

The HITLIST

LONDON → ANTONIA WINDSOR

The restaurant

LUCKY CAT, CITY

As we got our coats to leave the new Gordon Ramsay restaurant at the top of 22 Bishopsgate – the tallest building in the City of London – the elegantly dressed staff member informed us we'd just eaten in the highest restaurant in Europe. Floor 60, where Ramsay's restaurant spreads out in dusky colours until it meets the floor-to-ceiling glass windows and incredible views, certainly feels very high. It reminds me of the romcom *Lost in Translation*, with its Tokyo vibe. Cocktails are surprising (the sukiyaki western django came with a spoonful of orange boba) and expertly crafted and the food has a small-plate philosophy with dishes to share. We could have opted for a set menu, but grazing meant we could order an additional portion of the crispy squid once we'd tasted how delicious it was and we complemented it with Ramsay's famous GFC (Gordon's Fried Chicken). An ubercool female DJ was spinning tunes and we could have stayed talking, traffic-gazing and tempura munching until lam – surprising for a Monday night. But then this is the City, where the youthful workforce survives on adrenalin alone – with perhaps a plate or two of sushi. gordonramsayrestaurants.com



The brunch

BOCCICHINO, MAYFAIR

Sundays are meant for long, leisurely family meals, but sometimes you can't all agree on what you want. I wanted a roast dinner with all the trimmings, my husband wanted a late breakfast, my eldest wanted lasagne, my middle child wanted pizza and the youngest just wanted to just pick on "this and that", so when we discovered that the neighbourhood Italian restaurant Bocconchino was offering a hotel-style Sunday brunch buffet we were all sold.

The Il Grande Brunch costs £120 per person for free-flowing champagne or £85 with a single glass. The extensive menu includes a wide selection of antipasti to help yourself to; including cured meats, hunks of parmesan, lobster claws, shell-on prawns and oysters. You can then serve yourself hearty portions of handmade pasta or order plates of pizza or roast beef. The food is flavoursome and filling, but what really makes it a memorable family experience is the live music that plays almost non-stop from midday to 4pm. I was so engrossed in the talented duo's performance, I didn't see how many times the kids returned to the sweet trolley.

bocconcinorestaurant.co.uk/mayfair



The afternoon tea

THE PENINSULA LONDON, BELGRAVIA

I was a little unsure what to think when I heard that the Peninsula's £85 afternoon tea was to be served in the lobby. However, when I walked through the revolving doors, I realised this was no ordinary lobby. A pianist was positioned in front of me, as though to say, "Entrance? What entrance? Can't you see we are in a grand, oversized drawing room?" It's a lofty, serene space adorned with high ceilings, contemporary chandeliers, and an abundance of natural light. The experience begins with a glass of house champagne and a couple of *amuse bouches* served in the hands of a miniature porcelain Peninsula bear – a truffle béchamel and gruyère choux and a cheese sablé with a pumpkin and wild mushroom jelly. Following this was a rather ordinary-looking plate of sandwiches of which the egg and truffle mayonnaise was the most delicious. We were told we could order more of anything, but we were keen to move on. Then the tiered stand arrived and we were delighted to see we had a cake plate each and didn't have to fight over the apple pecan tart. The scones were suitably crumbly. Two hours and countless pots of tea later and we'd forgotten we were in a lobby. peninsula.com



The bar

ABAR, MANDARIN ORIENTAL MAYFAIR

Entering this rooftop bar at the top of the Mandarin Oriental in Mayfair feels notably exclusive. An unmarked lift leads to a black door. I thought I might need to perform a secret knock to be admitted. Opened in November 2024, this 50-seat bar and outdoor terrace was originally designed for reservations only. However, it's now accepting walk-ins and is well worth stopping by, if only for quick drink while marveling at the panoramic views extending as far as Hampstead Heath and the London Eye. Although this bar has more going for it than just the view. The cocktails are inspired by the changing seasons and like miniature works of art in their flavour combinations. In Haru (Spring) you'll find the Rhubarb & Rose (Altos Blanco tequila, Amaro Santoni, and Fever Tree rhubarb and raspberry tonic), while in Fuyu (Winter) there's the Dates & Coffee cocktail (the Macallan Double Cask 12-year-old whisky, Discarded Sweet Cascara vermouth, Mancino Kopi vermouth, café Maderas and dates).

Chef Akira Back has also curated a menu of small dishes, including sushi bites, Iberico ham with crositini and Wagyu broche burger.

mandarinoriental.com



The HITLIST

LONDON

The museum

MOCO, MARBLE ARCH

Visitors are greeted by Jeff Koons' mirrored Eeyore, leaving no doubt that your inner child is invited to play here. The bubblegum-pink branded Moco Museum, following successful openings in Amsterdam and Barcelona, shows modern art for the enjoyment of all. Before even reaching the lift there are pieces by Basquiat, Damien Hirst, Yayoi Kusama and Andy Warhol, with an audio tour explaining the significance of these major works of art. Upstairs, Marina Abramović's "Healing Frequency" invites interactions with crystal-laden chairs, while Banksy's Battle of the Beanfield offers political commentary. Takashi Murakami's 16-metre superflat piece blends classic Japanese art with Kawaii styling and memento mori cherry blossom, managing to stand out among contributions from Emin, KAWS and JR. The basement at Moco takes a darker turn, with eerie sculptures, an AI game and an automated heart, but Daniel Arsham's site-specific Lunar Garden provides a meditative, unifying finale. **JD Murphy**

mocomuseum.com



The salon

WS STUDIOS, PIMLICO

When I heard WS Studios in Pimlico had scooped "Best Cutting Salon" at the National Beauty Awards I had to go and see what was so special about this south London hairdressers.

"People not only come from all over London to have their hair cut here," says founder and top stylist Walter Stojash. "They come from all over the country." And I can see why. When I enter this open-plan, street-front salon on a Friday night there is a feelgood party vibe. The kind of easy upbeat music you might find at a beach club fills the room, while the place is busy with clients getting their hair done ahead of the weekend. They may have scooped the award for best cut, but the salon is particularly known for its careful and innovative colouring including, balayage.

Walter, who is a descendent of the Masovian royal family of the Piast dynasty, is no stranger to awards ceremonies, having picked up gongs for Best Hairdresser and Most Influential Hairdresser last year. So where will he go next? "I'm planning a salon in the city that is going to specialise in a revolutionary new hair-extension technique," he confides. "And then I want to break LA!" **Antonia Windsor**

wsstudios.co.uk



The exhibition

BRASIL! BRASIL! THE BIRTH OF MODERNISM, ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS

This major new exhibition at the Royal Academy features more than 130 works from the 1910s to the 1970s by 10 important Brazilian artists and captures the diversity of Brazilian art at this time. In early 20th-century Brazil, artists were adapting to contemporary trends, international influences and artistic traditions to create a new modern art informed by and celebrating its distinct, vibrant cultures, identities and landscapes. The majority of works in the exhibition have never been exhibited in the UK. The 10 featured artists include pioneers of early Brazilian Modernism, a movement spearheaded by Anita Malfatti followed by Vicente do Rego Monteiro, the Jewish Lithuanian emigré Lasar Segall, Candido Portinari and Tarsila do Amaral, now internationally celebrated as a leading female figure of Brazilian Modernism. The exhibition also includes the self-taught artists Alfredo Volpi and Djanira, an artist of indigenous descent, Afro-Brazilian artist Ruben Valentim, the early Neo-Concrete polymath Geraldo de Barros, and the artist and architect Flávio de Carvalho, who was also one of Brazil's first performance artists. royalacademy.org.uk



The club

PITCH, CANARY WHARF

A sleek new indoor golf club has just opened in the heart of the Docklands. It's the third London site for Pitch (alongside one in Dublin), which was founded in 2018, by two PGA professional golf coaches, Elliot Godfrey and Chris Ingham. The bar and social lounge area is a big draw here, which feels a cut above the usual city sports experiences, with retro interiors, big comfortable seating areas and subtle lighting. The shuffleboard tables downstairs add another fun layer to the space, for taking a screen break with platters of dim-sum and other sharing plates to keep hunger at bay. The current member base is a mix of gamers and golfers from beginner to professional who come for the tech-led simulator practice with booths facing screens to really drive the balls at. There are a range of membership options (from £179 a month), which include unlimited hours, access to lessons from PGA coaches, invites to exclusive events and discounts on equipment from the onsite store, which also sells clothing and accessories. **Antonia Wilson**

