OURPLACENews

The monthly magazine dedicated to help everyone over 50 get the best out of life!

FEBRUARY 2022

Inside this issue...

Flight of fancy:

The home inspired by an aircraft fuselage

43 best free days out!

From light festivals in London to fossil-hunting in the Isle of Wight

'I'm following a dream giving people my soul food':

The global restaurants bringing life to British streets

Happiness is accessible to us all:

10 steps to living a more contented life, according to an expert

PLUS...

What's on • Health & Beauty • Money & Work • Leisure & Travel Food & Drink • Arts, Crafts & Hobbies • Home & Garden

Welcome

Welcome to Our Place - The monthly magazine dedicated to help everyone over 50 get the best out of life!

Every month, we bring you news and features on; Health & Beauty, Money & Work, Leisure & Travel, Food & Drink, Arts, Crafts & Hobbies, Home & Garden, plus... our Charity of the Month!

Our Place was founded with a mission to connect the mature online community to a world of news, features, offers and life changing products they may have missed out on. Bring them all into one place, Our Place.

What makes us special is that we are a vibrant team of all ages, from 21 to 65 who are all passionate about living life to the fullest irrespective of age. We have built strong relationships with some of the best UK age related businesses with the aim of brokering discounted rates for our Over-50s community.

Become a Friend of Our Place and receive our exclusive newsletters. They are a great way of keeping updated with the latest news and promotions. We aim to bring a smile to your face every time you open your inbox by selecting exclusive vouchers and discounts just for you.

We welcome you and hope you enjoy Our Place.

The Editor - Our Place

PS. Do you have an interesting story or article? If so, send us an email by visiting: www.ourplace.co

CONTENTS

What's On	3
Health & Lifestyle Feature	
10 steps to living a more contented life	4-5
Health & Environment News	6-7
Leisure & Travel Feature	
43 best free days out!	8-13
Food & Drink Feature	
The global restaurants bringing life to streets	14-21
Home & Garden Feature	
The home inspired by an aircraft fuselage	22-23
Our Charity of the Month	24

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Chinese New Year 2022

1st February 2022

Chinatown / West End / Trafalgar Square

Celebrate Chinese New Year in London on 10 February during the free annual event across Chinatown and the West End, marking the Year of the Pig. Enjoy a colourful Chinese New Year parade, lion dances in Chinatown London, delicious Chinese street food, and free entertainment and stage performances in Trafalgar Square.

Every year, hundreds of thousands of people descend on the West End to enjoy a colourful parade, free stage performances and traditional Chinese food, and to wish each other "Xin Nian Kuai Le" (Happy New Year in Mandarin) or "San Nin Faai Lok" (in Cantonese).

Chinese New Year 2022 in London event programme

Chinese New Year Parade:

Watch colourful floats and more than 50 teams take part in the vibrant Chinese New Year parade, which usually kicks off with dragon and lion dances and handcrafted floats in Charing Cross Road, before snaking its way through Shaftesbury Avenue in Chinatown.

Trafalgar Square:

The fun in Trafalgar Square often begins with screen shows and a thanksgiving ceremony, followed by firecrackers, speeches and the Lions' Eye-Dotting Ceremony.

Experience traditional dragon and flying lion dances, ahead of fun-filled stage performances including Chinese dance and music shows, acrobatics, Chinese rock hits, interactive dance sessions and an exciting line-up of artists from China.

If you're feeling peckish, experience a taste of the Far East with street food dishes from the stalls lining the square throughout the celebrations.

The finale gets underway with a variety of showstopper performances and a spectacular pyrotechnic display, which lights up Trafalgar Square to mark the end of the Year of the Tiger festivities.

West End stages:

The London Chinese New Year fun continues across the West End with special performances, workshops and activities.

Spot up-and-coming British-Chinese artists and Chinese Spectrum radio on stage at the talent and community zone at Charing Cross Road.

Take the kids to the family and children's zone in Leicester Square for cultural activities and family-friendly entertainment. See thrilling martial art performances, including tai chi chuan and taekwondo, in the martial arts and cultural zone at Shaftesbury Avenue.

Chinatown:

Head to Chinatown, where you'll be able to get up close to lion dances and take selfies with Chinese zodiac animals. And sit down for a traditional Chinese New Year meal and festive treats in one of Chinatown's restaurants.

Van Gogh Self-Portraits

3rd February to 8th May 2022

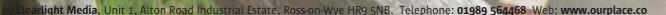
Courtauld Gallery, Somerset House, London



Self-Portraits takes as its springboard Van Gogh's iconic Self-Portrait with Bandaged Ear, one of the most celebrated works in The Courtauld's collection, and will bring together around half of the self-portraits Van Gogh created during his short years as a painter.

This will be the first time that the full span of Van Gogh's selfportraiture has been explored in an exhibition. Several works in the exhibition were last together in Van Gogh's studio and have never been reunited, until now.

An outstanding selection of 16 self-portraits will be brought together to trace the evolution of Van Gogh's self representation, from his early Self-Portrait with a Dark Felt Hat, created in 1886 during his formative period in Paris, to Self-Portrait with a Palette, painted at the asylum in Saint-Rémy-de-Provence in September 1889, one of his last self-portraits before his death in 1890. The myth of Van Gogh today is linked as much to his extraordinary life as it is to his stunning paintings. This exhibition will allow both aspects to be explored.





Happiness is accessible to us all: 10 steps to living a more contented life, according to an expert

Everyday joy is within the grasp of each and every one of us, according to Action for Happiness's Vanessa King.

Happiness is accessible to us all. But in these uncertain times, it is easy to forget how to find joy in our lives. As Vanessa King, of Action for Happiness and author of 10 Keys to Happier Living, explains: "As a species, we don't like uncertainty - having a sense of control in our lives is a core psychological need."

However, she adds: "Being happy isn't about bouncing around on cloud nine all of the time. It's about looking out for things that give us a sense of meaning, purpose and connection, and finding little moments of happiness every day."

Play the long game

We are surrounded by images on social media of people living incredibly glamorous lives and it is natural to want that for ourselves. We might get an instant buzz from buying a pair of shoes, but the high is short-lived.

It's what's called the hedonic treadmill and relates to our tendency to pursue one pleasure after another. Instead, ask yourself what you can do to bolster your resilience and feel happier day-to-day. A lot of research shows us that small things such as a daily walk, done regularly, will do just that.

Build strong connections

The number-one thing that makes us happy is human connection. Having people you trust to share the good and bad times makes us happier, healthier and live longer.

Close relationships provide love, meaning and support, and increase our feelings of self-worth, while broader networks (colleagues, neighbours, teams) give us a sense of belonging. Prioritise shared activities, talking to loved ones, giving/receiving support and nurturing connections.



Health & Lifestyle Feature

Help other people

Helping others is not only good for them, it makes us feel happier and healthier too. Helping activates the reward centre in our brain and I like to think of it as social glue: if you help somebody, they are more likely to help somebody else and that creates stronger, kinder communities and a happier society for everyone. It's the perfect ripple effect.

Take a phone break

Our mobile phones are designed to be addictive. Ask yourself whether you are controlling your phone or your phone is controlling you. Also think about how you are using it. If you're on social media to connect with people who matter to you, or to read about people doing amazing things, that's great. But mindlessly doom-scrolling isn't so good. How can you better spend your time? Learning exposes us to new ideas and helps us to stay curious and engaged. Put your phone down to join a club, learn to sing or take up a new sport.

Get moving

Moving our bodies regularly is important to our overall wellbeing, especially at this dreary time of year. Our body and our mind are connected and moving our bodies is very good for our brains. This doesn't mean you need to do a 10k run or spend hours in the gym. If you sit for six or seven hours at a desk, you will feel more depressed and lethargic. So stand up, stretch, go for a walk or do some yoga and feel your mood improve.

Set a sleep schedule

Our bodies do necessary maintenance work while we sleep, such as consolidating memories and banking learning. We are much more likely to feel down when we are sleep-deprived. Set a bedtime alarm an hour before you want to go to bed. Wind down by turning off the TV and devices, and light candles or run a bath. Invest in an alarm clock and leave your phone in the kitchen. Try going to bed an hour earlier two nights a week.

Be nicer to yourself

Our bodies do necessary maintenance work while we sleep, such as consolidating memories and banking learning. We are much more likely to feel down when we are sleep-deprived. Set a bedtime alarm an hour before you want to go to bed. Wind down by turning off the TV and devices, and light candles or run a bath. Invest in an alarm clock and leave your phone in the kitchen. Try going to bed an hour earlier two nights a week.

A big mistake we all make is to treat our thoughts as facts. I often ask people: if a friend messes up, how would you talk to them? Now, how would you talk to yourself in the same situation? People are much tougher on themselves, and this negative dialogue runs through the brain all day.

This triggers the threat system in our more primitive emotional brain to say we are in danger. Remind yourself that people make mistakes. Turn your inner critic into a coach who will guide you in a compassionate, constructive way.

Go outside

Every cell in our body has a biological clock set by daylight. Getting a dose of daylight every day is particularly important if you struggle to sleep, because your body regulates itself during daylight hours.

It gets dark early in January, but even on a dull, grey day, your body will get the light and vitamin D it craves to function smoothly. Make it fun and engaging. Listen to an audiobook or podcast or meet up with a friend.



It's OK to feel sad

Dr Chris Johnstone, an author and trainer for resilience, talks about "active coping". This involves first acknowledging how you feel. Whether you are angry or sad, paying attention to that feeling reduces its power over you.

This comes from what's called "acceptance and commitment therapy", which is about noticing emotions, not trying to suppress them. Acknowledge the feeling, then do something that will make you feel better.

Live mindfully

The evidence around mindfulness is really strong. You can start practising mindfulness today via an app and in doing so you will be learning to take more control over where you are placing your attention - it could be your walk to work, the way you eat or your relationships.

Mindfulness is openly experiencing what is already there. It helps us to tune in to our feelings and stops us from dwelling on the past or worrying about the future. It is an ancient tool that is very good for our current times.

(Article source: Inews)

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Health & Environment News

Cargo without carbon: the rise and rise of e-bike deliveries

Demand for electric cargo bike couriers has boomed since first lockdown, bringing the hope of cleaner, quieter, safer streets.



The Guardian reports that would you like your groceries delivered without a side order of traffic congestion? Boilers, books and beauty products dropped off without a roar of diesel? Or even take a taxi ride without the carbon emissions?

Since the first lockdown, increasing numbers of companies have started delivering their products - and passengers - on electric cargo bikes. According to a new directory, there are now almost 450 independent businesses and tradespeople across the UK transforming the sight, sound and smell of our cities and towns by delivering goods to customers using nothing but electricity and pedal-power.

"Over the course of the pandemic, the rise of businesses using ecargo bikes for deliveries has been breathtaking," said Helena Downey, the founder of the Bought by Bike directory. "The rise is so dramatic that this could become mainstream."

Like many other cargo bike delivery services, The Grace Network's The Bike Drop in Stroud was set up in the early days of the pandemic to help businesses struggling to reach customers.

"There was immediate interest as soon as we opened from both companies and customers: companies wanted to choose the greener option for deliveries while customers loved having their shopping delivered by bike - and we all love having cleaner, quieter, safer streets," said Harry McKeown, the managing director of The Bike Drop.

During the first month of lockdown, the grocery sector alone saw a 91% increase in home deliveries more generally. And McKeown said demand for their bike delivery services started high and had continued to climb.

"Business grew quickly: we soon had 13 employees delivering items for 36 local businesses," said McKeown. "We now have a fleet of electric bikes that have, in total, made over 6,500 individual pickups and deliveries for local businesses, cycled over 10,000 kilometres and saved over 2,300kg of CO2.

"During the pandemic, we delivered takeaway beer bladders for pubs, as well as deliveries for restaurants and pizzerias, local food co-ops, bakeries, florists, independent cosmetics producers and music shops, bookshops, other social enterprises and local publications. We're now expanding in all directions: we even offer an eco-post service and have delivered over 2,500 letters for Stroud district council."

E-cargo bikes have a host of advantages over vehicles: they can move more quickly through the city streets, meaning they are able to deliver packages 60% faster than their van equivalents. They're cleaner - saving about 90% in carbon emissions - quieter, and cut congestion, as a cargo bike uses a fraction of the road space of a typical delivery van.

Pedal Me, which transports not just packages but people around central London, has seen business double since the pandemic began. **Velocious**, a Bristol-based bike courier business, has also found demand for the delivery of everything from sensitive documents to groceries increase dramatically since lockdown.

Zedify, another cargo bike delivery service, had so much business during lockdown that it set up 10 mini-hubs on brownfield sites outside cities to make thousands of zero-emission deliveries into each city every day. "Everyone's a winner," said Zedify's Rob King. "Our hubs mean that instead of loads of vans driving into the city each day, you've got a handful of bikes zipping around."

There's also a growing number of electric cargo bikes covering remote areas: **Cargodale** started delivering orders during lockdown from local businesses to customers in the dales of West Yorkshire and has seen business boom.

Cargodale's co-founder Beate Kubitz said: "I live in a rural area and when lockdown happened and home deliveries increased, I saw cavalcades of vans coming down my little lane, destroying the delicate countryside roads and polluting our air. I couldn't believe there wasn't an alternative."

Kubitz and some of her mountain-biker friends hired a cargo bike for a month and experimented with making local deliveries. "The interest from businesses and customers was immediate and strong," she said.

Cargodale now has a team of 15 riders covering 30 square miles and delivering for up to 100 local businesses. "We've had requests for advice from across the UK," said Kubitz. "This really could be the start of something wonderful."

(Story source: The Guardian)

Do you have an interesting story or article?

If so, send us an email by visiting:

www.ourplace.co



Health & Environment News

Roger Black on why keeping things simple at 55 and above is the key to fitness

These days, slow and steady is what wins the race - and he's very happy with that.



Silver Surfers reports that after representing Great Britain for 14 years as an athlete, racking up 15 major championship wins including three Olympic medals along the way, Roger Black knows what it takes to push his body to its limits. Running is now so much more than winning medals.

"I do think less is more," says Black, 55. "A little bit every day is far better than getting so pumped up at the gym that you can't walk in the morning. My message is always just do a little bit every day, let your body adjust, build it up - and just pat yourself on the back for that. It's about the accumulation over time with fitness, sticking with it"

Hampshire-born Black, who competed as an individual 400m runner and in the men's 4x400m relay, retired at the end of the Nineties. The adjustment can be notoriously difficult for pro athletes and sportspeople when the intense regimes and targets they've built their lives around for years suddenly fall away. Black is grateful that for him it "was fine". "The day I retired, the drive and desire to set new physical challenges disappeared. A lot of former professional athletes keep that level up, because they love that adrenalin rush. I don't have that. I'm not somebody who needs to take on a big physical challenge." Instead, he seized the opportunity to do things he hadn't been able to while competing, like tennis, skiing and playing lots of football ("I wasn't able to play when I was an athlete because I just couldn't risk it") as well as TV appearances, motivational speaking and launching his home fitness equipment brand.

Black, who is married to Jules and lives in Guildford, Surrey, did eventually get back into running - but we're talking a half-hour "gentle jog" after dropping his twin sons, now 16, off at school. "Obviously like any parent, it's all based around the kids and work," quips Black, who also has a 21-year-old daughter. Often, he'll jog in the woods near their home: "I don't run on the roads anymore," Black notes, admitting his knees aren't what they used to be.

It might be a far cry from his championship days, but movement is still a key part of his life, while "just getting outside" boosts his mental wellbeing. "I need to get my heart rate up," he says. "If I don't manage to do that for a couple of days, I notice it. When I was an athlete, it was all about trying to run faster, but now it's more mental than physical for me."

That said, he has always been aware that we can't "take our health for granted". At age 11, Black was diagnosed with a congenital heart condition ("I was born with a leaky heart valve"), which meant annual check-ups, always with a question mark over whether he'd be told to stop running. Thankfully in his case, it didn't cause major problems or halt his career – but it has given him a deep appreciation for respecting his body. Black also credits it for helping him adjust to retirement.

"I think a part of that is probably, subconsciously, I've always had my heart condition. It's a weird thing - it was always there and it didn't stop me - but I think when I stopped [competing], a part of me said, 'You just need to respect that now'," he explains. "Exercise now is as important to me as it was when I was an athlete but for completely different reasons. It's not about winning medals, it's about staying healthy."

This ethos runs through his business, Roger Black Fitness, too. The range, which specialises in exercise bikes, treadmills, rowers and cross trainers, was first sold through Argos from 2006. But last year, Black launched the brand's own online shop and decided to embrace a more hands-on approach, managing it himself. He's relished the opportunity to connect with customers, many of whom are in their 40s, 50s, 60s and above.

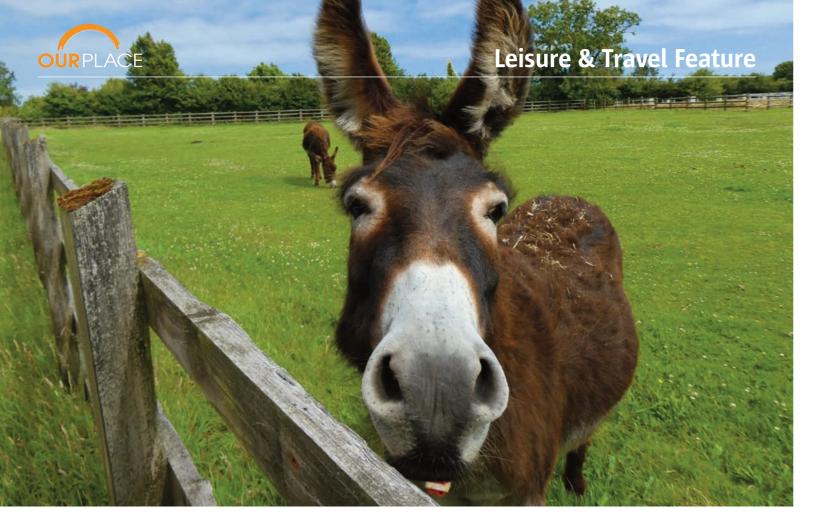
"We had an enquiry the other day from an 80-year-old lady - and this is the bit of the business that I love - saying, 'I'm looking at your treadmill but I'm 80 and I'll need to put it away after using it and I don't know if I'm too old to do that'. So I just did a little video and showed her what it takes [to fold and put away the treadmill] and gave her the option to choose whether it was too heavy for her. I love that we can answer those questions directly," Black enthuses.

One of his aims is to help make exercise more accessible - and less intimidating - for all age groups, particularly the more mature end of the market. The industry is constantly evolving with new trends and class formats, but sometimes, isn't there a lot to be said for keeping things simple?

"100 per cent," Black agrees. "I like to use the phrase 'moving' rather than 'fitness'. If we really have to nail down what we're encouraging people to do, it's to move. Whether we're choosing to walk somewhere or get in the car, to take the stairs or get in the lift - it's those little life choices we make.

"And the thing with exercise is, well it's the case for me anyway, it only really works when it's a habit and becomes part of your daily routine. So, we take the kids to school then go for a run. A lot of people buy a folding bike and then while they're watching EastEnders, they'll ride the bike. I think that is one of the big secrets... We're trying to keep it simple and effective."

(Story source: Silver Surfers)



43 best free days out! From light festivals in London to fossil-hunting in the Isle of Wight

From light parades to dinosaur hunts, an 80s experience and an adventure with the Very Hungry Caterpillar.

LONDON

Light Festival at Battersea Power Station, Battersea

The newly public riverside area in front of the former power station is playing host to six illuminated installations until the end of February. From a post-apocalyptic sunset to a huge tiger-shaped lantern and a fluorescent greenhouse, it's sure to brighten up those dark winter evenings.

To 27 Feb, batterseapowerstation.co.uk

Science Museum, Kensington

Fuel your imagination with award-winning exhibitions and stories of incredible scientific achievement, including space exploration, robots and astronomy. There is also currently an exhibition about the wisdom of the ancient Greeks.

Treasures at the British Library, King's Cross

Marvel at Shakespeare's First Folio and Jane Austen's writing desk in the "Treasures" exhibition, admire sculptures by Antony Gormley and Eduardo Paolozzi in the piazza, or enjoy a coffee and pick up your next read at the café and bookshop.

bl.uk



Leisure & Travel Feature

Imagine Children's Festival, South Bank

This arts and culture festival boasts musical workshops, activity trails, slumber stories, dance classes and even a pop-up children's library.

9-20 Feb., southbankcentre.co.uk

City Farm, Spitalfields

Started in 1978 on the site of a former railway goods depot, this urban oasis is home to donkeys, goats, pigs and Peanut the ferret. There is also an farm shop and tea house.

10am-4pm, Tues-Sun, spitalfieldscityfarm.org

Play time, Brockwell

With an aerial slide, massive sandpit and sections for different age groups, the playground in Brockwell Park is bundles of fun. Nearby there are also duck ponds, a basketball court, and plenty of walking routes.

7.30am-sunset, beta.lambeth.gov.uk/parks/brockwell-park

SOUTH

Fossil hunting, Isle of Wight

The Isle of Wight is home to more dinosaur remains than anywhere else in northern Europe. Explore the island's beautiful beaches in search of dinosaur footprints and fossils. You can also follow the "Dinosaur Trail", which stretches for 20 miles from Yaverland in the east to Compton Bay in the west.



visitisleofwight.co.uk/things-to-do/attractions/dinosaurs-andfossils

Maritime history at Poole Museum, Dorset

Set in a Victorian quayside warehouse, the museum contains an extensive collection of objects and art that tell the story of the historic maritime town.

10am-4pm Mon-Sat, 12pm-4pm Sun, poolemuseum.org.uk

Soak up the atmosphere at Boscombe Market, Dorset

With an ever-changing range of stalls - from fresh fish and meat to clothing and cakes - the open-air Boscombe Market in Bournemouth's pedestrian precinct is a lovely place to spend a few hours. And there are antique stores and retro shops just around the corner to browse.

10am-5pm, Thurs & Sat, bournemouth.co.uk/whatson/boscombe-market

Enjoy the views at Seaford Head, East Sussex

Located on the coast between Brighton and Eastbourne, Seaford Head is the best spot to enjoy views of the breathtaking Seven Sisters chalk sea cliffs. Continue on a circular walk around the nature reserve to see rare species of plants, birds and insects.

sussexwildlifetrust.org.uk/visit/seaford-head

SOUTH-WEST

The Donkey Sanctuary, Devon (pictured top left)

Meet the hundreds of rescue donkeys and mules living at this delightful, award-winning sanctuary in Sidmouth. There are also activities, walking trails and talks. Friendly dogs on leads are welcome

9am-4.30pm, thedonkeysanctuary.org.uk

Exeter Green Circle walk, Devon

This 12-mile walking route has something for everyone, taking in city pavements and country footpaths, historical buildings and green nature reserves. If you don't want to tackle it all at once, the route can also be split into five shorter sections.

exeter.gov.uk/leisure-and-culture/walking-in-exeter/exetergreen-circle-walks/overview

Hop across to St Michael's Mount, Cornwall

This is a fantastic way to lose a morning. Although there is a fee to explore the castle and gardens, crossing the causeway and wandering the harbour front is free. Start the day at Marazion's sandy beach, then walk across the causeway when the tide is low enough before grabbing a coffee and heading back.

Continued on pages 10-11...

8



SOUTH-EAST

Follow The Very Hungry Caterpillar trail, Kent

Walk around the Bluewater Nature Trail while experiencing the classic Eric Carle story in a new way. Dotted along the trail you will find signposts with illustrations from the book and QR codes, which, when scanned, play audio recordings. There is also an apple sculpture inspired by the picture book and a spider climbing frame.

bluewater.co.uk/bluewater-nature-trail

Hike through Ashdown Forest, East Sussex

Once a Norman deer hunting forest, Ashdown Forest is also the birthplace of one of the most famous bears in the world - Winniethe-Pooh. Lying in the heart of the High Weald Area of Outstanding National Beauty, the forest is perfect for a hike with plenty of walking routes, and you can play Pooh sticks from the bridge made famous by AA Milne.



WEST

Forest of Dean Sculpture Trail, Gloucestershire (pictured above)

The series of world-class, contemporary sculptures, spread out among the trees, celebrates all things nature. The 3.5-mile path begins at Beechenhurst Lodge, which also has a playground for children. Maps are available to download for free so you don't lose your way.

forestofdean-sculpture.org.uk

Get locked up, Cotswolds

Housed in a Victorian police office and courtroom, Tetbury Police Museum offers an insight into the history of the Gloucestershire Constabulary. With a replica courtroom, memorabilia, and the original office and cells still intact, you'll find plenty to write home about.

11am-3pm, Weds & Fri, cotswolds.com/things-to-do/tetbury-police-museum-and-courtroom

Feed the ducks at Windmill Hill City Farm, Bristol

A little agricultural oasis tucked away in Bedminster, this city farm has a wide range of petting animals, farm trails, sculptures, play area, farm shop and café.

9am-5pm, windmillhillcityfarm.org.uk



Leisure & Travel Feature

EAST

Experience Love Light, Norfolk

With this year's festival themed around love and belonging, Norwich's landmarks are being transformed into artworks - including Cupid projected on the castle. Enjoy live street performances, parades featuring a light-up octopus, glow-bike rides and incredible shadow puppets taking over the marketplace.

5.30-10pm, 17-19 Feb, lovelightnorwich.co.uk

Lose a day at Holkham Estate, Norfolk

A 25,000-acre rural estate in North Norfolk, Holkham promises hours of fun. With historical buildings, peaceful parkland, forestry, a woodland play area, walled garden and plenty of wildlife, families can walk a variety of trails or relax by the lake with a picnic. Holkham also hosts monthly walking groups, covering Holkham park and beach.



10am-4pm, holkham.co.uk

MIDLANDS

Meet dinosaurs, Birmingham

Taking its name from the award-winning Birmingham geologist Charles Lapworth, the Lapworth Museum of Geology holds the finest and most extensive collections of fossils, minerals and rocks in the Midlands. from zoological specimens to stone axes, diamonds to dinosaur bones.

10am-5pm Mon to Fri, 12pm-5pm weekends, birmingham.ac.uk/facilities/lapworth-museum/index.aspx

Explore Wollaton Hall and Deer Park, Nottinghamshire

This Elizabethan mansion is not only home to Nottingham's Natural History Museum and the city's Industrial Museum, it also stood in as Wayne Manor in Christian Bale's Batman trilogy. Explore the museums, then head to the deer park.

9am-5pm, wollatonhall.org.uk

NORTH-WEST

Relive the 80s, Merseyside

Get ready to pull up your leg warmers and scramble your Rubik's Cubes, as the new exhibition "I Grew Up 80s" arrives at The Atkinson in Southpost. Explore 80s Britain through the innovations, fashions and music which defined the decade, as well as getting nostalgic over BMX bikes, Donkey Kong games, confectionery and Walkmans.

To 19 March, theatkinson.co.uk/exhibition/i-grew-up-80s

Explore the Science and Industry Museum, Manchester

Featuring fascinating machinery, wacky inventions and interactive experiments - do you have the strength to lift a Mini?, for example - and exhibits on some of Britain's most famous scientists.

10am-5pm, Weds-Sun, tickets must be booked in advance, scienceandindustrymuseum.org.uk

NORTH-EAST

Ride a railway, Yorkshire

With vast halls filled with giant locomotives, including the fastest steam locomotive in the world, a miniature railway you can ride, and the opportunity to build your own train, enthusiasts will be in heaven at York's Railway Museum.

10am-5pm, Weds-Sun, book in advance, railwaymuseum.org.uk

Streetlife Museum of Transport, East Riding

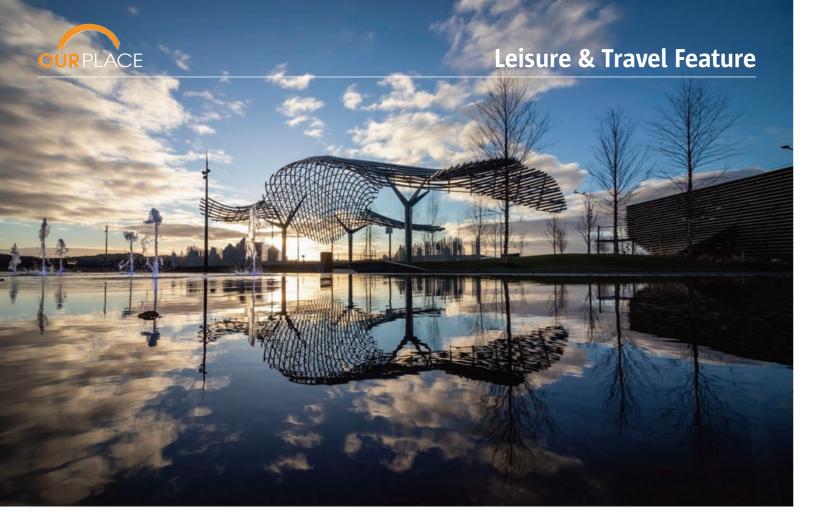
Experience 200 years of transport history in Hull as you walk down a 40s high street, board a tram or enjoy the pleasures of a horse-drawn carriage ride.

10am-4.30pm, 11am-4pm Sundays, hcandl.co.uk/museums-and-galleries/streetlife-museum/streetlife-museum

Tackle the Seven Bridges, Tyne & Wear

The best way to explore Newcastle's famous bridges is on foot. Start at Gateshead Millennium Bridge and then criss-cross over Tyne Bridge, Swing Bridge, High Level Bridge, Queen Elizabeth II Metro Bridge, King Edward VII Bridge and finally Redheugh Bridge to complete the set.

Continued on pages 12-13...



Get lost in a maze at The Discovery Museum. Tyne & Wear

At this science, technology and local history centre in Newcastle, visitors can enjoy exhibits on the Turbinia - once the fastest ship in the world - while the science maze is one of the most popular galleries, with a huge variety of interactive displays to navigate, including a shadow wall and air hockey table.

10am-4pm Mon-Fri, 11am-4pm weekends, discoverymuseum.org.uk

SCOTLAND

The Burrell Collection, Glasgow

Following a £68m refurbishment, The Burrell Collection is set to reopen in March. As home of the one of the world's greatest single, personal collections, there are more than 9,000 works of art to enjoy, including Chinese pottery and porcelain, a Persian garden carpet and paintings by Rodin, Degas and Cézanne.

burrellcollection.com

On the Waterfront, Dundee (pictured above)

Dundee's Waterfront area has recently enjoyed a £1bn development and now features a spectacular whale sculpture, which sits atop an interactive playpark, as well as an urban beach and water fountains, a maritime history walk and the V&A Dundee Museum (which is also free to enter).

dundeewaterfront.com

Spectra Festival of Light, Aberdeen

Join in Scotland's Year of Stories at this year's festival, which will use the city's buildings as canvases for epic light displays, including lines and images from Scottish prose and poetry. A visual feast.

10-13 Feb, 6.30-9.30. spectrafestival.co.uk

WALES

Follow the Alice in Wonderland Trail, Llandudno

The story goes that in the 1860s, Alice Liddell (the inspiration behind Lewis Carroll's Alice's Adventures in Wonderland) spent many summers in Llandudno. Today, you can follow the Alice Town Trail by to more than 50 statues and figures from Carroll's books, including the caterpillar, Cheshire cat and the white rabbit. Either pick up a paper map, download via the app or spot as you

alicetowntrails.co.uk

Margam Country Park, Neath Port Talbot

Set in 1,000 acres of lovely countryside, Margam Country Park boasts a magnificent castle, 18th-century orangery, ornamental gardens, deer park. There's also a, narrow gauge railway, adventure playgrounds and a rare breeds farm trail.

10am-4.30pm, margamcountrypark.co.uk



Leisure & Travel Feature

St Davids Cathedral, Haverfordwest

Britain's smallest city is also home to one of its prettiest cathedrals. Built by St David himself in the 12th century, it is a fabulous place to visit and, like other places of worship, free to

10am-4pm Mon-Sat, 1pm-4pm Sun, stdavidscathedral.org.uk

Go back in time, Cardiff

The impressive St Fagan's National Museum of History explores Welsh life through the centuries. Visit a Celtic village complete with a farmyard, or explore the 16th-century castle, before stopping off in a modern pub.

10am-5pm, book in advance, museum, wales/stfagans

Pontcysyllte Aqueduct, Llangollen

One of the greatest feats on Wales's many canals, Pontcysyllte Aqueduct forms part of a Unesco World Heritage site. You can walk along the top of the 40m-high structure for free, or wander beneath and count the 19 arches as you go.



NORTHERN IRELAND

Slieve Gullion Forest Park, Newry

Take a walk through the Giant's Lair and keep an eye out for fairy houses, dragons, and giants, before letting the kids blow off some steam at the play park.

8am-5pm, ringofgullion.org

Mussenden Temple and Downhill Demesne, **Co Londonderry**

There are few better spots to enjoy the breathtaking beauty of Northern Ireland than Mussenden Temple and the surrounding Downhill Demesne. Enjoy a walk around the grounds or soak in the stunning views across the North Atlantic - which are particularly lovely at sunset.

nationaltrust.org.uk/mussenden-temple-and-downhilldemesne

Illuminate, Co Londonderry

The historic walled city of Londonderry will come to life with an innovative and immersive light experience that celebrates the city's rich history, heritage and culture. Experience light displays, animations and music sessions across the city and illuminating some of its best-loved buildings.

17-20 & 24-27 Feb, derrystrabane.com

NATIONWIDE

Dance the day (and night) away with Zumba

Grab your dancing shoes and get involved in Zumba's "Love Revolution" - 24 hours of back-to-back dance parties taking place online. With top presenters taking the live classes, including Zumba founder Beto Perez, it's great for beginners and experts

3pm, 29-30 January, zumba.com/en-US/events/free-24-hrzumba?=1

Winter wildlife

While spring takes the crown as the most colourful season, there is still plenty of wildlife to keep an eve out for in winter. Cow parsley stems, hazel catkins and bracket fungi can be enjoyed at this time, according to the Woodland Trust, while the skies will be playing host to robins, blue tits and bramblings. Bonus points if you can spot rarer short-eared owls, red squirrels and green woodpeckers.

Lace up your trainers and join a Parkrun

Saturday morning Parkruns take place across the country and are a great way to start your weekend. Tackle the 5km at your own pace, with a friend or on your own - but, most importantly, enjoy yourself.



parkrun.org.uk

Go stargazing

With such dark evenings, winter is a great time to start looking up. Grab your telescope and head outside to see if you can spot Orion's Belt, The Plough constellation and even the planet Venus.

(Article source: Inews)



'I'm following a dream - giving people my soul food': The global restaurants bringing life to British streets

These 14 small venues - all run or founded by immigrants to Britain - are part of the fabric of the nation's high streets. But after two hellish years, can they survive?

North African: Los Moros, York Tarik Abdeladim, 51 (pictured above)

"When I started out, getting harisssa in York wasn't easy," says Tarik Abdeladim. "There was one stockist." Chefs have been frantic since reopening after lockdown, he says. "The combination of Brexit and the pandemic has been like a tsunami hitting our industry. We're a tourist city. European staff, especially those without families here, have gone home." He employs 20 mostly local workers.

"People used to drop their CVs in all the time. I recently advertised for chefs and didn't have one response. That's a huge geographical and emotional shift; people no longer want to work long kitchen hours away from home."

Abdeladim moved to London from Algiers in 1990, aged 20: "We'd visit Paris when I was young and I worked in kitchens on the Côte d'Azur, so Europe was always on my radar. I visited a friend in London and fell in love with British culture, history, music, football. I never went home."



Food & Drink Feature

Having worked first as a pot washer, then later as a waiter and front of house, he moved to York in 1997, after visiting the city. "As an immigrant, language is a barrier to jobs," he says, "but being in restaurants was what I knew. The pot wash suited me till I knew enough to speak to customers and take orders."

His falafel wraps and fiery merguez sausage, served with harissa on hot baguettes, quickly became the city's top-rated food on Tripadvisor, after he opened a stall on Shambles Market in 2015. When a regular offered to sell him their restaurant three years later, he established Los Moros - a Spanish nod to his Berber heritage - serving modern north African cuisine. Its picturesque British exterior belies the colours and aromas of an Algerian souk you'll find within.

Abdeladim's food is steeped in the legacies of Algeria's invaders. He says: "My indigenous Berber family cooked tagines. My grandmother sat for hours at our kitchen table making kilos of couscous from semolina. The Romans brought olives and citrus; the Arabs brought spices; the Turks came to defend us, bringing coffee and baklava; and, finally, the French, with the croissants I ate for breakfast back home. All the cultures that shaped my taste buds exist on my menu."

They include the merguez he first cooked for his stall, now served in a butter bean dish his mother used to make: "My father would go to the best butcher in Algiers." Abdeladim says. "It's the food of my childhood. When I came here at 20, I was young and adventurous, I wanted to discover and learn. My own business was never part of the plan. A guy from the Michelin guide tweeted about my food last year. I never envisaged that."

Cambodian: Kambuja, Marple, Greater Manchester Y Sok, 45



"Hunger pain never leaves you," says Y Sok, who was raised in a refugee camp in Cambodia during the Khmer Rouge civil war, where Red Cross food parcels sustained her family before they moved to America. "Every day there was a lottery system for a new life in France, the US or Australia. My father chose America."

She moved to the UK in 2014, aged 37: "I remember hanging up our sign and someone saying, 'We'll see how long that lasts.' I wanted to change the perception of Asian food, the racism around it.

People grew up eating £5 Chinese meals from the chippy but wouldn't blink at paying triple for pasta. I wanted the suburbs to discover what ethnic food really is."

Sok's 20 staff, who also run a market outpost, are mostly South Asian or Cambodian. She wants to sponsor skilled-worker visas for another two. "It is hard to find a Cambodian chef from our tiny UK population," she says. "I have found loyalty in immigrant staff, who come looking for better opportunities. If you treat them well, give full benefits and respect, most tend to stay."

The restaurant, where walls are adorned with framed vinyls - it was formerly called Angkor Soul because of her husband's record store downstairs - served takeaways during the pandemic. Sok says: "The supply chain has been horrible. I spent days driving round, looking for products."

Dishes include cha kroeung, a curry with lemongrass, galangal and turmeric, and loc lac, a French colonised dish.

Growing up among Cambodian refugees, in Boston, then Los Angeles, where she would cater dinner parties and small weddings, food provided comfort for Sok's community. Kambuja returned her to her roots. "As an immigrant kid, I wanted to eat American mac'n'cheese to assimilate," she says. "I took the Cambodian food my mother cooked for granted. My restaurant brought me back to a place I had been away from for so long."

Caribbean: Buzzrocks, Manchester Buzzrock, 72, and Farida Anderson, 60

Two decades after his parents arrived in the UK with the Windrush generation, Buzzrock came to Britain from Jamaica, in 1976, age 27, holding only a photograph of his mother. Raised by an aunt, Buzzrock (known as Buzz) was the last of his family to emigrate, following his three sisters, once his father - a second world war veteran - had made enough money.

Buzz established his name in the shebeens and all-night Caribbean clubs of Manchester's Moss Side where he met his wife Farida - the daughter of a Somali immigrant, now an MBE - and cooked up a taste of home for the city's Jamaican community, including the tightly packed dumplings he is named after.

Now his cafe, where meat marinates from 6am and punters queue before noon, dishes up 300 plates of island food a day. "Our customers are British, Irish, Asian, Caribbean - 80% are white. It gives me a buzz to see all of them with 'dem belly full'." (They sell T-shirts carrying Buzz's slogan in their online shop.)

"Buzz and I have put in a lot of hours to get here," Farida says. "When they called the area 'Gunchester' we'd dodge bullets, serving food from our trailer. We fought for eight years to get our premises, experiencing racism as black shop owners."

Continued on pages 16-17...



The pandemic has had an impact, too. "Meat is 30% more expensive. I spent last summer policing the door, getting people to wear masks and sanitise."

In the shebeen days, Buzz's cooking fuelled illicit gambling dens and a sideline supplying cannabis. He started the business following a two-year prison sentence for drugs offences and the (now expired) threat of deportation. Farida - later a campaigner for prisoners' families - fought for him to remain. Now, they employ ex-offenders and prisoners on day release. "We believe in second chances," Farida says.



Thirty years after he started feeding crowds from a gazebo at Manchester's Caribbean carnival, Buzz is still serving the same jerk recipe, salt fish patties, flavoursome gravy and curried goat (actually lamb, because British palates "don't like the bones in goat") in the shop the couple opened in 2007. "Consistency is the thing," Buzz says. "People say they've been to many places but never tried jerk like I make it."

French: L'Escargot Bleu, Edinburgh Frederic Berkmiller, 51 (pictured above)

"I have seen staffing problems in restaurants for years," says Frederic Berkmiller, who established a French-Scottish training exchange for young chefs in 2011, long before Brexit and the pandemic triggered an exodus of foreign and casual workers.

"Chefs say all the time that they can't get waiting staff now foreigners have left. We have to build our own ecosystem. Young people brought up on chips, curry sauce and supermarket food will not aspire to cook and work with fresh fish or vegetables they've never seen before."

Since lockdown, he has slimmed his staff from 30, across two sites, to six, including chefs who have been with him for years. "The work is hard, so I look after my chefs," he says. "We've been working four days on, three off, for 15 years."

Born in the Loire valley, Berkmiller moved to London in 1988, then to Edinburgh in 2004. He works to a sustainable, "producer to pass" ethos, farming himself and using nearby growers and suppliers for the dishes plated up at his chef's pass.

He serves classic French cuisine from a locally sourced Scottish larder and four-acre garden, employing skills he learned as a teenager. "School didn't like me and I didn't like school. At 14, I was sent to live in as an apprentice in a restaurant where food was hunted, picked and cooked on site."



Food & Drink Feature

L'Escargot Bleu is an authentic, charming bistro, with a blue frontage and a wood-panelled bar, tablecloths, a blackboard with the day's menu and large, classic French advertisements on its walls. "I like to cook by my mood," Berkmiller says. "My dream restaurant would have no menu. Time-intensive beef bourguignon and veal blanquettes are disappearing, but I'm a great defender of classic French cooking - it's my origin."

Scandinavian: Hjem, Hexham, Northumberland Alex Nietosvuori, 29

"It can be hard to find a passion for working kitchen hours among local boys and girls," says Alex Nietosvuori, the Swede behind newly Michelin-starred Hjem, which he established in 2019 with his Northumbrian fiance Ally Thompson, 37; they also run the Hadrian hotel and a gastro pub in the north-east market town.

While their fine-dining staff have expanded to a team of eight, lockdown triggered departures elsewhere in the business. "A lot of people are in our industry for convenience or to pay their way through uni," Thompson says. "They realised there's probably an easier way to live than working till midnight everyday."

Nietosvuori, who emigrated from Sweden in 2015, is matter of fact. "At the end of the day, if people leave, we don't need them here," he says. "We want all of our business to reflect the standards of our restaurant."



It compounded a problem started by Brexit, Thompson adds: "There are no applications from Europeans now. Our last stage [intern], an Italian, left before lockdown. Our two Polish chefs have said the vote made them feel unwelcome. I fear we will see fewer European chefs wanting to open here."

Hjem - both a Norwegian translation and Northumbrian dialect for "home" - sits on the same latitude as Nietosvuori's native Skåne, in the south of Sweden. The same berries, mushrooms and plants go into the recipes on his tasting menus, including crisp croustades; pearly, white river cod; and the restaurant's signature horseradish sorbet with spelt crumble and warm apple caramel served inside a wooden apple crafted by Thompson's father.

"In Sweden you can forage on anyone's land," Thompson says. "Alex will often be walking the dog and pull containers out from his backpack."

Nietosvuori, whose career began 12 years ago, making pies in Malmö, says: "Our ambition is very simple: to be the best in the country, then the world. Last time we opened bookings, they were gone in two minutes. I couldn't care less about food when I was young. Now, food is everything."

Chinese: The Welcome, Belfast San Wong, 69, and his sons Charlie, 44, and Michael, 42



Charlie's father, San, was 16 when he left Tai Po, Hong Kong, with his parents. "We couldn't make a living in the New Territories," San says. "My father left first; I followed six months later."

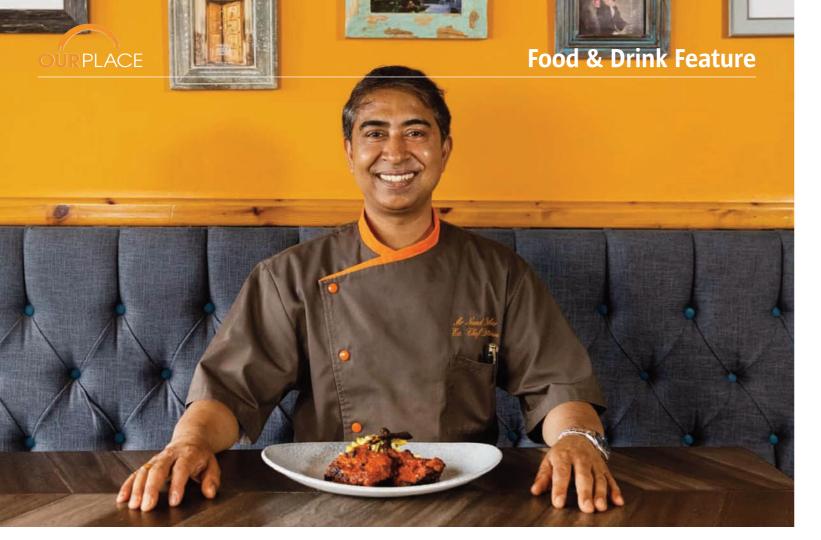
His 70-cover Chinese restaurant, situated on Stranmillis Road in Belfast, bills itself as the longest established in Northern Ireland (the first Welcome opened in Portadown in 1973; it switched location to the Belfast site in 1982) and passed to his sons, Charlie and Michael, five years ago.

"We still use sauces from Tai Po, but the pandemic has hit the supply chain hard," Charlie says. "People are stockpiling imported ingredients. You have to buy up what you can from Chinese supermarkets. Consistency is important."

During the Troubles, San stayed, while other families left. "Many Indian and Italian restaurants closed. Those were dark days, but they presented an opportunity to make our name. As an Asian family, we would be waved through road blocks while both sides of the city fought.

"Today we have families who've been coming for three generations. I've turned away rock stars and politicians to honour bookings from my regulars."

Continued on pages 18-19...



Indian: Dastaan, Epsom, SurreyNand Kishor, 47 (pictured above)

The pandemic dealt the worst possible blow to staff at Dastaan who lost their senior chef, Balam Singh, to Covid last January.

"He was my right-hand man, my friend, we miss him terribly," says chef-owner Nand Kishor Semwal, born in Dehradun, in the Himalayan foothills. Half of his 22 employees were taken ill over Christmas 2020.

The 52-cover restaurant, born of a friendship between Semwal and co-owner Sanjay Gour, both former head chefs at the Michelin-starred Gymkhana in London (where Singh also worked), is operating at 30 covers with a delivery driver, post-pandemic. "We're lucky - our staff have been here for years, but I'm paying $\mathfrak{L}2-3$ more per kilo of lamb, and a box of chillis is up 50%."

The name Dastaan is taken from the Urdu for fable or tale. The unassuming shopfront on a Surrey high street belies a vibrant, talked-about and beautifully plated menu served in simple surrounds.

Semwal moved to England, for work, in 2003, having cooked in Mumbai's best kitchens. His lamb chops with mustard relish remind him of the meat his mother and grandmother prepared. "I cook the food I ate at home in north India and cooked in kitchens in the south. I was always fascinated by food. My dream came true."

Tibetan: Taste Tibet, Oxford Yeshi Jampa, 42

"We need more staff but we know it's not a good time," says Yeshi Jampa, who started up his canteen-style restaurant in November 2020, after six years serving up east Tibetan soul food at fairs and festivals, including Glastonbury. "There aren't enough skilled workers around, or the time to train them."

Jampa and his wife, Julie, opened Taste Tibet's distinctive blue front door, on a residential street, mid-pandemic. "It's been really hard," he says. "Suppliers didn't want to come for our relatively small orders. I was going round shops buying chicken."



Their kitchen is open Wednesday to Saturday, with five employees, including staff from Tibet and Timor-Leste. "With more people, we'd be able to be open more often," says Julie, who met her husband while working in India.



Food & Drink Feature

Jampa had a semi-nomadic upbringing, followed by an accidental immigration. At 19, he crossed the Himalayas to help his brother join an Indian monastery. "I walked for 24 days. The journey was so hard, it was 17 years before I returned home."

He met Julie and moved to Oxford, where she worked, in 2011. "I'd never seen food covered in plastic or sold in such small quantities," he says.

Photographs of the mountainsides where he grew up, rearing yaks and cattle in summer and storing produce for winter, decorate the brick walls of his restaurant. The queue for his steamed momo dumplings hasn't dissipated since he first pitched up on Gloucester Green market, in Oxford, in 2014. During lockdown, they used their premises, and customer donations, to send food to frontline workers and vulnerable people. A cookbook, Taste Tibet, follows on 17 March.

Jampa says: "My driving force is to educate people about Tibet; food is a big part of that. Our canteen is a place where a rich man can eat the same food as a poor man. Being a refugee influences that. Where I grew up, the signs in schools said 'Others before self'. That ethos, karma, is important in Tibet."

Māori/Malay: Kota and Kota Kai, Porthleven, Cornwall Jude Kereama, 48

The last two years have given hospitality workers time to take stock, according to Jude Kereama: "I think a lot have really enjoyed being at home with their families. That's had a big impact on attitudes towards working in this industry. I'm lucky to have had loyalty from mine."

He employs 10 people across his two restaurants on Porthleven's Harbour Head. "Brexit and the pandemic have also taught us we must change the way we cook. Fish prices are four times what they should be. It's no longer sustainable to demand overfishing and huge pieces of cheap meat on meals."

Born in New Zealand to a Māori father and Chinese-Malay mother, Kereama has seen a lot of changes in the Cornish food scene. "When we moved here, everything around us was pubs. My menu was a culture shock."

After rising through the ranks of New Zealand hospitality, he came to England on a two-year working visa, aged 24, and fell in love with his restaurant manager wife, Jane. They converted a west Cornwall boat shed into Kota in 2006, and opened family-friendly Kota Kai in 2011. Jane died of cancer in 2019.

His Kota menu pays homage to his childhood. Soft-shell crab in a bao bun, with Asian slaw and seaweed mayo, is a bestseller. "My siblings and I would catch blue swimmer crabs on Waikanae beach," he says. "Mum would throw them in chilli paste and we'd dip in white bread and butter." Tempura oyster, served at the restaurant, is inspired by the taste of his dad's battered oyster, enjoyed with fish and chips every Friday, on the beach back home.



"In New Zealand, everyone had an abundance of garden veg and fruit trees. We'd harvest everything. Dad taught us bushcraft and foraging. Mum brought Malaysia's fusion flavours and had an open-door policy. Friends would walk past at 6pm, knowing they'd get an invite to dinner," says Kereama, a finalist on the BBC show Great British Menu, whose dream is to cook for the Queen. "Immigration is about following a dream. I try to give people my soul food, something that comes from my upbringing, my journey, and no one else's."

Ethiopian: Beza, London Beza Berhanu, 44

"My staff are students or mums who need some hours," says Beza Berhanu, who was 16 when she followed her cousin to the UK. Her vegan restaurant in Elephant & Castle opened six months before the pandemic. During lockdown, locals and her landlord funded cooking for NHS staff, the homeless and those out of work. "When I came here I wanted to do something that helped people. I came for opportunity. Look at me now," she says.



Berhanu grew up in Addis Ababa. Weekends and the winter were spent away from the city, at her grandmother's, where the table was full of colour - spinach, tomatoes, green beans. "She grew everything you can think of on her land. My grandmother was an Orthodox Christian who knew all the health benefits of vegan food, or what we knew as 'fasting food'. She was over 100 when she died."

Continued on pages 20-21...



Berhanu studied as a nutritionist in London, and started making juices, then batches of red lentil and spinach, to sell at Camden market. "When I started cooking, all that my grandma taught me came back to me. Ethiopian food was new to my customers - they were full of wonder."

Long queues led to the offer of a 25-seat premises in another part of London, which has all the colour and flavours of her grandmother's table. In fact a round, Ethiopian-made replica table, crafted from dyed grass and palm leaves, hosts her customers. "In my culture, if you have one meal, you share it with someone. My family would sit around my grandma's table and tell each other about our day. Now everyone wants to sit at my table.

"Sometimes I sit in my kitchen and think: 'Now people know my culture.' I still go back home to fill my suitcase with the berbere spice that my mum makes, to use at my restaurant."

Italian: Casanova, Cardiff Antonio Cersosimo, 45

"I wanted to live abroad and being in the EU made that easy," says Antonio Cersosimo, who was a physics student when he left Italy for Wales in 1999, aged 22, to improve his English.

Now he runs one of the country's best, authentically Italian restaurants, where regulars visit twice a week and the menu uses a mix of local ingredients and Italian imports, including wine, truffle and salami, which are increasingly hard to come by.

"The ripple effect of Brexit, coronavirus and the Suez canal blockage has been chaos," he says. "Prices have gone up. In some cases we're the only ones in the UK buying from small, family producers, so they simply had to stop exporting to us."

When he opened in 2005, it marked a departure from the garlic bread and lasagne served in Wales's Italian cafes. "I'd never had garlic bread in my life. In my grandparents' village in Calabria, we ate polenta or risotto. In Milan, where I was raised, my mother made her own passata and sourdough."



He says successive generations of immigration to the UK have changed attitudes to new cuisines. "When we first opened, I'd put goat and octopus in the bin every week because people wouldn't try them - now they're our bestsellers. "I was part of the second wave of immigrants. We came not because we had to but through choice, so we brought a different approach - less need to assimilate. I could make bolder choices with the food I cooked because, if it didn't work, I could go home."



Food & Drink Feature

Gambian: Parkers Arms, Newton, Lancashire Stosie Madi, 51

At the height of summer, pre-Brexit and pre-pandemic, Stosie Madi's multi award-winning pub would cook for 300 people over a weekend, opening six days a week. This summer's staffing shortage has halved their week and their capacity. "It is heartbreaking. We could still be cooking for those numbers - we have the demand - but we don't have the staff. After being closed for 18 months, we have not been able to capitalise on the boom that followed."

With no local transport, and based in a wealthy hamlet where teenagers are not looking for work, Madi has relied heavily on staff from eastern Europe, often living on site. Her four core staff are Brits and one Romanian, who has been there for four years. "Brexit has been a nightmare. It stripped that workforce away. If something doesn't change drastically, I can't see how independent restaurants can survive." Madi describes herself as a "French-born Gambian with Lebanese origins". She was born at the end of colonial rule in West Africa and followed her parents into hospitality, opening a jazz club in her 20s, then a restaurant.

The political situation forced them out when her daughter Laudy was 10. "We witnessed defenceless children being shot at in front of us. Seeing poverty around us worsen, people disappearing, friends and colleagues threatened or jailed for political opinions was the last straw."

Rural Lancashire, the home of her long-standing friend and business partner Kathy Smith, became an unlikely new start and a culinary success. Its location, in the Forest of Bowland, was pivotal when they took on the Parkers Arms in 2007: "We wanted to cook food from the land around us, to be self-sufficient." Citrus is one of their only imports and everything from icecreams to bread, chutneys and pies is prepared on site: "I dream in ingredients. My cooking draws from my multinational background and my new, British one. One dish always on my menu is a pie - a dish from Middle Eastern culture, made with northern veg and the same pastry recipe I ate at school in Africa. Yet what could feel more British?"

Nepalese: Yak Yeti Yak, Bath Sera Gurung, 58

Sera Gurung opened Yak Yeti Yak with his wife, Sarah, 18 years ago to satisfy his desire for an authentic taste of home. He grew up in Armala, northern Nepal, without electricity or tap water. "Fresh vegetables grew outside and we kept buffalo and goats. My siblings and I would watch our mother cook on the open fire in the middle of the house." Meat was a luxury and pork was forbidden. "As a boy, I'd travel to get it, then cook it on a fire by myself. It is still my favourite dish on my menu." Gurung was studying business in London when he met Sarah in 1989. They returned to Nepal together for five years, before settling in the LIK.

At Yak Yeti Yak, tucked away in the basement of three Georgian townhouses, their core team has been with them more than a decade, serving customers on floor cushions, under walls adorned with rice dollies, fish traps, nets and Nepalese art.

At this point in the pandemic, Sarah says, they are still in survival mode. "A few younger, newer staff liked furlough too much," she says. Young employees saved their wages in lockdown and left when it was time to reopen. "Finding new staff to replace them and extra staff to keep up with Covid sanitation is difficult," she adds. This has limited their capacity.

Gurung says: "I've had people travel to Nepal after eating here, then come back to tell me my food is better. One Michelin chef sends his kitchen porter for takeaway at the end of his shift. In our culture, a guest is like a god, to be respected. To hear they love the food of my home country feels wonderful."



Mexican: Mestizo, London Roberto Alvarado Rios, 71 (pictured top left)

In autumn, a competitor walked in and tried to poach the Spanish staff at Mestizo, a bright, cosy restaurant and tequila bar in Camden, near Regent's Park in London. "I was shocked," says owner Marysol Alvarado. "I would never do that. It shows how desperate the industry is. We had already lost staff from the floor, the kitchen. They left because of the pandemic and never returned because of Brexit. Every restaurant owner is struggling."

Marysol and husband Roberto came to the UK from a restaurant background in Tecamachalco, central Mexico, in 1997 and opened Si Señor, in Soho, with an ambition to deliver traditional cuisine to Brits. In 2001, though, they were forced to close when the rent went up.

The pandemic threatened financial ruin again - the family put their entire savings into keeping their restaurant, and the Mexican market next door, going. "The supply chain has been menacing," Marysol says. "The customer may never feel this, and perhaps gets mad about not being able to get served their favourite tipple, but certain food and drink items are just not available any more."

Now the lively, 80-cover spot is thriving again, thanks to loyal locals and a solid reputation - a favourite dish is mole poblano (meat in a chocolate and chilli sauce). "Our menus are inspired by all parts of Mexico, by my mother and mother-in-law," Marysol explains. "We are not fancy, but we are ambassadors for the food, flavours, colours of home. When Mexicans come to eat here, they remember when their grannies cooked for them: Mi casa es su casa."

(Article source: The Guardian)



Flight of fancy: The home inspired by an aircraft fuselage

A designer's fascination with aviation led him to build his own cocoonlike home in Kildare, Ireland.

Most creatives yearn to build their own home, experimenting with materials, styles and ideals. Type "self build" into Google and up will pop homes ranging from the singular to the outlandish. Triangular houses squeezed into tight urban spots, round houses perched on stilts like landlocked moons - the vacant plot is your blank canvas

Garvan de Bruir's home in Kildare, Ireland, is a case in point. A designer-craftsman best known for his leather bags and accessories, de Bruir drew on the history of aviation to build his unusual. timber-framed dwelling.

"The technical term is a monocoque, which refers to the cocooning shape of an aircraft's fuselage. It's thin, but by virtue of its curved profile - like a shell - it's also very strong." It is also eco-friendly. "You use the minimum amount of materials for maximum effect."



The result is hard to miss. The Aviator Haus is a gleaming, hoopshaped structure rising from flat green fields, where a low stone wall is all that remains of a former abbey.

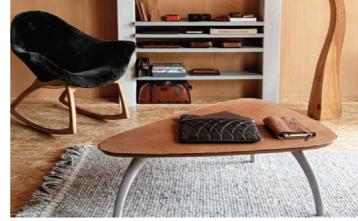


Home & Garden Feature

Previously a scrap yard, the site later became an industrial zone. "Because I built my workshop here I was allowed to add a home as well," says de Bruir who built the two-bedroom, prefabricated structure himself. Its pre-insulated components were digitally cut and assembled in sections, as neatly as Lego, over the course of a few weeks.

The ideas behind his home grew out of his fascination with wood and its architectural potential. He studied furniture making at Buckinghamshire Chilterns University in High Wycombe, the former furniture making hub of the UK. "During the Second World War, local factories also made parts for aircraft. A shortage of metal led to a return to timber. They used plywood, heavily engineered for strength. I began thinking about how I could apply those techniques to architecture."

His "melting pot of ideas" home was executed on a tight "self-builders' budget. It was about materials and economy." The curving outer shell is covered in a powder-coated corrugated iron, riveted like a fuselage. "It is what they use for local farm buildings, but unfortunately the planners wouldn't allow me to use the classic agricultural red oxide colour." For the exterior, he used cedar cladding with inexpensive PVC framed windows.



Measuring a lean 5m wide by 10m long, there is an open-plan living area downstairs with two bedrooms and a bathroom upstairs, where light spills in through windows at either end. "It's your classic terrace house," smiles de Bruir, industrious in his leather apron.

Of course, it is not really. "In a traditional house the ceiling corners of the top floor rooms are dead space. By eliminating them you cut down on the energy needed to heat the space," he explains. "A typical house requires thick walls to support a heavy roof; the curved profile does away with that, reducing the materials needed."

With its gently sloping walls and wood panelling, the interior feels as cosy as a woodland cabin mixed with the economical elegance of a ship's cabin. "The different woods add texture and warmth," he says, pointing out the floors, made from a budget-engineered wood (OSB) produced in Waterford. The staircase which twirls gracefully upstairs is made from offcuts. The walls are clad in plywood also used to make the kitchen with its ingeniously curved doors and shelves full of cheerful pottery.

There is leather in unusual details, like the handles or hinges, inspired by vintage luggage design. "Leather as a building material has been overtaken by plastic or metal. But its strength and flexibility makes it so versatile."



Other experiments include the leather tables and chairs perching on animated, curving legs. He uses whole sections of leather for his designs, unlike mass-produced pieces, which are generally made from smaller cuts stitched together. "Wrapping a bag in one piece of leather makes it much more durable.

Fewer joins mean it's structurally far stronger," he says. "Typically there would be four panels of leather stitched together to create the bucket shape. However my design is moulded as a single piece. It's a medieval process called 'cuir bouilli' which craftsmen used to make armour by boiling and moulding leather to the shape of a torso."

De Bruir built his "singleform" house as a prototype. Ideally he would like to roll it out commercially as home or studio solutions. "I am still working out the costs, but it would be very economical." The interior's snugness and tactility, he says, have also made it a delight to live in.

The modular structure will make it easy to produce different versions with more windows, rooms and a deeper footprint. Picture a row of his Aviator Hauses set in their own green plots, glinting softly against blue skies. It could be fun – and different.

(Article source: The Guardian)



Please help us rescue and care for vulnerable hedgehogs - Britain's

favourite mammal

A shocking study has revealed that hedgehogs are rapidly vanishing from our countryside, with numbers <u>HALVED</u> in the last 20 years.

I am delighted to tell you that Britain's hedgehog has won favourite mammal in a UK poll.

The UK's only spiny mammal won with 35.9% of the 5,000 votes, more than double that of the Red Fox, who came in second place with 15.4%. The Red Squirrel came third with 11.4%, out of a shortlist of 10 charismatic UK mammals.

Unfortunately, hedgehogs are rapidly vanishing from our countryside as numbers have <u>HALVED</u> in the last 20 years, a shocking study has revealed.

Henry Johnson, hedgehog officer, People's Trust for Endangered Species (PTES) said:

"We Brits seem to love hedgehogs for a whole range of reasons, including their cute appearance, their role as slug controllers and the way they have colonised our gardens with such aplomb. This is why it is so sad to see them decline, with one in three lost since the millennium."

Threats to hedgehogs come mostly from us. In rural areas, our farmland increasingly lacks the diversity of habitats hedgehogs need and the invertebrates they feed on. In towns and cities green spaces are lost to development, paved over or increasingly fragmented. Hedgehogs are also very prone to road traffic accidents.

This is why we have launched this special Annual Appeal to protect Britain's favourite mammal.

At Hedgehog Rescue Rehabilitation and Care Centre we respond immediately to rescue injured hedgehogs. A vet is called in straight away and the hedgehogs are monitored and cared for. Once fit and well they are released back into the wild.

Hedgehog Rescue is now conducting its Annual Appeal. Only by continuing our huge effort and long-life commitment can we give these wonderful animals a safe, happy and contented life.





We care for many hedgehogs here at our rehabilitation centre. Hedgehogs just like these:

'Julie'



'Julie' (pictured left) came in last Autumn, quite small, out in daylight and had ticks. She stayed a few weeks, put on enough weight, and made a full recovery. She was released back to her own territory by the finder.

Baby Hedgehogs

These 2 hedgehogs came in as very small babies and had stayed with us a few weeks, gaining weight and giving us a chance to sort out their health issues. They had several ticks and needed worming. When they were 100% ready, we released them close to where they were found.



These hedgehogs are some of the lucky ones. Others are less fortunate.

As a friend who knows what a wonder animals can be, I hope you will support our Annual Appeal. Your kind gift will help us rescue and care for many more vulnerable hedgehogs - Britain's favourite mammal.

To donate to Hedgehog Rescue, go to: https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/hedgehogrescue or write to: Raisemore, Unit 1, Alton Road Industrial Estate, Ross-on-Wve HR9 5NB

