

THE WIRE

GOT ISSUES 8

For laid back lifestylers... with a sense of humour

2019



CBD is on everyone's lips. Both figuratively and literally in many cases. It's the hot topic up and down the country, from swish Harley Street clinics to the bottom shelves in Sainsbury's health aisle. Following recent legalisation to open up its use for the great British public, many are saying their search for a miracle cure has ended. Or has it?

People are popping it, spreading it, cooking with it, vaping it, and even washing with it. Next to the Peppa Pig Wellkid (is this marketing gone mad?) it's all happy hemp, CBD Daily, hemp hair restore and there's a whole shelf of CBD bio food supplements, moisturisers, lip balms, body oils and soothing serums. It's said to help everything from Alzheimer's to acne.

There's gourmet CBD popcorn butter, CBD labneh, hemp salad dressing, Zip pesto, CBD gummies, and forget Starbucks – why not add a little brightness to your morning with hemp packed into your morning joe. 'Hemp dip anyone?', brings a whole new take on your amuse-bouche...

WHAT IS IT, AND WHAT DOES IT DO?

In short; cannabidiol, or CBD, is a chemical compound from the cannabis plant. It's used in many products including oils and edibles. It interacts with your body's own endocannabinoid system and according to Junella Chin, an osteopathic physician and a medical cannabis expert, 'CBD is the non-psychoactive portion of the plant, so what that

means is you won't have any effects like euphoria.' Quite simply, it imparts a feeling of relaxation and calm. It can also be used to help skin conditions such as eczema according to Dr. Friedman, who points out that the ingredient's ability to regulate cell growth, reduce inflammation, and stimulate important fats in the skin and sebaceous glands could help inform treatments for other skin issues, such as dry skin and psoriasis.

You won't get high on CBD. Cannabis composes two main parts: innocuous CBD; and THC, which is the vital ingredient for achieving an altered state of consciousness. If getting high is your objective, then CBD is utterly redundant.

HOW DO YOU TAKE IT?

There are four ways to take CBD: vape, oils, lotions, and food. They all have different delivery speeds and vary in how long the effects last:

- Inhalation (in the form of a vapouriser e-juice) is said to be the most efficient and direct route into the body – cannabidiol enters the lungs and diffuses into the bloodstream quickly, bypassing the liver.

- Topical creams, lotions and balms are typically made for local pain relief, working on the upper skin cells, and as such do not enter the bloodstream.
- Pure CBD oil and tinctures can be taken sublingually (under the tongue) where the mucous membranes can absorb it into the bloodstream within minutes.
- Swallowing is the easiest way to ingest, allowing it to pass through the digestive system and metabolise in the liver.

MAGIC OR MEDICINE?

Given the number of 'How CBD Changed my Life' headlines you'd be forgiven for thinking it's a wonder drug. This popular misconception is easily understood says Dr Chin, 'A lot of times people think CBD is a cure-all, and it's not, you should also have a healthy lifestyle with plenty of exercise and good nutrition – CBD is not going to fix everything.'

Continues on page 2



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THE BACKGROUND CHECK

CBD is extracted and separated from specific varieties of cannabis, often known as hemp. It is one of 85 chemical substances known as cannabinoids, found in the cannabis plant, and is the second most abundant compound in hemp, typically representing up to 40 percent of its extracts. People often mix up CBD with THC, but CBD is completely separated and isolated from THC. The only CBD medication that is currently FDA-approved is Epidiolex, which was approved last year for the treatment of certain types of epilepsy.

WAIT A SECOND, I'M CONFUSED BETWEEN HEMP, MARIJUANA AND CANNABIS.

Hemp and marijuana are the two primary species of the plant Cannabis sativa. When people talk about hemp oil, they're referring to oil extracted from the seeds of the hemp plant. Although both hemp and marijuana contain CBD, there's a much higher percentage in hemp, which also has very low levels of THC compared to marijuana. So no, you can't get high on hemp.

I NEED MORE INFORMATION

CBD has become very popular within the cosmetics industry for its anti-inflammatory benefits. In fact, most skin conditions are connected to inflammation.

If a cheeky hash brownie is not your thing, take Gwyneth's advice and try a GOOP gluten-free dark-chocolate CBD brownie. A particularly delicious way to enjoy the benefits of CBD. While they're a great riff on the dorm-room classic, they're sophisticated enough to finish any dinner party. They won't make you high. They will, however, make you want another. Some things never change.

CBD:

Where can you get your hands on it?



ORGANIC CBD OIL 25% 10ML
Daylesford
£175.00

This Organic CBD oil 25% is a premium high dosage CBD Oil that contains the full plant product with all its optimum effects, specifically chosen for its high CBD content which is critical in giving you the best entourage effect between cannabinoids & terpenes.

www.daylesford.com

BAMFORD B SILENT ORGANIC BODY OIL
Bamford
£42.00

This organic body oil contains cannabis sativa with St John's wort, known for its deeply relaxing properties. Combined with a soporific blend of roman chamomile, lavender flower and vetiver root essential oils.

www.bamford.com



RED CANNA WINE SINGLE BOTTLE
Canna Wine
£21.99

Let's be honest, it was only a matter of time before we found a CBD wine. Wine aromatised with hemp extract enriched with cannabinoids.

www.cbddrinkscompany.com

NOORO LEMON + GINGER RAW OAT CBD BAR
Eat Nooro
£2.95

The guys at Nooro have created a snack bar that fuels your mind, allowing you to re-discover your natural rhythm and flow. Clarity, balance and focus in a raw, vegan, CBD, oat snack bar.

www.eatnooro.com



LIFE FORCE SERUM, SPIRIT OF HEMP
Spirit of Hemp
£29.99

Life Force Serum has many cult-like fans shouting its praises, for everything from eczema, psoriasis, rosacea, acne and dry skin and has even been celebrated for taking the itch out of everything from insect bites to chicken pox.

www.spiritofhemp.com

CBD OILS
George and Mae
from £29.99

George & Mae have gone one step further and offer delicious tasting oils in Mint, Orange and Lemon, all flavoured with the finest essential oils. On top of the delicious taste, their oils are also completely THC free, that is: zero THC, nothing, nada..

www.georgeandmae.com



PODCAST CONSUMPTION IS ON THE RISE

...here are a few that we are currently tuning into....

Adam Buxton Podcast

Irreverent interviews with interesting people. Comedian Adam Buxton's podcast is wonderfully simple. He chats with people. But not just normal people, some of the most interesting actors, comedians, musicians and film makers from the UK and beyond.

How I Built This

Founders explaining how their companies became a success. The real draw for us is the calibre of guests that this podcast manages to attract: past episodes have featured the brains behind prominent startups including Instagram and Airbnb, but also more mainstream business leaders such as the executive chairman of Starbucks and the founders of Ben & Jerry's.

The A-Z Festivals with Rob da Bank

A foray into the world of festivals with music man and festival guru Rob da Bank, exploring the underbelly and secrets of how the world's best festivals run.

Beyond Today

Radio 4's Today programme's slightly younger 'n' funkier podcast. One big question about one big story from the news - and beyond - every weekday. Tina Daheley and Matthew Price search for answers that will change the way we see the world.

Desert Island Discs

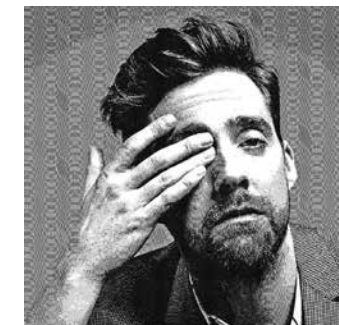
An old favourite. Eight tracks, a book and a luxury: what would you take to a desert island? Guests share the soundtrack of their lives.

Table Manners with Jessie Ware

A podcast that teams food with celebs - all under the watchful eye of one of Britain's most talented musicians, Jessie Ware, and her chef extraordinaire mum. So far, Jessie and Lennie have hosted everyone from Sadiq Khan and Tom Kerridge, to Kiefer Sutherland and Paloma Faith.

60 Seconds with our friends...

Ricky Wilson



Where are you eating?

At home. I've yet to find a restaurant with fewer stars but more appeal.

Who is the hero or heroine you'd be tongue-tied to find yourself sitting next to at a dinner?

The dinner party dance is one I have become good at. Settle in between two conversational bean bags. I don't like being put with people that believe they are famous. The longer they believe they are famous the less it will last. That's why I like Robin Hutton. He knows he's a nobody.

The message to your younger self?

Find a cheap framer.

What's your favourite lazy-at-home dish to cook?

Cassoulet. Secret recipe.

You'll never find me....

I can walk like me and not like me. In a crowd I can decide to be recognised or not. It's bafflingly easy. Like a showbiz switch.

What are you listening to?

A Philips air fryer humming away doing me some Birdseye fish fingers for a lunchtime sandwich. It's not a guilty pleasure. It's just a pleasure.

Your book at bedtime?

The Radio Times.

Where are you looking forward to playing this summer?

It's always great when I get to play somewhere I would be going anyway.

Apart from the slight inconvenience of having to perform for 75 minutes, Smoked & Uncut is my pin in my calendar. I even have a leather punch on standby to put another notch in my belt that afternoon.

Eat, Drink, and be Leary.

MILLENIAL LINGO

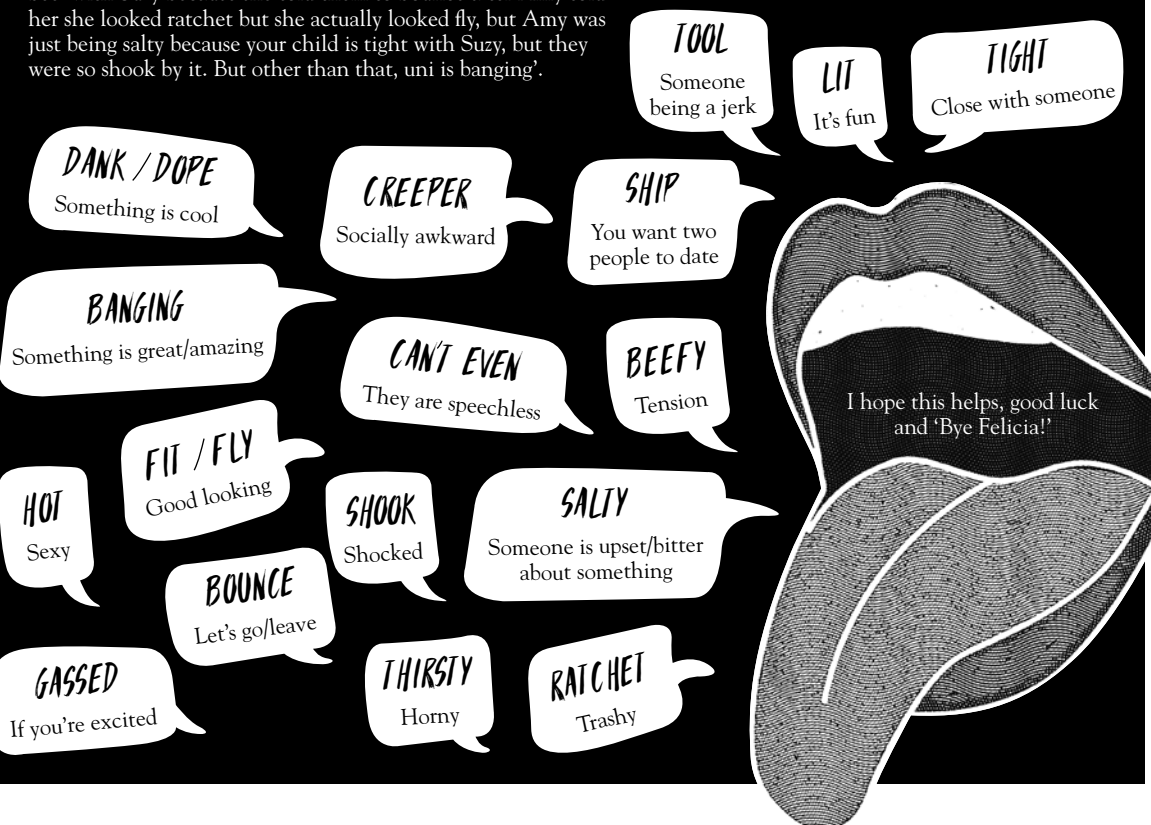
How many of you have been in this situation or one similar?

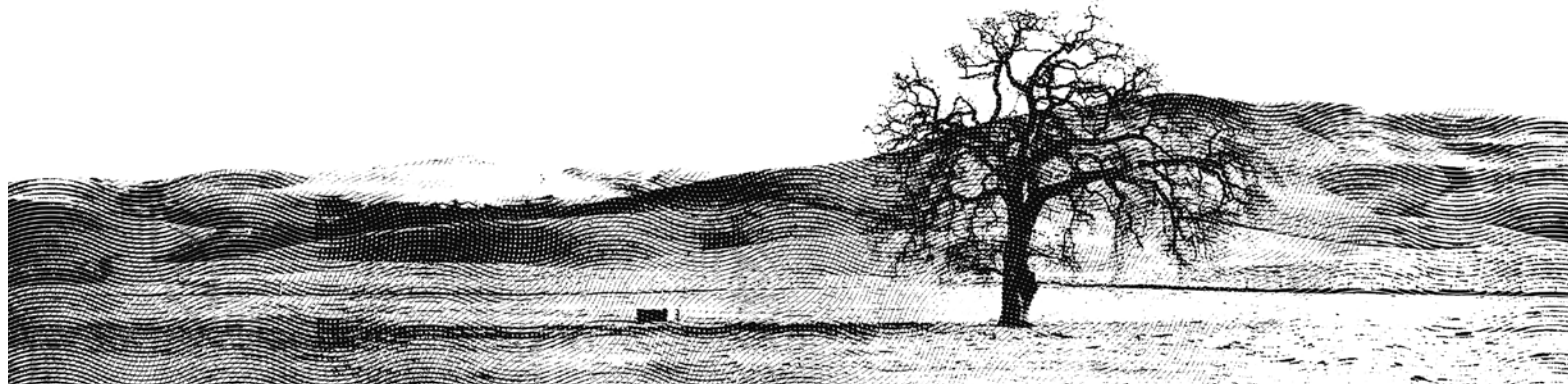
Offspring return from school/university and after hugs you ask how everything is going. Off they spout, but it sounds like another language. Tuts may follow. And clenched teeth with the loose regard for syntax, context, or meaning! Enquiries trigger eye rolling but you honestly have no idea why your child, 'has beef with Suzy because she told them to bounce after Amy told her she looked ratchet but she actually looked fly, but Amy was just being salty because your child is tight with Suzy, but they were so shook by it. But other than that, uni is banging'.

What?

They shrug, and recapitulate in a mono-answer you'll get, 'it's great'.

Enough is enough. Here's the A-Z of common words (or so I'm reliably advised):



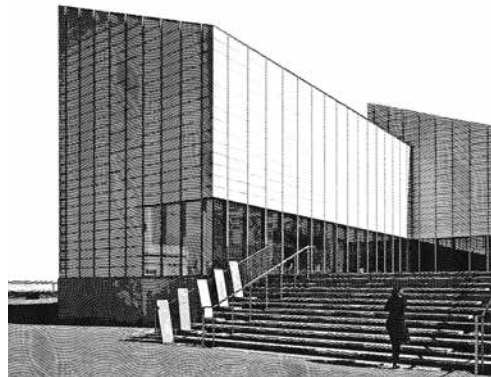


THINGS WE LOVE *in the sticks...*

HOWLETTS WILDLIFE PARK THE ASPINALL FOUNDATION, CANTERBURY, KENT ↓

Howletts Wildlife Park is tucked away in a picturesque patch of countryside just 3 miles south of Canterbury. Howletts is a charity with a commitment to conservation and runs in conjunction with The Aspinall Foundation. Through breeding, education and reintroduction, Howletts expertly cares for exotic wildlife here in the United Kingdom, with an end-goal of returning rescued animals to their natural habitats in the wild. The wildlife park is an ongoing project where the animals really do come first and your visit and the park's dedication work hand in hand to enable their expert teams to save endangered animals.

www.aspinallfoundation.org/howletts



TURNER CONTEMPORARY, MARGATE, KENT ↑

Turner Contemporary is a gallery that sits just off the sandy seashores of Margate on the North coast of Kent. A momentary home to an eclectic array of contemporary exhibitions, the Turner Contemporary is one the UK's leading art galleries designed to connect individuals with the intriguing links. With an everchanging exciting array of extraordinary exhibitions, Turner Contemporary is definitely a seaside spot for artistic expression and personal reflection, a space to get totally lost in.

www.turnercontemporary.org



PYTHOUSE KITCHEN GARDEN, TISBURY, WILTSHIRE →

Pythouse Kitchen Garden is an enchanting 18th Century walled garden, restaurant, bar and venue set in the stunning landscape of South Wiltshire. Each Saturday and Sunday throughout the summer season you'll be greeted by the wonderful sight and smells of outdoor cooking over fire – the star of the show at Pythouse Kitchen Garden! Excellent homegrown and locally reared ingredients are paired with some firm favourites from the kitchen garden to create a fun and family-friendly menu that celebrates everything we love about the warmer months.

www.pythousekitchengarden.co.uk



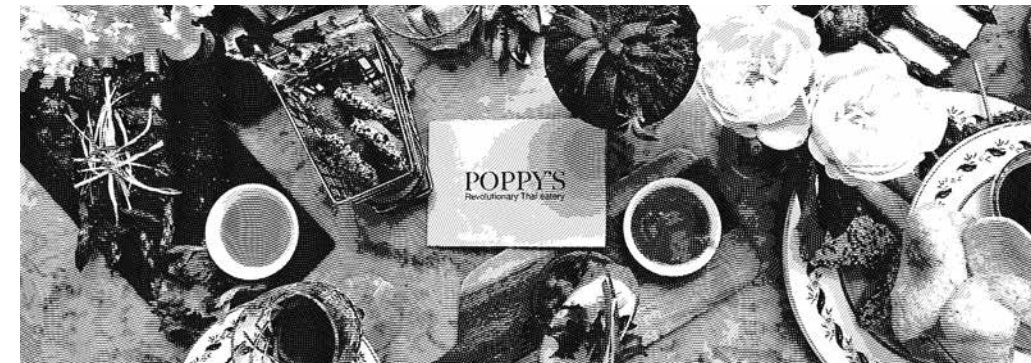
ILLYRIA, UNITED KINGDOM ↓

Described by The Telegraph as “top-notch outdoor theatre”, Illyria is a theatrical production company that tour the United Kingdom executing an eclectic mix of plays for all to laugh and love. This summer, Illyria will be performing Ali Baba and the Fourty Thieves, Shakespeare's The Tempest and Frankenstein, venturing from the Cornish Land's End to the North East coast of Scotland, meaning there are plenty of showstopping spots to pick and choose. With a full orchestrated score, expect dazzling performances of spectacular stage effects and wickedly dark humour. A perfect means of keeping kids (and adults) amused with some timeless classics, sit back and relax alfresco to some open-air theatre with a Pimms in hand and let Illyria do the entertaining.

www.illyria.co.uk



THINGS WE LOVE *in the city...*



THE FRENCH HOUSE, SOHO, LONDON ↓

A Grade II listed pub tucked away down Soho's Dean Street, The French House is a building with just as much history as it has atmosphere. Once a hotspot amongst twentieth century bohemians, artists and actors, the top-floor of the red-bricked building is now home to Chef Neil Borthwick's French House Soho, where the soft chitter chatter, stripped burgundy walls and narrow stairwell are quite enough to take you back in time to 1950s France. Described by The Guardian's Grace Dent as a “likeably shabby French-themed boozer”, Neil Borthwick's perfectly sized, hand-written menu is an earthy mix of classic French cooking, creating a space where technology is a big no-no and chatting for a long-while about everything and anything is positively encouraged.

www.frenchhousesoho.com



POPPY'S, HAMMERSMITH, LONDON ↑

A popular hotspot among London's edgiest foodie bloggers, Poppy's is a hidden gem in the bustling Hammersmith. The setting is unique with an eclectic mix of taxidermy hanging on the walls, and the menu is equally eclectic as you can enjoy traditional Thai food, the odd Malaysian dish, or Chinese dim sum.



SNAPS & RYE, NORTH KENSINGTON, LONDON ↑

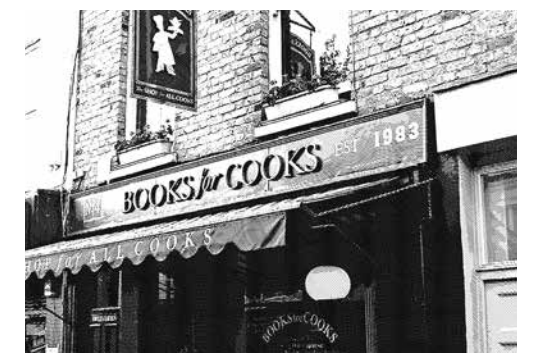
Looking to take your taste buds on a Scandinavian journey? Look no further than a cosy corner tucked away in North Kensington. Snaps & Rye is a Danish restaurant that serves traditional Nordic cuisine using fresh produce, embodying a philosophical approach completely rooted in 'Hygge'. Although difficult to pronounce, Hygge is a term easy to resonate with and translates as a concept central to Danish culture that encompasses that warm, bubbly feeling of contentedness we all know and love when enjoying good food with good people.

www.snapsandrye.com

BOOKS FOR COOKS, NOTTING HILL, LONDON ↓

While there might be an abundance of book shops dotted around the many streets of London, Books for Cooks is a dream spot for those who like getting lost in a good cook book with the hearty smell of home-cooking never too far away. Open from Tuesdays to Sundays from 10am until 6pm, Books for Cooks' kitchen runs a little differently from your average café. With plenty of recipes and worldwide cuisines sitting right on their bookshelves, staff select a cook book from the latest titles on display, and after having a flick through the pages, decide what it is they fancy whipping up that day. From French to Indian to Thai, you never know what you're gonna get.

www.booksforcooks.com

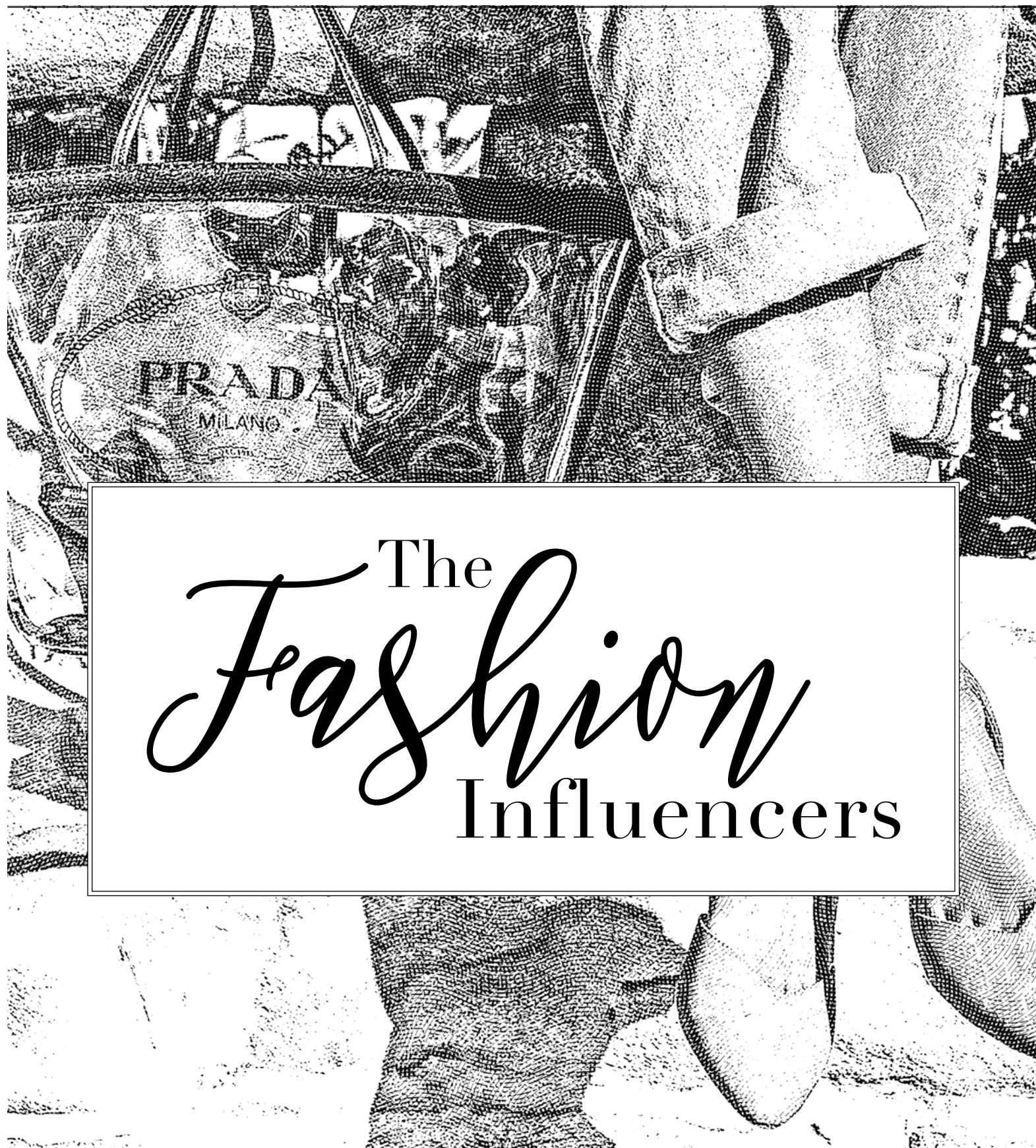


DIOR EXHIBITION AT V&A, LONDON ↓

Spanning from 1947 to the present day, this exhibition traces the history and impact of one of the 20th century's most influential couturiers, exploring the enduring influence of the fashion house, and Dior's relationship with Britain - a must see collection.

www.vam.ac.uk





The Fashion Influencers

Big weekend. Wake up late on Monday morning. Already too frazzled to attempt any semblance of coordination yet alone a power 'capsule' wardrobe. So you throw on the first thing you see, without a second's thought, and hare out the door.

If this sounds familiar, it may come as a surprise to learn the degree of thought that has gone into every ounce of textile on your torso. Meryl Streep had something to say about that in her role as fashion prima donna Miranda Priestly in 'Devil Wears Prada'

THE PRADA RANT



'You think this has nothing to do with you. You go to your closet and select, I don't know, that lumpy blue sweater for instance because you're trying to tell the world that you take yourself too seriously to care about what you put on your back. But what you don't know is that sweater is not just blue, it's not turquoise, it's not lapis; it's actually cerulean. And that you're also blithely unaware of the fact that in 2002 Oscar de la Renta did a collection of cerulean gowns. And then I think it was Yves Saint Laurent who showed cerulean military jackets, and cerulean quickly showed up in the collections of eight different designers. And then it filtered down to the department stores, and then trickled down into some tragic casual corner where you, no doubt, fished it out of some clearance bin. However, that blue represents millions of dollars and countless jobs and it's sort of comical that you've made a choice that exempts you from the fashion industry. When in fact, you're wearing a sweater that was selected for you by the people in this room, from a pile of...stuff'

So, the big question is, how do we choose what we wear? Has it already been chosen for us (trainers are only for the gym / denim on denim is a faux pas / no brown in town)? Are we sheep just following the rules or trend? And who are the big influencers?

THE SOCIAL MEDIA QUEENS

Instagram is probably the single most powerful tool for wannabe supermodels to influence our decisions and spread it like wildfire. Louise Roe (701k followers) has sparked a whole new following with her mini-me daughter Honor (you're never too thin, too rich, or too young to be an influencer it would appear). Trinny Woodall (436k followers) says, 'think pink to change your mood' and suddenly Zara sells out of pink; and Shini Park (215k followers) quips, 'don eyewear for the weather you want' and Mulberry stocks soar.

THE SCHOOL CARPARK

Remember that 1990's pashmina craze? Well, it all started in the school carpark – posh mummies ruminating over pastel pinks and blues, shooting avaricious stares towards the shahtoosh crowd. Ever since then it's been all, 'Oh I love your Penelope Chilvers' and, 'Where did you get that fur pompom hat?' Hunter wellies and converses are invaluable (a safe fashion stake and comfortable to boot) and as my daughter says, 'knock ten years off you mum'. If in doubt stick to the old classics – the little black dress will always be a THING.

The CELEBS

The day to day choices of top-drawer celebs, like Kim Kardashian West (133M Instagram followers), massively influence the fashion industry. Their expensive designer creations, trickle down through the fashion ladder to brands like Missguided (in this example) who create cheaper versions for the general public. We may think we're steering clear of statement catwalk couture, but follow it we do, albeit a dress with a high slit or cut out midriff.



Then there's the girl-next-door celeb category, like presenter Holly Willoughby, who shop from the high street. More than once, has her outfit sold out within hours of her TV appearance or social media posting.

THE ROYALS

The royals are veteran clothes horses. Premier league fashionistas, with plenty of opportunity to show and shine: royal weddings, christenings, sport events, charity gigs, openings, closures and endless preening for beady-eyed paparazzi.

The Queen always plays it safe: perfectly tailored stylish perfection – a twin set or dashing frock coat with a flash of colour that makes her stand out from the crowd. Eugenie and Beatrice seem to make their own rules. And fickle tabloids swoon between style Kate and style Meghan, who incidentally are both big fans of re-wear, recycling outfits multiple times. A philosophy adopted by celebs like Tiffany Haddish who loves to keep a favourite frock in fashion.

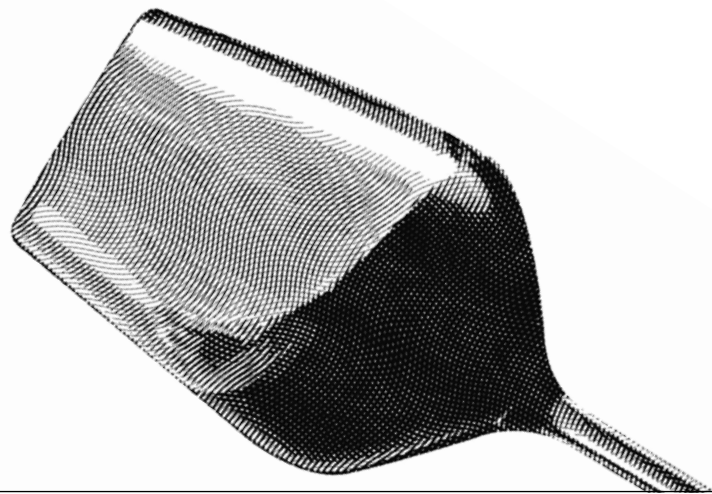


Thanks to a combination of climate change, improved viticulture and oenology knowledge, and increased investment, the English wine industry is flourishing. This has sparked unprecedented interest to visit English vineyards and wineries and to learn more about this increasingly popular national product.

The Wine Garden of England group is made up of seven Kent wine producers: Biddenden, Chapel Down, Domaine Evremond, Gusbourne, Hush Heath Estate, Simpsons Wine Estate and Squerreys. Together, they have formed a pro-active producers group to create a 'world-class' wine trail in partnership with Visit Kent.

This friendly collective has formed to promote the Wine Garden of England, with its superb quality wines and the county's unique and prized terroir. As the English market grows, wine lovers will look forward to seeing regional variation like one would in France. This is what makes wine fascinating, that the same grape can be grown in two different, even neighbouring regions, and yet look so different.

Discussing the wine partnership, Pierre-Emmanuel Taittinger, of Champagne Taittinger and Kent collaboration Domaine Evremond, said: "Kent is one of the warmest and driest counties of England, and we were delighted to find some beautiful land, on chalk, near the charming village of Chilham - we planted our first vines in May last year at Domaine Evremond. We were welcomed with open arms by the other producers in the region and I am delighted that we are joining forces with six of the top Kentish wineries in the spirit of friendship, to form the Wine Garden of England."



GARDEN OF ENGLAND WINE GROWER CHARLES SIMPSON OF SIMPSONS WINE ESTATE GIVES US HIS TOP PICKS FOR STILL WINES



SIMPSONS

Rabbit Hole Pinot Noir
or Railway Hill Rosé or
Derrington Pinot Meunier.



CHAPEL DOWN

Kits Coty Chardonnay



HUSH HEATH

Skye's English White
(Pinot Blanc + Chardonnay)



BIDDENDEN

Gamay



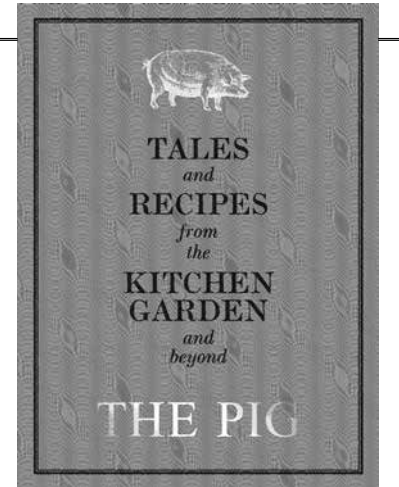
GUSBOURNE

Boot Hill Pinot Noir

HOT OFF THE PRESS

from our very own

Piggy pages



'The Pig: Tales and Recipes from the Kitchen Garden and Beyond' is the first book about all things PIG! On sale from 1st August, it is packed full of simple recipes, kitchen garden tips and tricks, interior inspirations and home-grown how to's – a perfect pressie for PIG aficionados.

Available now to pre-order at www.thepighotel.com, with dispatch on 1st August. Also available to purchase from any PIG hotel Reception from 1st August.

Taking our inspiration from a sneak peek inside the pages of book, we ask our very own hotel visionary, Robin Hutson, about his favourite recipe and the key ingredients for great hospitality.

Robin distils the tricks of the trade: keep it simple, do your prep... and don't forget the Maltesers. Have a laid-back, generous approach to the food and drink you're serving and be a relaxed host.

It's easy to get in a tizz about entertaining at home, but that's generally because we make things too complicated. Three different cocktails and six types of canapés on the menu might sound impressive but will not make for a relaxing, enjoyable evening for anyone – least of all you.

There's that old army adage about 'the 7 Ps', which for me, pretty much sums up the best way to approach entertaining at home. It stands for 'Proper Planning and Preparation Prevents Piss-Poor Performance'. In the world of hospitality, we have a slightly more elegant French phrase that means more or less the same thing. It's 'mise en place' – literally 'put in place'.

So what this essentially means is: sort out as much as you can beforehand and don't leave things to the last minute, or to chance. If your dish requires chopped parsley to finish it, make damn sure that the parsley is already chopped and set aside well in advance. If we have a bunch of mates round for lunch or supper at home, even though we want to make it look effortless and relaxed, preparation is all-important. Basically, anything that can be done before the event is boxed off, which leaves the hours leading up to the meal free to concentrate on cooking and enjoying a couple of glasses with your guests before dinner.

Planning the menu is key too: our failsafe is fizz, olives and nuts for the aperitif, a cold starter (so you can prepare it in advance), a main course that's not 'timing critical' – i.e., it can be slowed down if required – and a cold dessert that just needs to be taken from the fridge when the right moment arrives.

Simplicity and generosity are the other vital factors. The most successful meals are often the most straightforward, but made with the very best ingredients you can afford and cooked really well. One simple plate of pasta or some homemade burgers with decent, free-flowing, thoughtfully chosen wine wins every time over a stressy, overcomplicated meal with this month's must-have ingredients. And while we're on the subject of simplicity, an open box of Maltesers on the table after pudding will beat any fancy petits fours hands-down.

Lots of us have a go-to menu that never lets us down. For Judy and me, it's this: tender, flavoursome beef rib, a crunchy anything-goes salad and the final touch, a bowl of fried potatoes. The quality of the beef is key with this dish, so make sure you buy yours from a good, organic supplier. The secret ingredient? A slosh of sweet pomegranate molasses on the salad to really make it sing.

AGED RIB OF BEEF, SHEPHERD'S SALAD & FRIED POTATOES

SERVES 8

For the beef

- 4 aged ribs of beef
- olive oil
- salt and pepper
- fresh horseradish root, or English mustard, to serve (optional)

For the shepherd's salad

- 3 ripe tomatoes
- a small bunch of spring onions
- ½ cucumber, chopped
- 1 green pepper
- 1 red pepper
- 1 yellow pepper
- 1 avocado, stoned and peeled
- ½ fennel bulb
- the seeds of 1 pomegranate
- a handful of toasted pine nuts
- a big handful of roughly chopped flat leaf parsley
- a big handful of roughly chopped purple basil
- a handful of chopped mint
- a good slosh of tasty olive oil
- a small slosh of pomegranate molasses

For the potatoes

- 1kg (2lb 4oz) potatoes, ideally Pink Fir Apple or Charlotte
- 4 medium-sized red onions
- olive oil

THE ALLOTMENT LET THEM EAT BUGS

Selfridges recently announced that they will be incorporating insect flour into their everyday food items such as pasta and granola bars. An unappetising concept perhaps, but insect flour brings benefits. One hundred percent natural, free from artificial colours, flavourings and preservatives. No MSG. Its high protein and low saturated fat and carbohydrate content make for a healthy cooking ingredient.

The launch of the “bug bars” will follow on from its decision to stock chocolate-covered giant ants in its hallowed London food hall.

WHY INSECT FLOUR?

The obvious attraction is the level of protein in cricket flour compared with your bog-standard plain flour. Off the shelf pasta contains a mere 10 grams of protein, compared to 18 grams in Jimini's insect-enhanced fusilli. As well as minerals, amino acids, fibre, vitamin B12 and calcium, Jimini say that crickets contain twice as much of the ever-important iron than spinach. Is it time Popeye rethought his diet? What's more, there are over 1,900 edible insect species on Earth – a seemingly endless supply of bugs. And what better way to rid the world of mosquitoes?

This craze began after Sainsbury's became the first major supermarket in the UK to stock roasted crickets under the UK brand 'Eat Grub'. Apparently, over 80 per cent of nations consume insects as part of their diet, where, surprisingly they're even considered a delicacy. Not just in South East Asia is entomophagy (the eating of insects) accepted; many areas of Africa, South America and Australia make it common practice. Is this what's contributing to the rising flexitarian diet? It seems a waste not to give this trending snack a try.

HOW IS IT MADE?

It's easy to see why this new type of flour has been introduced, but one has to question just how millions of tiny crawling insects are actually transformed into everyday flour used for cooking and baking?

It takes over 1,000 house crickets to produce each packet of cricket flour according to Bugsolutely.com who state that the largest producer of cricket flour is Thailand, with a recorded 20,000 cricket farms (compare this to around 17,000 dairy farms in the UK). Clearly, crickets are becoming more valuable than cows.

After five weeks on the farm, crickets are harvested, dried, roasted and milled into a fine flour, which is shipped to the likes of Sainsburys, Selfridges and Amazon. Interestingly, Amazon sells a 100g bag of 'Crunchy Critters' flour for £8.49 compared to £1.55 kg for bog-standard plain flour. So, critters don't come cheap. In their defence, Crunchy Critters say it's not technically flour and should not be used for baking due to their 'varying behaviours'.

WHY IS THIS SUCH A TREND?

Insect munching has certainly grown in popularity since 11.6 million people watched Harry Redknapp struggle to eat this little nutriment in 'I'm a Celebrity...Get Me Out of Here'. Growing concerns around the sustainability of traditional protein such as beef, eggs, pork and poultry, are compounded by consumer demands for new and innovative protein-heavy foods. Delicacies such as baked tarantula and chocolate covered scorpions are also becoming popular although I'm less convinced; reviews describe it as 'sawdust-like' and 'smelling a little of cat food'. Another one to try is pumpkin seed granola, made from ground buffalo worms.

ANY NEGATIVES?

Unfortunately, if you have an allergy to other insects, shellfish, or dust mites, it is possible that you could be allergic to crickets. Sadly, you may have to give these snacks a miss...



Rubies in the Rubble has been rescuing fruit in a pickle since 2011, making condiments with a conscience. Their delicious range of award-winning relishes, ketchups and mayo are all made with sustainability at the forefront, from ingredients that would otherwise go to waste, often for simply being the wrong shape, size or colour. Some say it's a load of rubbish... they take that as a condiment.

www.rubiesintherubble.com



WANDERLUST



A mile from the airport, the rusty arm of the signpost points to Moscow. But we're not in Russia. Well not anymore, or ever, if you ask the locals, who hold their neighbours with unconcealed disdain. Tbilisi, even on a sunny morning, is coated in austerity – the outskirts are a maze of grey concrete punctuated with great statues, cast in industrial iron. Elfish Georgian script adorns the capital's billboards and shopfronts like a child's play-writing, an exotic pretend kind of prose that merely adds to the mysteriousness. Further into the city there are deliciously lopsided balconies, cobbled squares with golden horses, wide Parisian avenues, abandoned tram carriages selling ice cream and coffee, and an incongruent row of western shops like Zara (does Zara get everywhere?).

Tbilisi is a city of layers 1500 years old – made, ruined and remade 17 times. What remains is from the Russian empire and Soviet Union times. A mishmash of buildings, crudely built, often ramshackle and basic. Men wear the hardest of life on their faces without appearing hard and women have a matter-of-fact air portraying a life lived day by day. Everyone wears a thick coat and hat: Georgia is a frontier land dominated by the cold corridor of winds that hurtle along its mountainous spine.

The Bridge of Peace, an incongruously modern structure over the River Mtkvari, was initially sniffed at by locals but is now seen as a link between old and new. A symbol of optimism. The scent of progress is still fresh in the air; gas and electricity arrived as recently as 1996 and you sense that creature comforts are a new arrival following the peaceful 2003 revolution, which marked the end of the Soviet era of leadership in the country. All is

quiet on the western front today, following the brief Russo-Georgian war in August 2008, but a territorial dispute continues...

Interestingly, Shia and Sunni Muslims share the mosque – a rare unison in a world where religious convictions more commonly divide. It wasn't always so. Georgia, or Iberia as it was known, has a rich history, visibly defined by the course of her religion. The country became one of the first to convert its state to Christianity in the fourth century when a female evangelist called Nino (confusingly, also called Nina sometimes) crossed the land, preaching and curing, converting the people from paganism. Today 88 percent of the population is Georgian Orthodox Christian and still practicing. Something of a miracle considering mass can last for three hours with a strict standing-room-only policy.

Georgia's wine production is a badge of pride. Dating back 8,000 years, the country has been recognised as the cradle of wine; central to family life and symbolic to religious services. The country's best wines come from the Tsinandali Estate in the Telavi district roughly 80km from the capital. This verdant valley in the Caucasus hasn't changed much since the writer Dumas fell in love with its horse-drawn carts, hayricks, winding rivers and rich cultural life.

Georgian hospitality is the stuff of legends. Supra, a traditional Georgian feast, is a key part of the country's social culture. Proceedings revolve around lengthy toasts given by the Tamada (or toastmaster) and their famous proverb “Every guest is a gift from God”, says a lot about their generosity.

Set in the heart of Kakheti, Tsinandali Palace was the home of one of the most colourful characters in Georgian history, Prince Alexander Chavchavadze. Born in 1786, he was an acclaimed linguist and poet who brought European wine making techniques to Georgia – along with the grand piano, horse-drawn carriage and billiards. The adjoining hotel is fast becoming the hot new destination for sophisticated wine enthusiasts. The main area is the library, a big space filled with vintage European furniture, board games, shelves of yellow spined National Geographic, and tattered old editions on everything from 1970's fashion to a well thumbed Webster's Dictionary. The result is a contemporary Soho House feel where you can grab a corner with a coffee or cha-cha and read whatever takes your fancy.

Back in Tbilisi, Meidan Square links a chain of narrow lanes, during medieval times each traded in something different: silver, bread, wine, or clothes – a multitude of free economics that was set off by different bells for the various Jewish, Armenian, and Christian quarters. Above it all, the statue of Mother Georgia stands, holding a sword and a cup of wine to fend off the enemy and welcome friends respectively. Georgia is a country that wants to be discovered – her final farewell blessing (inscribed on the marionette theatre), ‘May onions be your only cause for tears’ – says it all.

Where to stay: Radisson Blu Iveria Hotel in Rose Revolution Square, in the heart of Tbilisi, nestled between the beautiful Mtkvari River and Caucasus, followed by a trip to the winelands at the Radisson Tsinandali Estate Hotel. www.radissoncollection.com



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