



Spring wine tours. Talk tech. Best of Brum. The art of storytelling. Mostly Jazz Funk and Soul. Capital attractions. A neon beacon. 1,000,000 welcomes. 5,000 years of history. Trendcast travel insights. A cool caravan? Racing green. A touch of class. Timeless tales. Listen up! Spring streaming. Design icons.



# Book direct.

For instant savings and instant rewards.



Always save at least 10%.



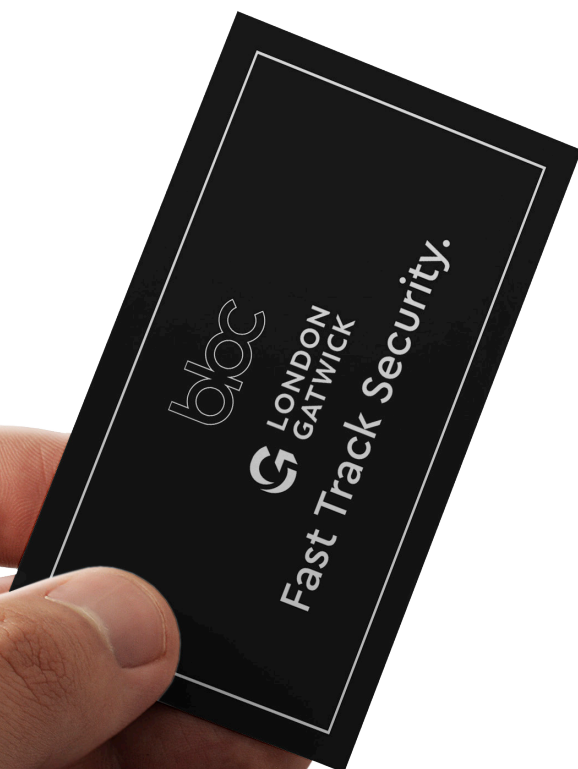
Free room upgrades\*.



Free Fast Track Security.



Just steps from departures.



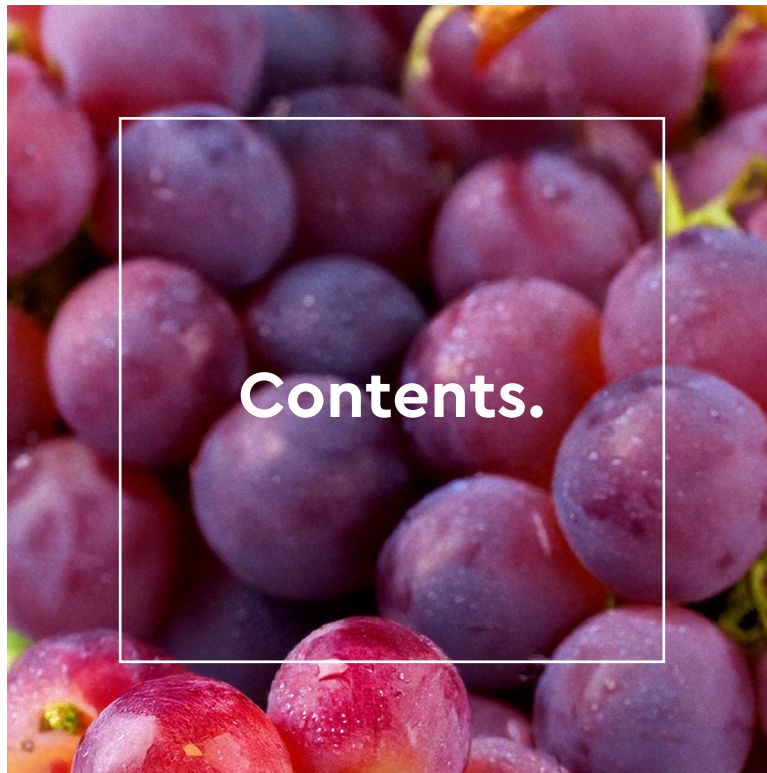
The only hotel reward scheme that rewards you before you book.

No points, no tiers, no need to register in advance and completely free.

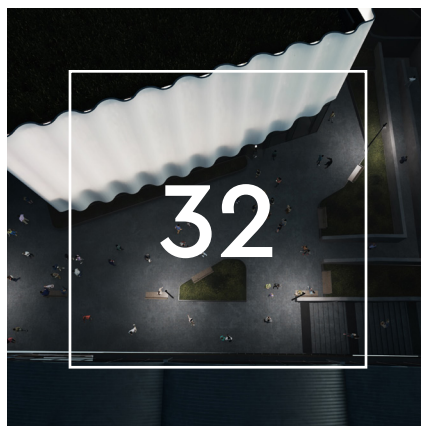
Book now at [blochotels.com](https://blochotels.com)

\*Upgrades may be an upgrade in amenities and/or an upgrade of room type and are subject to availability.





**06** In vino veritas. **22** Talk tech. **24** Best of Brum. **26** The art of storytelling. **28** Mostly Jazz Funk & Soul. **30** Capital attractions **32** A Neon beacon. **36** 1,000,000 welcomes. **38** 5,000 years of history. **40** Trendcast travel insight. **42** Fun and games. **44** A cool caravan? **46** Racing Green. **50** A touch of class. **56** Timeless tales. **58** Listen up! **60** Spring streaming. **62** Meeting the team. **64** Design icons. **66** Puzzles.





# Refresh and recharge.

Book your day-use room at  
[blochotels.com](https://blochotels.com) from just £49.







Welcome to the spring issue of Bloc magazine, where travel, culture, and lifestyle collide! We're celebrating an incredible milestone: welcoming our one millionth guest.

Explore our Spring wine tours around the world, indulge in the best of Birmingham and London's buzzing events, including the Mostly Jazz Funk and Soul festival, and discover the vibrant Neon installation at Battersea.

For travel lovers, we delve into 2025's top trends and unveil Bentley's latest luxury launch, the Flying Spur, perfect for stylish road trips.

Tech enthusiasts will enjoy our coverage of the newest consumer gadgets shaping modern lifestyles.

And there's more—take a virtual trip to the awe-inspiring Grand Egyptian Museum, now open after years of anticipation.

Whether you're looking for adventure, relaxation, or the latest in luxury, Bloc magazine has something for everyone. Sit back, relax, and enjoy your guide to all things travel, culture, and innovation!

Whilst care is taken to ensure that Bloc magazine is as accurate as possible, no responsibility can be taken by Bloc Hotel Operations Limited for any errors or omissions contained herein. Furthermore, responsibility for any loss, damage or distress resulting from adherence to any advice, suggestions or recommendations made available through this magazine, howsoever caused, is equally disclaimed by Bloc Hotel Operations Ltd.

Copyright 2025 Bloc Hotel Operations Ltd. All Rights Reserved. All text, images, graphics, and other materials in this publication are subject to the copyright and other intellectual property rights of Bloc Hotel Operations Ltd, unless otherwise stated. These materials may not be reproduced, distributed, modified or posted to websites or any other medium whether printed or otherwise, without the express written permission of Bloc Hotel Operations Ltd. Bloc magazine is a trademark wholly owned by Bloc Hotel Operations Ltd.





# In vino veritas.

Spring is the perfect season for wine lovers to indulge in vineyard tours across the globe. As the weather warms and the vines awaken from their winter slumber, wineries from France to Australia begin to bustle with activity, offering visitors a taste of both the landscape and its wines.

In Europe, countries like Italy, Spain, Portugal and France boast historic vineyards that come alive with springtime charm. Picture yourself strolling through Tuscany's rolling hills, or sipping a glass of Bordeaux at a family-run château. Across the Atlantic, Napa Valley in California offers lush, green vistas and world-renowned wine, while Argentina's Mendoza region invites oenophiles to experience its vibrant Malbecs with the Andes as a backdrop.

For those seeking more exotic locales, South Africa's Cape Winelands offer a unique blend of stunning scenery and robust reds.

Spring wine tours provide not only the opportunity to sample exceptional wines but also to immerse yourself in the culture, tradition, and natural beauty of each destination, making it an unforgettable experience for wine lovers.







# Bordeaux in bloom.

Bordeaux, one of the world's premier wine regions, truly comes alive in the spring. As the vines emerge from dormancy and the countryside blossoms, it's the ideal time to explore the region's renowned vineyards. Whether you're a seasoned connoisseur or a wine enthusiast, a spring visit to Bordeaux promises unforgettable experiences.







The spring months in Bordeaux offer mild, pleasant weather, perfect for touring the sprawling vineyards and grand châteaux that dot the landscape. The region is best known for its rich red blends, primarily made from Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, and Cabernet Franc, although its crisp white wines and sweet Sauternes also garner global acclaim. As spring progresses, the vibrant green vines begin to bud, creating a picturesque setting for tastings and tours.

Begin your journey in the Médoc, home to some of the most prestigious names in wine, including Château Margaux and Château Latour. Many of these legendary estates offer guided tours, giving visitors the chance to learn about winemaking processes, explore their historic cellars, and sample their exquisite vintages.

For a more relaxed experience, venture to Saint-Émilion, a UNESCO World Heritage site known for its charming medieval village and superb wines. Here, visitors can wander cobbled streets, visit local wine shops, and enjoy tastings at esteemed wineries like Château Ausone or Château Cheval Blanc.

In addition to its renowned reds, spring is an excellent time to discover Bordeaux's white wines. The Pessac-Léognan region, just outside the city, offers excellent Sauvignon Blanc and Semillon tastings.

A springtime visit to Bordeaux is a delightful blend of history, culture, and gastronomy, where fine wines are paired with stunning scenery and warm hospitality. It's a must for any wine lover seeking a unique and enriching experience.





# Your next port of call.

The Douro Valley in northern Portugal is a hidden gem for wine lovers, especially in spring when the region comes alive with lush greenery and blooming vines. As one of the oldest wine regions in the world and a UNESCO World Heritage site, the Douro Valley is famed for its production of Port wine, but also boasts excellent red and white table wines.



A visit to the Douro Valley in spring allows travellers to experience the wine-making process up close. Many of the family-owned quintas (wine estates) open their doors to guests, offering guided tours of their vineyards and cellars. At estates such as Quinta do Vallado and Quinta do Seixo, visitors can enjoy tastings of Port and local wines, paired with regional delicacies like queijo da serra cheese and cured meats. The spring season also brings the opportunity to see the early stages of grape growth, as the vines awaken after winter.

One of the most unique aspects of a Douro Valley wine tour is the landscape itself. Terraced vineyards stretch along the steep hillsides overlooking the Douro River, creating a mesmerising view. In spring, these terraces are vibrant with budding vines and wildflowers, offering a picturesque backdrop for wine tasting and exploration.

River cruises along the Douro are another popular way to experience the valley. Many tours include stops at several vineyards, allowing travellers to savour both the wine and the stunning scenery from the water.

Whether you're a seasoned wine connoisseur or simply looking for a scenic getaway, the Douro Valley in spring offers an unforgettable experience combining exquisite wines, beautiful landscapes, and rich cultural heritage.





# Masters of Malbec.

Mendoza, Argentina, is a dream destination for wine lovers, and spring is the ideal time to experience this picturesque region. Nestled at the foothills of the Andes, Mendoza is world-renowned for its Malbec, offering visitors not only exceptional wine but also stunning landscapes and pleasant weather.



**MENDOZA**





Spring in Mendoza brings a burst of vibrant greenery as the vines awaken after winter. The temperatures are mild, making it perfect for leisurely wine tours, outdoor dining, and scenic hikes. The region is home to some of Argentina's most celebrated wineries, many of which offer tastings, guided tours, and vineyard walks.

Start your journey in the heart of the wine country, the Uco Valley. With its high-altitude vineyards, this area produces wines of exceptional quality. Visits to bodegas such as Catena Zapata and Salentein offer an opportunity to sample robust Malbecs and crisp Torrontés while soaking in views of the snow-capped Andes. The wine-making traditions in Mendoza are deeply rooted in the region's culture, with many family-owned wineries continuing to uphold artisanal practices.

In addition to wine tours, spring in Mendoza is perfect for exploring the surrounding countryside. Embark on a cycling tour through the vineyards or take a day trip to Aconcagua National Park, home to the highest peak in the Western Hemisphere.

Mendoza's culinary scene is another highlight of any spring visit. Many wineries pair their wines with traditional Argentine asados (barbecues), creating an unforgettable food and wine experience. Dine al fresco while savouring local produce, all paired with the region's finest wines.

With its breathtaking scenery, exceptional wines, and warm hospitality, Mendoza in the spring offers an enchanting wine tour adventure that will linger long after the trip is over.





# Rioja dreams.

La Rioja, Spain's premier wine region, is a must-visit for any wine devotee, especially in spring. As the vines begin to bloom and the landscape turns lush and green, this picturesque region offers not only world-class wines but also stunning scenery and rich cultural heritage.







Located in northern Spain, La Rioja is famous for its Tempranillo wines, known for their robust flavours and ability to age beautifully. Spring is an ideal time to visit, with mild temperatures and fewer tourists than the summer months, allowing for a more intimate experience at the region's renowned bodegas (wineries).

Start your visit in Haro, the heart of Rioja wine country, where many prestigious wineries, such as Bodegas Muga and Bodegas López de Heredia, offer tastings and tours. Here, you can explore century-old cellars, learn about the winemaking process, and, of course, sample some of the finest wines Spain has to offer.

Beyond Haro, the landscape of La Rioja is dotted with charming medieval villages, such as Laguardia, which is perched on a hill and surrounded by vineyards. Strolling through its narrow streets feels like stepping back in time. Many local wineries offer tastings in this enchanting setting, making it a perfect stop on a spring wine tour.

For a truly immersive experience, plan your visit around the spring festivals, like the Rioja Wine Harvest Festival in March, where you can enjoy traditional Spanish music, food, and, naturally, an abundance of wine.

La Rioja's springtime beauty, coupled with its legendary wines and warm hospitality, make it an unforgettable destination for wine lovers. Whether you're a seasoned connoisseur or simply looking for a relaxing getaway, La Rioja promises an experience full of flavour and charm.



# California dreaming.

Napa Valley, California, is a dream destination for wine lovers, and spring is the perfect season to explore this world-renowned region. As winter fades and the valley comes to life, vineyards burst with fresh greenery, and the warm sunshine creates an idyllic backdrop for touring some of the best wineries in the world.







Spring in Napa Valley offers a more tranquil experience compared to the busier summer and autumn months. With fewer crowds, you can enjoy leisurely wine tastings and vineyard tours at a relaxed pace. This is also the time when the valley's mustard fields bloom, blanketing the region in vibrant yellow flowers—a stunning contrast to the lush, green vineyards.

Napa is famous for its Cabernet Sauvignon, but you'll also find top-notch Chardonnay, Merlot, and Pinot Noir to sample during your visit. A must-visit winery is Robert Mondavi, one of Napa's pioneering estates, where you can enjoy educational tours and tastings. For lovers of sparkling wine, Domaine Carneros offers an elegant setting with its French-inspired château and impressive views.

To elevate your spring experience, consider a hot air balloon ride over the valley at dawn. Floating above the vineyards, you'll witness Napa's rolling hills and vast wine estates from a unique vantage point. Follow this with a visit to the town of Yountville, known for its Michelin-starred restaurants, where you can pair exceptional wines with fine cuisine.

With its combination of picturesque scenery, world-class wines, and luxurious hospitality, Napa Valley in the spring offers an unforgettable wine tour experience. Whether you're a seasoned connoisseur or a curious newcomer, this California gem has something to offer every wine lover.







# Tours of Tuscany.

Tuscany, with its rolling hills, medieval villages, and cypress-lined roads, is one of the world's most iconic wine regions. Spring is the perfect time to visit, as the mild weather and blooming countryside create an idyllic setting for exploring its famous vineyards and indulging in some of Italy's finest wines.





At the heart of Tuscany's wine country is the Chianti region, known for its Sangiovese grapes, which produce the robust and earthy Chianti Classico wines. Spring is the season to witness the vineyards come to life, with the vines bursting with fresh green growth. A visit to renowned estates such as Castello di Brolio or Fattoria dei Barbi offers a glimpse into the centuries-old traditions of Tuscan winemaking. Many of these estates provide guided tours, where you can learn about the production process, explore historic cellars, and, of course, enjoy tastings of their finest wines.

Beyond Chianti, other wine-producing areas like Montalcino and Montepulciano offer their own distinctive experiences. Montalcino is home to the famed Brunello di Montalcino, one of Italy's most prestigious wines, while Montepulciano's Vino Nobile is another must-try for any wine lover.

Spring in Tuscany is not only about wine but also the rich culinary tradition that complements it. Many wineries offer farm-to-table experiences, where fresh seasonal ingredients are paired with their wines, enhancing the flavours and providing a true taste of Tuscany.

For those seeking a mix of relaxation and culture, Tuscany's wine tours are an unforgettable experience in spring. The landscapes are at their most vibrant, the wine at its freshest, and the hospitality as warm as the Italian sun. It's the perfect way to savour the best of Tuscany's wine heritage.







# The Cape winelands.

As spring blossoms in the Southern Hemisphere, South Africa's Cape Winelands transform into a breathtaking destination for oenophiles.



Stretching across the Western Cape, this renowned wine region offers more than just world-class wines – it provides an immersive experience in stunning landscapes, rich culture, and warm hospitality.

The Cape Winelands encompass picturesque towns such as Stellenbosch, Franschhoek, and Paarl, each brimming with historic vineyards and award-winning estates. Springtime, which runs from September to November in South Africa, is an ideal season to visit. The vineyards burst into life, with vines sprouting fresh green leaves and the surrounding countryside dotted with colourful wildflowers. The mild weather allows for leisurely strolls through the vineyards, guided tours, and al fresco wine tastings.

At the heart of this region is Stellenbosch, home to some of South Africa's oldest and most prestigious wineries. Visitors can sample a variety of wines, from full-bodied reds to crisp whites, all produced in the unique terroir of the Cape. Franschhoek, known as the "food and wine capital" of the country, offers an elegant pairing of fine dining with exquisite wines, and even boasts a dedicated Wine Tram for a relaxed journey between the local vineyards.

Beyond the wine, the Cape offers a deeper connection to nature and history. Many estates feature traditional Cape Dutch architecture, surrounded by towering mountain ranges, providing a serene backdrop to tastings and picnics. The region also celebrates its harvest season in spring, with wine festivals and events showcasing the best vintages.

A spring wine tour in the Cape Winelands offers a chance to discover the warmth and beauty of South Africa, where excellent wines and unforgettable landscapes combine to create a truly enriching experience for any wine lover.





# Tech talk.

In today's fast-paced world, consumer tech is making everyday tasks smarter and more efficient. From AI-powered plant feeders that optimize your greenery's care, to sleek robot vacuums that clean your home hands-free, and powerful new battery chargers, the latest gadgets are transforming our daily routines like never before.



## Swippitt.

Swippitt offers an Instant Power System featuring a charging hub and a protective phone case with a 3,500 mAh battery. The system enables users to swap depleted batteries for fully charged ones in under two seconds, providing immediate power access.

The Swippitt Hub accommodates up to five batteries simultaneously and is compatible with iPhone models 14, 15, and 16. The system is available for pre-order, with shipping expected in June 2025.

\$456 / [swippitt.com](https://swippitt.com)





### LeafyPod.

Effortless AI-powered houseplant care for everyone.

LeafyPod aims to keep all your house plants alive and healthy by tracking soil moisture, light, temperature and humidity.

It's adaptive watering system then adjusts based on plant type and real-time environmental data to prevent both over-watering and under-waterings.

\$148 / [leafypod.one](https://leafypod.one)



### Roborock Saros Z70.

Most robot vacuums struggle to clean effectively when random objects clutter the floor. Roborock's new Saros Z70 tackles this issue with the OmniGrip, a five-axis articulated robot arm that picks up small items and clears obstacles.

Currently, it can handle objects like socks, tissues, or anything under 300 grams, but the company aims to expand its capabilities over time. Pricing remains undisclosed, but Roborock expects to launch the Saros Z70 by Summer 2025.

Price TBC / [roborock.com](https://roborock.com)

### Ozlo Sleepbuds.

If you're a light sleeper, then these super comfortable sleep earbuds designed by three ex-Bose engineers may be the answer. The Sleepbuds can hold up to a 10-hour charge for all-night noise masking from snoring partners, city sounds, or your party loving neighbours. The built-in biometric sensors can also seamlessly detect when you fall asleep, auto-magically switching from your streaming audio to built-in noise-masking sounds.

£299 / [ozlosleep.co.uk](https://ozlosleep.co.uk)



### ThinkBook Plus Gen 6.

For when bigger is actually better, the new Lenovo ThinkBook has a flexible OLED display that can expanded with the simple press of a button.

In roughly 10 seconds, the bright and colourful display can climb to 16.7 inches tall, giving you enough space to fit two 16 x 9 windows stacked on top of each other.

The ThinkBook's innovative design has been thoroughly tested too, rated for at least 30,000 closings and openings of its lid hinge and 20,000 rolls both up and down.

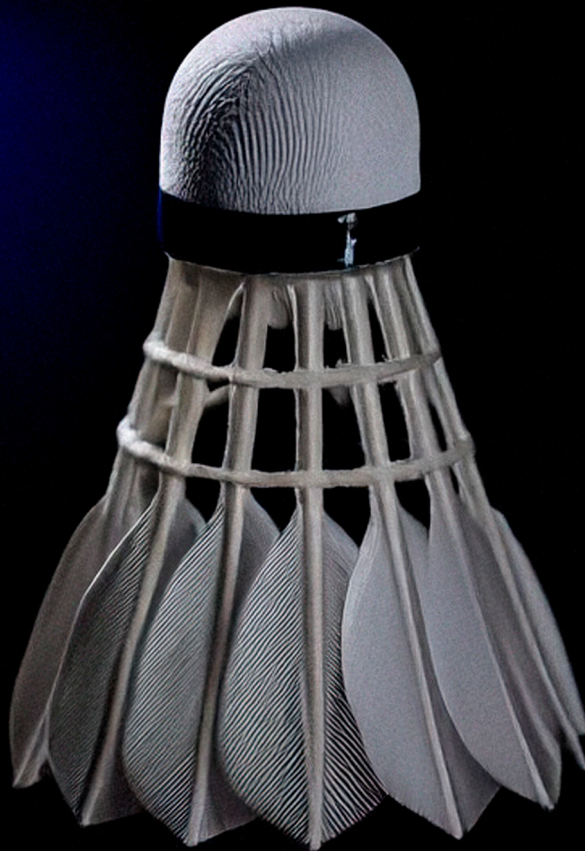
\$3,499 / [lenovo.com](https://lenovo.com)





# Best of Brum.

As spring blossoms in Birmingham, the city comes alive with a vibrant mix of events. From thrilling sports matches and captivating theatre performances to live music gigs and colourful parades, there's something for everyone. Dive into Birmingham's buzzing cultural scene and make the most of this lively season.







**Boy Blue's Cycles.**  
Birmingham Rep. 7th – 8th March.

Winners of the 2024 Sky Arts Award for Dance, Boy Blue are the UK's most celebrated hip-hop dance theatre company. Since the company was founded in east London, 2001, by composer Michael 'Mikey J' Asante MBE and choreographer Kenrick 'H2O' Sandy MBE, they have been a radical force, breaking boundaries and creating "choreographic gold" (The Guardian).

Cycles is movement at its most fluid, distilled and skilled. Resolute and unapologetic, Boy Blue's latest production is a tenacious exploration of hip-hop dance in all its forms. Cycles was nominated for the 2024 Black British Theatre Awards.

[birmingham-rep.co.uk](http://birmingham-rep.co.uk)



**The Smartest Giant in Town.**  
Birmingham Town Hall. 12th – 13th April.

Based on the bestselling book by Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler.

George wishes he wasn't the scruffiest giant in town. So when he sees a new shop selling giant-sized clothes, he decides it's time for a new look: smart trousers, smart shirt, stripy tie, shiny shoes. Now he's the smartest giant in town . . . until he bumps into some animals who desperately need his help – and his clothes!

This heart-warming tale about friendship and helping those in need is brought to life in a musical, puppet-filled adventure.

[bmusic.co.uk](http://bmusic.co.uk)



**Earth Day at Thinktank.**  
Thinktank Science Museum. 22nd Apr.

Thinktank will host the incredible Autin Dance Theatre Company to perform the spectacular *Out in The Deep Blue* – a moving tale about our earth's climate emergency told through dance, movement and masterful puppeteering. This outdoor spectacle features 'Eko', a 13-foot-tall SeaGiant Puppet and 5 world-class performers.

There will be extra under to the sea activities to celebrate the day including *Under the Sea Object Handling* – get hands-on with marine wonders. *Ichthyosaur Make and Take* – discover what our skeleton specimen might have looked like!

[birminghammuseums.org.uk/thinktank](http://birminghammuseums.org.uk/thinktank)



**All England Open Badminton Championship.**  
Utilita Arena. 11th – 16th Mar.

The All England Open Badminton Championships, or simply All England, is the world's oldest and most prestigious badminton tournament.

Played annually, since 1899, athletes from around the world compete for a chance to win the title of champion. With 155 matches, and 50 hours of live badminton over 6 days, this is an event not to be missed. Badminton is one of the most exciting, exhilarating and dynamic sports to watch live. Whether you're a sports fan inspired to sample badminton for the first time or a social player who enjoys time on court every week and wants to see how the professionals do it, this is a captivating experience the whole family can enjoy.

[allenglandbadminton.com](http://allenglandbadminton.com)



**Horrible Histories.**  
Alexandra Theatre. 10th – 12th Apr.

So it's time to prepare yourselves for two amazing shows with *Horrible Histories* live on stage! Using actors and eye-popping 3D special effects, these astounding shows are guaranteed to thrill you and your children. Historical figures and events will come alive on stage and hover at your fingertips!

**AWFUL EGYPTIANS:** From the fascinating Pharaohs to the power of the pyramids, discover the foul facts of death and decay with the meanest mummies in Egypt.

**TERRIBLE TUDORS:** From the horrible Henries to the end of evil Elizabeth, hear the legends (and the lies!) about the torturing Tudors. Find out the fate of Henry's headless wives and his punch up with the Pope.

[atgtickets.com](http://atgtickets.com)



**Mike Peters, The Alarm: Love Hope Strength.**  
Birmingham Town Hall. 25th May.

It's been a remarkable career. Mike Peters, frontman of The Alarm, created one of Britain's best-loved rock bands at the turn of the 1980s. He filled arenas, enjoyed hits with *Sixty Eight Guns* *Spirit Of '76*, and *Absolute Reality*, and opened for U2 and Bob Dylan. There's always been much, much more to the man who was awarded an MBE in 2019.

Mike's a multiple-cancer survivor, whose life story is truly inspiring and extraordinary. To coincide with the publication of his self-penned, multi-edition autobiography – also called *Love Hope Strength* – Mike is coming to Town Hall. Expect acoustic hits, remarkable stories, and an intimate evening with one of rock's great survivors.

[bmusic.co.uk](http://bmusic.co.uk)



# The art of storytelling.

Step into the world of Rembrandt van Rijn, the 17th-century Dutch master known for his remarkable ability to capture human emotion on canvas.







Rembrandt van Rijn (Dutch, 1606–1669) The Return of the Prodigal Son, 1636.

While Rembrandt's paintings are widely celebrated, his work as a printmaker is equally deserving of admiration. His innovative etchings demonstrate a mastery of light and shadow, storytelling, and natural landscapes, and have influenced artists across the centuries.

Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery invites you to explore Rembrandt: Masterpieces in Black and White, a stunning exhibition showcasing a selection of exquisite etchings from the Rembrandt House Museum in the Netherlands. This unique collection traces Rembrandt's evolution as a printmaker, offering insights into his artistic development through self-portraits, landscapes, and narrative-driven scenes.

The exhibition not only highlights Rembrandt's genius but also presents a broader context by featuring artists inspired by him. Visitors will have the opportunity to view Birmingham's own collection of Rembrandt's etchings alongside 20th-century works by two prominent Midlands printmakers. These pieces capture the stark contrast between rural and industrial landscapes, showcasing the enduring legacy of Rembrandt's techniques.

Running from Thursday 6th March to Sunday 1st June, the exhibition will be open Wednesday to Sunday from 10am to 5pm in the Gas Hall at Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery. To ensure your spot, pre-book tickets online, although on-the-day tickets will also be available (subject to availability). Don't miss this rare chance to experience the full range of Rembrandt's printmaking genius in the heart of Birmingham.

[birminghammuseums.org.uk](http://birminghammuseums.org.uk)



Rembrandt van Rijn (Dutch, 1606–1669) Sleeping Puppy, c. 1640.



# Mostly Jazz Funk & Soul.

Nestled in the heart of Birmingham's Moseley Park, the Mostly Jazz Funk & Soul Festival returns for its 2025 edition, promising another unforgettable weekend of live music, dancing, and summer vibes.





What sets Mostly Jazz Funk & Soul apart is its eclectic mix of legendary headliners, rising stars, and local talent, making it a celebration not only of music but of community. Over the years, the festival has seen iconic performances from the likes of Public Enemy, George Clinton, and Kool and The Gang.

This year's line-up features Ezra Collective, Craig Charles, Groove Armada and Maribou State.

Taking place from 11th to 13th July, this festival has become a staple in the UK's music calendar, drawing enthusiasts of jazz, funk, soul, and everything in between.

Moseley Park's intimate, tree-lined setting adds to the festival's charm, offering a relaxed, family-friendly atmosphere. The site boasts a

lake, perfect for picnics and chill-out moments between sets. The event also offers a range of food and drink vendors, showcasing everything from street food to craft ales.

For those looking to enhance their experience, there are dance workshops, spoken word performances, and after-parties that keep the energy going long after the main stage has closed.

Mostly Jazz Funk & Soul is not just about the music – it's about celebrating the spirit of togetherness. Whether you're a dedicated fan of the genres or just looking for a laid-back festival experience, 2025's edition promises to be a joyful, sun-soaked weekend of musical discovery and communal joy in one of Birmingham's hidden gems.

**MARIBOU STATE** **EZRA COLLECTIVE**  
**WAR JALEN NGONDA**  
PLUS SPECIAL GUESTS  
**GROOVE ARMADA** DJ SET  
**SEUN KUTI & EGYPT 80**  
**GOLDIE** DJ SET **CRAIG CHARLES** DJ SET  
**KOFI STONE** **DAVE LEE (JN)** **EROL ALKAN**  
**ROSIE LOWE** **MRCY** **TOM MCGUIRE & THE BRASSHOLES**  
**HARRSN FT THE HOUSE** **GOSPEL CHOIR** **SOMEWHERE SOUL** DJ SET  
**WONDER 45** **LULU** **SAM REDMORE** PRESENTS A JAMES BROWN SPECIAL  
**AMY GADIAGA** **FILA BRAZILLIA** **SUMMER PEARL** **THE NEW CONSISTENT** **MT JONES**  
**HEAVY BEAT BRASS BAND** **LEFTFOOT** **BIG BAND OF BOOM**  
**ALIVE BY NIGHT** **DIDDY SWEG** **LAOD DISCO** **MANIFEST SPEAK!**  
**CZAFARI** **B+AND TOGETHER** **SOUNDLAB** **BRUM VARIATIONS** **DJS**  
**THE HUSSAIN BROTHERS** **DDQ** **SERMON** **THE LOVELY HELEN** **MING (EAT VIETNAM)**



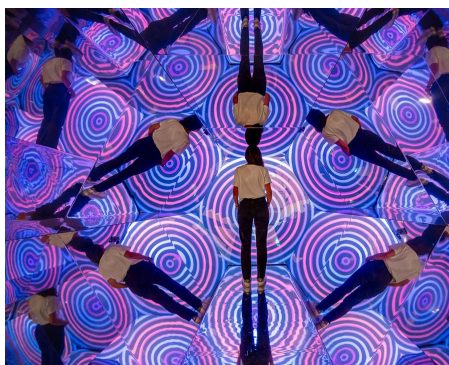
Scan for more info and to book VIP room + ticket packages.



# Capital attractions.

Spring in London is buzzing with vibrant events. Explore captivating exhibitions at world-class galleries, dive into interactive gaming festivals, and get your adrenaline pumping with the thrilling Dare Skywalk at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium. Whether you're seeking culture, entertainment, or adventure, London's spring calendar has something for everyone.





**Twist Museum.**  
Oxford Street, London. Ongoing.

Test your senses and immerse yourself into a world of unique, interactive and multisensory experiences at Twist Museum in Oxford Street.

Get up close and personal in the mind-altering immersive rooms and experience interactive illusions to discover how your brain interprets reality.

What colours can you see? Do you know which way is the right way up? Find out for yourself at Twist Museum.

[twistmuseum.com](http://twistmuseum.com)



**Vogue Exhibition: Inventing the Runway.**  
Lightroom, Coal Drops Yard. Until 26th Apr.

Discover a striking exhibition exploring the history of the fashion runway show in Vogue: Inventing the Runway at Lightroom.

VOGUE: Inventing the Runway is a spectacular new immersive exhibition exploring the history of the fashion runway show, from the intimate couture salons of the early 20th century to the unforgettable pop-culture events of the present.

Narrated by Cate Blanchett, the show utilises Vogue's remarkable archive and contributor network to create an experience that brings together the industry's leading voices from the past, present, and future.

[lightroom.uk](http://lightroom.uk)



**Monopoly Lifesized.**  
213 Tottenham Court Road. Ongoing.

Get ready to explore London's most famous locations and complete exhilarating escape room-style challenges at Monopoly Lifesized!

Experience the popular family game come to life, as you roll the giant dice and move around the interactive board.

Be entertained by 80 minutes of immersive gameplay and attempt to build your London empire – just try not to end up in jail!

[monopolylifesized.com](http://monopolylifesized.com)



**The Dare Skywalk.**  
Tottenham Hotspur Stadium. Ongoing.

Hold your nerve as you scale the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium on The Dare Skywalk, an adrenaline experience like no other in London.

This thrilling climb gives you the chance to scale the stadium, all the way up to the famous golden cockerel on its roof.

Make sure to take plenty of pictures as you step out onto a glass walkway and viewing platform more than 46 metres (150 ft) above the pitch – from there, you'll see panoramic views of the capital.

[tottenhamhotspurstadium.com](http://tottenhamhotspurstadium.com)



**London Games Festival.**  
Various venues. Ongoing.

Get ready to play! London Games Festival returns April 2–13, 2025, promising an epic celebration of all things gaming. Dive into the action with "New Game Plus," a brand-new expo showcasing hot upcoming titles across all platforms.

Don't miss the prestigious BAFTA Games Awards, innovative indie games at "Now Play This," and the business-focused Games Finance Market. Plus, expect exciting events in Trafalgar Square and pop-up experiences citywide. Whether you're a hardcore gamer or just curious, LGF 2025 is the ultimate play ground!

[games.london](http://games.london)



**Grand Designs Live.**  
Excel London. 2nd – 5th May.

Grand Designs Live London is an annual event inspired by the popular TV show Grand Designs, offering visitors a unique opportunity to explore the latest innovations in home building, renovation, and interior design.

Held at ExCeL London, the show features expert advice, live demonstrations, and over 500 exhibitors showcasing sustainable solutions, cutting-edge technology, and stylish décor. From architectural inspiration to practical tips, it's a must-visit for homeowners, renovators, and design enthusiasts looking to transform their living spaces.

[granddesignslive.com](http://granddesignslive.com)



# A Neon beacon.

Battersea Power Station will welcome a cutting-edge event space created by NEON, a global leader in immersive experiences and exhibitions. This new venue, the first-ever purpose-built cultural and entertainment exhibition space in Central London, is set to elevate the iconic riverside neighbourhood's cultural appeal.

Located on Circus Road East, next to the historic power station, it will showcase NEON's world-renowned immersive exhibitions, promising to deliver unforgettable experiences to Londoners and visitors alike.

NEON has established itself as a pioneer in experiential entertainment, renowned for creating large-scale, immersive exhibitions. Their latest venture at Battersea Power Station will draw from an impressive portfolio of touring exhibitions, such as Machu Picchu and the Golden Empires of Peru and Jurassic World: The Exhibition, providing a semi-permanent home for these experiences in the UK. The new space will host two major exhibitions per year, bringing acclaimed global content right to the heart of London.

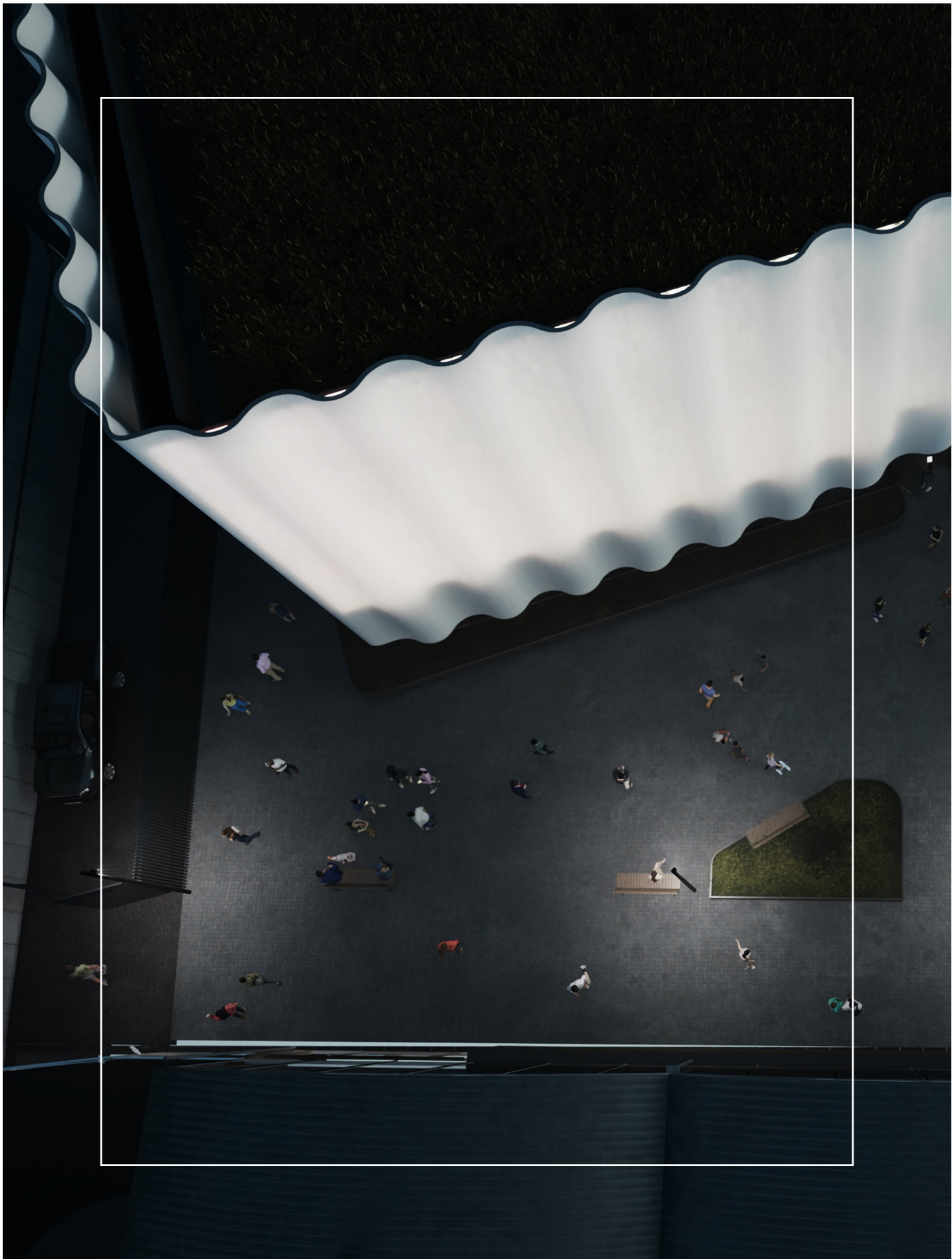
Battersea Power Station has quickly transformed into a cultural hub since its grand reopening in October 2022. With over 150 shops, bars, restaurants, and leisure venues, the riverside neighbourhood has become a thriving destination for residents and tourists. The annual events programme, which includes highlights like the Light Festival, celebrASIA, and Christmas at Battersea Power Station, has cemented the area's reputation as a key cultural player. In 2024, it was even recognised by National Geographic as one of the world's top 20 "Best Cultural Spots".

NEON's new venue will not only add to the vibrancy of the area but will also coincide with the start of Wandsworth's year as the London Borough of Culture.













This opening will further Battersea's vision of becoming a centre for arts, entertainment, and community engagement. The new venue is expected to attract not just local visitors, but also tourists from around the globe, making it a landmark addition to London's cultural scene.

To mark the grand opening, NEON will offer 5,000 free tickets to local schools, ensuring students can experience the exhibitions first-hand. Additionally, 1,000 tickets will be provided to local charities and community organisations, reinforcing NEON's commitment to accessibility and inclusivity.

As anticipation builds for the first exhibition to be announced, visitors can keep up-to-date on upcoming events and secure priority access to tickets through the official website, [NeonAtBPS.co.uk](https://NeonAtBPS.co.uk). With the launch of this new venue, NEON at Battersea Power Station is set to become a must-visit destination, offering unique, immersive experiences that will captivate audiences from near and far.

For more information about NEON at Battersea Power Station, visit the official website or follow along on social media for the latest news and updates.

[neonatbps.co.uk](https://neonatbps.co.uk)





# 1,000,000 welcomes.

Bloc Gatwick was delighted to announce a significant milestone in its journey, having welcomed its one millionth guest. This achievement marks a proud moment for the team at Bloc, as it continues to deliver exceptional experiences to travellers from all over the world.







Conveniently located within Gatwick Airport's South Terminal, Bloc Hotel has become the go-to destination for passengers seeking a blend of comfort, style, and technology during their travels. The hotel's unique concept offers state-of-the-art, space-efficient rooms, coupled with smart technology to ensure a seamless stay for its guests.

To celebrate the occasion, Bloc Hotel hosted a special event, with the one millionth guests, William and Annie McHugh, being greeted with a warm welcome by the hotel team. Bill and Annie were treated to an upgraded stay in Bloc's luxurious Runway Suite, with unrivalled views across the runway. As part of the surprise, they were given an exclusive VIP experience including Champagne, refreshments and £500 spending money. Bloc's lounge partner, No1 Lounges, also welcomed Bill and Annie pre-flight.

Bloc Hotel's General Manager, Alex Mee, commented on the milestone: "We are thrilled to have reached this incredible milestone of welcoming our one millionth guest. It is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our team, as well as the trust that travellers have placed in us to provide a premium experience. Our goal has always been to offer a convenient, stylish, and comfortable option for travellers, and we're excited to continue on this path as we look towards the future."

Bloc Gatwick offers travellers easy access to Gatwick's terminals, making it the ideal choice for business and leisure travellers alike.

As Bloc celebrates this remarkable milestone, it continues to expand its reach, with plans for future developments aimed at enhancing the guest experience. The hotel is looking forward to welcoming many more guests in the years to come.





# 5,000 years of history.

The highly anticipated Grand Egyptian Museum (GEM) has finally opened its doors, showcasing the rich and awe-inspiring history of Ancient Egypt on an unprecedented scale. Situated just two kilometres from the iconic Giza Pyramids, the museum is poised to become one of the world's leading cultural landmarks, combining cutting-edge design with one of the most extensive collections of Egyptian antiquities ever assembled.







The GEM has been decades in the making, with construction beginning in 2002. Its opening marks a momentous occasion for Egypt, as it becomes the largest archaeological museum in the world. Spread across an impressive 480,000 square metres, the museum's striking modern design complements the ancient artefacts it houses. Visitors are greeted by a colossal 11-metre statue of Ramses II, which sets the tone for the grandeur and scale of the exhibitions inside.

The museum is home to over 100,000 artefacts, including the complete collection of treasures from the tomb of King Tutankhamun. Many of these pieces are being displayed together for the first time, providing an unprecedented glimpse into the life of the boy king. In addition to Tutankhamun's treasures, the GEM features an extensive range of objects spanning 5,000 years of Egyptian history, from the earliest dynasties to the Greco-Roman period.



What sets the GEM apart is its blend of modern technology with ancient heritage. The museum uses augmented reality, 3D visualisations, and immersive experiences to bring Egypt's past to life in ways never before seen. Its state-of-the-art conservation facilities ensure that these priceless relics are preserved for generations to come.

With its grand opening, the Grand Egyptian Museum is set to become a beacon for cultural tourism, inviting visitors from around the world to explore the wonders of Ancient Egypt.

[visit-gem.com](http://visit-gem.com)



A silhouette of a hand reaching upwards, palm open, against a background of a sunset or sunrise sky with soft orange and blue hues. The hand is positioned on the right side of the frame, reaching towards the top right corner.

# Travel trends.

In 2025, the world of travel is set to be transformed by a series of exciting trends that reflect the shifting priorities of today's travellers. Tripadvisor has launched Trendcast 2025, an insightful report that offers a forecast of what the future holds for tourism, based on data from the platform's extensive user base and global insights.

From new ways to explore the world to the rise of conscious and experiential travel, these trends are shaping how we travel, why we travel, and where we go.

**Astrology and Spiritual Travel.** Spirituality is playing an increasingly prominent role in travel, with Written in the Stars being one of the top trends for 2025. With a growing interest in astrology, tarot readings, and

cosmic wellness, many travellers are seeking out spiritual retreats and experiences that help them connect with the universe. Wellness resorts are increasingly offering astrology-based programmes, guided meditation, and even crystal healing as part of their offerings. Travellers are also drawn to destinations that have historical ties to spiritual practices, such as India's ashrams or Mexico's ancient Mayan temples.











A full-page background image showing a diver in a black wetsuit and mask, surrounded by a massive, dense school of fish in deep blue water. The fish are silvery and appear to be moving in a coordinated pattern. The diver is positioned in the center, looking towards the camera. The lighting is dim, creating a mysterious and immersive atmosphere.

### **Waterculturalism.**

One of the key trends for 2025 is Waterculturalism, which highlights the growing popularity of water-based experiences that blend adventure, wellness, and culture. From modern bathhouses to eco-friendly underwater conservation activities, water is becoming central to many travellers' itineraries. Places like Japan's onsen spas, Iceland's geothermal lagoons, and Italy's historic thermal baths are attracting visitors not just for relaxation but also for social and cultural immersion. Additionally, snorkelling and diving experiences that focus on marine conservation are gaining traction as eco-conscious travellers seek to protect the world's oceans while enjoying them.

### **Adult playtime.**

Another exciting development is the rise of Play it Forward, where playful experiences that were once reserved for children are being adapted for adults. Travellers are embracing activities that offer fun and whimsy, from immersive dining experiences with storytelling elements to escape rooms and virtual reality gaming. This trend reflects the growing desire for adults to reconnect with their sense of wonder and curiosity while travelling. Destinations that offer interactive and themed experiences, such as Japan's Pokémon cafés or immersive theatre performances in London, are tapping into this newfound enthusiasm for playful exploration.

### **Immersive local travel.**

While the days of cramming multiple cities into a single trip are fading, Nano Neighbourhoods represent a growing trend towards slower, more immersive travel. Instead of hopping between tourist hotspots, travellers are taking the time to explore specific neighbourhoods in-depth, one block at a time. By immersing themselves in the daily rhythms of local life, they gain a deeper understanding of the culture and people of a destination. Cities like Tokyo, with its distinct districts such as Shibuya and Harajuku, or New York's neighbourhoods like Williamsburg and Greenwich Village, are perfect for this type of exploration.

### **Celebratory travel.**

#### **A New Way to Mark Milestones**

Finally, the trend of Celebratory Travel is growing as people look for new ways to mark important life events. Traditional honeymoons and birthdays are making room for "retiremoons," "divorcecations," and other milestone trips. These celebratory journeys allow travellers to turn personal milestones into memorable travel experiences, whether it's a solo trip to celebrate newfound independence or a retirement cruise with family and friends.

As we head into 2025, these emerging travel trends reflect a shift towards more meaningful, immersive, and playful travel experiences.



# Making caravans cool?

As sustainable travel gains momentum, the Pebble Flow electric trailer is revolutionising the way we experience road trips. This innovative trailer, designed with eco-conscious adventurers in mind, combines cutting-edge technology with sleek aesthetics, offering a green alternative to traditional caravans.







Developed by Boulder Vehicles, the Pebble Flow trailer is powered by a high-capacity battery system, which can be charged via solar panels or electric hook-ups. The trailer's aerodynamic shape and lightweight design ensure minimal drag, making it easy to tow with an electric vehicle, reducing energy consumption and extending the range of electric cars on long journeys. The Pebble offers an efficient and environmentally friendly way to explore the great outdoors without leaving a carbon footprint.

Inside, the Pebble is a haven of modern design and functionality. The spacious interior features a minimalist aesthetic, with smart storage solutions that make the most of every inch of space. It boasts a fully equipped kitchenette, complete with induction hobs, a fridge, and a fold-out dining area. The sleeping area comfortably fits two, with options to expand the layout for larger groups.

The interior also includes a sleek bathroom with an eco-friendly water

recycling system, further enhancing its sustainability credentials.

One of the most exciting features of the Pebble is its smart control system, which allows users to monitor and manage key functions via a mobile app. From tracking battery levels to adjusting the temperature and lighting, the app gives travellers complete control, making the experience seamless and convenient. Additionally, the trailer is equipped with energy-efficient LED lighting, solar-powered ventilation, and sustainable materials throughout its construction.

The Pebble is a game-changer for eco-friendly travel. It offers the freedom to explore off-grid destinations while reducing the environmental impact. For those looking to embrace a more sustainable way of travel, the Pebble presents the perfect blend of innovation, comfort, and sustainability, paving the way for the future of electric travel trailers.

From \$109,500 – [pebblelife.com](https://pebblelife.com)

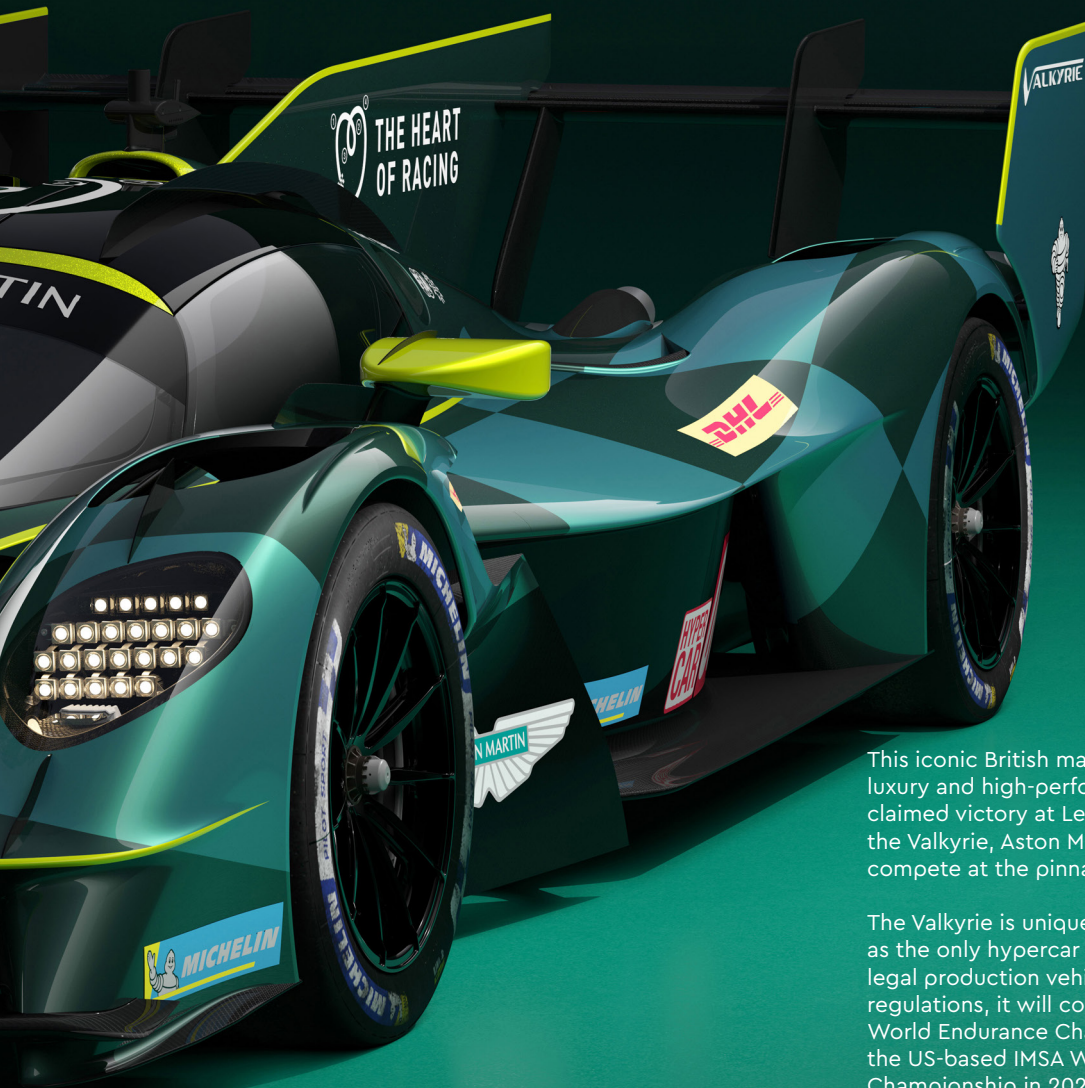


# Racing green.

In a bold return to the world of endurance racing, Aston Martin has unveiled its Valkyrie hypercar, setting its sights on overall victory at the 24 Hours of Le Mans.







This iconic British marque, known for blending luxury and high-performance engineering, last claimed victory at Le Mans in 1959. Now, with the Valkyrie, Aston Martin is back, ready to compete at the pinnacle of motorsport.

The Valkyrie is unique among its competitors as the only hypercar derived from a road-legal production vehicle. Built to FIA Hypercar regulations, it will compete in both the FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC) and the US-based IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship in 2025. The factory team, known as The Heart of Racing (THOR), will run dual race programmes in both championships and Valkyrie made its competitive debut in Qatar on 28 February 2025.



"The Aston Martin Valkyrie is not just a hypercar; it is a revolution in automotive engineering history representing the pinnacle of performance, design and innovation. With an extraordinary fusion of F1® technology and road car mastery, Valkyrie is truly built for racing and its participation in the highest level of world endurance racing will only further cement its technological achievement."

- Adam Carter, Head of Endurance Motorsport.



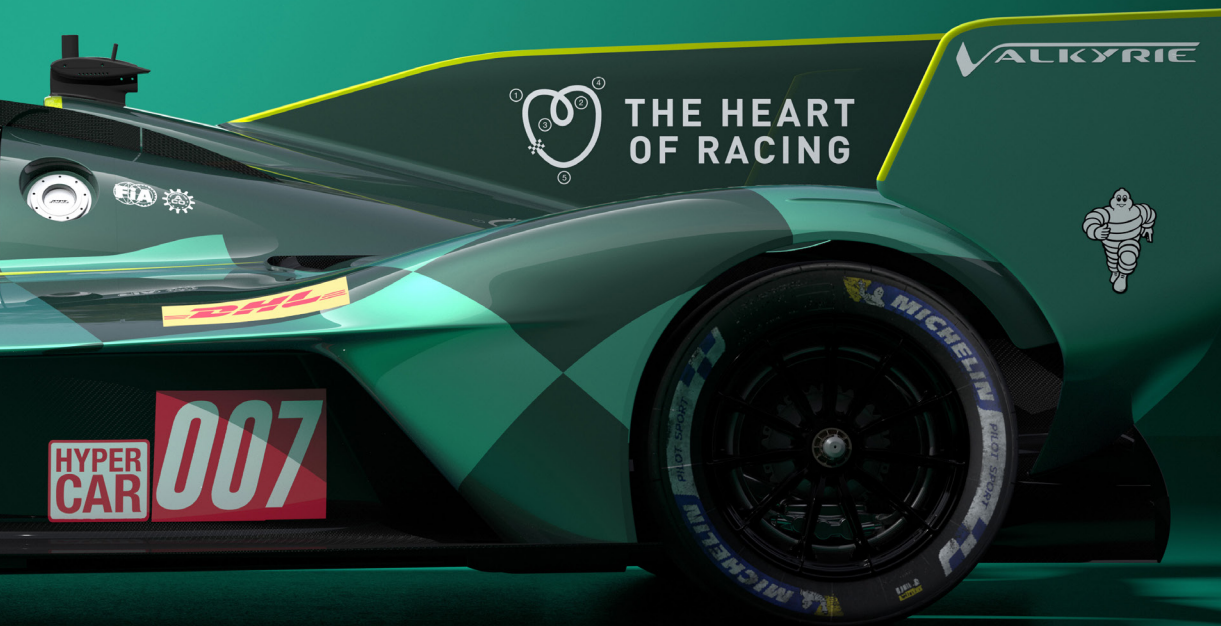


Powering the Valkyrie is a state-of-the-art 6.5-litre V12 engine, developed in collaboration with Cosworth. This engine, adapted for racing, retains its road-going roots, yet delivers the high efficiency and durability required for long-distance endurance racing. With over 15,000 kilometres of testing under its belt, the Valkyrie has been finely tuned to handle the rigours of top-level competition.

The driver line-up is equally impressive. For the WEC season, British drivers Harry Tincknell and Tom Gamble will share the #007 Valkyrie, while triple FIA GT World

Champion Marco Sørensen and race winner Alex Riberas will helm the #009. Meanwhile, Ross Gunn and Roman de Angelis, both IMSA champions, will lead Aston Martin's charge in the IMSA GTP class.

As the Valkyrie prepares to take on the world's toughest endurance races, Aston Martin's return to Le Mans marks a new chapter in its illustrious motorsport history. With a fusion of cutting-edge technology and racing heritage, the Valkyrie is poised to make its mark on the global stage.





# A touch of class.

Bentley has unveiled its latest triumph – the all-new fourth-generation Flying Spur, marking nearly two decades of setting the benchmark for luxury performance saloons. This time, however, Bentley pushes the envelope further, delivering its first-ever four-door supercar.













The new Flying Spur debuts with the performance-focused Speed variant, now featuring Bentley's cutting-edge Ultra Performance Hybrid. This revolutionary powertrain offers an impressive blend of capabilities. For those looking for silent, emission-free motoring, the Flying Spur can travel up to 47 miles (76 km) in pure electric mode, making it ideal for navigating Zero Emission Zones or city streets. Moreover, it boasts a 90% reduction in CO2 emissions compared to its predecessor, aligning Bentley's heritage of luxury with modern sustainability.

But when it's time for more exhilarating performance, the hybrid system truly shines. Combining the enhanced Bentley V8 engine, producing 782 PS (147 PS more than the outgoing model), with an electric motor, the Flying Spur rockets from 0–60 mph in a mere 3.3 seconds (0–100 km/h in 3.5 seconds). With such blistering speed and performance, few vehicles can match its breadth of abilities, and none deliver it with the refinement and elegance that define Bentley.





'When it's time for more exhilarating performance, the hybrid system truly shines. Combining the enhanced Bentley V8 engine, producing 782 PS, with an electric motor, the Flying Spur rockets from 0-60 mph in a mere 3.3 seconds.'





Externally, the design remains largely faithful to the muscular elegance of the 2019 model. The real transformation, however, lies beneath the surface. The new powertrain is complemented by a cutting-edge electrical architecture, delivering the most advanced technology suite ever fitted to a luxury sedan.

Inside, Bentley has refined an already exquisite cabin, introducing new stitching options, extending 3D diamond hides, and adding features such as intelligent air ionisation and optional automatic postural adjustment for all seats. The new My Bentley App Studio also provides a suite of convenient applications at the driver's fingertips, enhancing both luxury and connectivity.







# Timeless tales.

In recent years, classic literature has experienced a notable resurgence among younger readers, a demographic often associated with modern fiction, fast-paced digital content, and social media.





This renewed interest in time-honoured works like *Pride and Prejudice*, 1984, and *Frankenstein* suggests a deeper cultural shift, driven by several educational, societal, and cultural factors.

One key reason for the revival of classics is a desire for substance and depth. In an era dominated by fleeting digital trends, young readers are seeking narratives that offer more profound explorations of the human condition, social structures, and existential dilemmas. Classic literature, with its intricate plots, complex characters, and timeless themes, provides a sense of intellectual challenge and emotional depth that many modern works, particularly those shaped by commercial interests, may lack.

Educational institutions have also played a role in this resurgence. Universities and schools continue to place a significant emphasis on classic works in their curricula, exposing students to the canon of Western literature. This academic engagement often sparks curiosity, encouraging young readers to explore these texts beyond the classroom. Additionally, the rise of digital platforms such as TikTok, where book discussions under hashtags like #BookTok thrive, has created online communities where classics are dissected, discussed, and celebrated.

From a societal perspective, many classic texts resonate with contemporary issues. For instance, George Orwell's 1984 remains a touchstone for discussions around surveillance and authoritarianism, while Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* raises questions about ethics and scientific advancement—topics that are more relevant than ever. These enduring themes allow readers to draw parallels between past and present, making these works feel fresh and urgent.

For those looking to delve into classics with modern relevance, *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë offers powerful insights into gender and autonomy, while Fyodor Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* remains a compelling exploration of morality and mental anguish.

In this digital age, classic literature serves as both a refuge and a lens through which we can better understand our world.



# Listen up!

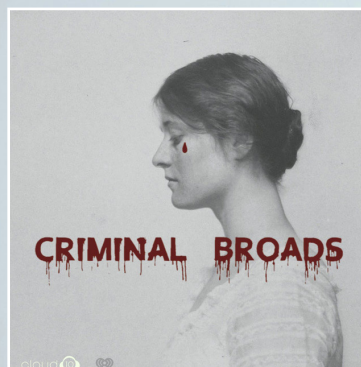
Podcasts have exploded in popularity, but for every chart-topping show, there are hidden gems waiting to be discovered. Each of these podcasts brings something fresh to the table – whether it's chilling storytelling, insightful exploration, or myth-busting. Give them a listen and add some variety to your podcast playlist.



## The White Vault.

This horror audio drama follows a team sent to a remote outpost in the Arctic to investigate strange occurrences. The eerie atmosphere and superb sound design will have you hooked. Told through found footage and audio logs, the show builds tension as strange, ancient forces come into play.

The White Vault is a masterclass in slow-burn horror that blends mythology, survival, and psychological drama into an immersive listening experience.



## Criminal Broads.

Criminal Broads delves into true crime stories that focus on women—either as perpetrators, victims, or figures central to the case. Hosted by Tori Telfer, each episode brings a thoughtful, often under-represented narrative that explores everything from historical crimes to modern-day cases.

With fascinating storytelling and meticulous research, this podcast offers a fresh perspective on the crime genre, shedding light on both notorious and obscure criminal stories.







#### The Allusionist.

For those fascinated by language and its quirks, The Allusionist is a delightfully niche show that unpacks the fascinating world of words, exploring etymology, grammar, slang, and the evolution of language with wit and humour.

Each episode is short but filled with intriguing insights and trivia, making it a must-listen for anyone who loves linguistics, wordplay, or simply learning curious facts about the language we use every day.



#### Science Vs.

In a world filled with misinformation, Science Vs. stands out by tackling controversial topics and debunking myths using hard evidence. From vaccines and diets to climate change, host Wendy Zukerman takes on popular misconceptions with a fun, fact-filled approach.

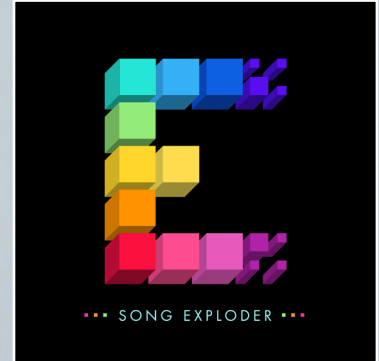
Episodes are engaging, humorous, and backed by solid research, making complex scientific topics accessible and entertaining for everyone. This podcast is perfect for curious minds looking to cut through the noise of fake news.



#### Flash Forward.

Imagine a podcast where each episode dives into a possible future scenario – whether it's living in a world without bees or the consequences of time travel. Flash Forward blends science fiction with reality, as experts weigh in on the feasibility of these imagined worlds.

Both speculative and thought-provoking, this podcast encourages listeners to think about the future in innovative ways while grounding its narratives in real science and tech.



#### Song Exploder.

Song Exploder offers a unique glimpse into the creative process behind your favourite songs. In each episode, a different musician breaks down one of their tracks, explaining the inspiration and how it came together, layer by layer.

With guests ranging from indie artists to global superstars, this podcast is a fascinating deep dive into music production, allowing listeners to appreciate songs in a new, more profound way. If you love music, this one's for you.



# Spring streaming.

This spring, streaming platforms are offering a fresh lineup of must-watch series and films. From gripping dramas to feel-good comedies, here's a rundown of the latest releases you shouldn't miss.



**Your Friends and Neighbors.**  
11th April. Apple TV+.

After being fired in disgrace, a hedge fund manager still grappling with his recent divorce, resorts to stealing from his neighbours' homes in the exceedingly affluent Westmont Village, only to discover that the secrets and affairs hidden behind those wealthy facades might be more dangerous than he ever imagined.



**The Studio.**  
26th March. Apple TV+.

Seth Rogen stars as Matt Remick, the new head of struggling Continental Studios. As the film industry fights to stay relevant, Matt and his conflicted team of executives navigate their own insecurities while managing egotistical artists and corporate pressures. Every party, casting, set visit, and meeting presents a chance for success or disaster. Matt, who's devoted his life to movies, now faces the immense pressure of his dream job – one that could either define or destroy him.





**Plankton – The Movie.**  
7th March. Netflix.

SpongeBob SquarePants is back with it's second in a series of SpongeBob character spin-off films.

Failing to dominate the world, Plankton continues running the Chum Bucket, aided by his computer wife Karen, in his never-ending rivalry with Mr. Krabs.



**The Electric State.**  
14th March. Netflix.

Millie Bobby Brown and Chris Pratt star in this big-budget sci-fi adaptation from the Russo Brothers.

Set in the aftermath of a robot uprising in an alternate version of the '90s, The Electric State follows an orphaned teenager who ventures across the American West with a cartoon-inspired robot, a smuggler, and his sidekick in search of her younger brother.

**007: Road To A Million.**  
TBA. Prime Video.

The epic adventure show returns for an action-packed second series with Brian Cox reprising his role as 'The Controller'.

Nine pairs of intrepid contestants must channel their inner 007 as they compete in a game show of global proportions for the chance to win a £1 million cash prize.





# Meeting the Bloc team.

In this issue we introduce Karl Robins, Reception Manager at Bloc Birmingham.

## **How did you come to work at Bloc?**

After earning my degree in Hospitality Management, I started my career in the industry as a receptionist. Before long, I was assisting the Conference and Events team, which led to managing a high volume of events and sharpening my organisational and leadership skills.

When COVID-19 hit, I decided to explore the restaurant industry, but I soon realised how much I missed the hotel environment and the work-life balance it offers. So, when the opportunity to return came up, I jumped at the chance! Now, I manage the reception team at Bloc's JQ location, and I couldn't be happier.

## **How does hotel work differ to other jobs you've had?**

Hotel work is unique because of its fast pace and constant guest interaction—no two days are ever the same! As part of the reception team, you're always problem-solving, coordinating with different departments, and ensuring guests have the best experience possible.

Compared to the restaurant industry, where the focus is primarily on food and service flow, hotels require a broader skill set. You're working closely with housekeeping, maintenance, and guest services to create a seamless stay. The level of detail, guest care, and variety in hotel work make it both challenging and rewarding.

## **What are the best bits about becoming part of the Bloc team?**

Being part of Bloc is incredibly rewarding. The team here is like a family—everyone is supportive, and there's a real sense of community. The company fosters a culture of collaboration and innovation, where new ideas are genuinely valued.

Knowing that we're creating a welcoming and comfortable environment for guests makes the job feel even more meaningful. Plus, the flexibility, support, and career growth opportunities make Bloc a fantastic place to work.

## **What are the most important aspects of your role?**

As Reception Manager, my key responsibilities are ensuring smooth operations, delivering excellent guest service, and maintaining a positive team culture. Since reception is the first point of contact, it's crucial that guests feel welcomed and well cared for from the moment they arrive. Leading the team involves providing guidance, motivation, and training to ensure we uphold high service standards.

Strong communication and coordination with housekeeping and maintenance are also essential for a seamless guest experience. It's a fast-paced and ever-changing role, but that's what makes it so fulfilling!





#### **What has been your greatest accomplishment at Bloc?**

One of my biggest achievements has been successfully leading the reception team through a period of transition and growth. When I first joined, I had to adapt quickly to new systems and processes while maintaining excellent service standards. By prioritising clear communication, consistent training, and teamwork, we've kept guest satisfaction high—even during the busiest times. Seeing my team grow in confidence and skills, knowing I played a part in that, has been incredibly rewarding.

#### **What is the biggest challenge you have faced?**

One of the toughest challenges was when our property management system (where all our reservations are managed) went down for over six hours while the hotel was nearly at full capacity. To keep things running smoothly, I worked closely with the team to implement a manual check-in process, ensuring guests weren't affected. We also coordinated with housekeeping to prevent any confusion over room assignments. It was a stressful situation, but it really highlighted the team's adaptability and problem-solving skills!

#### **Who inspires you and why?**

My biggest inspiration is my mum. Her strong work ethic and family values have shaped who I am today. She always taught me to give 100%—whether at work or with loved ones. When I'm at work, I dedicate myself fully to the job, and when I'm with family and friends, I'm fully present. This balance ensures that everyone I interact with gets the best version of me, and it's a principle I carry with me in both my professional and personal life.

#### **What is your most memorable guest interaction?**

One guest arrived exhausted after a long journey, only to discover an issue with their reservation. Understandably frustrated, they were on the verge of a bad experience. I took the time to listen, apologised sincerely, and made sure they got a room that suited their needs—offering a complimentary upgrade to turn the situation around. The next day, they personally thanked me for the kindness and effort, saying it had completely changed their perception of the stay. Moments like that remind me how powerful great hospitality can be!



# Design Icons #39.

The satisfying snick of a foil cutter, the smooth twist of a corkscrew, the gentle levering of a stubborn cork – these are the hallmarks of a sommelier at work, and their trusty tool is the iconic sommelier knife.



More than just a bottle opener, it's a symbol of wine expertise and a testament to elegant, functional design.

This clever tool, also known as a waiter's friend, emerged in the late 19th century. While its exact origins are debated, credit is often given to German inventor Carl F.A. Wienke, who patented a similar design in 1882. The sommelier knife quickly gained popularity amongst waiters and sommeliers for its compact, all-in-one functionality.

Its elegant simplicity is key to its enduring appeal. Typically featuring a small, serrated blade for cutting foil, a spiral worm for extracting the cork, and a lever (sometimes two) for effortless

removal, the sommelier knife packs a punch in a pocket-sized package. High-quality versions boast polished wood handles, gleaming metal finishes, and satisfyingly smooth mechanisms, elevating this practical tool to a design icon.

Beyond its functionality, the sommelier knife represents a connection to the rich traditions of wine service. It's a tool that inspires confidence in both the wielder and the wine drinker, a silent promise of a perfectly opened bottle and the enjoyment within. This combination of practicality, history, and symbolic weight has cemented the sommelier knife's place as a design classic, a must-have for wine enthusiasts and a timeless symbol of the art of wine service.



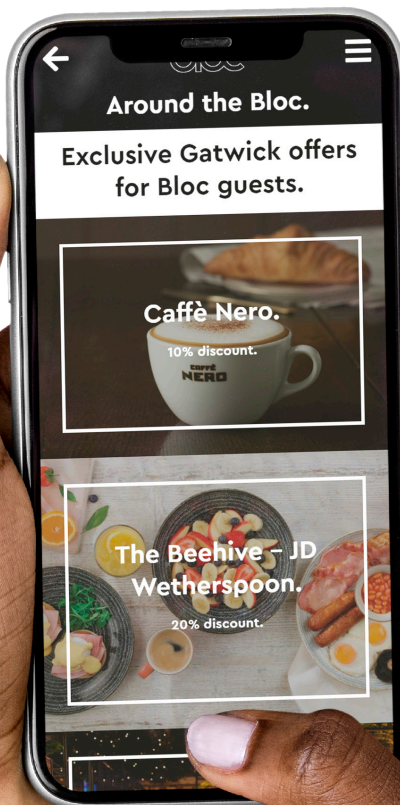
# Just around the Bloc.

At Bloc, we're always thinking of new ways to provide great quality whilst keeping costs down. One of our favourites is the Around the Bloc Guide, where we team up with some of the best cafés, bars and restaurants to secure superb guest offers – including two Michelin-starred Opheem.

Visit [atb.blochotels.com](http://atb.blochotels.com) to enjoy exclusive Bloc guest offers at:  
Opheem ■ Caffè Nero ■ Pizza Express ■ Vagabond ■ Black Sheep Coffee  
■ Wagamama ■ Tapas Revolution ■ JD Wetherspoon and many more.



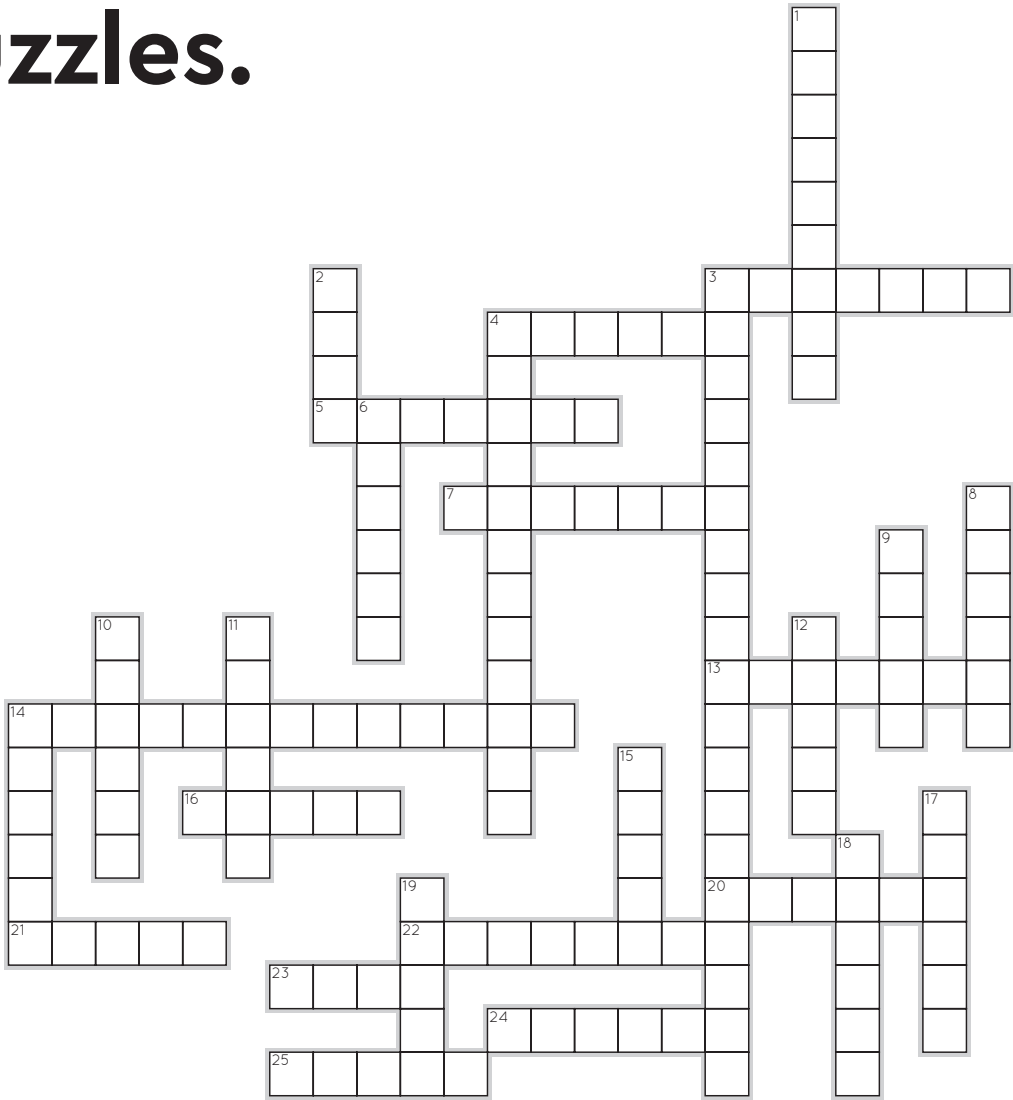
Scan for Birmingham offers.



Scan for Gatwick offers.



Puzzles.



Sudoku.

4		3		1			7	
				3			4	8
								1
			4				8	5
	1	4	7	5	3	9	2	
2	6				9			
6								
7	3			9				
	4			6		5		2

Across.

- 3. Ate greedily
- 4. Strict
- 5. Arena
- 7. Gemstone
- 13. Educated
- 14. Group of stars
- 16. Dissuade
- 20. Magazine Chief
- 21. Decree
- 22. Mishap
- 23. Minus
- 24. Calm
- 25. Aquatic Mammal

Down.

- 1. Quilt
- 2. Employer
- 3. Beta
- 4. Yachts
- 6. Suit Maker
- 8. Hazard
- 9. Custom - Nun's Clothes
- 10. Small open boat
- 11. Required
- 12. Eros
- 14. Select
- 15. Sudden Thrust
- 17. Social Outcast
- 18. Standing
- 19. Hurry

1	4	8	3	6	7	5	9	2
7	3	2	5	9	1	8	6	4
6	5	9	2	4	8	7	1	3
2	6	5	1	8	9	4	3	7
8	1	4	7	5	3	9	2	6
3	9	7	4	2	6	1	8	5
9	2	6	8	7	4	3	5	1
5	7	1	9	3	2	6	4	8
4	8	3	6	1	5	2	7	9

Across: 3. Scoffed, 4. Severe, 5. Stadium, 7. Diamond, 13. Erudite, 14. Constellation, 16. Deter, 20. Editor, 21. Sailingboats, 6. Tailor, 8. Danger, 9. Habit, 10. Dinghy, 11. Needed, 12. Cupid, 14. Choose, 15. Lunge, 17. Pariah, 18. Status, 19. Haste





Forma provides a full range of supplies for any project, working with interior designers and construction teams to deliver bespoke solutions through our in-house design, engineering, manufacturing, project coordination and supervision teams.

Fire & Acoustic Door Sets  
Case Goods  
Panel Work  
Furniture  
Bespoke Joinery  
Kitchens

# FORMA

ITALIAN DESIGN. INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS.



For more information visit:  
[forma.international](http://forma.international)





To the free spirits and the wanderers,  
to whom ordinary is absurd and  
itineraries are abnormal.

You go your own way.  
We'll handle the rest.

**Sleep well. Stay inspired.**