceps, or simple lockdown delirium, the video blew up. It received millions of views. *The Guardian* ran an article entitled: “Why is Stanley Tucci making a Negroni so hot?” Suddenly he wasn’t just an actor, he was a lifestyle.

“I don’t know what happened,” he says. “It was so weird. I made this video and my wife told me to put it up on Instagram. All of a sudden it was everywhere and everyone was saying I was a ‘sexy bartender’. I was like, ‘Boy, people are

desperate.’ They were at home and the liquor stores weren’t shut.

“I’ve been around a long time, but people have never really seen me at home, so I think they saw a different side,” he offers by way of more sober explanation for the clip’s popularity. “I think they liked seeing someone trying to have fun during lockdown.”

Two months later, Tucci wrote an article for an American magazine, *The Atlantic*, detailing his daily routine in Barnes during the first lockdown, when in addition to his core family he found himself living with his boy-girl twins and daughter by his late first wife, Kate, who died in 2009, and one of their friends who couldn’t get home from university. In hilarious detail, Tucci enumerated the travails of caring for this sprawling blended family, with children aged 20 to two, and their

## “ALL OF A SUDDEN THE VIDEO WAS EVERYWHERE AND EVERYONE WAS SAYING I WAS A ‘SEXY BARTENDER’”

attendant demands for food, attention, nappies, entertainment and booze. “5pm,” he wrote. “The older children have now come downstairs to eat an entire f\*\*\*ing meal before dinner.” The piece went viral, too. As well as a beloved performer, Tucci emerged as a chef, writer, relatable dad and cocktail enthusiast. “It turns out that all I had to do, all these years, was just be myself,” he says. “Who knew?”

Tucci captured that rare thing, authenticity on the internet, but he also had two fine pieces of screen work more or less in the can before the pandemic struck. His CNN series, *Searching for Italy*, allowed him to give full expression to a love of food that has already spawned two cookbooks. Then there was *Supernova*, a two-hander with ▶



Below: Alongside Colin Firth in *Supernova*, and in *Captain America: The First Avenger* and *The Devil Wears Prada*



his old friend Colin Firth. Tucci plays Tusker, a novelist with dementia who decides to take a road trip through the Lake District with his partner Sam, a concert pianist. It's a poised, tender film, which explores grand ideas about life, death and love without forgetting to include a few jokes. Tucci is also surely the buffest novelist-with-dementia ever to appear on film, as a topless scene attests – his sculpted torso the result of a lifelong work-out regime. “If I go more than 24 hours [without exercising] I go mad,” he says.

Like Tusker, Tucci's had mortality on the mind. Stan the Negroni-master is only half the story. “I love to have fun, but I'm not the most relaxed guy,” he says. “I'm not a good sleeper. I always have way too much on my mind.” He reveals that three years ago he was diagnosed with a tumour at the base of his tongue. “It was too big to operate, so they had to do high-dose radiation and chemo,” he says. “I'd vowed I'd never do anything like that, because my first wife died of cancer, and to watch her go through those treatments for years was horrible.” After what he'd endured with Kate, he was particularly scared about what the illness might mean for his family. “The kids were great, but it was hard for them,” he says. “I had a feeding tube for six months. I could barely make it to the twins' high-school graduation.”

Three years later this cancer is unlikely to come back, he says, touching wood with both hands. “[Cancer] makes you more afraid and less afraid at the same time. I feel much older than I did before I was sick. But you still want to get ahead and get things done.”

There is plenty lined up. He has another book out in October, a memoir through food. “I wasn't sure if I could write enough about food, but I think people are interested in catering on sets and how ▶

## This is Stan The Tucci CV

### Born

11 November 1960 in Peekskill, New York. Tucci is second-generation Italian American, with Calabrian heritage, and spent a year in Florence with his family when he was 13 years old.

### Education

State University of New York at Purchase, major in acting (1982).

### Interests

Italy, working out, restaurants (in the early 2000s he owned Finch Tavern, in New York) and, of course, cocktails. Tucci takes his cocktail equipment to set. His *Captain America* co-star Chris Evans tweeted that Tucci would make Martinis at the end of the day's filming.

### Key works

#### Levi's ad (1985)

Fresh out of drama school, Tucci appeared in an ad for Levi's, walking the streets of New York in a Brando-esque vest and 501s. Early hunk credentials established.

#### Big Night (1996)

Tucci starred in and co-wrote this passion project about a failing restaurant in New Jersey in the 1950s, and co-directed it with his friend Campbell Scott. One of the great food films.

#### The Devil Wears Prada (2006)

As the exacting, big-hearted but spiky magazine art director Nigel Kipling, Tucci announced himself to a whole new legion of fans.

#### The Lovely Bones (2009)

His only Oscar nomination, for Best Supporting Actor, as a serial killer in Peter Jackson's film of Alice Sebold's novel.

#### Spotlight (2015)

A classic Tucci role, minor but unforgettable, as the crusading Boston lawyer Mitchell Garabedian, who represented people who were abused by priests as children.

#### Negroni-making video (2020)

In just 71 seconds of Instagram content, with three spirits and a cocktail shaker, Tucci became one of lockdown's standout sex symbols.



ALAMY



## “WHO CARES ABOUT SUCCESS? IT’S MUCH MORE INTERESTING TO WATCH SOMEBODY FAIL”

Wool flannel checked jacket by *Paul Smith*. Navy collared knit by *Cos*. Jeans *Tucci's own*. Burgundy socks by *London Sock Co*. Tan buckle shoes by *George*

to depict food.” *Big Night* – the 1996 film that he wrote, directed and starred in – is a rarity: a brilliant movie about restaurants. “[Food] is hard to do well on screen,” Tucci says. “I think what made [*Big Night*] work is that it’s about failure. Food movies are always about success. Who cares about success? It’s much more interesting to watch somebody fail. Then I can connect with them.”

Then there’s *The King’s Man*, the latest instalment in the *Kingsman* series, the franchise built upon Firth. More CNN food series are

planned. For the first time in his life, Tucci feels in control. “It’s exciting,” he says. “As an actor you go through so many ups and downs. There are so many periods where you’re like, ‘I have a house and all these children; how come I don’t have a job?’ Even at the start of the pandemic, I was like, ‘Why am I still waiting?’”

Four decades after he started out, Tucci’s waiting days might just be over. Cheers to that.

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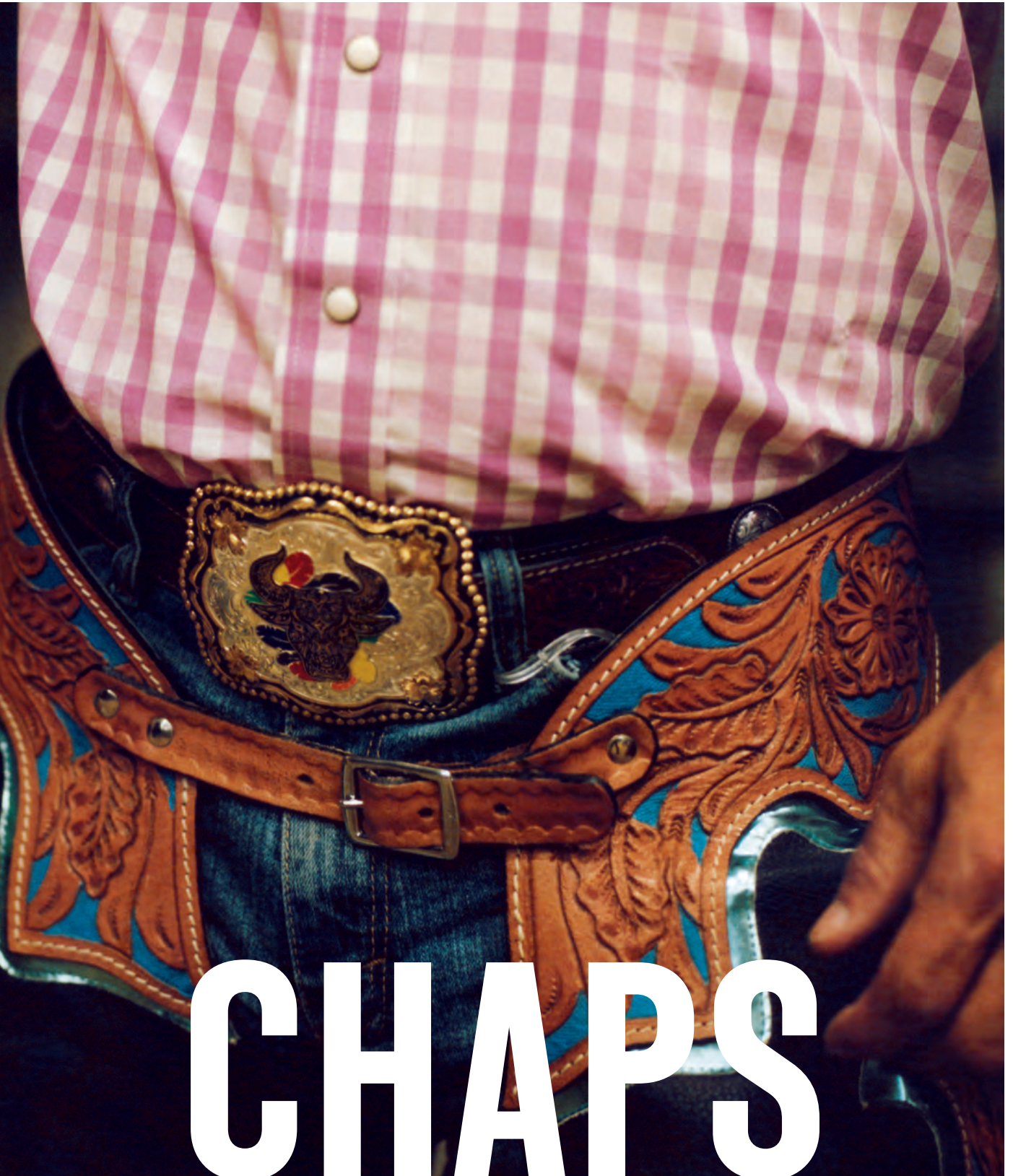
PLEASE DRINK THE UNUSUAL RESPONSIBLY

# LOVELY

The macho world of Wild West cowboys is given a queer makeover by America's gay rodeo scene. **Kevin EG Perry** travels to Las Vegas to find out how it all began 45 years ago, and why this September's BigHorn Rodeo will be more loved-up than ever

PHOTOGRAPHS: LUKE GILFORD





# CHAPS

# THE GREAT AMERICAN SPORT OF RODEO

was started, as you'd probably guess, by cowboys. It began on 19th-century ranches as a way to race horses and show off prowess in the skills frontiersmen needed to survive. It was a way for them to test their mettle. To prove how much of a man they were.

"When you look back at the history of the West, it was rough. You had to work hard and you had to be tough," says Matt Fain, who comes from a tiny almost-town in Arizona and a long line of cowboys. His great-grandparents were ranching there before Arizona was Arizona. We're sat in Charlie's, a gay bar west of the Las Vegas strip. Above our heads, a pair of mirrored cowboy boots hangs beside the disco ball. "I think there's a preconceived notion that if you're gay or lesbian or transgender, you're not tough," says Fain. "Gay rodeo defies that." ▶



From left: Matt Fain, who's competed on the circuit for five years; and Texan nurse and rodeo competitor Alexis Cole



Fain, who has competed on the gay rodeo circuit since 2017, is currently deep in preparation for one of the biggest events on the calendar: Vegas's BigHorn Rodeo. Running from 18-19 September, this year's event is particularly significant. Not only is it one of the first major gay rodeos to take place since the pandemic hit, it also marks 45 years since the first-ever queer rodeo event was held here in Nevada at Reno's Washoe County Fairgrounds on 2 October 1976.

The story of that event gives some small insight into the hurdles that gay rodeo's pioneers – and the LGBTQ community in general – have had to clear in America's conservative west. Organiser Phil Ragsdale dreamed up this new kind of inclusive hoedown as a way to have fun, raise money for local senior citizens and, he hoped, erase some of the negative stereotypes that gay people face. However, even after

## “GAY RODEOS GIVE US A HOME, MUCH LIKE GAY BARS DID IN THE 60S AND 70S”

securing the venue, Ragsdale found he could not convince any local ranchers to allow his team to use their animals. Just a day before the crowds descended he was finally able to locate a handful of cattle, one pig and a Shetland pony. Still, the event proved a success.

Ragsdale's original Reno rodeo ran until 1984, by which time the concept was taking root across the United States. In September 1985 the International Gay Rodeo Association (IGRA) was formed to standardise competition across the various state rodeos springing up in places like Colorado, Texas, California and Arizona. The Nevada Gay Rodeo Association (NGRA) was formed in 1992 and four years later succeeded in bringing gay rodeo back to the state where it began with the inaugural BigHorn Rodeo.

Fain, who also competes on mainstream rodeo circuits, says it's hard to overstate the significance of the space these trailblazing cowboys created. "If gay rodeo riders are becoming more accepted



### This ain't our first gay rodeo: a timeline of the IGRA



#### October 1976

The first gay rodeo is held at Washoe County Fairgrounds in Reno, Nevada. Winners are crowned King of the Cowboys and Queen of the Cowgirls.



#### September 1985

As gay rodeos get popular across North America, the IGRA is founded in Denver by delegates from Arizona, California, Colorado, Oklahoma and Texas.



From left: James Walker has been representing as Nikki Starr for more than 25 years; Shetinkles Alittle; and software developer and bull rider Breana

now, then that's through a lot of work and sacrifice from a lot of generations before me," he says. "Gay rodeos give us a home, much like gay bars did in the 60s and 70s. They weren't just places where people went to get drunk, they were also about creating a sense of community where you could feel safe."

That's safe from persecution, not necessarily from biting Nevada dirt. Gay rodeo is still rodeo, featuring 13 hotly contested events testing speed, stamina and nerve. At the Henderson Saddle Association, I meet Chris Due and his nine horses. He's a former Mr NGRA who lost track of how many winner's buckles he's collected when it got past a hundred.

"My experience with gay rodeos is that everybody is extremely friendly," he tells me, as rabbits hop between stables. "Your competitors are your biggest cheerleaders on the fence. They'll be yelling for you, hoping that you do well, even though they know that if you do you'll beat them.

We give that back and forth to each other because as gay people we've had to learn that we're not always accepted everywhere. The "Western lifestyle" is one place it wasn't always thought we would be accepted in, but here at gay rodeo you are."

There's a real sense of community about the gay rodeo circuit, one that extends beyond the competitors to include everyone who gets involved. It's something the acclaimed photographer Luke Gilford, who counts Lil Nas X and Paris Hilton



**February 1992**

The Nevada Gay Rodeo Association (NGRA) is founded at Badlands Saloon in Las Vegas, with founders wanting to bring gay rodeo "home".



**June 1996**

The first BigHorn Rodeo is held at Horseman's Park in Las Vegas, drawing competitors from across the country to compete in 13 different rodeo events.



**February 2014**

*Queens & Cowboys: A Straight Year on the Gay Rodeo* premieres at the Santa Barbara Film Festival, winning the best documentary award.



**December 2020**

Photographer Luke Gilford's *National Anthem: America's Queer Rodeo* is published by Damiani, spurring a wave of interest in the scene. [damianieditore.com](http://damianieditore.com)



Felinda Bush  
Member of the Month 2018  
1<sup>st</sup> RUNNER UP  
MISS NGRA 2019  
MEMBER OF THE MONTH  
OCTOBER 2018

among his subjects, found himself drawn to when he first came across the IGRA in 2016. “After growing up in the mainstream rodeo culture, with its patriarchy and homophobia, I developed conflicting feelings as I discovered my own queerness,” he tells me. “Finding the IGRA felt like uncovering a shining beacon of exception – a caveat to the rural standard. After my first few trips to IGRA rodeos, what I felt was not just a sense of acceptance, but the electric charge of belonging.”

Gilford spent four years embedded in the sport, compiling his book of photography *National Anthem*, which was published during the pandemic. It captures Fain and other members of the gay rodeo circuit in all their fierce beauty. Some are in drag, a crucial part of the gay rodeo experience since the naming of the first Miss Dusty Spurs back in 1976. “The rodeo is a spectacle and a performance, and so is drag,” points out Gilford. “At the queer rodeos, we get both in the same space.”

The reigning Miss NGRA 2021 is Felinda Bush, who got her name one fateful and quite possibly inebriated night out. Bush, also known as Troy Peter, meets me at Horseman’s Park to give me the guided tour of the 5,000m<sup>2</sup>, 2,800-capacity



## “RODEO IS A PART OF THE FABRIC OF AMERICA. THE BIG THING WITH OURS IS THAT WE’RE ALL-INCLUSIVE”

arena which will soon play host to the BigHorn Rodeo. “I’ll be calling bingo on the Friday night, and then we have a big drag show on the Saturday,” says Peter. “It’s a lot of fun.”

By the time the much-anticipated weekend rolls around, Peter will have already played a crucial role in making the rodeo happen in the first place. As NGRA Royalty, Felinda Bush hosts monthly bingo nights and other fundraisers to finance the BigHorn Rodeo. “There’s a lot of behind-the-scenes work,” he says. “We work 362 days of the year for a three-day show.” The rodeo itself is free,

and 100% of the money that is generated from on-site concessions is split between local gay and horse charities. “For me, getting to write that cheque to our charities is the big pay-off,” says Peter. “It’s about giving back to our community.”

By setting out to create a space where cowboys could feel safe to be themselves, he explains, they ended up creating a space for everyone. “Rodeo really is a part of the fabric of America,” he says. “The big thing with our rodeos is that we’re all-inclusive. Just because we have ‘gay’ in our title does not mean you have to be of that persuasion to compete in or to visit our rodeos. There’s no judgement. We’re open to everyone who wants to come out, have a good time and enjoy rodeo. That’s the beauty of it.”

From left: Felinda Bush; couple RJ and Christy Mikels; Kelly O’Neil (aka Kevin Springer) – IGRA Royalty in 2017

✖ **Fly to Las Vegas. The BigHorn Rodeo is at Horseman’s Park, Las Vegas, from 18–19 September. For more information visit [ngra.com](http://ngra.com) or follow [@nevadagayrodeo](https://twitter.com/nevadagayrodeo) online**

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# LONDON'S REALEST MEALS

SOME OF LONDON'S BEST RESTAURANTS ARE IN LESS OBVIOUS LOCATIONS, BUT NOW INTREPID FOODIES ARE DISCOVERING WHERE TO LOOK. ONE OF THE CHAMPIONS OF THIS 'REAL' RESTAURANT SCENE, FOOD WRITER **JONATHAN NUNN** LIFTS THE LID ON FOUR OF HIS FAVOURITES

PHOTOGRAPHS: LUCY RICHARDS

**A**round the turn of the millennium, something strange happened in London. Where previously the city's dishes had been the punchline of international jokes – jellied eels, well-done meat, stolid school-dinner

fare – visitors started to admit that actually the food was really rather good. The culinary gravity was shifting. Paris seemed burdened by the weight of its own history, but London was creatively unshackled and culturally diverse. Food writers began wondering, seriously, if this had become the culinary capital of the world.

Twenty years later, it's taken for gospel that London is a city that eats well, yet its uniqueness has become somewhat lost. It was almost as if, in hyping it as the greatest place to eat on Earth, we as food writers neglected what made it so thrilling in the first place.

If London *is* the best place to eat in the world, it's because of its second restaurant culture: less heralded but thriving on the margins, both in the outer doughnut of the city and in unlikely central spaces. These are the restaurants made by and for communities, reflecting the former imperial capital's history as well as the diversity of those who call it home: Syrian desserts on an industrial estate, Malaysian stews in an indoor market, the cuisine of every South American country under one railway arch, and more regional biryani styles than any city in the world.

It is this other restaurant culture that truly defines London today, and which I celebrate in my own writing and the newsletter I edit, *Vittles* (subscribe at [vittles.substack.com](http://vittles.substack.com)). To take advantage of it fully, you must venture a bit further and embrace dislocation. However, here are four places that are as extraordinary as anything you'll find on any "must eat" London travel list, and that say something about where London has been and where it's headed. ➤

Normah serves up southern Malaysian dishes just around the corner from the High Commission





## Kaieteur Kitchen

### ESSENTIAL GUYANESE EATING IN ELEPHANT & CASTLE

There are restaurants that I recommend people go to if they have one day in London, the ones you go to for a special occasion – blow-out restaurants that leave you reeling and staggering down the street, belly laden, promising to never eat anything again. But if I had to tell you, hand on heart, where I would eat every day if I had to, I would say Kaieteur Kitchen.

This Guyanese cafe in south London's Elephant and Castle is run by Faye Gomes, whose eclecticism is shaped both by her stint cooking for the Commonwealth Secretariat, where she had to become proficient in all the cuisines of the former British Empire, but also by Guyana itself, where Black African traditions mix with Indian, indigenous Amerindian, Chinese and European ones. Eating food at Kaieteur Kitchen is inextricable from this history but also from



### If I had to tell you where I would eat every day if I had to, I would say Kaieteur Kitchen

Faye, who told me for *Vittles*: "When I'm cooking, I cook with happiness and I cook with love. It doesn't tell just on you, but it tells on the food."

You'll be convinced by one taste of her weekend pepper pot, black as a 10" vinyl and bittersweet with cassareep (a cassava-based

sauce). It's a stew made not just with love but with time, knowledge, skill and a huge amount of Faye herself. It will leave you perfectly sated, only promising to come back again tomorrow.

■ Kaieteur Kitchen, Castle Square, Elephant Rd SE17 1EU, [kaieteurkitchen.business.site](http://kaieteurkitchen.business.site)



From left: Kaieteur Kitchen's Guyanese dishes include pepper pot; Bake St's Towpath chicken bun



## Bake St

### HALAL BRUNCH IN EAST LONDON

If your schedule is too tight to fully explore the wealth of London's food, you could do worse than eating at Bake St every single day, where chef Feroz Gajja's wide-ranging eating habit and interests (Feroz is also a food writer himself) are all

**The menu might include kilishi, spicy and honey-sweet beef jerky sourced via one of London's Nigerian restaurants**

refracted through the lens of halal brunch. One way of describing halal brunch is if Australian brunch, the American diner and the Levantine kebab shop all raised an unruly child, but in an interview for *Vittles*, Feroz simply defines it as "food that second-generation Muslim immigrants can call their own, but which their parents and grandparents wouldn't eat".

Feroz gives himself licence to put pretty much anything on the menu. That

might include tongue-tuni, a Turkish-inspired tantuni wrap filled with melting beef tongue that would be familiar to anyone who has eaten at a kosher deli; skewers of barbecued meat brushed Japanese-style with tare; or kilishi, spicy and honey-sweet Hausa beef jerky sourced via Chishuru, one of London's essential Nigerian restaurants. Feroz is also well known for his takes on American burgers that would have been considered haram for many Muslim children growing up – the Smashburger, a homage to the double cheeseburger, where the thin patty, cheese, pickles and sauce have melded in a morass of fat, acidity and umami, and somehow tastes more like McDonald's than McDonald's.

■ Bake St, 58 Evering Rd N16 7SR, [bakestreet.co.uk](http://bakestreet.co.uk)



## Normah's

### MALAYSIAN MAGIC IN ZONE 1

Normah's is named after its owner, Normah Abd Hamid, whose Johorean cooking (Johor is a southern state of Malaysia) adds something new to the small clutch of restaurants around the Malaysian High Commission in Bayswater. Growing up with 12 siblings, cooking is Normah's way of creating a family atmosphere away from home – indeed, sometimes it feels like you're sitting in her front room, being simultaneously looked after and cooked for. The menu runs through the food of the Malaysian peninsula – laksa, nasi lemak, beef

### Sometimes it feels like you're sitting in her front room, being looked after and cooked for

rendang – but the best things are the roti canai, burnished and crispy, and the dishes from the southern tip of Johor like assam pedas, a sanguine bowl of intensely spicy-sour fish curry.

In London, trendy doesn't always mean cutting edge – there are plenty of trendy restaurants here where the offering is easy to predict, down to the typeface on the menu. Then there are places like Normah's, tucked away in Queensway Market next to a shop that only sells Russian films, an unexpected restaurant in an unexpected place, where the dissonance between the two can provoke something close to wonder. It's enough to remind you that no matter how much you think you know it, London always has a surprise up its sleeve.

■ Normah's, Queensway Market  
W2 4QJ, normahs.co.uk

From left: Assam pedas at Normah's, and Tetote's curry pan, with the hot dog and cheese and mushroom buns



## Tetote Factory

### UNPARALLELED JAPANESE BAKES IN EALING

Flying in and out of Heathrow is always my preference because it means I can hop a few stops on the tube to South Ealing, luggage in tow, and grab some buns at arguably the city's best bakery. If it existed in Paris, people would travel from other countries to come to Tetote, but in London it has been putting out sublime bakes for the small Japanese community in Ealing without fanfare or any plans of expansion. Its particular genius lies in its buns and brioches, as soft and squidgy as a high-tog pillow, with a roster of fillings that change at an attritional rate of one every two years.

The options at Tetote can be divided into two quintessentially Japanese themes. One is as austere as a tea bowl, as refined as wagashi: buns filled with sweet-savoury red azuki bean or matcha cream, brioches of raspberry, blueberry and apricot, custard buns bursting with oven-warm crème pat, shaped to perfection with not a single decorative almond out of place. The other is sublimely deranged: a hot dog baked into a bun filled with mustardy onions and ketchup, or a chicken nugget bun surrounded by a moat of barbecue sauce and mayonnaise. Oh, and I challenge you to find a better baguette at any of the world's most-famous boulangeries. Once again, London comes out on top.

■ Tetote Factory, 12 South Ealing Rd  
W5 4QA, tetotefactory.co.uk

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# What's On



## GET UP, STAND UP

The late 1960s: Chicago, Illinois. Petty thief Bill O'Neal (LaKeith Stanfield) is recruited by the FBI to infiltrate the Black Panther movement and investigate its leader, Fred Hampton (Daniel Kaluuya). Shaka King's Oscar-winning movie account of this incredible real story, *Judas and the Black Messiah* combines powerhouse performances with brilliant storytelling.

[Watch Judas and the Black Messiah](#)





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59-65

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67-71

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73-75

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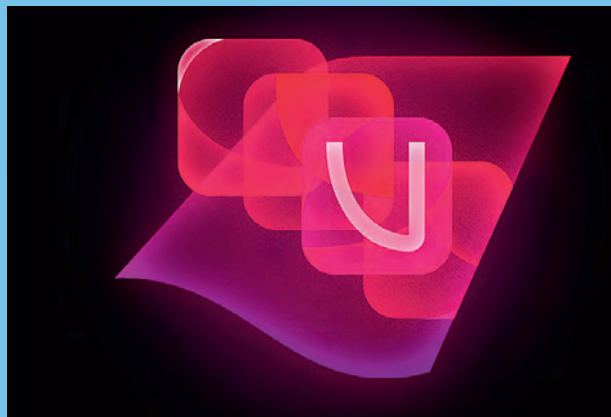
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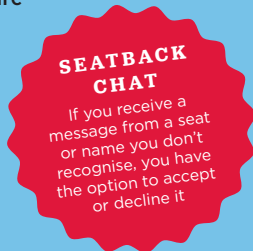
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- For Music, click on the star symbol next to your chosen track or album.
- For Movies and TV click Save Show/Movie for Later.
- Depending on which aircraft you are on, you'll see a tab or star at the top of your screen.
- Click on it and you'll see the items you've selected.
- Select Music, Movies or TV. Now you can work through your personally curated list of top entertainment at 30,000ft.



**Parental blocking**  
If you want to block by rating or specific content, please talk to a member of the cabin crew.

**Headphones**  
Using your headphones? Our PAs are recorded at levels that work with the headphones we provide onboard, so be prepared if you use your own.

### Viewing guide

- Not suitable for nervous flyers
- Unsuitable for children
- Vera Loves

### Languages

Most movies have several language options available. To find them, pick a movie, select the dropdown language box, choose your language and enjoy! We also have a selection of Hindi and Chinese movies onboard.

### Subtitled

Subtitles and audio descriptive titles (AD) are available on a selection of movies onboard.



## Pair your device

The entertainment screens on our sleek new A350 aircraft are all touchscreen, but you

can also choose to navigate our awesome selection of movies, TV and music with your own device too. All you need to do is pair your phone or tablet and, hey presto, it turns into a remote control. Here's how:

- On your entertainment screen, select the pairing button (*see left*) to get your four-digit code.
- On your personal device, select the "Virgin-Atlantic" WiFi network.
- Your device will

automatically take you to our WiFi page.

- Select Control Your Screen.
- Select the pairing button and enter your four-digit code when it asks you.
- Ta-da! You can now use your device as a remote.

A SUPERSIZED SELECTION OF TOP FILMS

# Movies



## MONSTER'S BRAWL

Who's harder, Godzilla or King Kong? Here's our tale of the tape

**NAME** Godzilla – after *gorira*, Japanese for gorilla, and *kujira*, Japanese for whale.  
**HEIGHT** 120m – his tallest ever – in *Godzilla vs Kong*.  
**REACH** Not much. Hilariously short arms means 'Zilla won't be doing cartwheels. But watch out for his massive tail or he'll whip you into next Tuesday.  
**STRENGTHS** Born out of nuclear experimentation, Godzilla feeds off toxicity and flattens cities with his atomic laser breath. He's been a tetchy dino since 1954's *Godzilla*, but has finally worked out his priorities. The 2021 flick sees him go up against a familiar simian foe in defence of his ancient heritage.  
**WEAKNESSES** Godzilla's kryptonite is micro-oxygen – a powerful chemical that exists in his world. And best not mention Mechagodzilla – the metallic alien version that first appeared in 1974 and is back here. Never get in the middle of a family feud.

### THE VERDICT

A raging reptile facing off against a very chunky monkey? This one's too close to call.

**NAME** Kong – after the African country of Congo, famous for its gorillas.  
**HEIGHT** 103m: the greatest ape ever.  
**REACH** Extensive. Those huge arms were born for climbing skyscrapers and pounding dinosaurs.  
**STRENGTHS** Kong has been one angry ape since he was captured from Skull Island and paraded around NYC. He might look like a furry dope, but his Battle Axe – made from a giant dorsal plate – is pretty lethal. In *Godzilla vs Kong*, he's able to communicate with humans via sign language, while gearing up to kick a certain reptile where the sun doesn't shine.  
**WEAKNESSES** Kong is protected by his thick fur, but he's still susceptible to flesh wounds and, like any mammal, will perish if held underwater for too long.

📺 [Watch Godzilla vs Kong](#)



## Judas and the Black Messiah ♥

15

Daniel Kaluuya,  
LaKeith Stanfield

125  
mins

**FESTOONED WITH AWARDS** – including a best picture Oscar nomination – *Judas and the Black Messiah* is the true story of how in late-1960s Chicago, FBI informant William O’Neal (Stanfield) infiltrated the Black Panther party in order to bring down its charismatic leader, Fred Hampton. Not since *The Departed* has an informant story been told with such panache and psychological insight, with all involved on incredible form, from Martin Sheen as the obsessed FBI director J Edgar Hoover right through to Kaluuya who was rightly garlanded for his spellbinding turn as Hampton. What emerges is a tale of divided loyalties and racial injustice all wrapped up in a nail-biting thriller, and one of the year’s best movies.



## A Quiet Place Part II

15

Emily Blunt,  
Millicent Simmonds

97  
mins

Just when you thought it was safe to sneeze comes this gripping sequel, with the aliens who hunt by sound still leaping on anyone who dares make a noise. However, as Emily Blunt and co soon discover, the aliens are far from being the only threat...



## The United States vs Billie Holiday

15

Andra Day,  
Trevante Rhodes

130  
mins

From *The Butler* director Lee Daniels comes this biopic of the legendary jazz singer dealing with a period in which, while addicted to heroin, she was firstly targeted by the Federal Bureau of Narcotics then had an affair with one of the agents.



## Nobody

15

Bob Odenkirk,  
Aleksey Serebryakov

92  
mins

*Nobody* stars Odenkirk as... well, if we tell you what he is, then it’ll spoil the surprise. Suffice to say, it’s him against Russian drug lords, much ass is duly kicked, and a lot of bone-crunching fun is had.



## The Mauritanian

15

Jodie Foster,  
Tahar Rahim

129  
mins

Seemingly incapable of giving a bad performance, Foster is superb in this legal drama in which she plays a defence attorney representing a suspected terrorist who’s been languishing in Guantanamo Bay without charge.



## Georgetown

15

Christoph Waltz,  
Vanessa Redgrave

99  
mins

A leftfield delight here, with Waltz directing and starring in a character-driven, true-life mystery about a socialite who becomes the chief suspect when his wife is murdered. The facts all seem to point to his guilt. But do they tell the whole story?

MOVIE QUIZ

Take our  
trivia test



1

Welsh acting giant Anthony Hopkins won this year's Best Actor Oscar for *The Father*. But which lip-smacking 1991 thriller scored him his first Academy Award?

2

Riz Ahmed rocks the house in the Oscar-winning drama *Sound of Metal*. But what's his successful sideline career?

3

Daniel Kaluuya gives a powerhouse performance in the scorching *Judas and the Black Messiah*. But which subversive racial satire made him world famous?

4

*Godzilla vs Kong* unites two mighty movie monsters for a titanic smackdown. But which capital city did Godzilla famously flatten in his first film all the way back in 1954?

5

Emily Blunt fights to protect her kids from armoured aliens in *A Quiet Place II*. But which recent Disney remake saw her playing a very different kind of guardian?



Wrath of Man

15

Jason Statham,  
Holt McCallany

119  
mins

**IT'S FAIR TO** say that Guy Ritchie movies are a mixed bunch, both in terms of genre and quality. Having made his name with a brace of brilliant crime movies – *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels* and *Snatch* – he turned his back on the genre after *RocknRolla*. *The Gentlemen* in 2019 saw him (re)turning to a life of crime, and now *Wrath of Man*, with Statham in tow, seals the deal. Make no mistake, it's a cracker. We're not going to tell you the plot, not even a tiny bit of it, because much of the pleasure of the film lies in its exquisitely delivered reveals. Yes, it is plenty violent, so be warned. But providing you can stomach that you're in for a fine old time with this one.



Mortal Kombat

15

Lewis Tan,  
Jessica McNamee

110  
mins

Let's face it, there are times you just want to veg out with mindless mixed-martial-arts action based on a violent videogame. And if right now is one of those times then, ladies and gentlemen, we give you *Mortal Kombat*, the latest big-screen take on 1992's videogame.



Godzilla vs Kong

12

Alexander Skarsgård,  
Millie Bobby Brown

112  
mins

When a man is tired of watching monsters kick seven shades of whatsit out of each other, he is tired of life. This latest in the *Godzilla* franchise, which finds the two doing battle in Hong Kong, is stompingly good fun. Turn to p59 to see how the protagonists measure up

ANSWERS: 1. THE SILENCE OF THE LAMBS 2. SHE MAKES MUSIC UNDER THE NAME RIZ MC 3. GET OUT 4. TOKYO 5. MARY POPPINS RETURNS PHOTOS: BARRY KING / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

OSCAR WINNERS



**Sound of Metal** ❤️

15

Riz Ahmed,  
Olivia Cooke

120  
mins

**THE OSCAR-BAGGING** *Sound of Metal* begins with, well, the sound of metal. We're talking heavy metal here, as sticksman Ruben, played by Ahmed, hammers out a doom-laden and very LOUD drumbeat with his band Blackgammon. This is a film in love with music about a man in love with music – a guy who spends his entire life on the road – the tragedy being that Ruben is about to undergo a life-changing trauma when he begins to lose his hearing. Advised to avoid loudness of any kind, he continues to perform; what's more, he's a recovering drug addict so his loved ones begin to worry about his continued sobriety. As his entire existence begins to slip, what follows is a stunning treatise on addiction, relationships and disability. Superb.



**Minari**

12

Yeri Han,  
Yuh-jung Youn

120  
mins

Movie balm for the soul here, in the uplifting, gentle and heartfelt tale of a Korean family who move from California to rural Arkansas and begin a new way of life as farmers. "This is the movie we need right now," says the *LA Times*.



**The Father**

12

Anthony Hopkins,  
Olivia Colman

97  
mins

Hopkins has been raking in the awards for his perfectly calibrated performance as Anthony, who is beginning to succumb to dementia. Colman is the daughter who desperately wants to help, despite his strenuous objections.

FAMILY



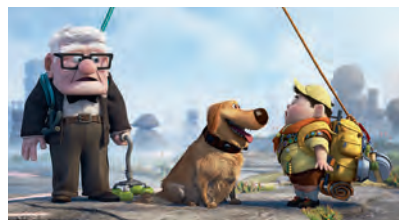
**Raya and the Last Dragon**



Kelly Marie Tran,  
Awkwafina

90  
mins

There's just one dragon left in the realm of Kumandra, and guess who's on a mission to find him? As you can imagine, coming from Disney, this is a gorgeously rendered and endlessly entertaining treat.



**Up**



Edward Asner,  
Christopher Plummer

92  
mins

Comedy adventure from Pixar about a 78-year-old balloon salesman who fulfills a lifelong dream when he ties thousands of balloons to his house and flies to South America – only to discover that he has a nine-year-old stowaway.



**The Secret Garden**



Dixie Egerickx,  
Richard Hansell

97  
mins

From the same people who brought you *Harry Potter* and *Paddington* comes this equally magical and just-as-star-studded tale of a little girl who is sent to live with her uncle and while there happens upon... well, the clue is the title.

HIDDEN GEMS

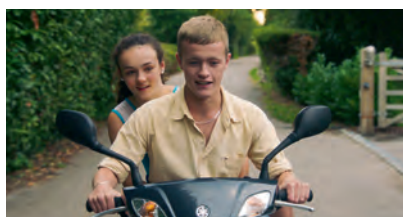


Land

12

Robin Wright, Demián Bichir	89 mins
--------------------------------	------------

Wright can always be relied upon to give a soulful performance, and here she not only stars but directs as well, thoughtfully telling the tale of Edee, who after a bereavement goes off grid in the Rockies and learns to live again.



Perfect 10

15

Frankie Box, Alfie Deegan	83 mins
------------------------------	------------

Critics have been united in their praise for this cracking indie film featuring a whole host of staggeringly good performances - not least from Box as Leigh, a budding gymnast who gets mixed up with moped crime.



Babyteeth ♥

15

Eliza Scanlen, Michelle Lotters	120 mins
------------------------------------	-------------

**TEENAGE CANCER-SUFFERER** Milla has had enough and steps towards the edge of the railway platform in a bid to end it all - only to find herself face-to-face with a tattooed and frankly scuzzy-looking drug dealer, Moses. Next thing you know, the two are firm friends and then inseparable lovers. Milla's parents are understandably horrified (they're okay with the tattoos, it's the drug-dealing they object to) and do all they can to end the affair - only to recalibrate their opinion when, thanks to Moses, their daughter learns to prize her life. The romance is served up with a lo-fi, indie feel giving it an immediacy and intimacy that a more glossy treatment might have lacked, making this an affecting and very moving piece that quite rightly had the critics raving. *Read more about break-out star Scanlen below*



NEW FACES

Eliza  
Scanlen

**I sort of recognise her face - who is she?**

You likely know this young Australian actress from her break-out role as the ailing Beth March in Greta Gerwig's *Little Women*.

**How'd she get famous?**

Having discovered her passion for acting during high school, Scanlen got cast as a recurring character in soap *Home and Away* at just 17. Her next big role was in HBO mini-series *Sharp Objects*, in which she played Amy Adams's psychopathic

little sister, before landing her first feature film role as terminally ill teen Milla Finlay in *Babyteeth*.

**Why should I watch out for her?**

She's only 22 and she's already given captivating performances in a number of high-profile on-screen projects, as well as appeared on Broadway (*To Kill a Mockingbird*). Her more recent film roles have seen prominent filmmakers take notice: she just starred in M Night Shyamalan's horror film *Old*. We're

excited to see what she does next.

**So, does she just act?**

Inspired by the female directors she's worked with, Scanlen has started writing and directing her own shorts, such as the controversy-provoking *Mukbang*, for which she won Best Director for shorts at last year's Sydney Film Festival. The talented Aussie also brushed up on her piano playing skills for *Little Women*.

📺 Watch *Babyteeth*

THRILLERS



**Crisis** ♥

15

Gary Oldman,  
Armie Hammer

118  
mins

**IF YOU RECALL** Steven Soderbergh's *Traffic*, which took a look at the heroin trade from several different angles – top to bottom – this could almost be considered an update, concentrating as it does on the current US opioid epidemic. As with *Traffic* it hones in on three different but connected stories. In one, Hammer plays an undercover agent infiltrating a fentanyl-smuggling cartel; in the next, a university professor (Oldman) makes a discovery about his pharma employers, and in the third, Evangeline Lilly plays a recovering addict who investigates the death of her son, apparently from a fentanyl overdose. Taken together the tales form a revelatory, eye-opening experience in terms of their overall message about the epidemic while also proving the essence of a riveting thriller in their own right.



**Wander**

15

Aaron Eckhart,  
Tommy Lee Jones

94  
mins

Hired to investigate a possible murder, a mentally unstable PI (Eckhart) grows certain that the case is linked to the same conspiracy that caused the death of his daughter. Separating fact from fiction soon becomes his biggest challenge.



**The Courier**

12

Benedict Cumberbatch,  
Merab Ninidze

111  
mins

Cumberbatch plays real-life British businessman Greville Wynne, who in the 1960s was recruited by MI6 to gather Soviet missile intelligence. Pretty soon, he found himself swept up in what we know as the Cuban Missile Crisis. *See below*



MOVIE BLUFF

**THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS**

**Give me the TL;DR version, what is it?** Essentially, it was a showdown between the US and the USSR over the presence of Soviet nuclear armaments on the Caribbean island of Cuba. After a reconnaissance aircraft discovered the missiles, President John F Kennedy surrounded Cuba with warships and things got a bit tense.

**When did it happen?** Over 13 nailbiting days in October 1962.

**Who was involved?** In one corner, the US and their

Western allies; on the other, the USSR.

**What was the outcome?** Given the fact you're alive to read this, the outcome was, thankfully, a peaceful de-escalation. High-level negotiations between JFK and Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev led to the Russians dismantling their missiles on the condition America left Cuba alone.

**How does it play into *The Courier*?** Benedict Cumberbatch (who can also be seen in *The Mauritanian*) is

businessman Greville Wynne, drafted to uncover info on the movement of military hardware to Cuba. It was said Wynne played an integral part in defusing the crisis.

**What are some things I can say about it to sound intellectual?** 1. "They were right to be paranoid. The world came this close [hold your fingers really close together] to Armageddon." 2. "JFK's finest hour? Could well be."

📺 Watch The Courier



FUNNY LADIES



I Care a Lot

15

Rosamund Pike, Peter Dinklage	118 mins
----------------------------------	-------------

Fantastically cynical comedy-drama with Pike superb as a scammer who cons the elderly out of their life savings. Things go seriously and violently awry when one of her victims turns out to be the beloved mum of a vicious gangster.



French Exit

15

Michelle Pfeiffer, Lucas Hedges	113 mins
------------------------------------	-------------

Penniless heiress Frances Price and her son relocate to Paris – complete with a cat who is Frances's reincarnated hubby. What emerges is a surreal comedy boasting a terrific performance from Pfeiffer.



Military Wives

12

Kristin Scott Thomas, Sharon Horgan	108 mins
--	-------------

The true story of Kate, who finds herself facing an uphill task when she decides to start a military wives choir. What emerges is a joyous tale of hope and inspiration – just as you'd expect from the director of *The Full Monty*.

LOVED UP



Before Sunrise

15

Ethan Hawke, Julie Delpy	101 mins
-----------------------------	-------------

The first in what turned out to be one of cinema's great romantic trilogies takes place in a single night as Jesse (Hawke) and Celine (Delpy) meet on a train and spend the night in Vienna getting to know one another.



Together Together ♥

15

Patti Harrison, Ed Helms	91 mins
-----------------------------	------------

IF IT'S AN UPLIFTING, feel-good treat you're after, then step right this way. *Together Together* – so good they named it twice – is a cracking little comedy about a young woman, Anna (Harrison), who signs up to become a gestational surrogate for a single bloke in his forties, Matt (Helms). Anna wants to pay her way through college; Matt doesn't want to get married. If you've got a degree in romantic comedy you might think you can guess what happens next, but hold your roll, because *Together Together*, while not exactly going against the grain, has a little more originality than that. Rather than being a simple meet-cute affair, it explores broader issues of connection and romantic boundaries – all the while doing so with plenty of laughs and actually a few tears along the way.



Supernova

15

Colin Firth, Stanley Tucci	97 mins
-------------------------------	------------

Tear-jerking romance about long-term partners Sam (Firth) and Tusker (Tucci). When Tusker's diagnosed with dementia, the pair embark on a road-trip in order to reconnect with friends and family. See our *Tucci interview on p30*



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SHOWS TO GET YOUR TEETH INTO

# Television

## VAMPIRES: A SPOTTER'S GUIDE

The bloodsuckers of *What We Do in the Shadows* have evolved, says **Stuart Heritage**

**IT'S GETTING HARDER** to spot vampires. While once they were either gnarled demons or flashy aristocrats, they now come in all forms. Mopey teenage boys, little Scandi girls, Tom Hiddleston. But, as proved by two seasons of sitcom *What We Do in the Shadows* (a third is out this month), it isn't impossible. Here's a quick guide.

**They're problematic.** Laszlo Cravensworth (Matt Berry) is beyond the pale. Not only did he once admit to being Jack the Ripper, he's also a wildly promiscuous former porn star who spends his days rendering genitals in topiary. Do you know anyone who has a leafy vulva in their garden? They're a vampire.

**They're micro-managers.** Once a feared soldier, now all Kayvan Novak's Nandor the Relentless has to command is a rundown house in Staten Island and human familiar Guillermo. Nandor's the finicky housemate who calls endless pointless meetings. Do you live with an annoyingly officious person? They're a vampire.

**They're always in fashion.** Look at the opening of *What We Do in the Shadows*. Look at how Nadja (Natasia Demetriou) looks effortlessly chic no matter the era. Do you know someone who dresses well? Vampire.

**They're trolls.** Not all vampires feast on blood. Colin Robinson (Mark Proksch) is an energy vampire who can sustain himself on creating boredom or ill feeling in others. He is also, as you would expect, quite prolific on Twitter. Do you know someone who isn't very nice online? Definite vampire.

📺 **Watch What We Do in the Shadows**

From top:  
Guillermo,  
Colin Robinson,  
Nadja, Nandor  
the Relentless,  
and Laszlo  
Cravensworth

**BAD-ASS WOMEN**

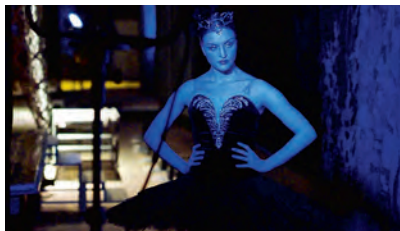


**Good Girls** ♥

10 episodes

45 mins

**FINDING THEMSELVES IN** financial dire straits, three hard-up mums led by Christina *Mad Men* Hendricks turn to crime in this hit US comedy-drama. Robbing a supermarket should be easy pickings, but to say they pick the wrong store would be putting it very mildly indeed. This is no mere branch of Lidl. It's owned by a local gang, and they don't take kindly to being ripped off. Pretty soon the women are forced to rob again in order to pay back the bad guys and, as you might imagine, things quickly spiral wildly out of control. Full of action, packed with great performances and rich characterisation, *Good Girls* is a proper, binge-worthy treat.



**Joy Womack: the White Swan** !

Feature

90 mins

Texan lass Joy Womack had a dream – to become a Bolshoi ballet dancer. As this incredible feature-length documentary demonstrates beautifully, she achieved that – she became only the second American woman to sign up with the Bolshoi – and so much more.



**Be Natural: the Untold Story of Alice Guy-Blaché** ⚠️

Feature

103 mins

In director Pamela B Green's hands, this documentary about pioneering filmmaker Alice Guy-Blaché is both tribute and detective story, asking why she is not better recognised for her achievements and seeking to put that right.



**Mare of Easttown** !

7 episodes

58 mins

Kate Winslet is at her all-time best in this riveting murder-mystery series, playing dogged detective Mare Sheehan, who investigates the murder of a local girl while simultaneously juggling her own chequered private life.



**Parks and Recreation**

4 episodes

22 mins

Among the best comedy shows ever, and the one that made stars of Amy Poehler, Chris Pratt and Aubrey Plaza, *Parks and Recreation* is not to be missed. We have the first four episodes from season three onboard.



**Car Crews with Supercar Blondie** !

6 episodes

41 mins

Having zillions of followers across the socials means that Supercar Blondie gets access to the best, most exclusive motors. Does she take advantage of that privilege? Oh yes, she sure does – in cities across the US from Los Angeles through Vegas, Houston and Detroit to NYC.

3 REASONS...

## Why Kate Winslet's Mare of Easttown is so iconic



1

### Her Philly accent

Philadelphia's accent is notoriously difficult to master, but British-born Winslet nailed it as protagonist Mare Sheehan, specifically the Delaware County brogue. "I just had to drill it and drill it and drill it," Winslet says.

2

### Her perfectly flawed appearance

Set on portraying a realistically imperfect middle-aged woman, Winslet refused director Craig Zobel's offer to edit "a bulgy bit of belly" out of her sex scene. She also sent back the show's Photoshopped promo poster.

3

### Her portrayal of grief

Mare seeks justice for the parents of a murdered girl, but hasn't processed loss in her own life. Winslet worked with bereaved parents and a grief counsellor to bring raw truth to a performance that shines bright, even as part of Winslet's glittering career.

Watch Mare of Easttown



## Schitt's Creek ♥

13 episodes

22 mins

**FUN TO SAY** and even more fun to watch, sitcom *Schitt's Creek* has netted a whole truckload of Emmy awards at the same time as gaining insane amounts of word-of-mouth traction. It follows the fortunes of a formerly rich family, the Roses, who are forced to start again in a lowly motel. But plot is not where the show's appeal lies. It's the characters. It's Dan Levy's hilariously self-obsessed fashionista David (his jumpers are worth the entry price alone). It's Annie Murphy's sweet and incorrigible Alexis. Eugene Levy's pragmatic Johnny. And as for Catherine O'Hara, playing off-the-scale eccentric ex-soap star Moira, she literally steals every scene she's in. And we haven't even started on the brilliant supporting cast.

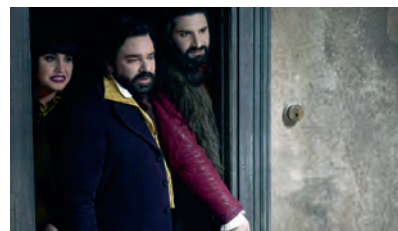


## This Time with Alan Partridge !

6 episodes

29 mins

After years of trying and failing, our favourite sports-casual wearer finally has a show on primetime TV. However, as this second season goes to show, things aren't exactly going according to plan. Played by the inimitable Steve Coogan, Partridge is toe-curlingly funny.



## What We Do in the Shadows !

4 episodes

30 mins

Having started life as a brilliant cult comedy film, *What We Do in the Shadows* has made the transition to brilliant cult TV show. The simple tale of three vampire housemates, this is very funny stuff indeed. *Meet the main characters on p67*

NAIL-BITERS



**Lovecraft Country** ❤️

10 episodes

60 mins

A **STRANGE AND** challenging mix of the Lovecraftian supernatural horror its title suggests and real, racially charged horror, *Lovecraft Country* is set in 1950s Jim Crow America. Here, Atticus Freeman teams up with his friend Letitia and his Uncle George in order to embark on a road trip to find his missing father. Along the way they encounter the terrifying monsters of the Lovecraft mythos, while the far more present and prevalent threat is the constant racism they face. Factor in some superb performances and smart changes of pace and plot direction – not to mention the fact that its producers include JJ Abrams and Jordan Peele – and you’ve got something that is as scintillating as it is intriguing. We have the whole of season one screening for you onboard.



**The Terror: Infamy**

10 episodes

45 mins

*The Terror* changes up for its second season, which features an entirely new story – this one set in an American-run Japanese internment camp during World War II. It retains, however, a supremely clammy supernatural-horror feel.



**Dirty John: the Betty Broderick Story**

8 episodes

48 mins

Season two of the anthology show unveils a new story telling the true-life tale of Betty Broderick (Amanda Peet) and her husband Dan (Christian Slater), whose protracted marriage breakdown ended in bloodshed and tragedy.

CLASSICS



**Friends**

5 episodes

22 mins

The classic sitcom is currently enjoying a new lease of life. However, these aren’t just any old episodes. They are the very best, funniest and most significant of the show’s legendary 10-season run. Could we be more overjoyed?



**The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air**

5 episodes

22 mins

Funny how things come around, because the 1990s sitcom that launched the career of Will Smith as the Fresh Prince, a streetwise kid who goes to live in an upscale neighbourhood of Los Angeles, has never been more popular.



**The Office**

4 episodes

22 mins

The US version of *The Office* ran for a glorious nine seasons and was considered by many to be better than the Ricky Gervais original. We have four episodes from that momentous final season onboard.

HARD FACTS



**You Cannot Kill David Arquette**

15

Feature	91 mins
---------	---------

Actor David Arquette isn't just an actor. In fact, he once set aside a promising movie career to forge a career as a wrestler. Now he's making a return to the sport with a camera crew in tow, and the result is this uplifting and inspiring film.



**The Booksellers**

15

Feature	96 mins
---------	---------

With contributions from the likes of Parker Posey and Fran Lebowitz, this frank and funny documentary goes behind the scenes to take a look at New York's rare book world and some of the more eccentric characters therein.



**The Truffle Hunters** ❤️

12

Feature	84 mins
---------	---------

**YOU KNOW THE** Alba Truffle Hunters of northern Italy right? Oh, you don't? Well, allow us to enlighten you, because they're a group of ageing – and, it has to be said, very funny – guys who search for the rare and expensive white Alba truffle deep in the forests of Piedmont, Italy. It's a delicacy favoured by the mega-rich that can only be found in the wild, having apparently resisted all efforts at cultivation. Though the truffle hunters' secret weapons are their sniffer dogs, they zealously guard the tricks of their trade, hunting only at night so that they don't leave clues for competitors. Like all the best documentaries, Michael Dweck and Gregory Kershaw's film about these wily and elusive characters has you utterly entranced by a subject you previously knew nothing about.

KIDS



**CoComelon**

1 episode	120 mins
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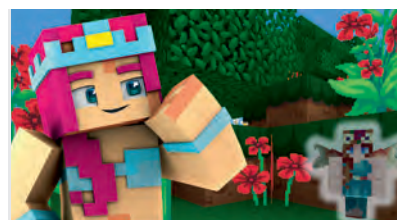
Parents – and little ones – will likely need no introduction to JJ and his buddies. The team of tykes play, sing and dance along to nursery rhymes and original songs that teach preschoolers everything from letters and numbers to life lessons.



**Scooby Doo! And Guess Who?**

4 episodes	22 mins
------------	---------

The gang are back on the trail of spooky supernatural shenanigans with a host of guest stars. Among the onboard episodes, Mystery Inc visits London, encountering Ricky Gervais, and teams up with Wonder Woman in Greece.



**Tankee Town**

15 episodes	15 mins
-------------	---------

It's lots of fun making Minecraft marvels with the residents of the titular town. Tankee's ethos is to allow kids access to their favourite games and videos while parents know their little ones are in a safe environment.

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SWEET TUNES AND SOUR NOTES



# Music

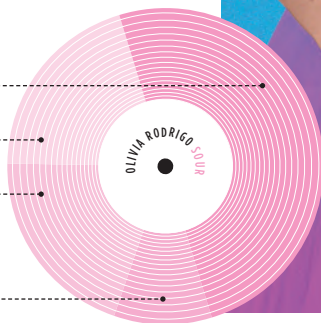
## SOUNDS LIKE TEEN SPIRIT

Olivia Rodrigo lets it all out on debut album *SOUR*

**IF THERE'S ONE** name in pop you need to know in 2021, it's Olivia Rodrigo. The 17-year-old former Disney star is smashing records all around the world, first with mega break-up ballad *Drivers License* and now with debut album *SOUR*. Don't be fooled by her child-star creds though – this isn't an industry plant. Rodrigo reportedly penned the album entirely solo during lockdown, inspired (very overtly) by a split with her teen screen co-star, Joshua Bassett. The result is one helluva break-up album. Her music is a riot of pop-punk inspired belters about first love gone bad and teenage emotion (see: sads, rage, faux maturity) laid out for all to see. Its Paramore-indebted sound has awakened something in geriatric millennials too, with thirty-somethings worldwide jumping around their bedrooms to the sounds of *Brutal* and *Good 4 U*. Pop-punk revival? It starts here.

### SOUR, dissected

- 50% Stalking your ex on social media
- 20% Trying to fit into your old Avril Lavigne tour T-shirt
- 20% Crying in an Uber when "your song" comes on the radio
- 10% Relying heavily on coming-of-age metaphor



 Listen to *SOUR*



BIG HITTERS



**Taylor Swift** ❤️

Folklore	Pop
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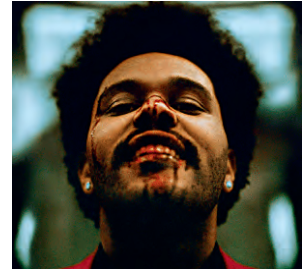
**WITH LOCKDOWN RELIEVING** her of the pressure to put out stadium bangers, Swift released not one but two intensely personal, almost folky albums in 2020. The first was this, *Folklore*, which saw her announce a change in direction by teaming up with Aaron Dessner of indie darlings The National, absorbing his influence and passing them through the Swift prism. The result is a low-key, downtempo, ballad-driven set which is at once unmistakably Taylor Swift and yet also a complete departure from her previous work. Highlights include lead single *Cardigan* and *The Last Great American Dynasty*, on which she writes movingly about the previous owner of her house. She followed *Folklore* up in December with *Evermore*, her ninth album. If you thought you knew Taylor Swift, think again.



**Olivia Rodrigo** !

SOUR	Pop
------	-----

If the kind of experimental, edgy but heartfelt pop made by the likes of Billie Eilish and Phoebe Bridgers is your bag then here's your new favourite artist. One listen to opening track *Brutal* and you'll be convinced. See p73



**The Weeknd** !

After Hours	Pop
-------------	-----

Inspired by movies such as *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* and *Uncut Gems*, and exploring themes that include self-loathing, this fourth album from The Weeknd still pushes pop and dance music in new directions.



**St Vincent**

Daddy's Home	Pop
--------------	-----

Annie Erin Clark is back and still effortlessly putting out leftfield but oh-so-very-accessible records that mix art and unabashed pop, and, quite frankly, leave the competition choking in her dust.



**Jessie Ware**

What's Your Pleasure?	Pop
-----------------------	-----

Mercury-nominated, pop-driven, soulful and occasionally danceable, Ware might well be the missing link between Adele, Disclosure and Sade. Her fourth album proves you can be hip and melt hearts at the same time.

A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF

**Years & Years**



**January** The band's frontman Olly Alexander's epic 2021 kicks off with a starring role in *It's a Sin*, a drama series about gay friends in the Aids crisis in the 1980s. Universal praise ensues. **April** The band releases single *Starstruck*. A remix features none other than Kylie - that's the camp-classic stamp of approval right there. **May** Alexander and Elton John perform the Pet Shop Boys' synthpop epic *It's a Sin* at the BRIT Awards. Dancing on Sir Elton's grand piano with a glittery crop top and flares = show definitively stolen. **July** Alexander becomes 7/2 bookie's fave to be the next Doctor Who. How will he have the time? Lord.

🔊 Listen to Palo Santo

WORDS: ANDREW HOLMES, EIAN FERGUSON  
PHOTOS: BETH GARABRANT, GETTY IMAGES, ALEXANDRA WALESPI

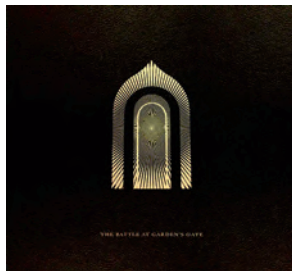
GREAT GROUPS



**The Struts** !

Strange Days	Rock
--------------	------

Fuelled by disparate influences from Queen to Michael Jackson and The Strokes, and buoyed by frankly terrific live reports, Derby band The Struts have come a long way, baby. This is their third album.



**Greta Van Fleet**

The Battle at Garden's Gate	Rock
-----------------------------	------

Not a person called Greta, but an actual band. What's more, a band who really like Led Zeppelin, as this second album – the follow-up to 2018's *Anthem of the Peaceful Army* – loudly demonstrates.



**London Grammar** ♥ !

Californian Soil	Pop
------------------	-----

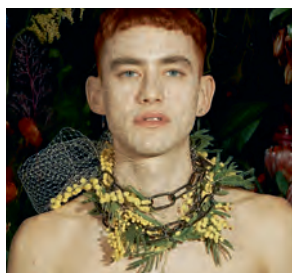
**LONDON GRAMMAR'S FIRST** album in 2013 introduced the world to their achingly beautiful post-trip hop sound, winning critical plaudits and commercial success in equal measure, with most of the praise being reserved for Hannah Reid's otherworldly voice. They take the "if it ain't broke don't fix it" approach so there's been no change in direction since, though Reid's lyrical concerns have evolved. On this third she addresses feminist concerns, in particular the price of success as a woman. "This record is about gaining possession of my own life," she says. "You imagine success will be amazing. Then you see it from the inside and ask, 'Why am I not controlling this thing? Why am I not allowed to be in control of it?'" Features stand-out singles *Baby It's You*, *Lose Your Head*, *How Does It Feel* – and the title track.



**Haim**

Women in Music Pt III	Pop
-----------------------	-----

There isn't a soul on the planet who doesn't think that Haim (rhymes with "time") aren't the best all-female group since, oh, Sleater-Kinney. As ever, they're doing the intelligent pop-rock biz on album number three.



**Years & Years**

Palo Santo	Pop
------------	-----

The British band's second album is a beautiful jumble of playful bangers, religious references and darker tracks, all exploring queer love, sex and relationships. *Read about Oilly's year (and what a year!) opposite*

PLAYLISTS

**Destinations: China** 

If you either want to catch up on or discover what's currently ruling the pop charts in mainland China, this 90-minute playlist has the lowdown on the best in C-pop. Includes the likes of Andrew Tan, Dian Deng and Waa Wei.



**Destinations: India** 

AR Rahman deservedly dominates this two-hour playlist showcasing the best in Indian music, but delve a little deeper and you'll find a real diversity of talent on here. For a primer in the local music scene you need look no further.



**Destinations: Pakistan** 

Pakistan never sounded so good as on this 90-minute playlist showcasing a rich seam of talent including Ghulam Ali, Alamgir and loads more. From established megastars to emerging new talent, it's all here.



virgin atlantic 

# Swap 9-5 for island vibes

The Caribbean, Virgin Atlantic style



# CREDITS.

Virgin Atlantic news and views

**Y**ou might think that having cabin crew onboard a cargo-only flight is a strange requirement. You can't serve a drink to a freight pallet. But when Virgin Atlantic launched our first-ever cargo-only flights, Andrea Burton was one of the cabin crew rostered to operate these duties.

"As cabin crew on a cargo flight I'm required to carry out a firewatch every 20 minutes, which includes a full check of the aircraft," she explains. "Having no customers was a unique experience. On a commercial flight, you're investing time and attention into your guests. You're an entertainer, a host, a therapist, a first aider, everything. Safety is always a priority but these flights added more responsibility to my role as I was the only crew member onboard the plane."

Andrea's first cargo trip was in July 2020, flying from London to Chicago and back. "We were on a 787 aircraft. We carried loads of pallets in the cargo hold on the way out and even more in the actual cabin on the way back."

This new facet of our business model proved lucrative in a time of financial strain. Our planes



## PRECIOUS CARGO

When the pandemic hit, we adapted by launching cargo-only flights. Cabin crew **Andrea Burton** tells us what it's like onboard

Cargo-only flights allowed Andrea Burton to get back in the cabin during the Covid-19 pandemic

were – and still are – transporting everything from salmon to vital medical supplies. "We're not a cargo airline but, in true innovative Virgin Atlantic style, we adapted. We knew we needed to fly outside of the box in order to survive," she adds.

Andrea went on to do around 21 cargo-to-cargo flights. But, as someone who's been at Virgin Atlantic for 19 years, 14 of which have been as cabin crew, didn't she miss passengers? "I missed sharing stories, I missed hearing about customers' travel plans, I missed recommending places to visit at the end destination. At times I was a bit lonely – but I soon found ways to amuse myself. I'd blog about the journey; I'd charge my crystal by the Moon; I'd buy cookie dough from Target in Chicago and bake cookies on the way home to go with my freshly brewed coffee," Andrea says.

"Nevertheless, it was just amazing and humbling to be back on a plane. Prior to the pandemic, landing in London felt like home. But when I was flying on a cargo flight during the pandemic, looking out the window and seeing miles and miles of clouds and blue sky really felt like home too."



# WHO YOU GONNA CALL?

The Operations Control Centre, apparently. From rerouting aircraft due to bad weather to finding replacement parts for planes, its teams are constantly on standby to solve any problems

**W**hen you're on a flight, you tend to pay attention to what's around you: what movies are on the entertainment system, which snack you want from the service trolley, how you can sneak past the person sleeping next to you to get to the loo. But have you ever stopped to think about who's on the ground supporting your flight and helping you to arrive smoothly at your destination?

Our Operations Control Centre (OCC) is to thank. More than 100 people work in teams of about 20 people to cover the operation 24/7, 365 days a year. "They're all equally important," says Jon Hilton, who's been a duty director at Virgin for six and a half years. "If we didn't have the engineering team then we couldn't run; if we didn't have somebody in Network Operations to organise our slots then we couldn't operate; if we didn't have the Crewing Team replacing sick cabin crew then we wouldn't be able to leave the ground. The OCC looks after all the critical functions of the airline and each team serves an important purpose." Here, Jon talks us through the teams that make up the OCC and their roles.

account for every minute with a delay code so we can keep track of the cause. The other is the overall safety of the flight. They monitor and communicate with flights via a satcom phone and messaging system."

## **Crewing Team**

"They're responsible for crewing the flight. This can be a difficult task as they have to replace sick or delayed crew and check those who stand in are legally able to."

## **Customer Care**

"They are the voice of our customers in the OCC. If there are delays, they ensure we adhere to regulations and that the necessary care is provided, from missed connections and lost baggage to sorting out hotel rooms."

## **Flight Planning**

"As you can probably guess, this team plans the flight routing. They take weather patterns and winds into account, choosing suitable flight tracks for a smooth and efficient flight."

## **Duty Directors**

"There are five of us responsible for overseeing the whole live operation, taking information from the different subject matter experts within the OCC and making the final decisions on what needs to happen. I think of myself as the conductor of a fine orchestra. I don't know how to play all the instruments, but I can bring all these musicians together for a perfect performance."

## **Network Operations**

"This team has two principal roles. One is to ensure our aircraft depart on time. If this doesn't happen, they must

## **Engineering**

"This team is split into three sections. There's **Maintrol**, responsible for monitoring our aircraft and the data they send during flight and providing troubleshooting guidance to our ground engineers. **Maintenance Planning** looks for opportunities to fit planned or unplanned maintenance work into the schedule, while **Aircraft on the Ground** is responsible for getting the necessary parts to where they're needed if an airplane breaks."

# A PROBLEM SHARED...

Our mental health first-aid programme means there's always someone close by to talk to

**AS A FORMER** nurse turned senior manager of crew experience, Steve Sneddon was very interested when two crew members told him about a mental health first-aid programme they'd attended. Having dealt with mental health issues himself and within his own family, Steve was only too aware that this is a problem that can fly under the radar, with devastating consequences.

For this reason, he and his manager booked onto the two-day course. It gives people the skills to support colleagues experiencing mental health issues. The focus is on identifying warning signs and learning where to help people find the right help.

The pair saw the value in bringing mental health first aiders into our crew community and called for volunteers to train. They were overwhelmed with the response. "We took over 400 of our cabin crew through the two-day programme and gave onboard managers and supervisors a half-day familiarisation session too." That's a significant investment in time, but well worth it with one in five of our crew community now trained in mental health first aid.

Although the scheme started as a cabin crew peer support group, it quickly grew into a company-wide programme with first aiders in all departments. At the time, Covid-19 wasn't on anybody's radar but



**The course gives people the confidence and skills to support colleagues who are experiencing mental health issues**

Empathy is what makes a good mental health first aider, according to crew manager Steve Sneddon

it would go on to have a massive impact not only on people's physical health but their mental health too. "With the pandemic impacting the company and people's jobs, the management team were having weekly calls with the mental health first aiders to offer each other support and talk about the key themes they were dealing with," Steve says. "It also gave the leadership team an insight into the key anxieties, allowing us to target and support them."

 Practise meditation and mindfulness with Headspace



## WHY I LOVE MY JOB

**For Justin Ho, it's the people who make the job:**

"I love travel and I love meeting new people – the two are combined in my role as customer service master trainer (and prior to that as cabin crew and a service trainer). I'm in charge of customer service training on the ground and in the air. I love inspiring future cabin crew and feeling like I'm having an impact on their lives and careers.

"I have so many career highlights. Being cabin crew opens doors for you to explore the world. It's amazing that you can travel just a few hours and be somewhere so culturally different. The main thing I remember from my career, though, are the people. Not just customers but also crew. At our peak we had nearly 4,500 cabin crew and we'd usually fly with a different group of people every time. Even though we'd usually only meet an hour before the flight

at crew check-in, we'd soon be great friends.

"I've worked at Virgin for 18 years because of its culture. It's continued even through recent tough times. For instance, our VALUED (Virgin Atlantic Loves Unity and Ethnic Diversity) network, of which I'm a committee member, was set up in November 2020 to champion diversity and inclusion in the business. The company has really engaged with us and, due to that, we've already achieved so much."

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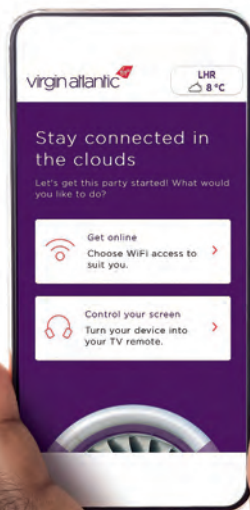
Now you can post selfies, binge-read your favourite e-book, brag about your hols to your mates, or even catch up on some work while flying above 10,000ft with Virgin Atlantic

## How to connect

- 1 Turn on your WiFi-enabled device and connect to the "Virgin-Atlantic" WiFi network.
- 2 If you don't automatically connect to the WiFi portal, don't worry. Just take a look at the safety card in your seat pocket to see what type of aircraft you're on.

If you're onboard...

- A787-9, A330-200 or A350-1000, open your browser and navigate to **virgin-atlantic-wifi.com**
  - An A330-300, open your browser and navigate to **airborne.gogonflight.com**
- 3 Just follow the onscreen instructions to buy a session, and then get browsing!

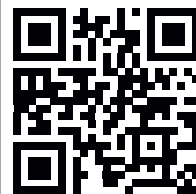


## Shout about it

Tweet or take a pic with #LiveFromVirgin and let the world know you're connected above the clouds.

## Making the most of your data

Remember to switch off your device's automatic app updates and synchronisations. That way you can avoid using up your data on the boring background stuff while you're busy browsing, tweeting and sharing.



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**M**any young people around the world aspire to careers in aviation. The aviation industry provides a total of 87.7 million jobs worldwide<sup>1</sup> and contributes more than US\$686bn<sup>2</sup> to the global economy every year. We all deserve the chance to turn our dreams into reality. But, sadly, some young people still face much greater barriers to realising their dreams than others.

At Virgin Atlantic, we aim to deliver a real difference, invest in the hearts and minds of young people, and use our business as a force for good by making careers in aviation and STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) more accessible. To make a change for good, we must bridge the gender gap and the social mobility gap, offering opportunities to all.

That's why we're pioneering our Passport to Change programme. It's a first-of-a-kind global programme that will see more than 350 disadvantaged 12- to 15-year-olds enjoy 12,000 hours of dedicated learning time with our airline, and bring STEM engagement to young refugees.

We are proud that the young people participating represent the diversity of the communities that we serve. Over their year-long journey with us, our young people will gain first-hand insights into how airports work, meet

experts from every department at Virgin Atlantic, and build their confidence and skills, working closely with our volunteer mentors.

During this unique learning experience, we aim to inspire all these young people to raise their aspirations to the skies.

Your donation to the Virgin Atlantic Foundation helps us deliver life-changing opportunities for young people and make their dreams come true. Thank you for your support.



Passport  
to Change



SPEAKERS  
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UNHCR  
The UN Refugee Agency  
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

**“Passport to Change is opening up opportunities for me to fulfil my dream of becoming a pilot. I am excited for a future in taking everyone to the skies and connecting the world”**

**Ayanna, 13,  
Luther J Price Middle  
School, Atlanta, Georgia**





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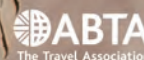
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