

YTL *life*

The YTL Luxury Magazine

COLLECTOR'S
EDITION

Gorgeous Gainsborough!

History Reinvented
in Bath

Old & New World Bath

Past and Present
Perfect

Johann Lafer • The Best of Bath • The Emperor Haile Selassie



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YTL HOTELS
Treasured Places, Treasured Moments

A Note from Tan Sri (Dr) Francis Yeoh



Tan Sri (Dr) Francis Yeoh
Managing Director,
YTL Corporation

It seems like only yesterday I was in Bath, addressing the huge crowds that had come to hear the world-famous Three Tenors – Luciano Pavarotti, Jose Carreras and Placido Domingo – perform at the Royal Crescent. Over 50,000 people had turned up for the free concert, divided between the iconic Crescent as well as in nearby Victoria Park. I remember, in my speech, thanking various contributors, from the Romans who transformed Bath into an unfortified oasis; the two John Woods, Elder and Younger, who created the most beautiful Georgian city; as well as Ralph Allen, a former postboy who built his fortune on the limestone that now clothes the city so splendidly. I also remember paying tribute to the City Fathers for their vision to build, what is now, Thermae Bath Spa, and strategically launching the ancient spa town into the forefront for another millennium in the spirit of rejuvenation.

The opening of The Gainsborough Bath Spa heralds yet another exciting new chapter for all of us at YTL Corporation. In addition to our business interests here in the form of Wessex Water, I can't be more pleased to say YTL Hotels makes its most significant international footprint with the opening of this historic, landmark hotel, right in the heart of this beautiful spa town. It is the group's first full hotel outside of Asia and I am grateful it is in a city that is close to the YTL heart. The Three Tenors' concert had included my favourite hymn, *It Is Well With My Soul*, which the trio performed for the first time ever that night. With The Gainsborough Bath Spa already finding its way into the hearts of Bathonians as well as our international clientele of discerning guests, I am happy to say all is well with my soul indeed. I invite everyone with a taste for all things fine to discover our latest gem, set within the Georgian crown that is the UNESCO World Heritage city of Bath.

God bless and enjoy the issue.

YTL *life*

The YTL Luxury Magazine

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AMIDST CENTURIES OF CULTURE AND COMMERCE

The allure of Malacca is still very much alive here in this magnificent mansion. The colourful wooden shutters. Ornate cornices. Intricate Peranakan tiles. Welcome to The Majestic Malacca.

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- 20 In keeping with the inventive and enduring spirit that's a signature of Britain's only city to be listed as a full UNESCO World Heritage Site, The Gainsborough Bath Spa opens its doors and invites you to discover a new yet old world of experiences, pleasure and luxury.

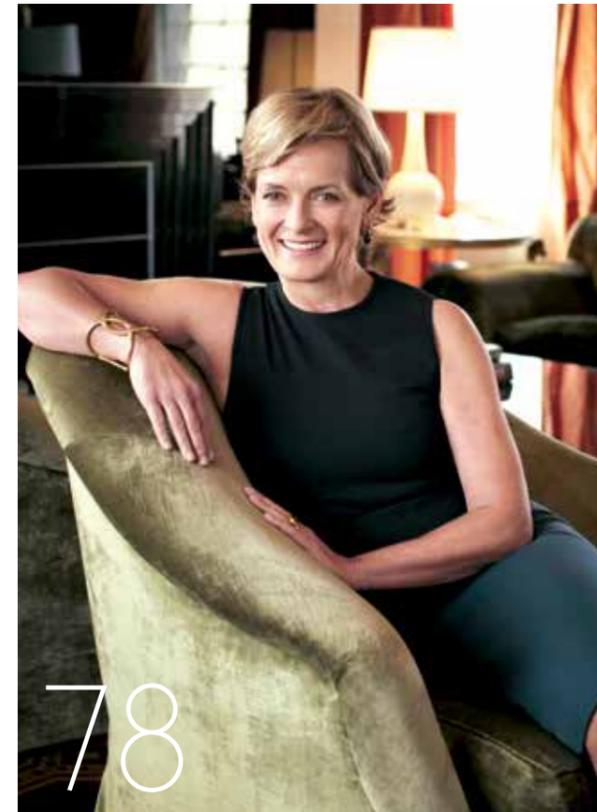
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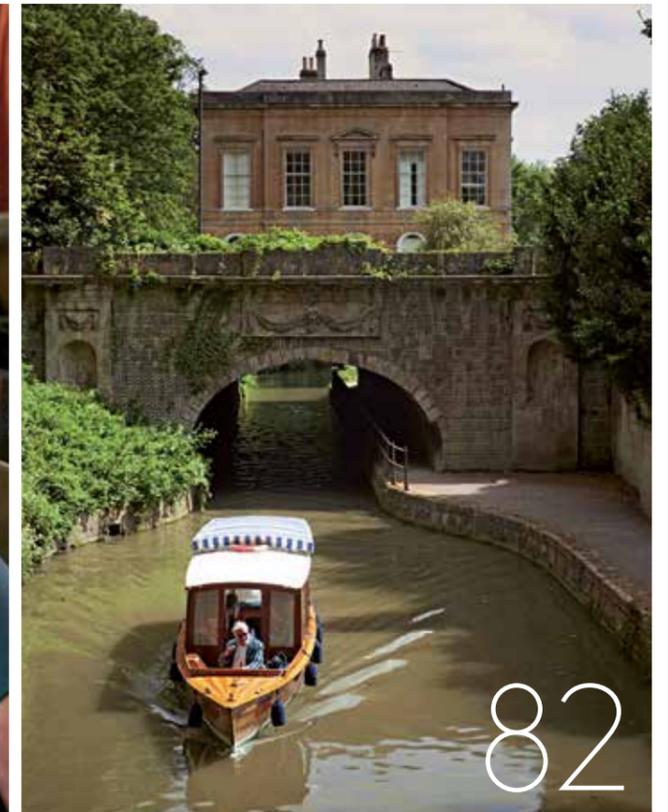
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- 86 Chances are, there is almost always something going on



when you're visiting Bath – a literary event, food fest or, if you're so inclined, a marathon through the city and its gorgeous surroundings.

- 90 You can, literally, get a drink just about anywhere in Bath. If you're staying at The Gainsborough Bath Spa, however, The Gainsborough Bar will quench just about any thirst you can think of.
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remarkable lives they lead in the jewel of the West Country. They share their stories as well as their favourite things about Bath.

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Portfolio of Life

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24 HOURS IN BATH

Visiting the ancient city of Aquae Sulis on a tight schedule? Here's a curated timeline of the best ways to while away your limited hours.

0600^{HRS}

Power up for the day with a simple but intense **workout** at The Gainsborough Bath Spa's 24-hour fitness centre, located on the lower level of the hotel.

Mornings at The Gainsborough should begin with the Bath House Circuit.



0700^{HRS}

Make the most of your preferential status as a guest of The Gainsborough Bath Spa by soaking up the city's world-famous natural thermal waters at **Spa Village Bath**. Tapping into the original Roman Bath springs amidst a beautiful contemporary setting, begin your **Bath House Circuit**, a privilege extended complimentary to in-house guests between 0700-0900hrs and 2000-2200hrs, with dips in either one or all of the three natural thermal pools of varying temperatures as well as sybaritic spells in the traditional and infrared sauna or steam rooms. If things get a little too hot to handle, cool down in the Roman-inspired ice alcove.

0800^{HRS}

Just as the city is waking up and you're all fresh and raring to go from your post-workout bath house experience, refuel in style at the hotel's signature dining room, **Johann Lafer at The Gainsborough**. You can indulge in all the sinful pleasures of a traditional English breakfast – two free range eggs cooked to your preference, accompanied by a rasher of Wiltshire bacon, Cumberland sausage, vine tomatoes, grilled mushrooms and earthily delicious black pudding – or acknowledge the restaurant's namesake chef by ordering *weisswurst* – Bavaria's iconic breakfast sausage – best enjoyed with *senf* (sweet mustard) and pretzels.



0900^{HRS}

Arrive early to beat the queues at the **Roman Baths**, one of the not-to-be-missed sights of the West Country and, indeed, Great Britain. Located in the heart of the city, the Roman Baths form a unique part of England's ancient history, dating back to 50BC. Exceptionally well-preserved, the four focal places of attention are the Sacred Spring, the Roman Temple, the Roman Bath House and, of course, the Roman Baths Museum, which offers visitors a wonderfully complete experience of how the baths, built around a natural hot spring, would have been like during Roman times.

Say 'hello' to Pieroni's sculpture of King Bladud at the Parade Gardens.

1300^{HRS}

Go for a stroll by the weir and the beautiful **Parade Gardens**, which overlooks the Avon river. Don't forget to stop by the life-sized statue of King Bladud, the legendary founder of Bath, which was sculpted by Stefano Pieroni in 1859. Afterwards, head on up to browse (or buy) the assortment of merchandise from the shops that line both sides of **Pulteney Bridge**, from original artworks at the Minerva Gallery to antique maps and handcrafted jewellery.



life at a glance //

1100^{HRS}

History can be hot, thirsty work. If the weather's looking lovely, treat yourself to an ice cream cone at the both-very-popular **David Thayer's Ice Cream Shop** or Marshfield Farm. Find yourself a sunny spot in beautiful Bath Abbey Square nearby, where there's usually a top notch busker at work. But, if it's Sunday, don't miss attending Choral Matins at the majestic Abbey.



1200^{HRS}

For a light, quick bite with a touch of history, mosey down North Parade Passage for half a **Sally Lunn** bun spread with something tangy, like lemon curd, or savoury, topped with scrambled egg and bacon. If you're in the mood to walk a little further, head towards the direction of the Assembly Rooms to sip on ginger beer and nibble creamy coronation chicken salad at the blissful **Bea's Vintage Tea Rooms**.

1430^{HRS}

Saunter back to The Gainsborough Bath Spa for **afternoon tea**, which is served at the serene **Canvas Room** between 1430 and 1730hrs. The traditional afternoon tea set, packed with yummys like York ham sandwiches, freshly-baked scones served with real Devonshire clotted cream and accompanied by a pot of artisan Jing tea, is always a treat but, if you're feeling particularly celebratory, make it a bubbly afternoon with glasses of the sommelier-selected Billecart-Salmon champagne. We personally think its rosé champagne is unrivalled!

1600^{HRS}

Make the most of the remaining daylight by squeezing in visits to yet another museum or simply stroll the streets to take in the stunning Georgian and Palladian architecture all around. One of the great visual masterpieces of Bath has to be the **Royal Crescent**, which is a gem of 18th century urban architecture. The popular **Jane Austen Centre** is a mere stroll away.



Johann Lafer at The Gainsborough Bath Spa offers stylish dining.

2100^{HRS}

Once dinner's done, simply move over to the intimate **Gainsborough Bar**, which overlooks the thermal pool of Spa Village Bath. The bartending team is extremely adept at what they do (not to mention adaptable) and are more than happy to whip up a **bespoke cocktail** just for you. But considering you're in England, it would be remiss not to imbibe a delicious gin. The classic G&T is given a pretty twist here but one of the most popular choices is, undoubtedly, the Negroni. Why? Just take a sip for the answer to be gin-clear. Made with Sacred Gin, we can't think of a better (or more delightful) way of calling it a day ... and night. 🍸

1800^{HRS}

Bath time, literally! The beauty about staying at The Gainsborough Bath Spa is that it's right at the heart of all Bath's action, making it the perfect base from which to explore all of the city without having to waste time travelling back and forth for indulgences, like a pre-dinner treatment at **Spa Village Bath**. Try the signature *Magnesium Wrap*, which includes a body scrub and massage as well. If you're in the mood for something tropical and exotic, opt for one of the traditional Spa Village classic experiences, like a session of Malay massage.

2000^{HRS}

With **delicious dining experiences** around every corner, Bath caters to the world's palates. From dinnertime *dim sum* to gastropub grub, there's something to satiate all appetites. If you aren't in the mood to walk, simply head down to Johann Lafer's eponymous dining room for seasonally inspired creations that skilfully blend east and west.

End your night with the prettiest Blueberry Cosmopolitan ever at The Gainsborough Bar.



BATH BITS & BOBS

One quick glance to guide you into spending your time (and money) efficiently in Bath.



ST SWITHIN'S

This 18th-century church is where Jane Austen's parents married and where the late Reverend George Austen is buried. It is the only Georgian church still standing in Bath.

BATH ABBEY

The abbey, located in the heart of the city, is an architectural marvel, with amazing fan vaulting and stained glass. Don't miss the tower tour. Strong legs are required, though.

PARADE GARDENS

This statue of a young Mozart is one of the highlights of Bath's Parade Gardens, which overlooks the River Avon. With a great view of Pulteney Bridge, the park is the perfect place for a breather.

HOLBURNE MUSEUM

Home to a collection of fine and decorative art, both the museum and the adjoining Sydney Gardens are must-sees in Bath.



PAXTON & WHITFIELD

If Livarot, Cerny and St Egwin are music to your ears, a visit to the Bath outpost of Britain's leading cheesemonger for over 200 years is a must. Do know that Paxton & Whitfield are also the appointed cheesemongers to HM the Queen and HRH the Prince of Wales. Definitely worth a look – and a smell.

HARDYS

With its treasure trove of confectionery delights, Hardys is a wonderland for every child and those of us with an insatiable sweet-tooth. Its seemingly limitless range of lollipops, fudge, toffee, chocolate and liquorice ensures that every visit will yield new surprises and treats!

LIZ COX

Nestled in between the Circus and the Royal Crescent is this darling Bathonian label that specialises in custom-made carryalls, tailored to your preferred style, with choice of leathers, fasteners and strap and handle lengths. British luxury at its best. And at prices that won't break the bank, either.

KATHERINE FRASER

From beautiful hand-woven fabrics to bespoke textiles, Katherine Fraser is the go-to place for people who appreciate the beauty of original designs in artisanal weaves. Come here to pick out the cutest bowties, divine scarves or even elegant cushion covers.



RIDING SHANK'S PONY

Illustration Eleen Tan

Upon arrival, you'd soon realise the best way to explore the honeycomb of a city that is Bath is *à pied*. From trekking up Bartlett Street, lined with pretty, quirky stores and cafes, to grabbing a well-deserved pint at Bath's oldest pub, the Saracens Head

tavern, which dates back to 1713 (it is believed that Charles Dickens wrote *The Pickwick Papers* while staying here), all you need to help ensure you have a great day out in Bath is a pair of comfortable shoes. After all, as Hilary King (see page 56), Trustee of

the Little Theatre, commented about fashion sense and sensibility during WWII: "We could tell if a Londoner was coming by the clip-clop of their heels. Bathonians generally didn't approve of high-heels in those days." Also, as the shopping's so good, a fat wallet helps

too. The best bit about staying at The Gainsborough Bath Spa is that it's right at the heart of all the action – ensuring it's ever so-easy should the need to catch an afternoon nap or to simply nip in and out to deposit shopping bags ever arise. **W**

WELL NOTED

Insider tips to help you make the most of your stay at The Gainsborough Bath Spa.

- **THE GAINSBOROUGH BATH SPA** It's hard not to fall in love with this beautiful, historical hotel yet with every modern convenience and luxury. We can't get enough of the cute Roberts radios that play classical music as part of the turn-down service or the thoughtfully heated bathroom floors – a touch you'd appreciate come winter!

- **DAYOH!** Ensure each day starts right with a thumping good breakfast. At Johann Lafer at The Gainsborough, the hotel's main dining room, breakfast is always a delightful affair, with the full English fry-up available as well as more traditional favourites like grilled kippers and scrambled eggs with smoked salmon. To pay homage to the chef after which the restaurant was named, however, order the traditional Bavarian white sausages with mustard and pretzels on the side.

- **WATER WORLD** If you are after the full thermal spa experience, ask for The Gainsborough Bath Spa's Suite 223 or Rooms 123 and 124 when booking as these come with special taps from which pure Bath thermal waters gush forth!

- **COCKTAIL HOUR** Nothing beats a cool cocktail after a long day sightseeing. Head straight to The Gainsborough Bar and order something quintessentially English. We like the Rhubarb Garden cocktail, made with vodka, ginger beer, lime and rhubarb bitters.

- **LATE NIGHT DELIGHT** One of our favourite things about hotel stays is the chance to relish room service! From 11pm to 7am daily, pick up the phone to order delectables like Thai chicken curry, Austrian-style goulash or lemon tart with thyme cream when late-night hunger pangs strike!

(Clockwise, from right) The stunning fan vault is one of the crowning glories of Bath Abbey; The Jane Austen Centre pays tribute to one of the city's most famous residents; Stonehenge is one of the great monuments of the ancient druidic religion; Bladud, the legendary founder of Bath.



of Bath around the curative springs so that others, too, may benefit as he had. Today, his relief may be seen on one of the walls of the Cross Bath while a large statue stands proudly, overseeing all the goings-on, at the Roman Baths. Shakespearian fans would also know Bladud as the supposed father of King Lear.

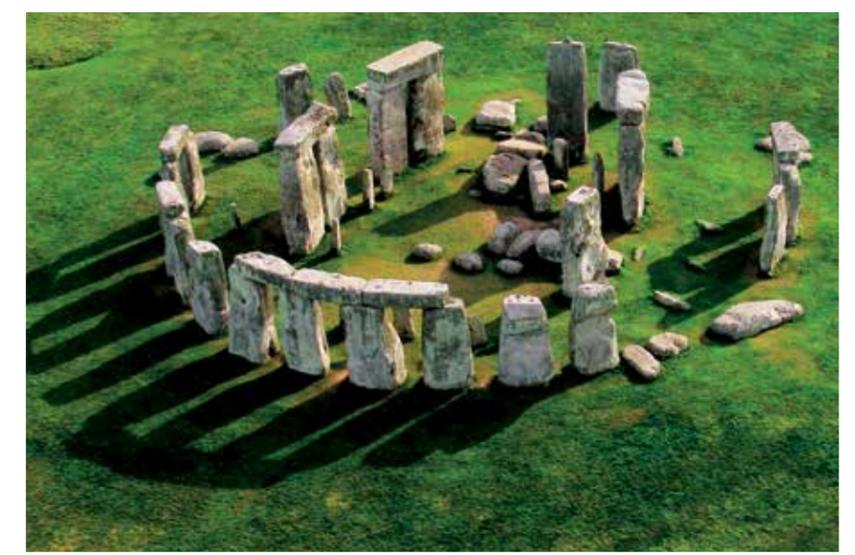
CLADIUS

It was under the order of the Emperor Claudius that the dreaded Roman armies began their systematic conquest of Britain, occupying what is, today, modern Bath and its surrounds in the Roman province of Britannia.



AUSTEN, JANE

Experiencing the places mentioned in the novels and letters of Jane Austen is certainly one of the main draws for visitors to Bath. From Gravel Walk, which was the setting of Anne Elliot and Captain Wentworth's happy dénouement in *Persuasion*, to The Jane Austen Centre along Gay Street, where guests may learn more about the author and even try on Regency outfits, Bath is the city in which Austen's writings, set in an era of romance, are best remembered. True fans may also visit 4 Sydney Place, where Jane lived for a time with her family or come again in September for the city's annual Jane Austen Festival.



BLADUD

Hailed as the legendary founder of the city, Bladud, son of King Ludhudibras, was said to have been cast out from court after contracting leprosy. After healing himself in a steaming swamp, which he discovered working as a swineherd and seeing his pigs free from scabs and lesions after a lengthy wallow, he returned to reclaim his royal position. In thanks, Bladud began to build the city



DRUIDS

This ancient region of Britain was famous for its druidic community, priests of yore who carried out religious rituals. Although not connected directly, modern-day druids continue to observe and celebrate certain pagan festivals like the winter solstice. It is also believed the great ancient monument of Stonehenge in nearby Wiltshire was built by druids of the Iron Age.

BATH A-Z

The great UNESCO World Heritage Site that is the entire city of Bath, the only one of its kind in the UK, is a treasure trove of history, myth and legend just waiting to be explored. To make life easier, we've summarised all the essential facts, figures and historical nuggets to make your stay as interesting and informative as possible. It's as easy as, if we may say so, A, B, C.



(Clockwise from left) There are many elliptical forms in Bath, including Pulteney Weir; Gainsborough's 'The Byam Family' (on loan from the Andrew Brownsword Arts Foundation) can be seen at the Holburne Museum; The façade of the King's and Queen's Bath; Bath's Fashion Museum is one of the best of its kind; The Gainsborough Bath Spa is fed by waters from the Hetling Spring.

ELLIPSE

Walking through ancient Bath, it is possible to notice many elliptical forms – from the shape of the pool at Thermae Bath Spa's Cross Bath to the Pulteney Weir, said to be a sacred geometric shape or *yonis* symbol inspired by the *vesica piscis*.

FASHION

It might surprise many but Bath's Fashion Museum ranks among the world's Top Ten and stylishly tells the story of fashion over the past 400 years. Its collection includes pieces from Shakespearian England, the 1700s as well as more recent creations by renowned designers like Biba, Mary Quant and Jean Muir. Celebrity-watchers should also look out for iconic pieces worn by stars, including Kate Moss' famous Chanel trouser ensemble and Jennifer Lopez's plunging green bamboo print silk dress by Donatella Versace.

GEORGIAN

The dominant style of architecture in Bath, an evolution of the popular 18th century Palladian revival style. The name 'Georgian', of course, is derived from the first four Hanoverian kings of Great Britain, all of whom were named 'George', spanning from 1714 right up to 1830. This was preceded by the Regency Period



and is followed by the Victorian. The City of Bath celebrated the 300th anniversary of the beginning of the Georgian era last year.

HOT SPRINGS

There are only three hot springs in the entire United Kingdom, all located in Bath. A natural phenomenon, they comprise of the King's Spring, which feeds the historical Roman Baths and was held sacred by them, the Cross Spring and the Hetling Spring, which feeds the waters of The Gainsborough Bath Spa. One of the greatest treats you can give your soul and body would be to immerse yourself in its healing waters before or after a world-class treatment at The Gainsborough's justifiably-renowned spa.

ISAMBARD KINGDOM BRUNEL

The 19th-century engineering genius was the talent behind the design of Bath Spa's railway station. Built in 1840, it has been named as a Transport Heritage Site by the Transport Trust charity and is a site of immense significance on Brunel's grand and legendary engineering feat that is the Great Western Railway.

JOHN PINCH THE ELDER

The architect behind the present building that houses The Gainsborough Bath Spa, John Pinch the Elder built this classical structure that has played home, over the course of the city's long history, to a hospital as well as a technical institute and college. It takes its name after the famous painter Thomas Gainsborough, who spent much of his time in Bath during the 18th century.

KING'S BATH

It was in 1106 that the first King's Bath was built within the grounds of Bath Abbey's monastery and named in honour of Henry I. But there has always been a

spring beneath it, regarded as sacred since ancient times. On display in the Roman Baths today are also coins and curses, written on pewter or lead, thrown into the spring as petitions to Sulis Minerva, the presiding goddess.

LONGLEAT

The seat of the Marquessate of Bath, Longleat is one of England's most famous stately homes and is popular for its safari park, which opened in 1966. Feed a giraffe, gape at the regal lions or walk amongst cute Humboldt penguins. Moreover, its proximity to Bath makes it the perfect choice for a family day out or easy excursion.

MELFORT CROSS

It was the year 1687 and a desperate Mary of Modena, wife of King James II, bathes in the Cross Bath, upon instruction by her physician, in the hope it would enable her to conceive a longed-for heir to the throne. The soak proved to be successful and the grateful Mary erected an elaborate marble cross to celebrate the birth of her son, although it has since been gradually dismantled. If you're out and about shopping in the city, be sure to stroll over to Old Bond Street where a cherub, one of the rare surviving remnants taken from the original Cross, can be seen surveying all the town from his little niche high above a store.

NASH, RICHARD 'BEAU'

Nicknamed the 'King of Bath', famous dandy Richard 'Beau' Nash's rags to riches story is one of legend. Having arrived in Bath in 1705, a gambler and socialite without a penny to his name, he was soon appointed master of ceremonies and helped set up the Bath General Hospital, as well as many other important steps forward for the city, together with other pivotal characters of Bath in that era, including John Wood the Elder, architect of the building; eminent

life at a glance //

businessman of the time Ralph Allen; and William Pulteney, who laid the first stone.

OLIVER, DR WILLIAM

Said to be the greatest physician of the age, Dr William Oliver (1695-1764) was the first honorary physician of the Bath General Hospital, founded in 1738. But it is for food that visiting gourmets would recognise his name. The good doctor is the inventor of the simple and plain water cracker, known to Bathonians and beyond as 'Bath Olivers' - a biscuit that's said to be good for the constitution of his rheumatic patients.

PULTENEY BRIDGE

One of Bath's architectural gems (and rightfully so), Pulteney Bridge is one of the few bridges in the world where it is lined on both sides with beautiful shops, selling a variety of items from antique maps to art and sculpture and even artisan pastries. Inspired by the Ponte Vecchio in Florence, it also brings to mind Venice's Rialto Bridge. We say it's the most romantic way to cross the River Avon. A jewel box of a bridge.

QUEEN SQUARE

Built by another of Bath's renowned architectural names, Queen Square was the first great work of John Wood the Elder and named in honour of Queen Caroline, wife of King George II. Today, visitors to Bath frequent the square to gaze at the obelisk, erected at the behest of Richard Nash to commemorate the visit of Frederick, Prince of Wales, in 1738, while being surrounded by the beauty of the area's formal gardens, before strolling to the magnificence of the nearby Royal Crescent, built by John Wood the Elder's son.

ROYAL CRESCENT

The Royal Crescent is, without doubt, Bath's premier address and one of the

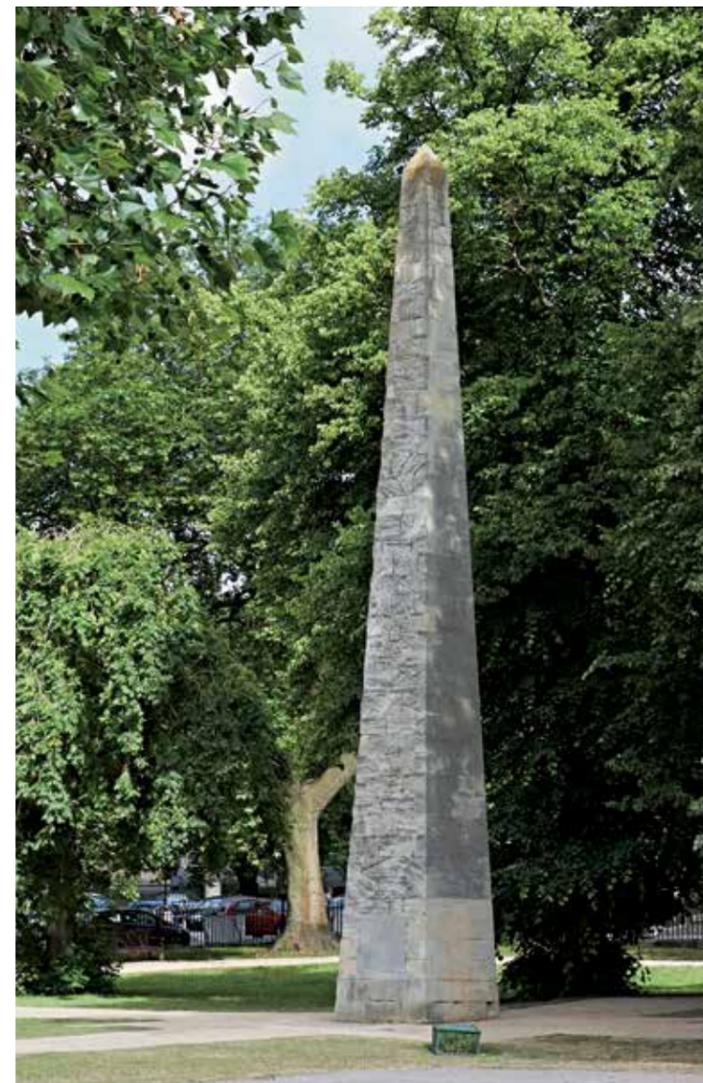
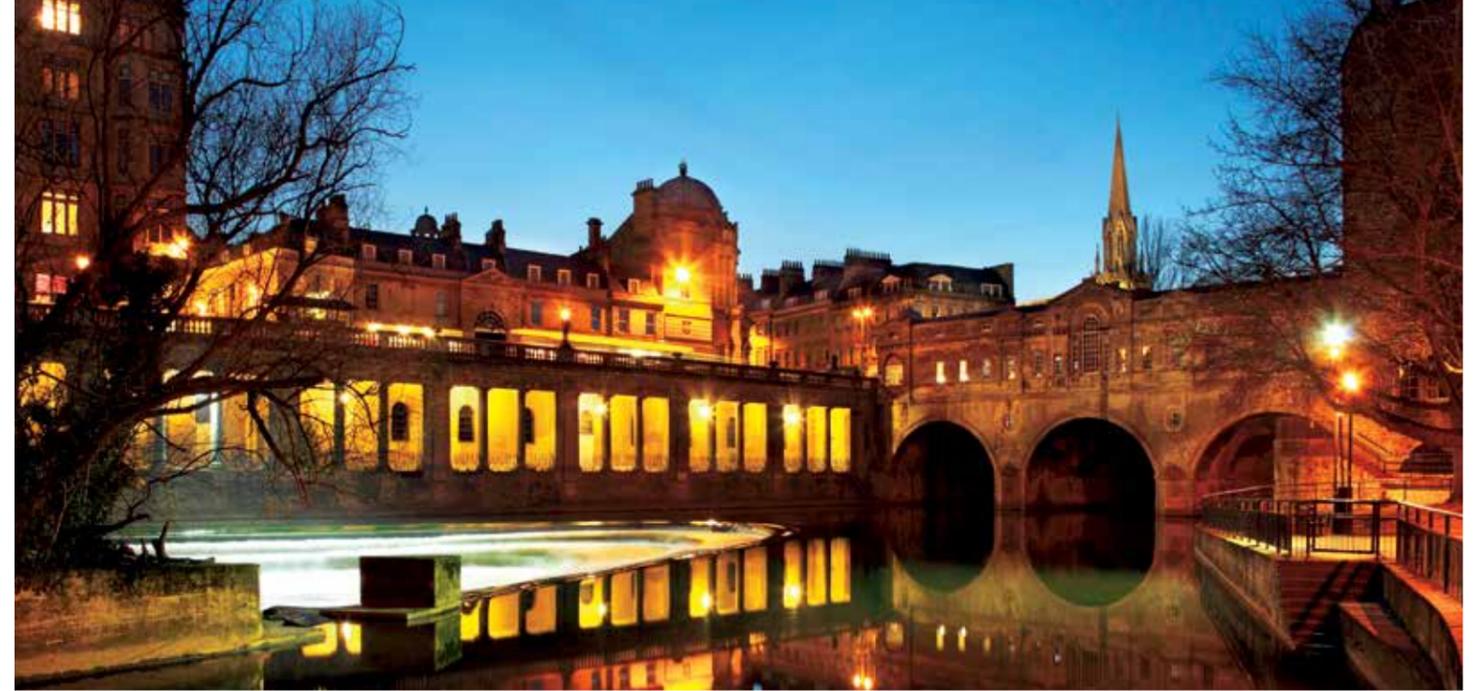
world's most famous buildings. Built by John Wood the Younger, it is greatly admired for its uncompromising symmetry Fans of Baroness Orczy's *Scarlet Pimpernel* play and adventure novel, set during the time of the French Revolution, would also be interested to know that, in the fictional story, Sir Percy Blakeney was said to have lived at No 15.

SULIS

The river goddess worshipped by the Dobunni, an Iron Age tribe. The Celts knew her as Sul. And it was at Bath's thermal springs they paid obeisance to her. It is also in Sulis' honour, the conquering Romans named their new town - *Aquae Sulis* or 'waters of Sulis' - while cleverly fusing her with Minerva, their own goddess of wisdom and medicine, creating the cult of Sulis Minerva.

THERMAE BATH SPA

The city's undisputed destination in which to experience the magic of Bath's waters, Thermae Bath Spa, which also oversees the Cross Bath, is the only place, aside from The Gainsborough Bath Spa, to enjoy Britain's only natural thermal waters in both a historical as well as contemporary setting. The waters have long been associated with healing and wellbeing. After all, the word 'spa' is



derived from the Latin acronym - *Salus per Aquam* (health through water).

URANUS

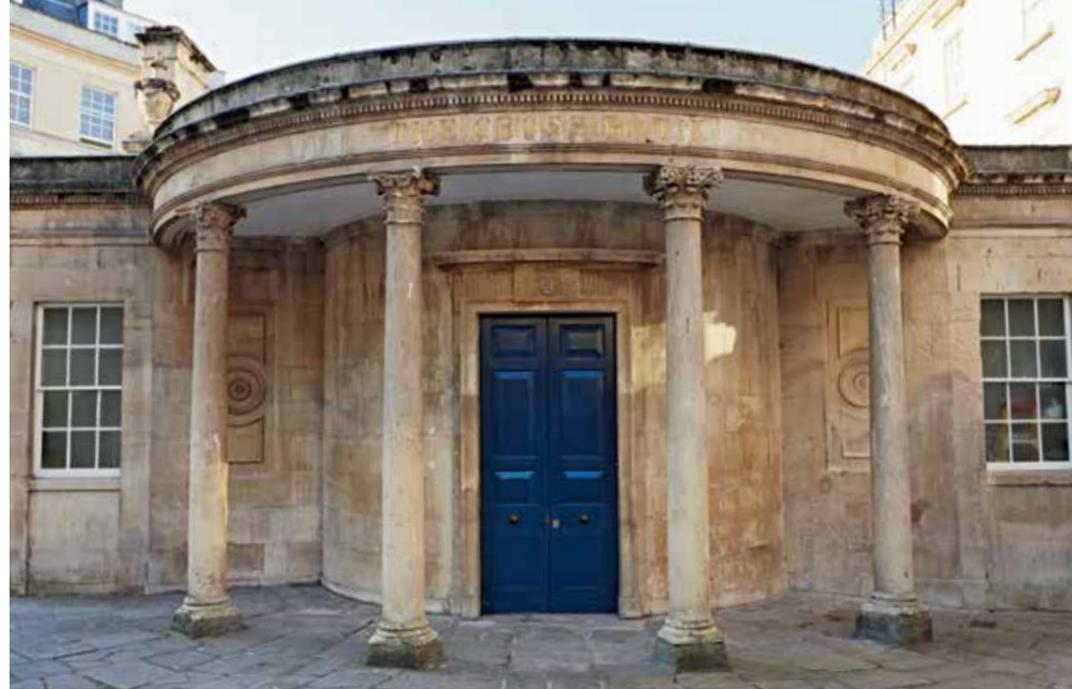
With its numerous noteworthy museums, those with a penchant for astronomy would do well to visit The Herschel Museum of Astronomy at 19 New King Street while in Bath. This was the home of astronomer and musician William Herschel and the site where he discovered the planet Uranus in 1781, right from his garden here. Visitors can also see how his workshop and

music room would have been in the 18th century.

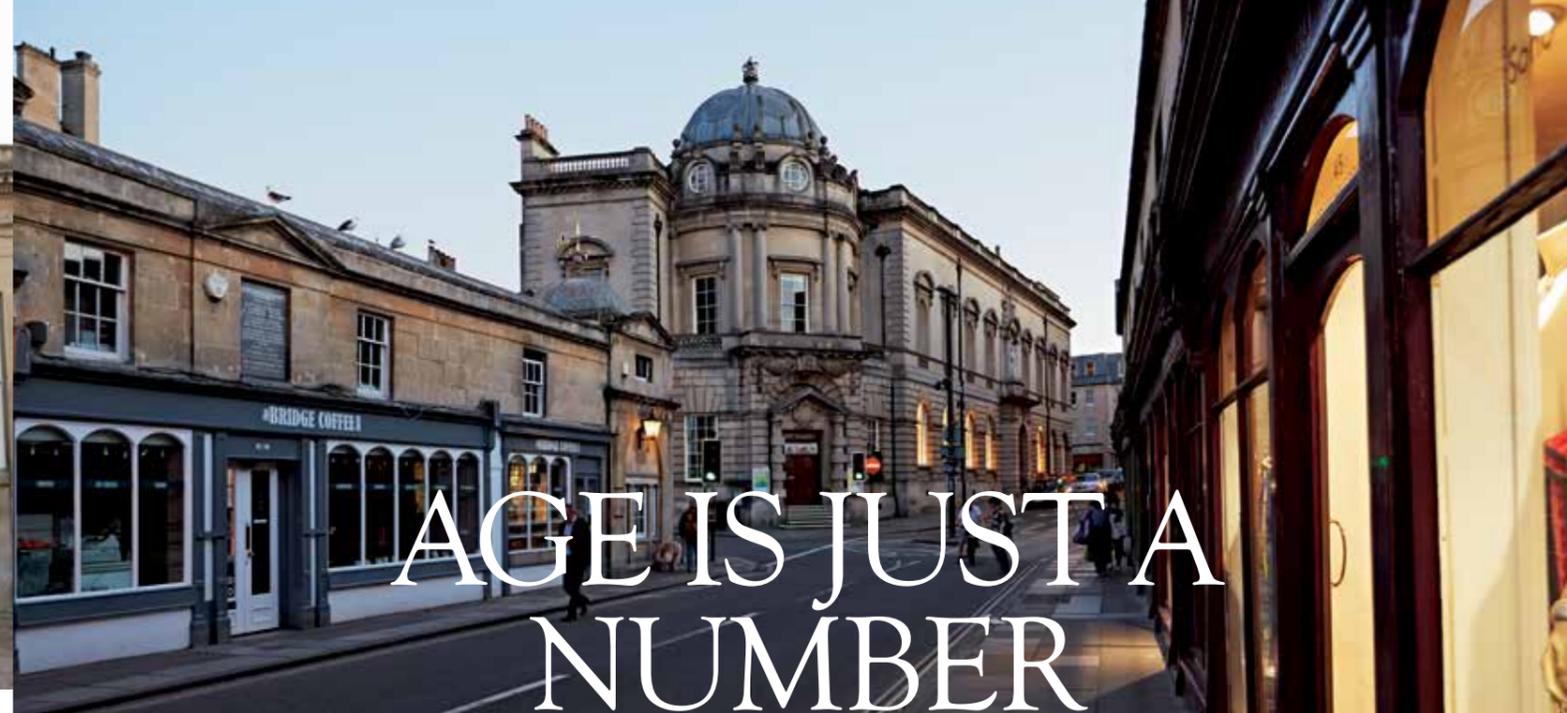
VILLULA, JOHN OF

In the year 1088, the appointment of John of Villula as Bishop of Bath and Wells would prove to be a significant turning point for the city. After the mayhem caused by the uprising against William Rufus, John of Villula channelled his energy and skill into reshaping Bath's street plan, a visionary exercise which brought benefits the city continues to enjoy till this day.

(Clockwise from top) Pulteney Bridge is one of Bath's architectural gems; You can get spectacular views of the city from Thermae Bath Spa's roof-top pool; The obelisk at Queen Square; This gilt bronze head of the goddess Sulis Minerva can be seen in the Roman Baths today.



(Clockwise, from right)
The Cross Bath is recognised as a sacred site; You can find various hues of Bath stone throughout the city; The Beazer Garden Maze.



AGE IS JUST A NUMBER



YELLOW

Many hues have been used to describe the pale yellow stone that features in almost all of Bath's buildings. Mined from Combe Down in Somerset, the oolitic limestone referred to collectively as 'Bath Stone' weathers beautifully and, depending on its age and exposure, may range from bright and buff when freshly-quarried to honey-coloured or even golden. Admire the different hues as you explore the city and its buildings.

ZOOMORPHISM

Defined as the use of animal forms in art or religious symbols, zoomorphism may be seen in various points around Bath, including within the temple complex at the Roman Baths to the forms and figures in Cyril Beazer's labyrinth and mosaic by the riverside, a gift to the citizens of Bath in 1973. ▣

WATER

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner by Coleridge might have lamented there not being a drop to drink but that's certainly not the case in Bath. Visitors to the beautiful and historical Roman Baths may help themselves to the curative properties of Bath water at their tour's end. Certainly, the tradition of drinking the waters for health continues. After all, it was the eminent Dr William Oliver who wrote, in *A Practical Dissertation on the Bath Waters*, in 1707 that: "If they can't be cured by drinking and bathing here, they will never be cured anywhere".

X

'X' or a 'cross' usually marks the spot and the standalone Cross Bath, just steps from the entrance of Thermae Bath Spa, is truly a treasure, combining history, healing and heritage in one beautiful, intimate location. Recognised by the World Wildlife Fund for Nature as a sacred site, the Cross Bath stands exactly on an earlier medieval bath with the original 2,000-year-old Roman cistern. Legend also has it that the body of St Aldhelm had rested here on its journey from Doulling to Malmesbury in 709AD, hence its evocative name.

The historic city of Bath plays the numbers game.

The Romans knew a good thing when they saw one and started spa culture right here in Bath from the first to fifth centuries AD. The city's historical Roman Baths is the oldest spa in the country, without doubt.

It is inconceivable to stay at The Gainsborough Bath Spa and not see a few original Thomas Gainsboroughs while you are at it! Visit the fine Holburne Museum during your stay. Built in 1796, it is home to numerous artistic treasures as well as pieces by the aforementioned great English portrait and landscape painter.

Dating back to 1482 and said to be the oldest house in Bath, Number 4 North Parade Passage is, today, marked by a plaque and is where the famous Sally Lunn's Historic Eating House may be found. Make sure you take a bite of history with Sally's famous light and airy buns, made from a secret recipe that is over 300 years old.

The oldest fireplace in Bath may be found at Hetling House and dates back to the Elizabethan era. Ask your friendly concierge at The Gainsborough Bath Spa to let you have a look as the building is part of YTL Hotels' property.

12 Orchard Street in Bath is home to 265 years (and counting) of history; foremost, being the site of the first Theatre Royal outside of London, then as a chapel where bishops were ordained and, since 1865, the home of one of England's oldest provincial Masonic lodges. If you've ever been curious about this secretive world or if Dan Brown has managed to pique your interest via his best-selling *Da Vinci Code*, pop by the Masonic Museum – certainly one of England's finest.

Built in 1805, the comparatively new Theatre Royal Bath is one of the oldest in the country and shows popular West End productions as well as the occasional opera and, during the Christmas season, pantomimes.

Meanwhile, cinema buffs would appreciate Bath's charming Little Theatre, the first cinema in the west of England.

If you've left your heart in Florence, Italy, sigh with relief as Bath's oh-so-charming Pulteney Bridge is an architectural paean to the Ponte Vecchio. It was completed in 1774 and, interestingly, is one of the few bridges in the world to have shops built into it.

The Star Inn is Bath's oldest pub. Dating back to the 16th century, head

there today for unpretentious pints in oak-panelled surrounds.

Bath is a shopping haven but did you know the oldest shopping venue in the city is, in fact, the Guildhall Market? Just a short stroll from majestic Bath Abbey, it's set in a gorgeous Victorian building next to the Guildhall.

Star-crossed lovers would appreciate the Lady Lena, a boat that plies the Kennet and Avon Canal. It's the oldest electric launch in existence and was the recent winner of Mills & Boon's 'most romantic experience' category in its popular Romance Awards, which celebrates Britain's most romantic things, from destinations to wedding venues.

The year 1781 was when the planet Uranus was discovered – right here in Bath by the brother and sister astronomer duo of William and Caroline Herschel. Visit the Herschel Museum of Astronomy along New King Street to find out more.

Rugby is one of Bath's most beloved sports and Bath Rugby has been at the heart of hale and hearty Bath since 1865 and its home ground is the pretty Recreation Ground (best known as the "Rec"), set by the Avon river. ▣

OLD AND NEW WORLD CHARM

In keeping with the inventive and enduring spirit that's a signature of Britain's only city to be listed as a full UNESCO World Heritage Site, The Gainsborough Bath Spa opens its doors and invites you in to discover a new yet old world of experiences, pleasure and luxury.

Text Kim Inglis

The imposing front façade of The Gainsborough Bath Spa, with its four-column portico, is as architecturally striking today as when it was built in 1826. Honey-coloured Bath stone is beautifully restored here.

In the same way that the UNESCO World Heritage Site of the city of Bath is an amalgam of historic eras and sites, so is the newly opened The Gainsborough Bath Spa. A 99-room five-star hotel operated by YTL Hotels, it opened its doors for business on 1 July 2015. The hotel's architectural roots lie in — or rather on — antiquity, more specifically on an original Roman bathhouse upon which the city was founded. Above these are 19th-century vaults, a Georgian building

with a Grade II-listed façade, additional Victorian wings and, nearby, an Elizabethan house.

As if that were not enough, there's a newly built wing and, at the hotel's centre, a natural thermal spa with three therapeutic pools set in a soaring, light-filled glass atrium. In many ways, this space — designed with the Roman history of Bath in mind, with blue and grey mosaic tiles, Romanesque columns and sparkling water — is the architectural 'glue' that holds the disparate buildings together. If this sounds like a hotchpotch, it isn't. Somehow, the hotel becomes more than the sum of its parts, as one space flows into the next. Certainly, the strong contemporary-styled interiors (which still give more than a nod to tradition) anchor the various elements, as does the efficient and friendly staff. There's a formality and calmness within the hotel, which is underpinned by the architectural features — high ceilings, tall wooden sash windows, symmetry and a notable lack of ornamentation.

The original buildings, and the one new wing, are all clad in local honey-toned Bath stone, giving the hotel a bold, if somewhat austere, exterior. Entry to the lobby is at the main building that originally housed a hospital and was built in 1826 in a design set by John Pinch the Elder. Featuring 11 bays with a four-column attached portico and pediment, it has been





“DO NOT LEAVE DORMANT IN YOUR STORE THAT WHICH WOULD RELIEVE THE POOR. IF THE POOR SLEEP SOUNDLY, SO WILL YOU.”

restored to its original grandeur. Adjacent is the Albert Wing, built in 1864 and so named after the deceased Prince Consort. It was designed by local Bath architect, John Elkington Gill, who also added a chapel.

These two buildings are linked by an underground walkway to the Bellott's annex, the oldest of the three edifices. First mentioned in 1608, it was built as an almshouse by one Thomas Bellott for poor visitors seeking treatment at one of the various bathhouses. Even though it was remodelled during Victorian times, its façade still bears the coat of arms of Bellott's master, William Cecil, Lord

Burghley, and a Latin inscription reading: "Do not leave dormant in your store that which would relieve the poor. If the poor sleep soundly, so will you." Fittingly, this 14-guestroom annex with private court garden may be hired out in its entirety. Even though it is attached to the rest of the hotel, it has its own private entrance and offers a degree of intimacy.

The public spaces and 99 rooms and suites have been conceptualised and appointed by Champalimaud Design, a New York-based company known for its award-winning work on properties such as The Carlyle in New York, The Dorchester in

Left to right: An internal corridor in the hotel is calm and cool with geometric marble floors and a pale palette; the relaxation area for post-treatment pampering overlooks the main thermal pool beneath a glass roof; the Albert Wing façade dates from 1856 and this addition blends harmoniously with the original hospital building.

London and The Liberty in Boston. The latter was a former jail, illustrating that the company is *au fait* with adaptive re-use projects.

Its main principal, Alexandra Champalimaud, describes the company's ethos as forward-thinking. "There has to be a modern context and a sense of dimension — more aspirational and exciting than ever before — yet entirely comfortable and user-friendly at the end of the day." She elaborates that things have to work, there has to be a sense of ease, comfort and quiet in the rooms, yet a vibrancy and excitement in the public

spaces. To sum up, she notes: "What we like to create is a project that's ahead of its time, unusual, with a deep soul, and reminiscent of the past in some way."

When the company was drilling underground to build the basement spa, it found some ancient Roman mosaics and 17,500 Roman coins, some of which are now displayed in the lobby. These had to be assessed and analysed by heritage experts, which caused some delays. Nevertheless, even though the foundations were eventually sealed beneath the surface, their traces remain embedded in the design of the basement spa. Not only is the special pre-treatment thermal water journey one that respects the Roman tradition of sequential temperature bathing, the spa's tranquil relaxation chamber features a reproduction of the Roman mosaic floor and cloistered arched niches for lounging pre- or post-bathing.

It is this attention to history, styled in a contemporary manner, that gives the hotel its strong identity. A few artworks were commissioned from students of the Bath School of Art & Design, an establishment that, at one stage, occupied the building pre-restoration but, for the most part, the interiors are remarkably uncluttered. In the lobby, a striking cascading lamp sculpture descends from an oculus at the top of an elegant historic central staircase to the lower basement level, but that notwithstanding, the rest of the space is clean-lined and collected in cool tones of grey and taupe. Elsewhere, *Gentry Blue*, a 'Georgian' blue/grey tone, covers restaurant and guestroom walls, allowing the huge windows to dominate — and invite in views of the honey-coloured city and the green hills beyond.

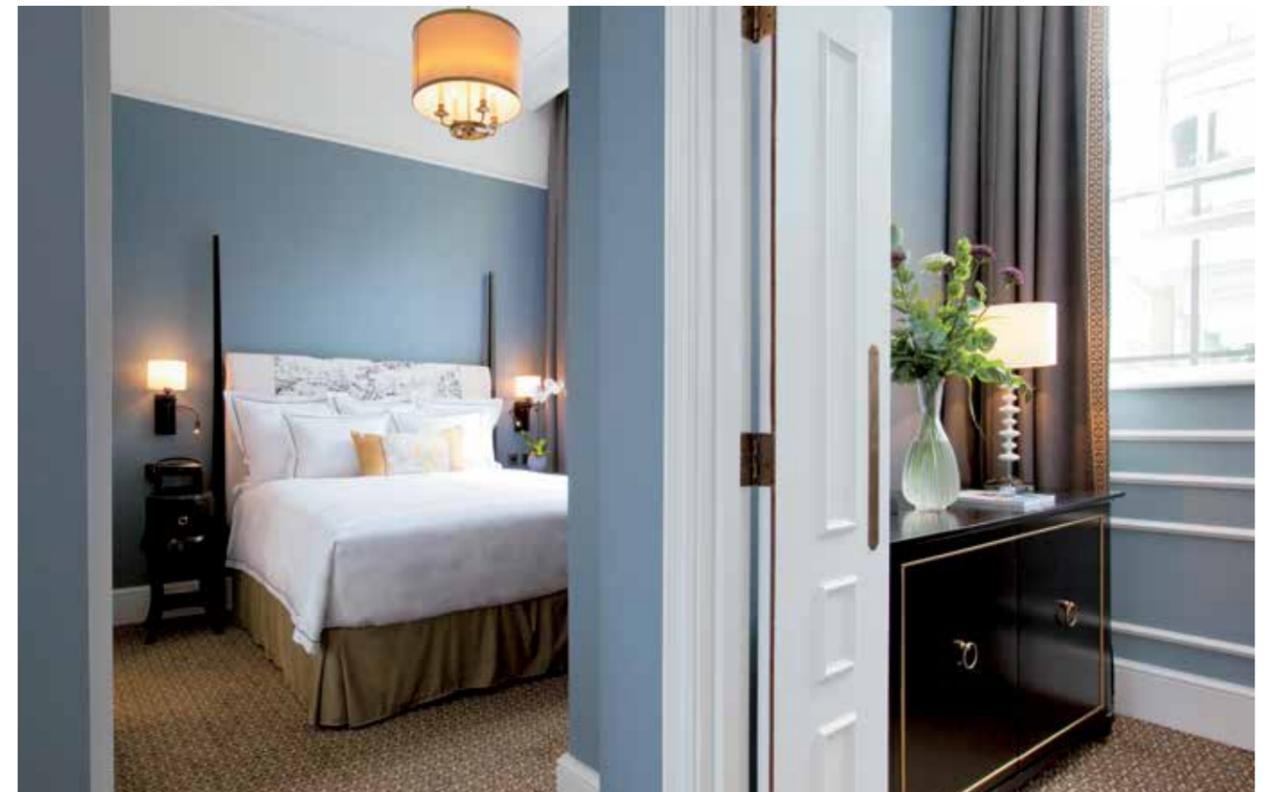
All 99 guest rooms and suites are different, each individually designed according to the original layout of the buildings. Many have incredibly high ceilings and massive Georgian windows, while there is also a duplex and a couple of rooms with interlinking balconies overlooking the spa. Local scenes are celebrated in the black and white toile antimacassars depicting playful bathing



“IT IS THIS ATTENTION TO HISTORY, STYLED IN A CONTEMPORARY MANNER, THAT GIVES THE HOTEL ITS STRONG IDENTITY.”

Above: The Guest Relations Manager and Head Concierge greet guests on arrival. Left: An unusual breakfast dish at the hotel restaurant comprises a Bavarian sausage and giant pretzel accompanied by mustard. Opposite top left: The bartender prepares a specially smoked cocktail for a guest.

Opposite top right: The Canvas Room hosts bubbles and cheeseboard in the early evenings. It is the perfect place to relax after a day of sightseeing. Opposite bottom: A suite, in a 'Georgian' tone of blue/grey, features a bedroom on the left and sitting room on the right. Tall ceilings and expansive sash windows bring in light and views.





Spa Village Bath is, undoubtedly, one of the hotel's strengths. With a thermal water journey, exotic treatments and personalised pampering, it is also beautifully designed.

activities draped over headboards, while a retro Roberts radio and Asprey bathroom products add a refined British flavour. The Sealy beds and Egyptian cotton sheets are also very comfortable.

Public spaces are no less impressive. In addition to the lobby, there is an attractive lounge that hosts afternoon teas and drinks and cheeseboard in the early evenings. Aptly named The Canvas Room after the British painter, Sir Thomas Gainsborough, it is quintessentially British in style. A stylish bar and striking restaurant are similarly inviting; the 94-seat dining room is warmly appointed with butterscotch-coloured leather seating, herringbone floors and high ceilings. There's a dramatic semi-transparent wine cellar wall that breaks up the space at one end, while a large mural by one of the college students dominates the opposite end. It's a space that invites conversation and interaction, yet there's a degree of formality as well.

Conference and banqueting facilities are particularly notable at The Gainsborough Bath Spa. The Somerset Room, with a half-shell area and room to seat close to 100 people, is ideal for weddings and the like; it has an impeccable period atmosphere. For larger events, look to The Chapel. Beautifully appointed, with an exquisite silk awning beneath the ceiling, The Chapel has an adjacent outdoor terrace that doubles its capacity and is perfect for summer events. A short walk from the hotel, one will find Hetting House, the last remaining Elizabethan mansion in Bath. Here, the Great Room, the only room of importance that has escaped various renovations and bombings, has been transformed into conference chambers. With fine wainscoting and an original 9ft wide x 14ft high chimney-piece, it features elaborate carving and heraldic details.

As if these were not enough, the hotel has one more trick up its sleeve — additional accommodation in a secluded townhouse round the corner. Believed to date from around 1590, 3 Hetting Court oozes period character and charm, but has been recently renovated to include everything the modern traveller may require. A thoroughly contemporary luxury retreat with three bedrooms and two bathrooms, it also has a fully functioning kitchen. Each floor is different with each room revealing a different colour



The spa reception mimics the design of an apothecary of old. Guests are given a bespoke bag of perfumed salts, assembled in front of them to their specification and likes, before embarking on their aquatic adventure.

scheme behind original wooden doors. It is the perfect bijoux bolthole for a family or group of up to five people who desire the utmost privacy, but also wish to use the hotel facilities.

In addition to its superb facilities and luxe interior decoration, The Gainsborough Bath Spa has the privilege of being the only hotel in Britain with a direct link to mineral-rich thermal waters. It also boasts an advantageous location, is close to the Roman Baths area, the abbey and shops, and is only five minutes' walk from Bath Spa railway station. Each year, about four and a half million visitors flock to Bath to enjoy the city's historic architecture and soak in its healing thermal waters. Now, they will be able to sample a meal or drink, take in a spa treatment, or stay overnight at its newest five-star attraction. With its timeless atmosphere and impeccable service, The Gainsborough Bath Spa is a welcome addition to the city. ■



The gleamingly gorgeous Spa Village Bath, spread out over two levels in The Gainsborough Bath Spa, pays tribute to the region's healing culture.

EAU, YES!

Seven is known to be the most special of numbers, a digit associated with the divine act of creation, the colours of God's rainbow covenant with man as well as being the most prime, undividable and unique numeral. *YTL Life* celebrates Bath's unique role as custodian of England's only natural thermal pools, and proudly presents the city's 'Magnificent 7' – a series of unique aquatic journeys, each a physical and sensorial celebration of the city's healing and immensely pleasurable hot spring waters.

Clockwise, from right: There is something enchanting about visiting the Roman Baths at twilight; have a glass of Bath water, said to contain 43 different minerals, from the King's Spring water fountain in the Pump Room; the Cross Bath is the city's most sacred water site.

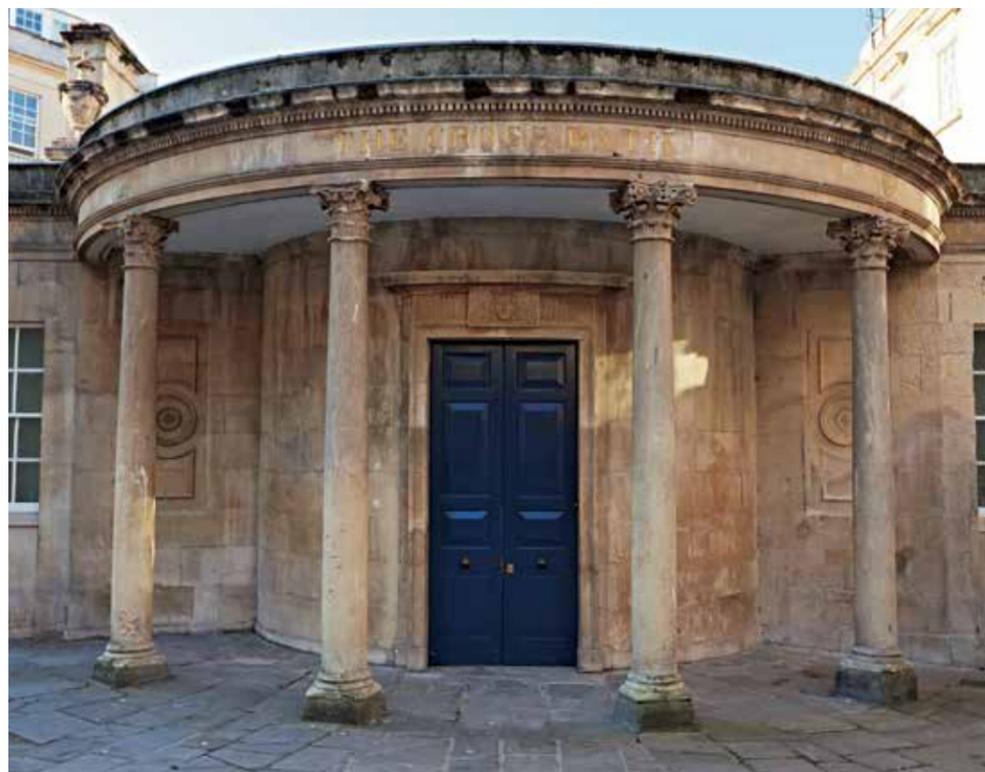
The Roman Baths at Twilight

Built around 70AD, the magnificent Roman Baths is found in the heart of the World Heritage City of Bath and a mere stroll from The Gainsborough Bath Spa. Dating back 2,000 years, the magnificent building was built as a grand complex for bathing and socialising – the two preferred Roman pastimes – and remains, today, one of the best preserved Roman archaeological sites in the world and, without doubt, one of the main reasons to visit Bath. The setting is absolutely magical, particularly around the Great Bath which, if you look up, rewards you with views of Bath Abbey's soaring spires as well as the statues that surround the terrace.

Although enchanting in the early morning of the cooler months, when hot steam swirls and dances about the water's surface, the Roman Baths are lovely in the summer. During July and August, make it a point to visit this great historical site at twilight. Open till late during this time, find a place to sit down by the water's edge and slowly admire the changing colours of the sky as it gives way from cornflower blue to soft orangey-yellows or blazing reds before, finally, giving in to night, which allows the light of torches to finally add their illuminative magic to a setting, which mere words, without the benefit of experience, can barely do justice.

Cross Bath

With its mystical shape that resembles the *vesica piscis*, the Cross Bath is undoubtedly Bath's most sacred water site. With its visual references to ancient symbols like the Eye of Osiris as well as the sacred feminine, the Cross Bath



“Bath’s unique waters provide a safe and effective avenue for healing, aiding in the restoration of confidence and increased mobility of mind, body and soul.”

or holy connotations. The word ‘unique’ is probably overused but I can't stress enough the importance of this extremely special, precious spring. People have always felt its unique quality, from thousands of years ago right up to the present day.”

Waters from the Pump Room

The legendary Prince Bladud may have found the answer to his physical ailments from bathing in Bath's hot springs but, from the time of the late 17th century, it was infinitely more fashionable to drink the waters, particularly after the 1707 publication of Dr William Oliver's famous *Practical Dissertation on Bath Water*, which emphasised drinking, on top of bathing and immersion in, the famous waters, which are believed to be sourced from water that fell on the Mendip Hills 4,000 years ago.

Thus, no visit to the spa town is quite complete without taking the waters. Although visitors to the Roman Baths may drink free spa water at the fountain in the West Baths, a more elegant option would be to visit the Pump Room, located in a beautiful Grade I listed heritage building

today is a little haven, encircled by the soft yellow glow of oolitic Bath stone. There is certainly an air of magic about it. After all, it was officially declared as a Sacred Site by the World Wide Fund for Nature in 2000. Worshipped since ancient times, it was the Celts who are best known for their reverence of this particular spring, dedicating it to their goddess Sulis, and it has always been considered their premier place of worship and devotion.

Although the Cross Bath sits on a site of worship and reverence that dates back at least three to four thousand years, an abundance of archaeological treasures, from both Celtic and Roman times as well as Neolithic arrow heads, have also been unearthed from this very site. Today, bathing at the Cross Bath is one of the most profound water experiences you can ever enjoy. It is adorned with a crystal fountain, with an inscription bearing a line from the poet Ted Hughes: “Water is the ultimate life, sure as crystal, the Divine influx.” “It is still the only place in England where natural spring water rises unadulterated to the surface,” notes Paul Simons, a World Heritage consultant. “After all, hot water, particularly to the ancients, was seen as a gift. It cannot be explained and it was always associated with spiritual



right next door. Constructed by, first, Thomas Baldwin in 1789 before being completed in 1799 by John Palmer, visitors to the Pump Room should make their way to the window overlooking the Roman Baths. There, you will find the King's Spring water fountain. Grab a glass to enjoy the unusual flavour of Bath water, which is said to contain 43 different minerals. Complete the experience in style with a spot of tea and music, courtesy of the Pump Room Trio, said to be the longest established musical ensemble in Europe.

Spa Village Bath Circuit

Juxtaposing the natural wonders of Bath's hot springs and the best of contemporary design, never has the city's thermal water heritage been celebrated so luxuriously than at Spa Village Bath. Spread out

“The Cross Bath sits on a site of worship and reverence that dates back at least three to four thousand years.”

over two levels, this gleamingly gorgeous spa facility at The Gainsborough Bath Spa pays tribute to the region's healing culture with a unique pre-spa ritual, a signature touch of all Spa Villages around the world, called the *Bath Circuit*. Here, guests are invited to allocate at least a full hour to enjoy a spot of Romanesque indulgence ahead of scheduled spa treatments. Begin with a quick dip of about five to 10 minutes in the balneo pool, which is heated to between 35°C and 40°C, before enjoying the soothing heat of the infrared or traditional sauna rooms – whose penetrating heat works effectively in relaxing muscles while

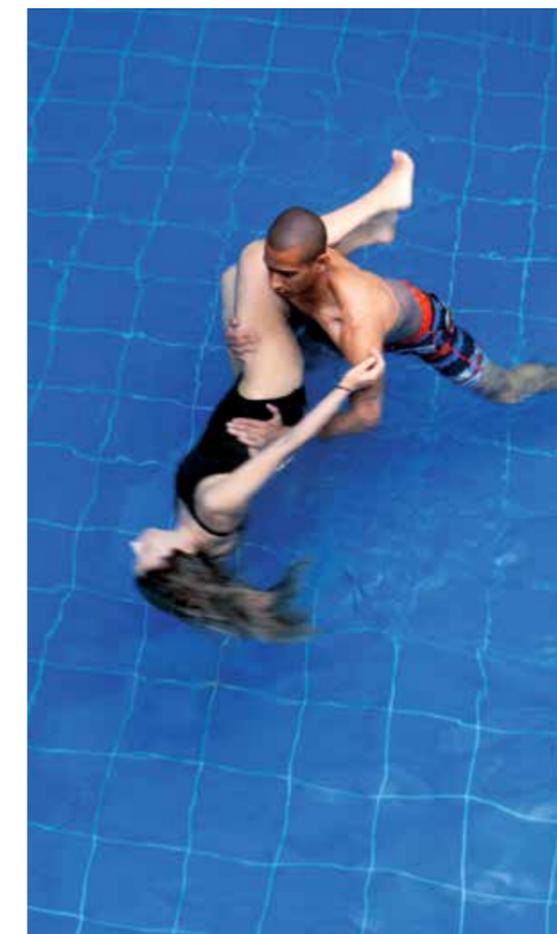
aiding the body's natural detoxification processes. Cool down in-between in the fiercely beautiful ice alcove. Find a place on the cooling marble seat and gently pat yourself with handfuls of ice, deposited in fresh snowy mounds from the mouth of a leonine fount. Move on to the main thermal pool where you may enjoy a simple swim or the hydro-therapeutic joys of the different water jets located around the sides of the pool. Hotel guests can avail themselves of the Bath House facilities on a complimentary basis during certain set times of the day, so make the point to find out.

The Path to Freedom

Weightlessness has always had its charm. Perhaps, it stems from deeply-buried memories while in utero or from more recent experiences like diving into the pristine waters of an exotic Maldivian atoll. Whichever it is, you can't deny the pure physical joy of limbs being released from worldly pressure over a session of dynamic aqua therapy. If this idea entices, do consider then Spa Village Bath's unique 45-minute water journey. Known simply as *Freedom*, this session of aquatic body therapy will prove incredibly liberating, immersing you in Bath's famously healing waters like never before.

Set in the spa's main thermal pool, fed by the Hetling Spring, your dedicated

Clockwise, from right: No visit to Bath is complete without tea and music, and, of course, a glass of Bath water at the 18th-century Pump Room; guided full-body stretches are part of Spa Village Bath's Freedom treatment; enjoy the pleasures of the Bath House Circuit at Spa Village Bath.



Vichy Rainforest Shower at Thermae Bath Spa

therapist will work in synchronised harmony, supporting you each step of the way as you are guided into slow but sure release from worry, stress and whatever is weighing you down in life. As the liquid warmth comforts your body, close your eyes to focus on the freedom the water affords. Concentrate on your breathing and simply just 'be', almost as if you are back in the comfort and safety of the womb. Your therapist will also work with you to execute deep full-body stretches, giving you a unique, gravity-free workout that has to be experienced to be believed.

For those with mobility issues or even muscular or neurological conditions, the blissfulness afforded by buoyancy is impossible to replicate. Bath's unique waters provide a safe and effective avenue for healing, aiding in the restoration of confidence, and increased mobility of mind, body and soul.

Tension manifests itself in many ways, from tightness in the chest to back pain and unexplainable mystery aches. One of the fastest and most effective ways to help your body relax and recover is with water. Just as a warm shower works wonders, both physically and mentally, imagine lying face down on a cushioned table as multiple strategically-placed shower jets rain down upon you, simultaneously working to massage, soothe, re-invigorate and caress your body.

At Thermae Bath Spa, the *Vichy Rainforest Shower* experience uses water, sound and light to appeal to all the senses, with your therapist gently adapting the power of the water, in a tripartite approach to wellness as well as wellbeing, by systematically cleansing, stimulating and soothing the soft tissues of the body while incorporating massage techniques.



Here, guests may choose from four distinct and unique Vichy Shower treatments namely the *Aroma Vichy Experience*, which uses aromatherapy shower gels specifically chosen according to your mood; the *Exfoliating Vichy Experience* that's akin to a tailor-made body scrub; the *Hot Stones Vichy Massage*, which marries stone, oil, water and the latest in hydro massage techniques to deliver an aquatic sensory journey like never before; and the *Revive Vichy Experience*, which includes a full-body exfoliation session, a conditioning hair treatment and a tailor-made facial using enriched ingredients to restore the skin's clarity and freshness, after which you'd swear a year has dropped off your face. But don't take our word for it. Go try it out post-haste.

couples may take advantage of a copper tray bearing sybaritic 'toys', which range from loofahs, rosewater sprays and glass dishes containing a bounty of good things: fresh spirulina, ideal for detoxifying while working to stimulate circulation; moor mud, harvested from a bog in Hungary and exceedingly rich in natural proteins and amino acids, making it an ideal exfoliant and face mask; mineral salts, to enhance the water's thermal qualities; and a delicious Turkish salt scrub with eucalyptus oil for the body.

After alternating between scrubbing each other down and soaking in the beautiful ofuro tub, the session is followed by a 90-minute couple's massage using Kerstin Florian organic aromatherapy oils on state-of-the-art treatment beds, which may be heated if the weather's nippy. This deeply sensual spa experience ends, as all Spa Village Bath journeys do, with a soothing pot of tea and a macaroon, best enjoyed on the relaxation terrace, overlooking the deep blue of the thermal pools. Forget about music being the food of love. This works even better. We promise. ■

Tranquility for Two

It's easy to see why Bath is regarded as one of the most romantic destinations in Britain, not to mention the preferred spot for honeymooners. If love is on the agenda, don't leave town without experiencing Spa Village Bath's *Tranquility for Two* – a two-hour-long sensory journey that begins with a playful session where

Clockwise, from top: The Vichy Rainforest Shower at Thermae Bath Spa uses water, sound and light to appeal to all the senses; Spa Village Bath's Tranquility for Two treatment includes a soak in the ofuro tub; the Roman Baths is one of the main draws for visitors to Bath; the Cross Bath today is a little haven encircled by the soft yellow glow of Bath stone.



The Bath Cure

The ancient spa town of Bath truly deserves its reputation as a destination for healing and restoration.

Text Dr Roger Rolls, MA, MB, MRCGP, DHMSA



For over 2,000 years, the thermal waters at Bath have enjoyed a reputation for healing, possibly even before the Romans built the magnificent bathing suite of which substantial remains are still visible today. Although the Romans used their public baths primarily for recreational and social purposes, the thermal springs at Aquae Sulis, the Roman name for Bath, had a reputation for healing and were thought to derive their power from spiritual sources associated with the Celtic goddess, Sulis, and the Roman deity Minerva.

Roman doctors recommended thermal springs for soothing painful conditions, and relieving swellings and painful joints. They believed such waters could promote good respiration, relieve fatigue and promote secretion of urine. One physician in ancient Rome, Asclepiades, suggested that water could enter the body through pores in the skin so that 'particles' causing disease and obstructions within the body could be diluted and flushed out. Most medical authors at this time believed that mineral waters worked inside the body by restoring the balance of humours.

The humoral theory was propounded many centuries ago to explain the causation of disease. Human bodies were thought to contain four humours: phlegm, blood, yellow bile and black bile. They had physical properties that described their temperature and humidity. In a healthy state, the four humours achieved a steady balance but if one or more became excessive, disease ensued and their symptoms depended on which humour was out of balance. It was the job of the physician to determine the state of the patient's humours and set up opposing remedies to restore a healthy balance.

Diseases caused by too much cold needed to have hot, drying remedies. Hot mineral water was thought to be suitable

Aside from soaking in Bath's warm waters as a health remedy, the ancient Romans also used to petition Sulis Minerva, the hot springs' primary deity, for a variety of things, from healing to requests for retribution.

because minerals gave the water a dry taste and immersion in the water produced a diuresis – an increased output of urine. These theories of how the water produced its healing effect were perpetuated for over a thousand years after the fall of the Roman Empire and were only seriously questioned in the latter part of the 18th century.

There is scant documentary evidence of the water's use until the 16th century. In medieval times, the baths were administered and maintained by the Bath Priory but, with the dissolution of the monasteries in the reign of Henry VIII, their ownership was transferred to the city council. Awareness of their healing potential was re-awakened by Dr William Turner, whose publication on the nature and properties of the baths of England, Italy and Germany, printed in 1562, listed over 60 disorders that could benefit from immersion in Bath waters. These included such diverse conditions as piles, migraine, sciatica, worms in the belly, forgetfulness, dullness of smelling, palsy, cramp in the neck, sterility and failure of menstruation – all of which were attributed to an excess of phlegm.

The reputation of the Bath waters for curing sterility proved attractive to certain English monarchs and royal visits helped to popularise the town as a resort. Anne of Denmark, Charles I, Catherine of Braganza and Mary of Modena were all visitors to Bath during the Stuart period and royalty continued to visit the spa in the ensuing centuries.

Bath was a small settlement in the 17th century, with about 3,000 inhabitants. People travelled from all over Britain to experience its waters and the population sometimes quadrupled during the bathing season. The rich stayed in lodging houses, many of which were owned by medical practitioners. The poor were accommodated in hospitals, all of which were grouped around the various baths.

They provided shelter rather than serving as medical institutions, although Bellott's Hospital, founded in the early 17th century, did have a medical practitioner, and patients were only allowed to stay a maximum of four weeks to allow for a reasonable turnover. The admission book for this institution is still around today and offers a glimpse into the patients' illnesses and the places of residence.

The first hospital, in the modern sense of the word, was founded in Bath in 1738 and provided accommodation, nursing care and medical supervision of treatment for patients whose cases were suitable for mineral water therapy. At first, the patients used the baths in the centre of the city but, by the 19th century, the hospital had its own mineral water supply and was renamed the Royal Mineral Water Hospital.

Renamed again in the 1930s as the Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases, it now specialises in rheumatology and



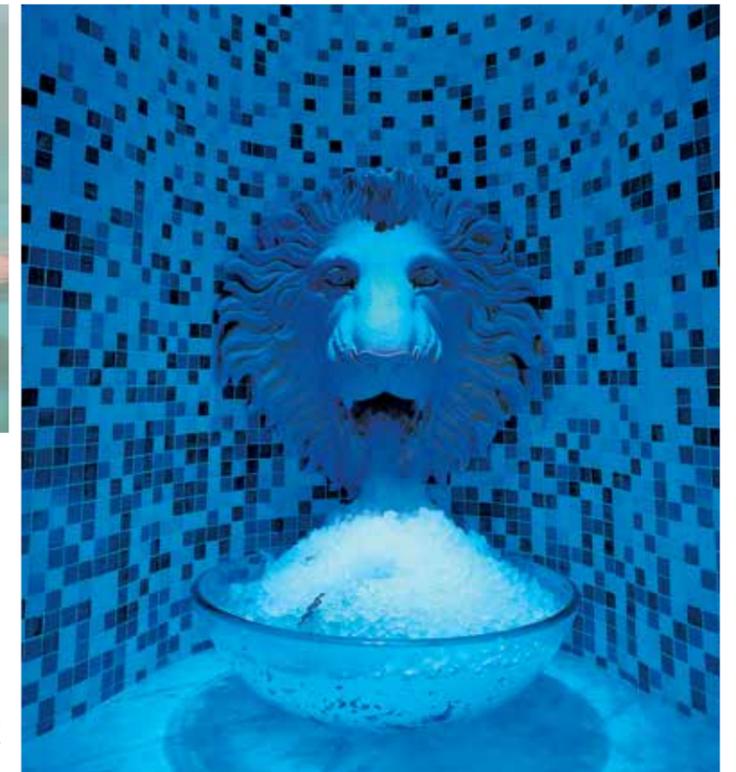
“Bath was a small settlement in the 17th century with about 3,000 inhabitants. People travelled from all over Britain to experience its waters.”

rehabilitation and has acquired an international reputation in this field.

Several 18th century record books from this hospital have survived and provide useful data to enable an understanding of how the spa became so successful as a medical facility in recent centuries. Broadly, the conditions most successfully treated in the spa fall into three main groups – skin disease, musculo-skeletal disorders and paralysis. Patients were also admitted with other chronic conditions but they made up no more than 10 per cent of the total.

Many of these cases, particularly certain types of paralysis associated with abdominal colic, have features of lead poisoning. Cider was a popular drink in the south-west of England and the apple presses used in its production were formerly lined with lead. The acetic acid in cider dissolves lead, producing lead acetate, which has a sweet taste and is sometimes called sugar of lead. This sweetness was so widely appreciated that farmers often hung a ball of lead in the fermentation vat. It was not only farmers who suffered from lead poisoning. Amongst the early records, there were numerous examples of artisans who had worked with lead.

The Bath waters also enjoyed a reputation for curing gout, a disease which is sometimes caused by kidney damage resulting



From the beautiful rooftop pool at Thermae Bath Spa to Spa Village Bath's Roman-inspired Bath House Circuit, Bath continues to draw people from all over the world to take or immerse in its waters.



from lead toxicity. In the 18th century, gout was more prevalent in the well-nourished and wealthier social classes. It was traditionally associated with drinking fortified wines like port and madeira. A few years ago, some American researchers analysed the lead levels in some expensive madeira dating from the 1790s and found a lead content well over 50 times the permitted level nowadays.

Lead contamination from one source or another was extremely common in the 17th and 18th centuries, a period when the spa was at its zenith. Patients with symptoms of lead poisoning were recognised as suitable for Bath spa treatment, even in the days before lead poisoning had been identified as the cause. So why should a month or six weeks of regular bathing bring about such a favourable outcome in these cases?

The answer seems to lie in the effects of immersion on the excretion of lead. It was traditional for those using the baths to immerse themselves up to their neck for several hours. In 1986, three subjects who worked at a lead shot tower in Bristol volunteered to take part in an immersion study. All of them had a raised level of lead, though not sufficient to produce symptoms. Their urinary lead levels were measured over a five-hour period and the results compared with a similar period of time spent resting out of the water.

After two hours, there was an almost five-fold increase in their lead excretion. Immersion produces a number of significant physiological changes, which essentially stimulate the kidneys. This is not dependent on the mineral content and appears to be due purely to water pressure.

Drinking spa water in large quantities may have more subtle effects but this has received very little scientific study, particularly as many thermal waters have an unpleasant taste. In the past, measured amounts of Bath's thermal water were prescribed by doctors and imbibed hot and fresh directly from the springs. Bottled Bath water has never enjoyed much commercial success, though it has been tried at various times during the spa's history.

Besides general immersion, localised treatments were also popular at Bath. By the 17th century, hand pumps were installed in the spa so that bath attendants could direct a douche of water over a painful region of the body. By the 19th century, the pumps had become more sophisticated and the spa used an impressive array of plumbing gadgetry to achieve a similar effect.

Massage was also an important adjunct to water treatment. Women called 'rubbers' were employed to massage the skin with brushes while the patient was in the bath. This practice led to the adoption of the Vichy spray massage, invented in the French spa of that name. Some of the beneficial effects of massage may result from changes in the patient's psychological state. Touch is

a fundamental and primitive need for human beings and massage can assist relaxation and reduce pain.

Steam baths have also been in use for centuries to induce sweating. Most European cities in the Middle Ages could offer sweating baths but many of them quickly degenerated into brothels and served merely as meeting places for libidinous characters. In London, these establishments were known as stew houses and became so notorious that they had to be outlawed and virtually all had been closed by the mid-16th century. Vapour bathing was on offer at Bath at various times during the spa's history. As well as sweating rooms, more localised treatment was given by enclosing a limb or sometimes the whole body in a sweating box or cabinet.

The use of fango, a volcanic mud product, also dates from Roman times. Fango has a silky smooth consistency and is grey brown in colour and odourless. Bath formerly had its own version of fango, made from a mixture of mineral water and fuller's earth mined on the hills to the south of the city. The heated mud was used to soothe painful joints.

The discovery that Bath spa water is mildly radioactive re-kindled ideas that it contained a labile therapeutic constituent and, for a time, radiation was hailed as the water's curative principle. Radiation certainly has dramatic biological effects, which is more than could be said for the chemical components of the water. Such was the enthusiasm for radioactivity that a Bath baker offered 'radium bread' for sale. However, the amount of radioactivity in the Bath springs is well below the hazardous level and poses no danger to bathers.

Over the centuries, spiritual forces, magic, minerals, dissolved gases, radioactivity and thermal heat have all been suggested as the water's curative principle and then discredited. Whether or not you believe the water contains some mysterious healing property, the spa therapies on offer at Bath can certainly promote relaxation and enhance well-being, if not more. ■



The spa experience is made all the more marvellous at Spa Village Bath while the ancient Cross Bath is listed by the World Wide Fund for Nature as a dedicated Sacred Site.

Some of the sculptures from the King Bladud's Pigs in Bath project at the Thermae Bath Spa.

THE KING Who Wasn't Really There

There is no evidence to prove the existence of King Bladud, who is said to have founded Bath. That, however, hasn't stopped him from having a real presence.

Image Witty Events UK



Sometimes, you can't let the truth stand in the way of a good story. Bladud, the legendary king of Briton who founded Bath, first appeared in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae*, or *History of the Kings of Britain*, published in the 12th century. There, Bladud is listed as the 10th king from the line of Brutus of Troy, the founder of Briton and a descendent of Aeneas. The latter, of course, is a survivor of the sack of Troy who was immortalised in Virgil's epic, *The Aeneid*. Aeneas is also said to be an ancestor of Romulus and Remus, who, abandoned by their mother, were suckled

by a she-wolf and went on to set-up Rome. Bladud, it would seem, had pretty impressive relatives.

The story is that Bladud was struck by leprosy in his youth and exiled from the court of his father, King Rud (or Lud) Hud Hudibras. Shunned, he became a swineherd in what is today Somerset. Some of his pigs enjoyed wallowing in the area's warm mud and he noticed that they were free of the skin diseases that inflicted the other animals. Thinking that it might help him too, Bladud started bathing in the mud himself and was soon cured of

leprosy. This allowed him to return home and, eventually, claim his birthright and become king. He went on to build the city of Bath, so that others may also enjoy the healing benefits of its waters.

Bladud's story isn't simply Geoffrey of Monmouth's alone. The *Historia* does mention that Bladud is the father of Leir (the same Lear from Shakespeare's great tragedy) and attributed Bath's foundation to him. There is no mention, however, of leprosy or pigs, which are certainly embellishments added by later writers. Geoffrey, however, did write that

Bladud practiced necromancy and even fashioned a pair of wings. On his maiden flight, however, he crashed into the Temple of Apollo in Trinovantum (London) and died.

There is, in the end, no evidence that Bladud ever existed, although there is reference to a Welsh prince named 'Blaidydd', which means 'Wolf-lord'. Bath was, of course, founded by the Romans, who were drawn to the area by the hot springs. They weren't the first there, though, as there is evidence of a shrine, dedicated to the Celtic goddess Sulis, that

pre-dates their arrival. Sulis was co-opted by the Romans to become Sulis Minerva and the rest, as they say, is history.

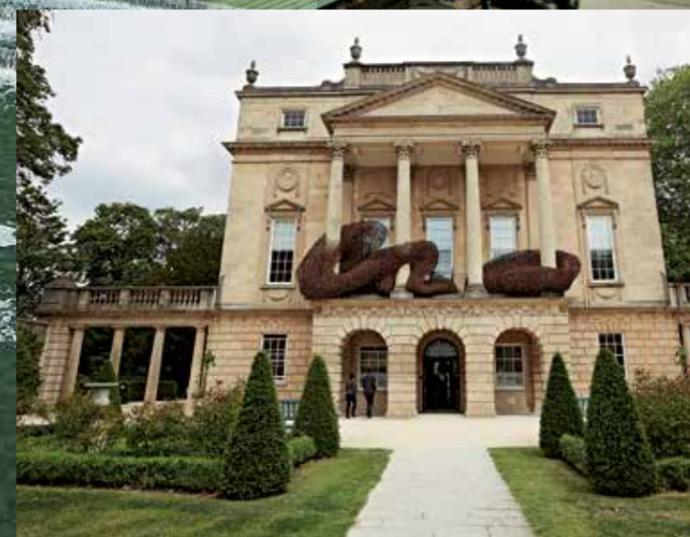
Still, for someone that probably didn't exist, Bladud has done pretty well for himself and you don't have to look very far to find him in Bath. There are statues of Bladud in the Cross Bath, the Roman Baths and Parade Gardens, for example. Just off Broad Street is the Bladud Buildings, which was built in the mid 18th century, as well as the Bladud's Head pub in Larkhall. He's even inspired a painting, *Bladud in Exile*, by the American

artist, Benjamin West, and a historical fiction novel, *The Winged Man*, by Moyra Caldecott. In the summer of 2008, a public art project, called *King Bladud's Pigs in Bath*, saw 106 decorated pig sculptures flood the city. A celebration of Bath, its origins and its artists, the statues were later auctioned off, with proceeds going to the city's Two Tunnels project. You can still spot some of these pigs in the city, including one in the Guildhall Market and another by Bath Abbey. Bladud might not have been real but, for Bath, it's a case of *si monumentum requiris, circumspice*. ❧



Austen Powers

Although Jane Austen lived for a relatively short time in Bath, both novelist and city left a substantial impact on each other.



Clockwise, from right: The 10-day Jane Austen Festival is clear indication of Bath's devotion to the novelist; Pulteney Bridge and, indeed, much of Bath will still be familiar to Austen; Martin Slater is ever-ready to welcome you into the Jane Austen Centre; when Austen moved to Bath in 1801, she lived across the street from what is now the Holburne Museum.

Jane Austen is big in Bath. While the city has, in its time, been home to many famous figures, few have loomed so greatly as the romantic novelist. Richard 'Beau' Nash, for example, may have lived and presided over the city and its society for more than 50 years, even playing a leading role in helping transform Bath into what it is today. Yet, there isn't an annual Beau Nash festival that celebrates the great dandy's achievements. Not only does Austen have her own festival – she even has her own centre, a permanent exhibition that tells of her life in Bath.

She was born in Hampshire in 1775 but Bath has embraced Jane Austen wholeheartedly. Perhaps it's the fact that she set her last two published novels, *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion*, in Bath, where she made her home from 1801 to 1806. Or, maybe, it's the way she captured the essence of the city, using her 'insider' knowledge, so to speak, to imbue it with an immediacy and vibrancy. Or it may be that the buildings and streets she populated her novels with are still extant today. It doesn't take a lot, really, to imagine her characters on the streets of Bath.

Home Sweet Home

At the end of 1800, Austen's father decided to retire from the clergy and leave Steventon in Hampshire, where she had

spent her entire life. The family moved into **No 4 Sydney Place**, the following year, just across from what is now the **Holburne Museum**. The building was a newly opened hotel then and stood on the edge of **Sydney Gardens**. Austen wrote about the gardens, the regular night galas it hosted, featuring music and fireworks, and other attractions in letters to her sister, Cassandra: "It would be very pleasant to be near Sidney (sic) Gardens! We might go into the labyrinth every day."

The gardens stood on the end of **Great Pulteney Street**, the grand Georgian thoroughfare that connects, over the **Pulteney Bridge**, to the city of Bath. Austen would later mention it in *Northanger Abbey*: 'They passed briskly down Pulteney Street, and through Laura Place, without the exchange of many words'. Nothing much has changed in the 200 years since, except that No 4 Sydney Place is now a boutique hotel.

The Austens lived in Sydney Place for three years and moved when the lease expired. The family moved in 1804 to No 3 Green Park Buildings, on the other end of Bath. Not too long later, however, Austen's father died suddenly. Financially, it was a disaster for Austen, her mother and sister. With a reduced income, the three women moved to smaller premises on **25 Gay Street** in





1805. A year later, they left Bath.

Life in the City

The Green Park Buildings were rebuilt after being destroyed in the Second World War, so the present No 3 Green Park Building is not the place where Austen lived. As for 25 Gay Street, it is today a dentist's. Just up the road, though, is the **Jane Austen Centre**, an award-winning exhibition that tells the story of Austen's life in Bath and its effect on her writing. You can also have afternoon tea, complete with champagne, at the Regency Tea Rooms upstairs. Further down is **Queen Square**, with its fine obelisk, erected by Beau Nash in 1738 in honour of Frederick, Prince of Wales, in the centre. On a fine day, you can see it all from a horse-drawn hackney coach, courtesy of **Courtyard Carriages**.

Gay Street leads to **The Circus**, another of Bath's Georgian architectural glories. Its designer was John Wood, the Elder, who was inspired by Rome's Colosseum, and, seen from the air, The Circus, Gay Street and Queen Square form the shape of a key. You can find that 'quiet and retired gravel walk' Austen wrote about in *Persuasion* just behind The Circus. It is, indeed, a peaceful path, taking you to **Royal Victoria Park**. Along the way, look out for the **Georgian Garden**, a meticulous recreation of a period garden. It is at the back of No 4 The Circus and only accessible from **Gravel Walk**.

Austen wrote about the Royal Victoria Park, in front of the site where The Three Tenors performed in 2003, to her sister, Cassandra. She would, of course, also incorporate one of Bath's most iconic landmarks, the **Royal Crescent**,

rooms – the Tea, Ball and Card Rooms and the Great Octagon. Austen herself was a regular there and her familiarity with the Assembly Rooms appeared in *Northanger Abbey*: 'Mrs Allen was so long in dressing, that they did not enter the ball-room till late... As for Mr Allen, he repaired directly to the card-room, and left them to enjoy a mob by themselves.'

The Assembly Rooms is popular with visitors to the city and still in use for events like the Bath International Music Festival. **The Fashion Museum** in the basement, where you can try on period costumes, is one of the best of its kind. Appropriately, the Assembly Rooms is also the starting point of the annual Grand Regency Costumed Promenade, which kick-starts the **Jane Austen Festival**, Bath's 10-day celebration of all things Jane. Five minutes away from the Assembly Rooms is St Swithin's Church, where Austen's parents were married in 1764. Nearly half a century later, her father would be buried here in the churchyard, hastening the end of her stay in Bath. **The Star Inn pub**, which dates back to the mid-18th century, is, literally, around the corner, while the **Saracens Head**, Bath's oldest tavern, is less than 10 minutes away.

Heart of Bath

The historic heart of Bath is also fully present in Austen's writing. Her vignette of **The Pump Room** in *Northanger Abbey* is spot-on: 'Mr Allen, after drinking his glass of water, joined some gentlemen to talk over the politics of the day and compare the accounts of their newspapers; and the ladies walked about together, noticing every new face, and almost every new bonnet in the room.' Again, The Pump Room today is pretty much as Austen and her characters would have known it, as would the nearby **Bath Street**, mentioned in *Persuasion*. While the stores might be different, the architecture has remained unchanged.

overlooking the park, in *Northanger Abbey*: 'They hastened away to the Crescent, to breathe the fresh air of better company'. Here, you would have found a more elevated set of society as the fan of terrace houses was home to some of the city's more notable residents. **No 1 Royal Crescent** is now a museum that recreates life in a Georgian house.

Balls and Card Games

On the other side of The Circus is Bath's Museum of East Asian Art and, further on Bennett Street (an unrelated echo, surely, to the Mr Bennet of Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*), is the **Bath Assembly Rooms**. Completed in 1771, the Assembly Rooms quickly became the heart of the fashionable Georgian society in the city, a venue for balls and concerts, to meet for tea or to play cards in one of the four

Along with tea and entertainment, Austen didn't miss out on another of Bath's delights, the shopping: "Do you know, I saw the prettiest hat you can imagine, in a shop window in **Milsom Street** just now – very like yours, only with coquelicot ribbons instead of green; I quite longed for it" (*Northanger Abbey*).

You might not find the same hat but you're sure to discover something of interest on this cobbled main street. Food is also not too far from her mind and having written about 'Bath bunnis' (sic), it wouldn't be surprising to know that there is a Jane Austen Room at **Sally Lunn's Historic Eating House**.

Bath Eternal

"Oh! Who could ever be tired of Bath?" says Catherine Morland in *Northanger Abbey*. Of course, we can't be quite sure how Jane Austen felt about Bath, especially after her father's death. She, however, seemed to have thoroughly explored the city and enjoyed its distractions of shopping, social visits and entertainments, all of it captured in her novels. If you go up to Alexandra Park, the same Beechen Cliff of *Northanger Abbey*, 'that noble hill whose beautiful verdure and hanging coppice render it so striking an object from almost every opening in Bath', you will see stunning vistas of the city, spread out across the Avon Valley. With little exception, this would be what Austen saw back in her time, more than 200 years ago.

That, perhaps, might best explain Bath's devotion to the novelist. Her novels captured a Bath that is still largely what it was then. Yes, things have changed – food, technology, fashion – but its essence, its spirit, the very best things about it, remain the same: beautiful and human. May it remain so eternally. ■

Clockwise, from above: Discover Bath from a horse-drawn hackney; The Circus is one of the city's architectural glories; take a ride on the Lady Lena through the Kennet and Avon Canal that cuts through the Sydney Gardens; The Fashion Museum, in the basement of the Bath Assembly Rooms, is one of the best of its kind.

FOOD & FRIENDSHIP

The Gainsborough Bath Spa's dining room, named after the celebrated Teutonic titan of taste, Johann Lafer and whose menu is crafted with input from YTL Hotels' Wai Look Chow, offers creative cuisine with a seasonal twist. *YTL Life* speaks to the three talents behind the dining room's distinctive cuisine as well as the unique bond they share.



Chefs Johann Lafer and Wai Look Chow with Georg Schneeberger, Head Chef of The Gainsborough Bath Spa.

"We have been friends for 13 years," says Johann Lafer, with the broadest of smiles, referring to the brotherly bond shared between him and Wai Look Chow (better known as "Chef Wai"). Acclaimed on their own turf – Lafer is quite possibly Germany's most famous chef and owner of Stromburg Castle, a beautiful Relais & Chateaux property complete with superlative restaurant, while Chef Wai needs no introduction to food-loving Malaysians – the two unlikely friends and collaborators see the opening of The Gainsborough Bath Spa, and its dining room, in particular, as the culmination of many years of learning from each other, discovering and experiencing the unique qualities of their respective cuisines and culinary backgrounds, as well as the simple joy when work and play go together.

"We'd even worked together on a book project, *Zwei Freunde – Eine Küche* or

Two Friends – One Cuisine, which was an idea I had," says Lafer. "Aside from friendship, we spend a lot of time learning from each other – in terms of food, ingredients as well as preparation styles. After all, both our backgrounds are as different as can be! To be able to work with exotic herbs and spices like pandan leaves, galangal, lemongrass ... it is all very interesting for me and it is knowledge and experience I can then use to excite and delight my guests."

Adds Chef Wai: "What I love is working with seasonal produce, seeing as I live and work in a tropical country. I am particularly fascinated by roots, tubers and special produce like white asparagus, which doesn't grow in South-East Asia. I find it just so unique, with a most exquisite texture and taste."

At The Gainsborough, guests can expect a happy coming-together of the two

chefs' decades of knowledge, experience and talent. "Here, our vision was to have an elegant yet casual place," Lafer says.

"Nothing too formal or stuffy – but a simple and beautiful place where we can showcase our unique cuisine. I would describe it best as 'cuisine without borders', where the food is driven by our personal belief and philosophy in bringing the best of English artisan and farm produce, combined with an Asian twist and flavour." Heading the dining room is also none other than Lafer's protege, Georg Schneeberger, who will ensure that the celebrity chef's exacting standards are kept well up to par.

Certainly, guests dining at the hotel will notice particular care taken to source the finest produce from the region and slightly beyond. A top-grade farmer, Walter Rose, in nearby Devizes supplies delicious beef cheeks to the kitchen, while the classic

English fry-up for breakfast is made all the more special with rashers of Wiltshire bacon. Cornish lobster, sweet and succulent, is served alongside a zesty citrus fruit salad, chestnuts, homemade aioli and quinoa. Scallops, this time sourced from further afield in Scotland, is roasted with linseed and served with black garlic and lemon tapioca.

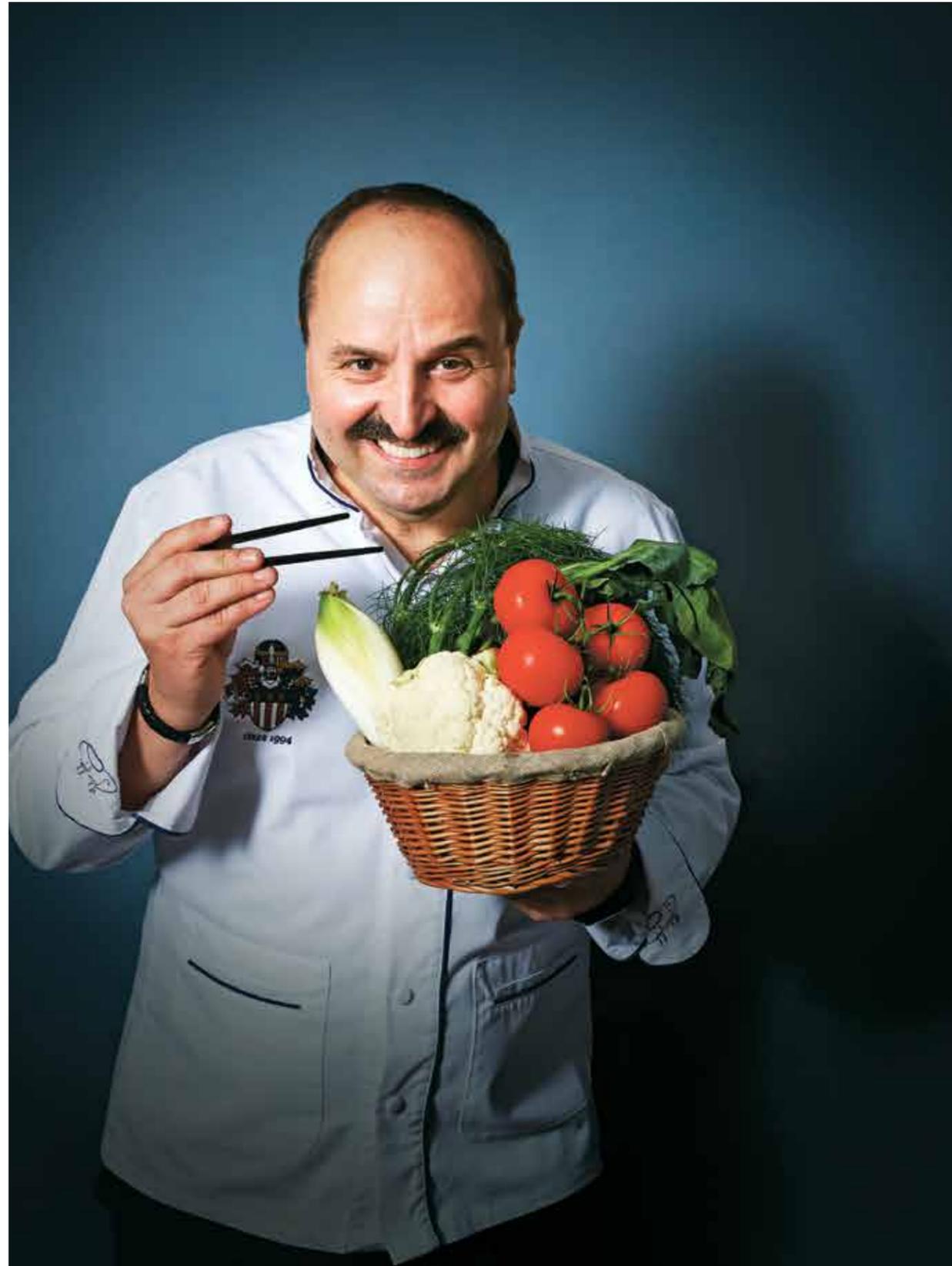
Chef's Wai's touch may be detected in a particularly succulent slow-cooked pork belly dish, accented with honey and soy, with mango salad and sesame cream on the side. For pudding, the cheese plate will star local favourites like Bath's famous soft cheese, the equally-renowned cheddar (which takes its name from the Somerset Village of its origin) and Cornish Yarg.

"We also want to make sure the menu evolves every two months so that Bathonians will keep having new things to try. We are here to delight them as well,

alongside our hotels guests," says Lafer, the most vocal of the three. There will also be Asian-influenced noodle dishes from time to time as well as dishes that marry the best of East and West, which can be seen in the appetiser of spicy salmon tartare with Asian spices.

"We will keep experimenting and innovating. We want our guests to be consistently delighted while always ensuring our local patrons keep having new things to try. But as long as people are happy, that's more than enough for Chef Wai and I. In fact, we had a table from Luxembourg the other day, who specifically sought us out to tell us how the meal they had here at The Gainsborough was better than anything they've ever had back home."

"And," he adds with a satisfied smile, "that's not a marketing tale. It's 100 per cent true!"



CHEF JOHANN LAFER

On childhood foods and culinary lessons from his mother.

Favourite Foods: I love fresh seasonal produce, like white asparagus, strawberries and raspberries. Autumn means mushrooms and I love it when the forests are thick with the incomparable smell of moss and porcini. I also love foods that remind me of my childhood, particularly *wiener schnitzel* with potato-cucumber salad. I also love Asian food, especially Malaysian! There's nothing tastier than *satay* with peanut sauce. And, because I have a sweet tooth, I love cakes. I love many things but the most important qualities each food has to possess are freshness, top quality and to be prepared with love and passion.

What's your idea of comfort food? Soups, stews, casseroles and roasts as much as salads and fresh bread. Somehow, scrambled eggs makes me think of home, as well as cheese from the Alps, radish and applesauce. Off-duty, I love eating fresh bread with butter, wild chives and salt or with cheese or Tyrolean bacon. I also love potatoes any style - mashed, fried or baked. A freshly-made hamburger is also a great treat once in a while and, if the weather's nice, nothing beats a barbeque with family and friends.

When did you realise food was your calling? As a small boy, I loved watching my mother cook and she allowed me to help her. She taught me about edible plants and how to prepare them with meat and poultry. I was always curious about what you can make with the things nature gives us. So, I kind of grew into it and became more ambitious about it as I grew up.

Original childhood ambition? There were three dreams – to be a football star, a chef and to have a castle. I am happy to say only the first didn't work out.

If a song or a book could describe your cooking style, what would it be and why? Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* or Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*, probably. *The Four Seasons* because I love everything fresh and seasonal, and *Rhapsody in Blue* because I like food to be fascinating, clear, simple and full of surprises, just like Gershwin's famous concerto!

Has there been someone who has proven particularly inspiring to you, though? Definitely my mother! But discovering new tastes and ingredients is equally inspiring. Chef Wai, for example, inspires me. He just showed me how to make a pigeon tender as butter, yet juicy on the inside and crispy on the outside; not by putting the entire bird in oil but by spooning hot oil over it for 20 minutes.

Career highlight? That's really difficult to say as so many wonderful things have happened, including opening Stromburg Castle in Germany, my two restaurants there, television shows, cooking for top politicians, business leaders and celebrities from all over the world, having my own cooking school and more. I also enjoyed the development, opening and running of a successful school refectory while having fun teaching children all about good food and good taste. It is also an honour being able to partner The Gainsborough Bath Spa.

Ultimate food and wine combo? A very, very good mould cheese like Roquefort or Stilton paired with an excellent white Beerenauslese, a type of dessert wine.

CHEF WAI LOOK CHOW

On simple foods, his love of fried rice and his Bath discoveries.

Favourite Foods: Noodles and traditional Chinese dishes. I like *pan mee* noodles, made using just wheat flour, water and salt, and served in a traditional anchovy broth with vegetables.

What's your idea of comfort food, though? I must confess to liking starchy food, like carbohydrates. I particularly love fried rice with *lap cheong* (Chinese sausage).

When did you realise you wanted to be a chef?

Exactly 384 months ago! I was a teenager when I realised it. Before then, food, to me, was just something to fill my stomach with. But, when you truly fall in love with food, you'll know it feeds your soul as well.

Did you always know you wanted to cook? I'd initially wanted to be a carpenter but it was my father who suggested that I be a chef as he saw how much fun I had helping my mother prepare the family's meals after school.

Kitchen must-haves: Good sea salt and extra virgin olive oil. Sea salt to me is a must but, if you are working with top quality meats, for example, then, of course, a wonderful one like French *fleur de sel* is the best. For olive oil, my preference is for Spanish ones. Absolutely wonderful.

Top food and wine combos: I love fine Continental cuisine with crisp, floral New World white wines. Poultry cooked *sous vide* style, for example, is always very nice.

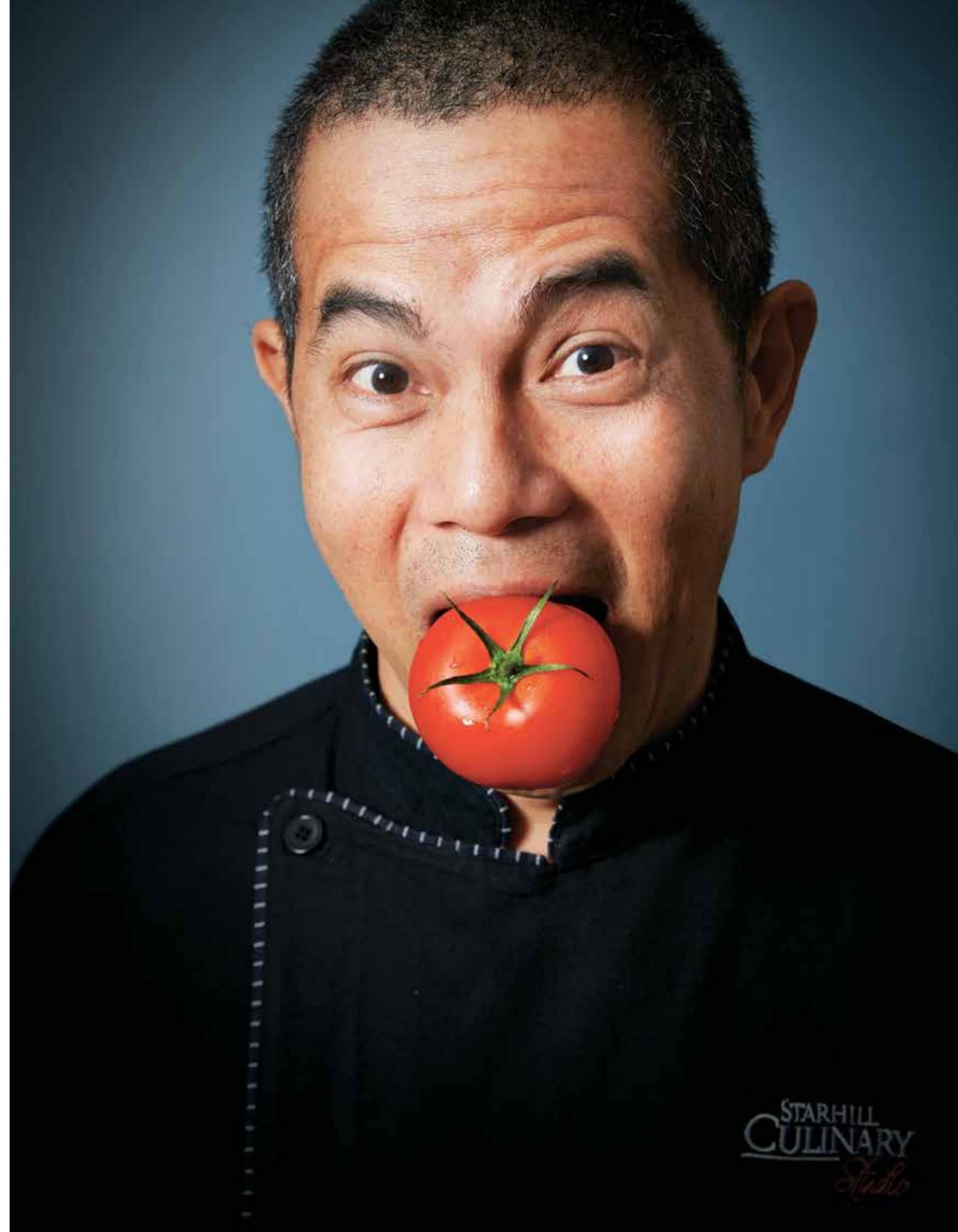
Has there been a chef who has proven particularly inspirational? Tetsuya Wakuda, for his perspective on natural flavours. I've eaten at his Sydney restaurant as well as once in Kuala Lumpur, when he came over for a working visit. I love how he manages to produce dishes of such clean, intense flavours. His ocean trout dish is, of course, his most famous but I really love his langoustines with seaweed and *yuzu*. Simply beautiful.

What or where do you eat when you're off-duty? I normally will eat something simple at home, like boiled vermicelli with aromatic dark soy and fried shallots. But, if I have to go out, I'd probably opt for a hot bowl of *ramen*!

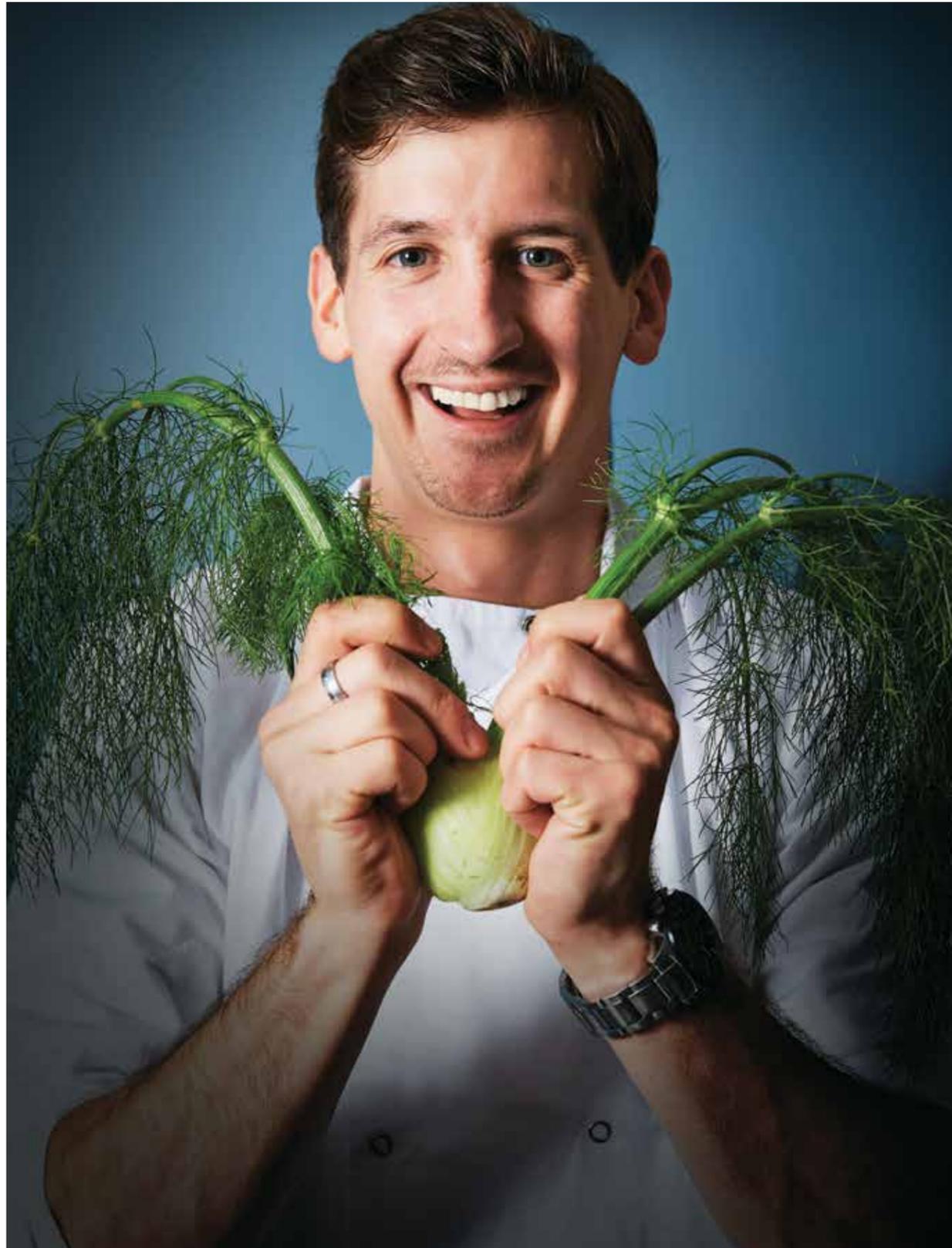
Favourite foodie destination? France, naturally, and possibly Madrid as well. There's nowhere like Paris for restaurants that offer it all: best ingredients, great ambience, stunning presentation and top cooking techniques. I also love the open-air markets of Europe, particularly the one in Saint-Tropez, where YTL Hotels has a property as well.

And what about Bath? What have you discovered on your recent visit? I love how there are so many great producers in the vicinity. Bath also has very nice apples, which, in turn, makes very nice cider. I also tried a very rustic, very delicious orange marmalade, which has been made by this label for 120 years!

What advice would you give to aspiring chefs? Always be passionate and always be intense in what you do.



STARHILL
CULINARY
Style



CHEF GEORG SCHNEEBERGER

On stolen apricots and growing up in hospitality.

Favourite Foods: I like diversity so there are no favourites, but I've always loved apricots. I had even stolen some from my neighbour's garden as a child – which wasn't easy – but they tasted so much better after all that!

What's your idea of comfort food, though? Chicken slices with bulgur, vegetables and chilli. And, every time I see an apricot, I think of home... and my neighbour!

When did you realise food was your calling? A friend of Chef Johann Lafer's had noticed me and asked if I'd like to go a step higher after culinary school. I said 'yes' and he sent me to Chef Lafer. I also like how food makes people happy.

Original childhood ambition? I grew up in my parents' hotel, where I served food from the age of four and, at five, started making ice cream with my grandfather. I also helped out at our farm in the Tyrolean Alps, so you could say I grew up in hospitality and it has always been so since young.

Most memorable career moments? I am always surrounded by awesome people and I remember particularly the moment we received a Michelin star.

Favourite food and wine combinations? I travel to Italy annually and, in my friend's basement, we sit down to eat and drink the best of Italy. He makes his own *prosciutto* and I think nothing beats that and a bottle of Palafreno Rosso, made from Merlot grapes.

Favourite gourmet destinations? It's all about what you like. I love Vienna but I also think my friend's home in Italy deserves a mention.

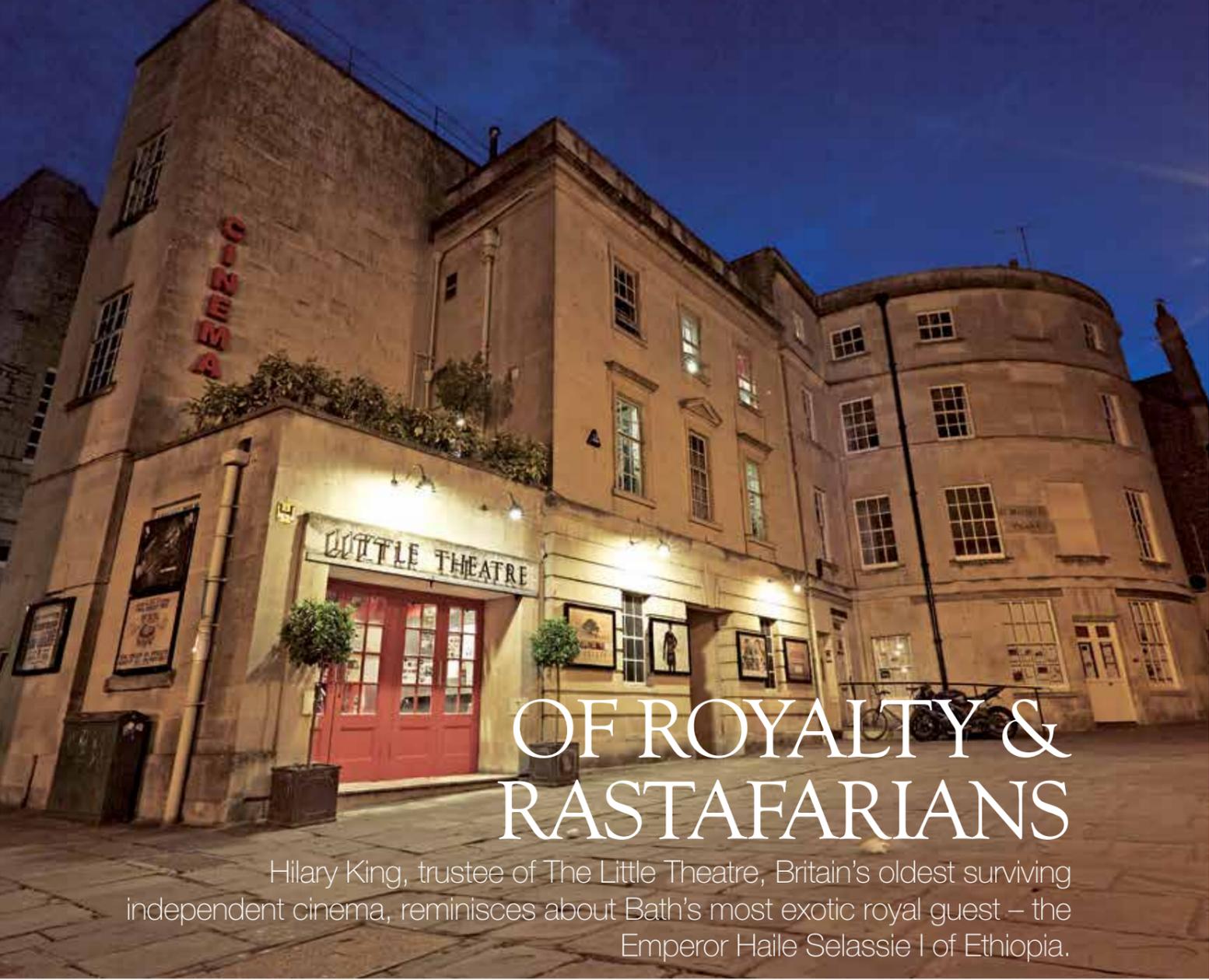
Do you have any advice for aspiring chefs? The most important thing is to like what you do. Secondly, work for the right people. Find a mentor who will elevate your craft.

Has there been someone who's inspired your cooking? It definitely would be my granny. She makes the most special cakes.

Kitchen must-haves? A good attitude, without which cooking's no fun; my knives – I am nothing without them; and fresh, good ingredients.

And what have been your favourite discoveries about the city of Bath? There's so much to discover here. I like going climbing and I've managed to find a church where you can climb it from inside, which is great. After climbing, I like to have a nice cappuccino with friends at Society Café in the town centre. There's also a nice cheese store I like going to.

Any particular recommendations from your menu at Johann Lafer at The Gainsborough? You should definitely try the pork belly while you're here! 🍖



OF ROYALTY & RASTAFARIANS

Hilary King, trustee of The Little Theatre, Britain's oldest surviving independent cinema, reminisces about Bath's most exotic royal guest – the Emperor Haile Selassie I of Ethiopia.

Bath is a city known for many achievements, from the formulation of the non-drying clay known as Plasticine in 1897 by art teacher William Harbutt to the discovery of the planet Uranus by Sir William Herschel in 1781 right in the very garden of his house at 19 New King Street. And among all these, Hilary King proudly counts herself part of the family who still runs Britain's oldest surviving independent cinema. Celebrating over 70 years of screening feature films, it is fondly referred to as 'The Little' by Bathonians and has indeed come a long way from its humble beginnings as a community theatre, before expanding to its current cinematic role in the 1930s. "It was a common pattern in those days," King muses.

The Little Theatre remains Britain's oldest surviving independent cinema.

The Early Days
A trustee of The Little, King, who was born in Bath in 1930, is the daughter of Consuelo de Reyes and stage designer Peter King. Tracing its origins back to the early 20th century, The Little's roots lie in a community project known as Citizen House. Established in 1913 by one Helen Hope, Bath's first woman councillor, JP and all-round pioneer in social welfare, Citizen House was set up as a community centre to house a wide range of voluntary societies concerned with welfare, education and the arts. "My mother had come to Bath from Leamington to work with the women of Citizen House. She was Helen Hope's protégée, if you will. When Helen died young, she had left

everything to my mother to continue her work." And work, she did. "My mother was a formidable woman," says King, smiling. "Theatre had always been her major love."

So, it was within these confines that King's mother created the first Little Theatre, with a 200-seat auditorium, before commissioning an architect-designed building that would function as both theatre and news cinema. Opening in January 1936, with 225 seats and entrance priced at a shilling and sixpence, old clippings displayed in The Little today announced how its main purpose was "education and to show films of a high class character". In fact, the opening programmes at The Little included *An Illustrated History of The Royal Academy*, a newsreel and a film on *The Life History of the Frog* while the first feature films were introduced in February 1939, which screened *Peg of the Old Drury*, starring Anna Neagle and Cedric Hardwicke, followed by *Oh, Mr Porter!* and *Three Smart Girls*, with Deanna Durbin.

"In 1930s Bath, The Little was where you'd go to watch news, documentaries and programmes that lasted an hour on average," King points out. "You have to remember there was no television in those days. Whatever visual stimulation or entertainment you had then, excluding live performances, was primarily through newsreels, which we screened, along with travel pictures in a continuous progression from about noon till 10pm at night."

A Royal Visitor

It was also in 1936 that the ancient spa town saw the arrival of Emperor Haile Selassie I of Ethiopia, whose official titles also included King of Kings and Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah, together with his wife, the Empress Menen Asfaw. It was in Bath that the Ethiopian royal family found temporary refuge during the turbulent years of Mussolini's invasion of what was then



Said to be descended from King Solomon and the legendary Queen of Sheba, Emperor Haile Selassie is inextricably linked to the history and heritage of The Little Theatre.

known as Abyssinia from 1936 to 1941. "I can only imagine that my mother would have written to His Majesty to offer private news viewings at The Little," explains King. "It helped, of course, that my mother was educated in France; French being the Emperor's second language (his first was Amharic). He would probably have first come to The Little around the end of 1937, I should think."

"I remember hiding behind my mother, who was a fairly large woman," King smiles at the memory. "It was both exciting and terrifying for a seven-year-old to be faced with an Emperor... and such an exotic one too. I remember everything very well as my mother had curtsayed very low – something I'd never seen her do before. And, of course, there I was, suddenly exposed from behind her. I was terrified to have been seen!"

The Emperor soon became a frequent visitor to The Little throughout his time of exile and wartime residency in Bath, coming to the cinema to, sadly, watch



Hilary King, trustee of The Little Theatre.



newsreels of the invasion of his country by Italian forces, where he would be seated in the middle of the balcony. This resulted in the balcony of Theatre One becoming known as 'The Royal Box'. "He exuded a sense of enormous power although he was small-built," says King. "He wore a splendid short cape mostly and, even to my young eyes then, I still remember how exceedingly grave and formal he was. I don't think I ever saw him smile."

Young Friendships

It was also during those years that an unlikely friendship was struck up between the daughters of a cinema owner in Bath and the grandchildren of an African Emperor, Ethiopia's 225th, to be precise, hailing from a line that can be traced all the way back to Menelik I, believed to be the son of Israel's legendary King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. "Somehow, together with my sister Helen, all of us became playmates," says King.

"All the children, including Sahle, the Emperor's youngest son, who happened to be younger than his grandchildren, picked up English very quickly. The Emperor, of course, had no need to speak English as he was never without his translators. We were often invited to Fairfield House, where the royal family lived, to play. I remember some of their names. There was Seble, who promptly became 'Sybil', Amha as well as Sahle, who also played with us."

Citing the approach to Fairfield House as "terrifying", King recalls with amusement how "I was always so scared I might

be confronted by the Emperor and not know what to say that I'd always, upon arrival, immediately run upstairs, straight to the nursery."

Bath in those days was also the heartland of no-fuss English cooking – a world away from the exotic tastes and flavours of the African continent. "I can tell you that it was only as recent as the late 1960s or early 70s that one could buy a bulb of garlic for the first time from a greengrocer's in Bath," says King. "We lived on straightforward English food. So, I recall this incident well when we were playing at Fairfield that someone came up to the nursery to say they were baking this particular bread and how all the girls got so excited. Bits of it were subsequently handed around and I remember it as a type of spicy, unleavened bread. It tasted most peculiar to me then although I am sure I would love it now."

Another visit to Fairfield included an overnight weekend stay and King vividly recalls how the children were all summoned to lunch with the Emperor, with strict instructions that no one was to speak unless spoken to. "The Emperor was famously known as a man of very few words," King says. "We noticed his

grandchildren becoming anxious at that, and the anxiety, in turn, spread to Helen and I."

It was, however, an unforgettable experience. "We were seated around a very large mahogany table, on chairs so high our legs dangled off the ground," laughs King. "We children were also seated at great distances from each other. And I have to say, up until today, I cannot recall what we ate. I am guessing it must have been a traditional English Sunday lunch, with sprouts and potatoes. What I do remember, however, was that the food was served on solid gold plates, which made the most tremendous screeching noises whenever we tried to cut our food quietly on it. And I was also very glad the Emperor never tried to involve us in conversation. On hindsight," continues King, "this luncheon must not have been long before the Emperor's return to Ethiopia. Once, at a Fairfield reception, the Emperor and Empress sat on a dais, like statues, while guests milled and mingled, unable to participate. I imagine he must have been a very shy man."

Who You Gonna Call?

By historical accounts, Bath and its citizens loved the Emperor. "I dare say it was

considered a great honour to have him. And, as we all know, he had also rapidly run out of funds and, somehow, this endeared him greatly to the people," King notes. Although Bath was seen as the fashionable place for well-off Londoners to retire to, it must have still seemed a world away for the sovereign of a 3,000 year-old monarchy, accustomed to being protected around the clock by imperial bodyguards as well as live lions and cheetahs. "I understand many Ethiopians and Rastafarians see him as a god," she adds. "I had come into contact in the 80s with Rastafarians who had wanted to see the cinema as well as the seat he sat in. Once news got out about the Emperor's connection with The Little Theatre, many would come, from time to time, treating it like a place of pilgrimage."

And, just as the Emperor endured his trials and tribulations, so too did The Little. As television began its vise-like grip on social life, cinemas all across Britain began to suffer. The 60s and 70s were bleak years indeed, with three of Bath's five cinemas forced to close. The Little, however, proved to be the cinema that could. Bolstered by its community of loyal supporters, the theatre was refurbished and its original scene store and tea room was converted into a second screen. The year 1984 proved to be The Little's big turning point. "It may surprise you but the film that saved The Little – and, indeed, many British cinemas – was *Ghostbusters*. Somehow, that movie just caught the public's imagination." When asked if Bill Murray or Sigourney Weaver, the stars of the show, had ever visited The Little, King smiles and says: "No, they haven't but it's enough the movie did what it did. It was as if a whole new generation had rediscovered the pleasures of cinema-going."

Fairfield House has since been gifted to the people of Bath and is now used as a minority community social centre while The Little remains open for public viewing. It is located at Saint Michael's Place, just a minute's walk from The Gainsborough Bath Spa. ❧

Bottom, left to right: Doric House, the King family house in Bath, which was built for the artist, Thomas Barker. On holiday in Caldey Island, Wales,

where the King family maintained a summer house. Playtime with the Emperor of Ethiopia's grandchildren.



LIFE PEOPLE

THE HEART BEAT OF BATH

The former Archbishop of Canterbury, Geoffrey Fisher, might have said that 'Until you know that life is interesting – and find it so – you haven't found your soul'. For these individuals privileged enough to call Bath home, it would seem that both spirit and soul are nourished richly daily with the remarkable lives they lead in the jewel of the West Country. Here, they share their stories with *YTL Life* as well as their favourite things about Bath.

COLIN SKELLETT

CEO, Wessex Water

It has often been said that Bath is an inspiring city. What better way to illustrate that point than with the inspirational tale of a council estate lad who grew up to become one of Bath's most influential business personalities? "I'm originally from Nottingham but came down here in 1970," says Colin Skellett. As CEO of Wessex Water, a position he has held since 1988, he has come a long way indeed from his first job as a trainee chemist in a sewage plant. More recently, Skellett's portfolio has also come to include the chairmanship of The Gainsborough Bath Spa, the city's latest luxury hotel and the first to be part of the Leading Hotels of the World collection. On the opening of the property, he says: "It has been a long time coming but it's great to see the transformation. I am personally very glad to see it open for business while lending credence to Bath's offerings as a world-class tourism destination. Bath has always attracted visitors but we are confident The Gainsborough Bath Spa will bring in greater numbers of high-net-worth guests who will come for pleasure, health and relaxation, adding substantial value to the local economy."

Colin Skellett's favourite Bath haunt is The Gainsborough Bar, where he's partial to the Sacred English Negronis.

MY BEST OF BATH



◆ I'd recommend going to the top of Bath Abbey, which is a fairly easy climb, to be rewarded with great views over the city and beyond.

◆ The Roman Baths, of course, is one of the top attractions in the whole of the UK. That, and the Abbey, to me, forms the core of Bath.



◆ Bath is also very much a museum town and there're so many to choose from, including the Fashion Museum and No 1 Royal Crescent. Each would give you a unique perspective of Bath.

◆ My favourite part of The Gainsborough Bath Spa would have to be its beautiful bar, which overlooks the spa pool. My drink of choice? The Sacred English Negroni.

◆ A short drive from Bath is Stonehenge and Bristol, two very different destinations yet vibrant and beautiful. Boating on the Avon River is also good fun and highly enjoyable. I'd recommend asking the hotel for a packed picnic to bring along with you.

STEPHEN BIRD

Head of Heritage Services of Bath & North East Somerset Council



History, for Stephen Bird is, pun fully intended, his story. Bird's historical epiphany can be traced back to the age of 11, when his Latin teacher had taken him, together with a group of other students, to Hadrian's Wall. "I remember having had to sleep in a barn behind a hotel and, each day, we'd get a bus or walk to different parts of the Wall. I have been fascinated by archaeology ever since." This love would eventually lead to a degree in archaeology from the University of Leicester, followed by, what would become the start of a distinguished career, a position in a small museum in west London. Now, as Head of Heritage Services of Bath & North East Somerset Council, it is also Bird's voice you hear as you listen to the insightful commentary on the audio guides provided by the Roman Baths – his only competitor being the acclaimed novelist, Bill Bryson, who does a humorous version. "Bath wasn't on my radar initially," Bird admits. "Although as a student, I specialised in prehistoric and Roman history. I had come often as a child to visit my mother's aunt, who worked in the Ministry of Defence, which had relocated here during the war. I remember having to march down the hill every morning to be brought to the Pump Room and made to drink the water. I didn't like it then but my mother was adamant it was good for my health." An opening then came up for the position of a curator in Bath and Bird says: "I applied, got it and that was 35 years ago! But, to be honest, I have never seen anything to beat what's in Bath. It's more than the museums and archaeology. And, for a small spa town, it has attracted everyone from all corners of the Roman Empire, right up to the present day. Bath has been a veritable phenomenon since Roman times!"

MY BEST OF BATH

- ◆ In the Roman Baths, when there's no one around, I like to be beside the Great Bath. You start to feel the power of the hot spring and it's very atmospheric. You then begin to get a sense of how enduring it's, continuing to flow for thousands of years.
- ◆ I like being on Beechen Cliff, which lies on the other side of the city. It's a favourite spot of mine, with wonderful

- views. It's also just a 15-minute walk from the centre of Bath.
- ◆ The Pump Room is a must for anyone visiting Bath. After all, it has been the social centre of the city since 1706, with the oldest continuous orchestra in the world. It's only a trio now but a full orchestra used to play right up until 1939!
- ◆ It's not a specific place per se but I have always appreciated how special Bath is with the

- country just a breath away. It's a cultural site yet is set in a beautiful valley of the River Avon, with little fingers of green that come into the city.
- ◆ In addition to pleasure-seeking, we mustn't forget Bath as a serious destination for healing and rejuvenation. Places like St John's Hospital have been a refuge for the elderly and infirm since 1174. Remarkable.

TARQUIN MCDONALD

Managing Director, Bath Rugby



If you've ever visited Bath when there's a rugby match on, you can't help but think, for a minute, that the city is just a teeming sea of blue, black and white – the colours of Bath Rugby, one of the oldest and most prestigious rugby clubs in the world. Established in 1865, Bath Rugby has called the Recreation Ground (aka 'the Rec') home for the past 120 years. "Bath Rugby lived a pretty nomadic existence prior to this, with the first match played on the ground in 1894," says Tarquin McDonald, the club's Managing Director. "In fact, during the war years, the players even used the Cross Bath as a changing room after the Rec was bombed. I love how the club is such an important part of the local community. In the 1980s and 90s, Bath Rugby was also one of England's most successful clubs and the Rec is synonymous with that success. We have a fantastic heritage as well as the most passionate and loyal supporters, and I can't think of anything better than watching Bath Rugby play at its spiritual home. I also think we play a very exciting, attacking style of rugby, which makes it very nice to watch. Also, rugby fans intermingle freely, unlike other sports, which can be positively tribal! And I like how Bath was built on a philosophy of pleasure. Now, whenever I see people come from all over to enjoy themselves, be it for rugby or otherwise, it's nice to be reminded that this tradition continues on till today."

MY BEST OF BATH

- ◆ Naturally, I think a visit to the Rec is highly recommended. We are a 150-year-old club and a Bath institution so, yes, a visit to its hallowed grounds, right in the heart of the city, is a must.
- ◆ Bath is an absolutely beautiful historical city. It's nice to spend time outdoors, having a drink and letting the kids just run around. It's friendly and lovely.

- ◆ What I love about Bath is that it has such a welcoming feel. When my family and I moved here, I was expecting a city with an older population but it's so young and vibrant. I now understand why so many people make a conscious decision to move here. Even my father-in-law had remarked on how welcoming Bath is!
- ◆ The city itself is stunning and, if you're new to Bath, you probably

- won't forget your first summer here, seeing the city set against a backdrop of green hills and the unique streets, which are full of character. And then, best of all, you remember you actually do live here!
- ◆ One of my favourite things about the city is the stone from which it is built. Bath stone is incredibly beautiful and seeing it all around is a visual treat.

MICHAEL WATTS

Entrepreneur, Bath Guildhall Market

His name might not yet be household but Michael Watts is well-known to Bathonians, having been quite the 'man of the hour' during a road closure incident some time back. A crack had appeared in the A431 road, causing it to be sealed off for an indefinite time. Meanwhile, commuters had to endure crawling in traffic for hours for a journey that'd normally take under 10 minutes. Ever-enterprising, Watts came up with the ingenious idea of building an alternative road at his own expense, borrowing an adjoining field from a farmer friend (and agreeing to split the profits 50/50), charging drivers £2 toll each time. "The idea occurred over a pint of beer," he smiles. Although newspapers labelled him a 'national hero' for his ingenuity and 'can do' spirit, Watts downplays it, saying he was just "a very popular man for 14 weeks". Since the road has reopened, Watts has gone back to his core business – running three popular shops in the quaint, old-fashioned Bath Guildhall Market. "I have no regrets about building the road. It was affecting business and discouraging everyone from coming to Bath. The road was closed in February 2014 and reopened in November the same year. We broke even in the end and I also got to meet David Cameron, who thought it was a wonderful thing we did." A true blue Bathonian, he adds: "I love Bath and was born here 63 years ago. I think it's such a beautiful city and I always tell visitors to start off with an open-top bus tour as it not only rewards you with the most magnificent views but it also helps you get your bearings very quickly." Starting out his career as a business owner with a hamburger bar called Micky Fins in the 70s across the Theatre Royal, Watts now proudly has three shops to call his own – all in the Guildhall Market, including a phone and computer repair centre, a party shop as well as the Time Out Espresso Snack Bar. "Come by and visit us," he smiles. "I do think we serve the best coffee!"

If you have time, don't miss a cup of java at Michael Watts' Time Out Espresso Snack Bar in the Guildhall Market.



The Market Pillar

When in the Guildhall Market, be sure to look out for the famous 'Bath Market Nail' – the site where deals and bargains were traditionally struck and promptly paid between market traders and buyers, giving rise to the English phrase 'to pay on the nail'. The market also is subject to some archaic but still-relevant (and sensible) by-laws, in existence since 1864, including how 'no person shall throw or fling vegetables, garbage or any missile in the market' as well as 'no unwholesome meat, fish or vegetables shall be exposed or brought into the market'.

MY BEST OF BATH



◆ My wife, Wendy, is Australian so, whenever we have family and friends visit, we take them to the Victoria Art Gallery, which always has a wonderful exhibition going on. The Roman Baths, of course, is truly spectacular and a must.

◆ Catching a game of rugby at the Rec, if you can get tickets, is unbeatable. The atmosphere is simply electric on rugby days and the city will be buzzing, with all the hotels, bars and restaurants filled to the brim.

◆ If you like a spot of shopping, you should go to Mallory's. I can't afford it myself but it's one of the oldest businesses still trading in Bath. They sell the best things and long may they do so! The Silver Shop of Bath in Union Passage, run by Guy Douglas, has also been there for years and years. They have unusual bits and pieces – all very nice – and I can't imagine Bath without it.

◆ My favourite restaurant in Bath is The Circus, which was recently voted 'Fourth Best Independent Restaurant' in the UK. I know the owners and I love the food – unpretentious, always top quality and simply delicious. It's a dining spot that never fails me.

◆ Margaret's Buildings have always appealed to me. My grandparents used to live in the Julian Road area and, as a child, I'd often pop into Margaret's Buildings to shop in the old grocery stores that used to be here. Now, it's known as Bath's "Covent Garden", with nice shops and restaurants.



GORDON BLOOR

Novelist and author of *Go Swift and Far*, a novel set in Bath.

Writing under the pseudonym Douglas Westcott, Bloor made the career shift from business to books, debuting his recent novel, *Go Swift and Far*, the first in a projected trilogy of novels tracing the development of Bath, from the time of WWII to the present. "I chose to write under a pen name as my advisors knew I had substantial business interests and they didn't think the book would do well at all," he laughs. "My friend, Alistair, had bet me £10 I wouldn't sell more than 800 copies. I chose the name Westcott as it's the village I grew up in, just outside Dorking. I'd been wanting to write for over 30 years and it's really my mother's story." The son of a Polish immigrant who fled to England after WWI, Bloor was orphaned at 17 and has lived in Bath for over three decades. "My grandfather was hung by Russians right before my mother's eyes when she was eight and she fled to England in 1922 and was supposed to get on a boat from Liverpool to America but she developed TB, so she never got on board. My father was killed in Burma. So, you could say I brought myself up. I was also always the chap in the dorm, sitting by the fireplace and telling stories. I had bought a property in Bath some 40 years ago and thought it a wonderful place. It has everything – from Georgian architecture to Austen, all preserved in aspic, you could say."



Bloor's book is a great literary souvenir of Bath.

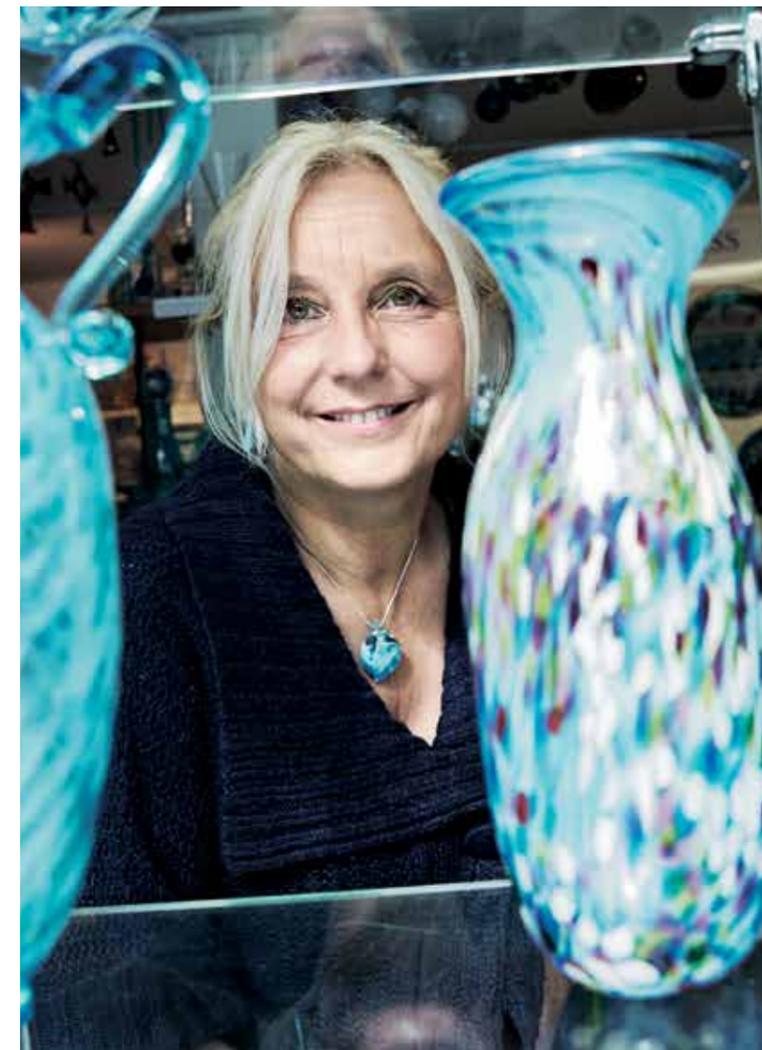
MY BEST OF BATH

- ◆ A walk from the Royal Crescent, through the Circus, and down to the bottom of the town in the sunlight. The City is a village of stunning architecture steeped in history and I inevitably meet one or more people I know and we start chatting.
- ◆ My wife, Liz, and I having dinner with friends at one of my favourite restaurants: Firehouse Rotisserie, The Porter or Raphael's.
- ◆ A film watched in the stillness – no phones or eating – and intimacy of The Little Theatre or watching a play at the historic Theatre Royal.
- ◆ Participating in one of the numerous annual events such as the Literary Festival, the Boules festival and Bath Christmas Market.
- ◆ A Saturday afternoon with my eldest son, starting with lunch at Joya's and then on to watch Bath Rugby win on the Recreation Ground.

ANNETTE MARTIN DOLAN

Founder, Bath Aqua Glass

"I've always loved and collected glass," says Annette Martin Dolan, the founder of Bath Aqua Glass. Born in Bristol, Dolan used to visit Bath often as a child and remembers falling in love with the city each time. "Even on a grim day, all you need to do is walk around the city to be uplifted. It's a very creative place to live and work in. I also think glass is the truest form of colour. Even paintings look flat compared to glass, which is the most wonderful medium. It offers so many possibilities from a creative level. I think glass is brilliant, alchemic and magical." With the traditional colour of Bath being aquamarine, it seems fitting then that Bath Aqua Glass gets its lovely hue by adding copper oxide to molten glass, to create a colour that brings Bath's spa waters to mind. "There's so much symbolism and history, with glass-blowing and Bath's past all intertwined. After all, it was the Romans who invented the blowing iron."



Baubles Bath

Bring home a one-of-a-kind memento of your Bath holiday by creating your very own glass bauble at Bath Aqua Glass' Walcot Street studio. Be sure to get it done at the start of your trip, though, as it'll only be ready for collection after 24 hours.

MY BEST OF BATH

- ◆ I love being by Bath's weir and waterside, especially where you can get a view of Pulteney Bridge. I think the water creates such good energy.
- ◆ I love the smallness of it all. You can literally walk the entire length and breadth of Bath easily, like a big, friendly village.
- ◆ Walking along Walcot Street is always nice, with its numerous independent retailers. It has been an artisan quarter for the longest time, attracting craftsmen, ironsmiths and tile makers from all corners of the Roman Empire, and even derived its name from the Saxon word for 'the place of strangers'. If you walk to the end of the street, you'd come to St Swithin's Church, where you may find the tombstone of the Reverend George Austen, Jane's father.
- ◆ Eating at Bill's Restaurant in Cheap Street is always nice. Try the Naked Burger! I also like Sukhothai along Manvers Street. The cook is an old Thai lady who works ever so hard and only takes Christmas Day off.
- ◆ You must also come to try a spot of glass-blowing at our Bath Aqua Glass workshop in Walcot Street, while bead-making sessions may be arranged by appointment at our store near Bath Abbey.



PAUL SIMONS

World Heritage consultant



Although Paul Simons hails from Lancashire, it's pretty clear that Bath is where his heart is. With a portfolio of titles that range from Founder Member of the European Spas Association, Secretary General to the Great Spas of Europe UNESCO project, consultant to the Bath & North East Somerset Council as well as its representative to the European Historic Thermal Towns Association, Simons was also formerly Bath's Director of Tourism and responsible for the construction of the Thermae Bath Spa, a project that single-handedly revived Bath as a premier spa destination. "The job had come up in 1993," says Simons. "Someone rang me and said: 'You're an architect by training; you work in conservation and tourism. This has got to be the perfect job'. I never thought it'd happen and I do consider myself very, very lucky. Being Bath's Director of Tourism really was the dream job for an architect who loves old buildings. And if you live

here, you'd know how Bath gets under your skin." Certainly, one of Simons' favourite career highlights is the Thermae Bath Spa project. "The site on which the spa now stands had been closed for 20 years. It was seen as a problem and Bath, until then, had only been promoted as a heritage destination. People thought we were crazy! But when Thermae opened, it became a place of living heritage, an experiential one, and we saw the revival of Bath as a living spa town." Bath remains the only full city in the world to be listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site and Simons remains hard at work, ensuring its appeal remains magnetic. Up next on his plate is the restoration of the Cleveland Pools. "We've got about two years more to go. It's not far from the Holburne and they are essentially beautiful Georgian-era outdoor swimming pools built to stop the men from bathing naked in the river and offending the eyes of the promenading women," he grins.



Fertile Ground

The Cross Bath is a favourite of royal visitors to the city. In 1663, Charles II, with his wife, Catherine of Braganza, was said to have bathed in the Cross Bath, which was fashionable then, as did Mary of Modena, wife of James II, who cites the sacred spring as the reason behind her successful conception soon afterwards.

MY BEST OF BATH



◆ The Sydney Gardens behind the Holburne Museum is a really great place for afternoon tea. Originally built as pleasure gardens, it is Bath's oldest park and dates back to the 1760s, with its original music pavilions still standing. The Kennet and Avon Canal runs through the park and it's incredibly picturesque.

◆ Certainly a game of rugby at the Rec is a must. They play between September to April, while cricket and tennis is during the summer. Although its facilities aren't the best in the Premiership, you can't beat its backdrop and its location in the middle of a World Heritage City. Also, the Bath team

is famous for its open style of play, with lots of action, which makes it excellent for the fans. And my favourite pre-match meal would be at Yak Yeti Yak – a popular Nepalese place in town.

◆ I enjoy my beer and I think The Old Green Tree in Green Street, at the bottom of Milsom Street, does its

own and very good Old Green Tree Bitter. If you like Irish music, go to The Star Inn on a Friday night, where there's live Irish music and beer straight from the barrel.

◆ My favourite treatment has got to be the *watsu* at Thermae Bath Spa. I absolutely love it. It is immensely relaxing and I

highly recommend it.

◆ I'm an architect by training with a great interest in conservation, so I think the Museum of Bath Architecture is a special little place, a unique museum that explains how and why Bath was built. You will definitely go away with a very special experience whenever you visit.

MARGARET STEWART

Founder, The Springs Foundation



"I learnt how to swim in the New Royal Baths, which was fed by the hot springs," says Margaret Stewart excitedly. Although the site has since been redesigned for commercial purposes, championing the case of Bath's thermal waters has always been Stewart's main reason for returning to her birthplace. "I was born in Bath but grew up mainly in County Kerry. I only returned in 1975 and worked as a guide in the Roman Baths before establishing The Springs Foundation to look after the long-term continuity of Bath's waters. These waters have been places of healing since ancient times and I wanted to protect the springs. I had a dream to do so, you could say." Stewart had been living in the Australian Outback then, and returning home was the farthest thing from her mind. "I felt this deep impulse to go home and to protect the springs. I still don't really know why I came home to Bath but I do feel a sense of being part of something much bigger. And the best thing about Bath's hot springs is that you don't even need to immerse yourself in the waters, I feel. Just being around them is special enough. When you are there, by the water, you will know you are in a special place... a sacred place, with a unique calm about it."



◆ Bath has always been about its hot water so I like a variety of things related to it: from drinking water in the Pump Room to saying 'hello' to the big spring at the Roman Baths. But my heart has and always will be with the Cross Bath.

◆ The Roman Baths is truly special but my favourite secret place within it is its Sacred Outflow, where you will see some beautiful staining on the rocks. I like being there, finding a

MY BEST OF BATH

nook and cranny, sit with my back against it and looking around, seeing the asclepius and luna pediment.



◆ The Old Theatre Royal is a great place to visit and it is also home to the Masonic Museum, one of the country's finest. It's an amazing space to explore. Bath's full of surprises like these.

◆ I like walking up and down Bath's little alleyways and trying to get lost, which is impossible to do. John Wood was trying to lay out the entire city on sacred geometrical lines

and it's interesting to see this within the city's architecture. The Circus, for example, is built around the dimensions of Stonehenge and, if you look around some of the old houses, you will see druidic elements and references, like acorns, which were sacred to the druids.

◆ If you have the time, drive to Mells, which is a lovely village that's more hidden than Castle Combe. There's a darling little church and The Talbot Inn, an amazing pub with extraordinary food.



MY BEST OF BATH

◆ A night out with Bizarre Bath, obviously! We run, rain or shine, every night from April to end October. I think we give visitors a totally different perspective of Bath. I also consider us a show, not a tour.

◆ If you'd like a tour, then nothing beats the Mayor of Bath's Corps of Honorary Guides. It's a two-hour walking tour, covering the historical and cultural sides of Bath. It's totally free and all you have to do is turn up. It is all run by volunteers and they won't even accept tips or gratuities. They are all passionate about history and are simply exceptional.

◆ I've always preferred nature and greenery to buildings so I have to say I love the park overlooking the river and the canal path alongside it. There's the Beazer Maze near the weir as well, which is nice.

◆ Bath has many good restaurants and I like going to Tilleys, a French bistro-type place with a menu that changes often, on North Parade Passage. I also like Koh Thai Tapas on Broad Street. I don't drink myself, having overdone things as a student, but The Huntsman has a nice atmosphere and a good place for it.

◆ I'm very proud of the fact we get very good plays in Bath. The Theatre Royal is such a chocolate box of a theatre, not to mention being a launch pad for the West End.

NOEL BRITTEN

Founder, Bizarre Bath



The jungles of Kalimantan might be a world away from the Georgian gentility of Bath, but that's where you'd find funny man Noel Britten when he's not making crowds laugh during Bizarre Bath, his famous night comedy walk that's been running for over 20 years now. "Bizarre Bath runs from April to October so I've been spending the past 10 winters in Borneo, where I volunteer with Dr Birute Galdikas' orangutan foundation," he says. "Comedy is harder to do when people are wet and cold." Always kitted out in his trademark purple jacket, polka dotted tie and with at least a couple of balloons tethered somewhere, Britten, originally from London, decided to stay on in Bath after studying business at the university here. "I love comedy and was looking at street performing, seeing how popular it was in Bath. But you'd have to get up early to queue for performer's slots. I also hated the idea of putting your hat out afterwards and getting little or no money for it. So, I decided to approach the idea backwards, if you will. What we do at Bizarre Bath is get guests to pay upfront and then we do a show – it's ideal for everyone. I always tell people to think of us as a show, and not a tour. We offer a different side of Bath – hysterical as opposed to historical. And, after all, who doesn't enjoy a good laugh?"

Walk and laugh at the same time with Noel Britten's on-the-go Bizarre Bath show.

CELIA MEAD

Museum Consultant, Bath Museums Partnership

"I first visited Bath when I was 16 and I have always remembered how beautiful it was. When the time came to move out of London, well, there was only one place I thought of, really. Bath has a magnetic quality – it really does. For a relatively small city, it has a very cosmopolitan feel and, every time I walk home, seeing the light reflecting off the Bath stone, makes for a magical equation. I work with the Bath Museums Partnership, which was founded about two and a half years ago, to get the museums to work together, to create a whole museum offering ... a 'museum mile', if you will. There's also so much to see, do and experience in Bath – even if you live here. I always say Bath is great if you have an appetite for brain food. There are 13 diverse, thought-provoking museums in this World Heritage City alone and they are all within walking distance of each other. Each one tells its own remarkable story through its collections, experiences and history, spanning ancient times to modern day. This melting pot of museums will prick the imagination, challenge the senses and stimulate the mind. What I say is, you feed your brain and body heartily through the dense concentration of museums, and then you feed your spirit through places like Bath's beautiful Abbey."



MY BEST OF BATH

- ◆ My favourite coffee shop is Colonna & Hunter in Milsom Street. I haven't had better coffees in the UK! If you're coming later in the day, do know they have very good craft beers, too.
- ◆ The views out of Bath and around it are astounding. I particularly love the fact Bath is a very walkable city. My favourite vantage point is actually from the terrace of the American Museum as you can't see any sign of the 19th to 21st centuries. No roads, no canals, no traffic. A completely unspoilt view! I also love being at the top of Prior Park's landscaped garden, where you can see the whole of the northern slopes, including my house and, of course, Beckford's Tower.
- ◆ Walcot Street is good for local and independent brands and is known as the artisan quarter. It's a very friendly area for shopping with smiling local faces and I particularly love Rossiter's of Bath – an amazing independent department store, which is becoming increasingly rare now. It's lovely, with uneven floors and little converted wood-panelled rooms.
- ◆ My favourite spot in Bath is actually a small side wall near Milsom Place. If you look for it, there's a half-timbered, almost hidden building with mullioned windows that's pre-Georgian, and a surprising medieval survivor! It's funny, old and wonderful to see. That's what I love about Bath – how old and new is all around – which is Bath's signature style, after all. Beautiful and inventive at once.
- ◆ Of course, a visit to all of Bath's 13 top museums. I really do think each is distinct and special. The Fashion Museum is one of the world's top 10 for its genre and the Holburne Museum hosts the finest display of 18th century portraiture in the world, including the largest painting in Bath by Gainsborough, *The Byam Family (1762-1766)*, at its core.

PETER HIGGINS

Design Director, Eton Design

At first glance, there is nothing at all to link Peter Higgins, the dapper designer behind Eton Design, the luxury interior design company, to Robert Southey, an English poet best known for his classic children's tale, *The Story of the Three Bears*, which is more easily recognised once the main protagonist is identified – Goldilocks. But, visit his showroom at 108 Walcot Street, and you'd soon realise that this was where Southey had lived as a child, in the home of his aunt, a certain Miss Tyler who took young Robert to the Old Theatre Royal so often that he later remarked: "I have seen more plays before I was seven than after I was 20." "I've lived here for years," says Higgins, who moved to Bath from Eton. "There's so much creative energy all around, it's astounding. It's a small classy, ancient city but it's also very dynamic. And with so much creative talent all around – in art, music, etc – it makes living and working here absolutely delightful."



"There's so much creative energy all around, it's astounding."

MY BEST OF BATH

- ◆ Bath is a never-ending festival! The Great Bath Feast is always good while the Bath Music Festival is wonderful. Bath in Fashion is great and also very good for the city. It is also always a treat to attend a classical concert inside Bath Abbey. A true delight.
- ◆ If you like a pint, all the Bath ales are really worth trying. There's a bitter one called Gem, which I particularly like. If you're looking for a place to go, The Star Inn is very traditional and there's another place called The Salamander with a good choice of Bath ales as well.
- ◆ I like walking the public corridors and lobby of The Gainsborough Bath Spa, which I think are stunning. I also think the spa and restaurant are beautiful. I love the look of the entire hotel and, every time I walk in, I have this feeling of understated calm, which I like.
- ◆ The Theatre Royal is a wonderful regional theatre, with a lot of pre-West End productions. I also adore the Little Theatre. I love going in on a winter afternoon and hiding there from the cold over a good movie.
- ◆ Bath's proximity to other beautiful areas of England is also fantastic. You're literally in open country within minutes while the Cotswolds is also close by. Devon and Cornwall are also short train rides away.



MY BEST OF BATH



◆ The Holburne Museum is done very nicely, with three floors of exhibits set within an elegant Georgian building.

◆ The American Museum is also a must-visit. Its grounds are beautiful and, on a sunny, day, end your visit with a cup of tea and cake at the café. Lovely!

◆ I think just sitting by the riverside, near the weir, is a wonderful way to experience Bath.

◆ I'd highly recommend a walk to Alexandra Park. From there, you can see the whole of Bath. A veritable bird's eye view. And it's not far away at all!



◆ Exploring Great Pulteney Street is always nice. It gives you a very different feeling, especially if you come from a big city.

A visit to the historic and beautiful AH Hale pharmacy is like stepping back in time.

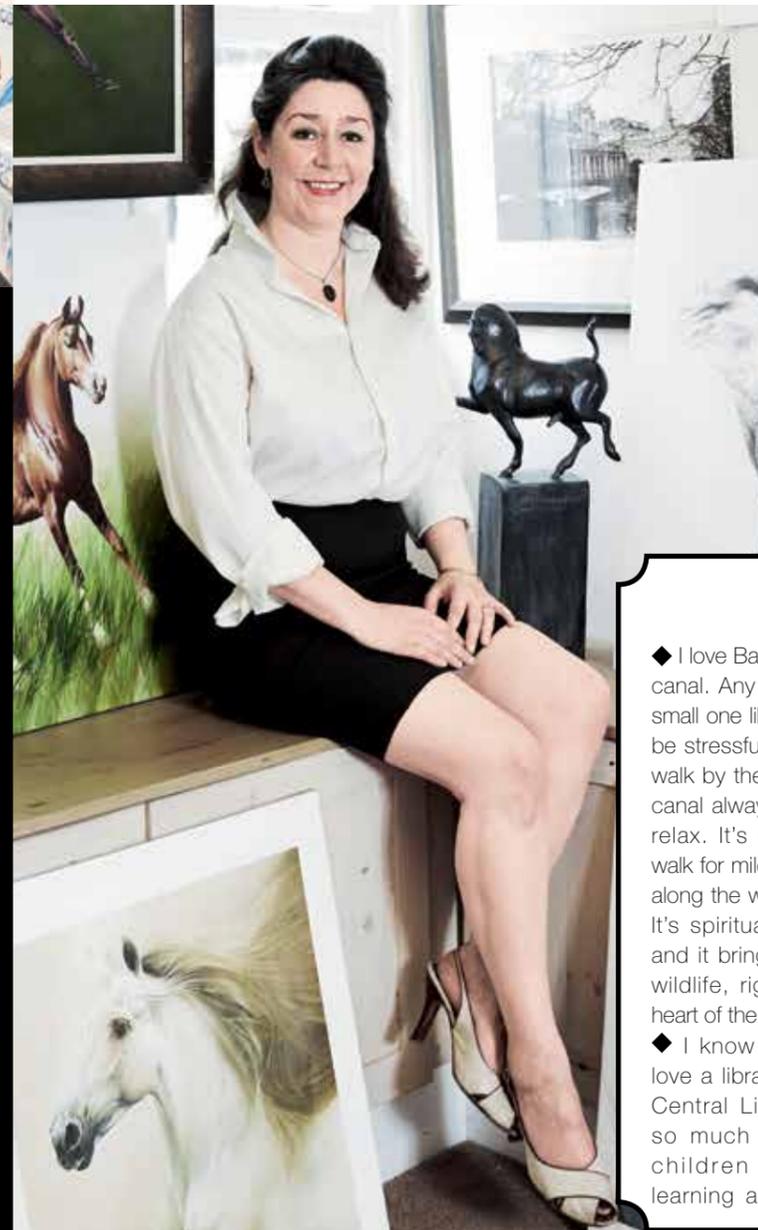
BR DOSHI

Pharmacist, AH Hale Ltd

Even if you're not feeling poorly, it's a visual delight and almost a step back in time the minute you enter AH Hale Ltd. Occupying a choice corner along Argyle Street, the historic pharmacy's façade is crowned with the restored arms of Charlotte Sophie, Queen of England (1744-1818) and the wife of George III, while its interiors are a hodgepodge of natural sea sponges, gentlemen's grooming products, specially-made old ribbed bottles (so that the blind would know its contents were toxic) and massive ornamental carboys – those ubiquitous jars, filled with mysterious-looking coloured liquids. Said to originate from the Persian word for 'flagon' or *qarabah*, it now counts itself as *de rigueur* displays for good pharmacists everywhere. "We get visitors from as far as New Zealand and Australia coming in, not to get medicines, but just to marvel at the shop," says BR Doshi, who has spent over three decades in Bath, helming what is possibly its prettiest and most historic pharmacy. "We'd been featured before on the BBC's *Vintage Antiques Roadshow*. So, whenever people come to Bath, they make it a point to stop by. Also, in those days, Bath used to be known as a place to which you'd retire, particularly if you were well-off. I remember how different things used to be. People expected to be served and it was a time when the men used to tip their hats off to greet a lady. It was this initial experience of life in Bath that inspired us to keep this 'step back in time' feeling."

BONNIE HELEN HAWKINS

Artist and Gallery Owner



Living in picture-perfect Bath for decades, it seems only natural that life for Bonnie Helen Hawkins revolves around art. The owner of the Minerva Gallery, Hawkins, together with her husband, Michael Porter, counts herself privileged to work out of Bath's iconic Pulteney Bridge – Robert Adam's Palladian beauty and one of only a few historic bridges in the world to have shops built into it. "I never mind coming into work," she smiles. A talented artist herself, Hawkins also represents other artists whose genres span traditional and contemporary painting as well as sculptures in bronze, one of whom, Irene Marsh, is a particular specialist in Bathonian scenes. "What I love about Irene's work is that you can practically navigate around Bath simply by looking at her paintings. If you ever get to see her at work, you would marvel at the amount of minute detail that goes into each piece. It's truly magnifying work. She uses triple zero brushes and puts in an incredible amount of effort, with each piece taking at least eight months of eye-straining work. The other incredible thing is that Irene only started painting at the age of 55, after the shoe factory she worked in closed. She's 72 now and my favourite piece by her is *Northumberland Place*, a 2010 piece where you just have to marvel at the detail of the raindrops hitting the puddles. That's the amazing thing about Bath. It just inspires people. After all, the city has so many claims to fame, from being the place where Plasticine was invented as well as the city where the first stamp was ever used to post a letter. In fact, the famous Penny Black was posted from Bath a few days before stamps were officially in use."

MY BEST OF BATH

◆ I love Bath's river and canal. Any city, even a small one like Bath, can be stressful but I find a walk by the river or the canal always helps me relax. It's possible to walk for miles and miles along the water's edge. It's spiritually uplifting and it brings so much to the heart of the city, with it.

◆ I know it's odd to love a library but Bath Central Library does so much to engage children in active learning and working

with the community. They host many events, from storytelling to art exhibitions and festivals, while its staff are so helpful that they all deserve a medal each!

◆ Being an artist, I just love the warm mellow colour of Bath stone. In the summer, when the light reflects off it, I feel as if I live in a city made of honey.

◆ It always saddens me to find the same shops and brands whenever and wherever I travel. The high streets

are all carbon copies of each other and, sometimes, it's hard to know which city you are in. But Bath's not like that. We preserve a large number of quirky, individual shops. They might be tucked away in corners but they're still here!

◆ Bath is small and everyone seems to know everyone. I can't step out of my shop without bumping into someone I know. I love how Bath is a city of friends.



MY BEST OF BATH



◆ George Bayntun is a must, of course, if you like fine bindings and rare books. We enjoyed the patronage of Queen Mary, who spent the war years at Badminton, near Bath, and was granted the appointment of Bookseller to Her Majesty in 1950. We sell a lot of childhood favourites. Books, after all, are about memories.

◆ Also, as Chairman of the Bath Preservation Trust, I do think our four museums – No 1 Royal Crescent, the Museum of Bath Architecture, Beckford's Tower and the Herschel Museum of Astronomy – are pretty perfect.

◆ I love seeing people march up and down Bath's hills – lean, fit and happy. I make it a point to walk different ways each time. Bath is like a labyrinth... corners, circles, crescents and squares. You'd find there are few straight roads, almost like a toy town filled with surprises.

◆ I often eat at The Circus, a restaurant near the Crescent. They do fresh fish daily and really good chips.

◆ The worst thing for a building is to fall into disuse and left derelict. So I love what The Gainsborough Bath Spa have done. Its location, next to St John's Hospital, of which my mother Charlotte was Almoner for 25 years, and the Roman ruins where it all started, is fantastic and I love the name. Gainsborough is one of Bath's great artists and I think it's wonderful that he is commemorated this way.

EDWARD BAYNTUN-COWARD

Owner, George Bayntun & Chairman of the Bath Preservation Trust

Life is good to Edward Bayntun-Coward. Having graduated with a History degree from Oxford University, where he studied alongside David Cameron, Bayntun-Coward juggles his day job as a bookseller with the famous George Bayntun bookshop along Manvers Street (one of the world's most famous bookshops and home to the Bayntun-Riviere bindery, which dates back to 1829) and his work for the Bath Preservation Trust, which presides over four of the city's most beautiful museums. "We have 13 independent museums and, for a small city like Bath, that's a great concentration of culture and knowledge," he says. "I get bored easily but I can say that has never, ever happened in Bath. There are marvellous buildings everywhere and something for everyone... so long as you are curious." With his family deeply-embedded in Bath ("We've lived here for centuries," he says), his father, Hylton, was also the High Sheriff of Avon. Next year, Bayntun-Coward will follow in his footsteps and assume the position of High Sheriff of Somerset, an ancient shrievalty that's been in existence for over a thousand years. "The uniform is slightly unusual but, being in Bath, a place where people have promenaded for centuries, I daresay I could get away with walking around town in it!"

If fine books rock your boat, get ready to go wild at George Bayntun's along Manvers Street.



For The Love Of Books

Established in 1894, George Bayntun is one of the world's leading antiquarian bookshops and specialists in fine leather bindings. Many beautiful editions of poetry, illustrated books as well as children's books may be found here, including first editions like a particularly precious one of Saint-Exupery's *The Little Prince* in English, Richard Adam's *Watership Down*, with illustrations by John Lawrence, and Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, all first editions, bound in full crimson and black morocco.



What were the main challenges working on The Gainsborough Bath Spa? The main challenges were to stay true to the essence and history of The Gainsborough Bath Spa while making the design fresh, new and innovative. We were tasked with reconstructing a collection of historic, Georgian buildings – two of them being former hospitals and a chapel – to a grand hotel. Redesigning historic buildings is a great honour but, with it, can come a few challenges. One has to be respectful of important features while coaxing them along so that they appeal to today's clientele. With The Gainsborough Bath Spa, these historic Georgian buildings were constructed as hospitals and then repurposed to serve the College of Art. In addition to needing repair and restoration, they needed to be unified to function as a hotel and embellished, where historic detail had been stripped over time. Unlike modern construction, where one room may be identical to the next, here we were dealing with unique dimensions and characteristics at every turn.

What were the initial thoughts that came to mind? A designer needs to anticipate the future. And, so, we ask ourselves: 'How will our design stand up 10, 20 years from now?' The design has to be enduring. Initially, we were struck by the wonderful light and views from what would become the guestroom windows. We were also very excited by the idea of the thermal baths and keenly aware that Bath needed a hotel which looked as much to the future as it relied on the past. Hotel guests have high expectations, so we are always focused on the task of making their stay unique, luxurious and memorable. Our principal concerns related to the complexity of the site. We faced the challenge of uniting all the historic architecture, ruins and stories to a common thread. In the end, it has turned out beautifully and what were challenging elements are now unique features that give the property a true identity and real character.

Tell us a little about your design philosophy for The Gainsborough Bath Spa. Our philosophy was to respect the history of the site, but not to replicate or worship it. Instead, we wanted it to be respectful, playful and to create welcoming, comfortable and social spaces. We want the hotel to remain relevant to both the residents of Bath and its visitors. The pre-existing spaces and features – the grand stairs, the chapel and the monumental windows – are so magnificent that we had to celebrate their inherent beauty. We layered in a modern, fresh décor over the deep soul of the building. Our design is respectful, charming and, most importantly, elevates the existing architecture while delivering the

Charmed By Champalimaud

If there's a reason why your stay at The Gainsborough Bath Spa seems a little more sumptuous than usual, chalk it down to the attentive detail and gracious decorative touches, courtesy of celebrated New York-based Champalimaud Design. *YTL Life* speaks to the award-winning interior designer Alexandra Champalimaud on her design philosophy and the challenges of working on a property already making waves for being the first five-star hotel to open in Bath in 30 years – a stunningly reimagined addition to the UNESCO World Heritage City.

comfort and modern amenities guests require and expect from a luxury hotel. The public spaces are inviting, elegant and fresh, not hushed and stuffy. In developing the design for The Gainsborough Bath Spa, we carefully considered the building's history, origin, purpose and location. We do this to distill a property's soul, to preserve it and then add in modernity – touches of comfort and contemporary amenities to suit today's discerning traveller. There was so much history to preserve and celebrate with this hotel and we wanted to revive every one of these special details in our design.

How did this project differ from your last one for YTL Hotels?

We worked with YTL on the reinvention of The Green Leaf Niseko Village. The Green Leaf Niseko Village, located in the Japanese prefecture of Hokkaido, is now a wonderfully modern ski resort. We created a casual, fun, contemporary hotel with a design vocabulary rooted in Japanese architecture. Aesthetically, it is a big departure from our work at The Gainsborough Bath Spa, but the hotels share a common vision of providing the YTL guest with a unique, highly personalised experience celebrating a fabulous location. YTL's philosophy is to celebrate local cultures and environments. We are like minded in this respect and so our collaborations yield unique and exciting results.

There are some fascinating *objets d'art* in the hotel as well as some interesting commissioned artworks. Can you tell me more about the decorative pieces in the hotel – which are your favourites and the stories behind them – as well as the design brief to the artists? Furnishing the hotel was such good fun, and we are especially proud and excited about the art. The hotel is named after one of Bath's most famous residents, the 18th-century portrait artist Sir Thomas Gainsborough, and needed to be filled with important art. So, working closely with YTL Hotels and the College of Art at Bath Spa University, we held a juried competition of student artists and commissioned three to produce original pieces for the hotel. My personal favourite is the piece by Stephanie Clark, who photographed the site throughout the construction and, working in paint and digital media, created a beautiful, layered abstract painting which is proudly on display in our restaurant. In the lobby, we designed a beautiful display case to house some 250 Roman coins that are part of the Beau Street Hoard, which was discovered during the excavation of the hotel foundations – amazing! And, in Spa Village Bath, we replicated an ancient Roman mosaic in the floor using archaeological records dating back to the 19th century. The original Roman mosaic is safely enclosed and protected beneath the surface.

What has your overall Bath experience been like? I've truly fallen in love with Bath. During our tenure of renovating the hotel, we have gotten to know the city and her people well, both of which



exude charm and gentility. Being a UNESCO World Heritage city, which draws in people from all over the world, we wanted to create a hotel that guests, tourists and locals could gather in for unique social and lifestyle experiences. Bath is also a gracious host to her many visitors and I am so proud The Gainsborough Bath Spa will be leading the way in welcoming these travellers to this magical corner of the UK.

What were the main highlights of working on The Gainsborough Bath Spa project? The highlight, for me, was the process of finding new, innovative ways to enhance the historical background and story of the property. I also enjoyed discovering and collaborating with many talented local artists and craftsmen.

What did you want to achieve in terms of guest experience, from entering the lobby to the beautiful spa and bedrooms? What mood and feel did you set out to capture and how did you go about doing it? Creating a memorable space is all about the first impression. The atmosphere needs to stun and provoke; it needs to have that 'wow' effect, even if it is a quiet place. Entering the hotel, guests are welcome by a jewel of a reception, which reinforces the splendour of the complete Gainsborough Bath Spa experience. The lobby gives you a sense of place and sets the

“YTL's philosophy is to celebrate local cultures and environments.”

tone for the rest of the property. The reception, concierge, and valet desks are contemporary, youthful and refined. Guestrooms are inviting and subtly luxurious. The beautiful spa is serene and offers a unique social experience. All spaces are well-proportioned, layered and timeless.

During the restoration of the hotel, Roman mosaics and coins were discovered. Did this alter your design plans? Discovering the Roman mosaics and coins was a lucky find and added a depth of personality and value to our design. Whilst excavating the thermal pools central to Spa Village Bath, we found 17,500 Roman coins! Dating from 32BC to 274AD, the coins were held intact in cloth satchels. It is amongst the largest coin hoards ever discovered in the UK, some of which are displayed in The Gainsborough Bath Spa's lobby, beneath restored Georgian architectural features. The coins are one of the first things you see when you enter the lobby. Guests on arrival are instantaneously

drawn to the Roman history of the site. In regards to the mosaics, we recreated the pattern in its original location, which is now part of the Spa Village Bath experience.

Tell us about the design for Johann Lafer at The Gainsborough. The restaurant features a stunning waxed oak floor laid in an oversized herringbone pattern of country, even rustic quality. Classical Georgian architectural features, including columns, arched openings and a coffered ceiling – preserved or introduced – round out the design. At the centre of the room, tall dining tables, coupled with sleek leather stools, offer a casual attitude while luxurious banquettes at the perimeter of the room offer a more intimate dining experience. A large contemporary canvas, commissioned by the hotel and painted by a young local artist, sets a vibrant tone against the room's more classical features. It also features a lovely antique mantelpiece and a signature wine display. The muted, contemporary color palette is inviting, unpretentious and youthful. The chef's creative cuisine is a perfect match for the room's décor, coming together to create the social centre of the hotel.

Do you have any personal favourite spaces in the hotel or its surrounds? One of my favorite spaces is The Canvas Room, which has a quintessential British sensibility. The room is charming and irrefutably modern. The subdued colour palette of soft golds and black, alongside majestic blues and rich natural materials, mirror the eclectic, ordered and tasteful parlours of the Somerset countryside. The Canvas Room is comfortable from dawn to dusk, the perfect place to gather with close family and friends and, of course, the Spa Village Bath, which is unrivalled in the city. Beneath a modern glass roof is the Bath House, anchored by a central thermal pool where guests can 'take the waters'. The design of the Bath House is a contemporary take on the traditional Roman bath. Two additional pools, along with a host of other spa experiences, round out the Bath House offerings. In addition to the water circuit, we designed a series of spa treatment rooms offering locally inspired treatments. We also have three lovely spa guestrooms, each with a thermal water tap at the bathtub – a true indulgence!

Lastly, what do you want guests to walk away with, after experiencing this property? Guests want to feel transported, but they also want to feel at home – a special, one-of-a-kind experience. The Gainsborough Bath Spa immerses you into the rituals and rich history of the past, while offering modern amenities and fulfilling your emotional needs. I truly hope they take a bit of the graciousness, charm and civility of Bath and The Gainsborough Bath Spa with them. This is a magical hotel in a magical city and we all need a little magic in our lives. 🍷

Sacred City

Bath Abbey has been, literally, at the heart of the city for more than a thousand years. As it continues to administer to the city's spiritual and communal needs, while also being a tourist attraction, the abbey, one of the architectural glories of England, maintains a devotion to its traditions even as it renews itself for the future.

In the hush of the evening, after the bustle of commerce and tourism have died away, there is something almost otherworldly about Bath. As you stroll down the streets, your steps echoing off the Bath stone cladding the buildings, there is a certain feeling in the air, a frisson, perhaps, of history, an intangible but real link to a past that stretches more than 2,000 years. Bath is and has always been a spiritual place. If you're staying at The Gainsborough Bath Spa, it's worth going for a walk at dusk. Turn right at the entrance and head up to Stall Street. Take a left and you're in the city's historic heart – the Roman Baths and the adjoining Pump Room, and, through an archway, its spires soaring into the sky, Bath Abbey, one of the glories of this beautiful city.

The abbey, formally known as the Abbey Church of Saint Peter and Saint Paul, is the sacred centre of the city. As far back as the 7th century AD, this has been a religious site, when a convent was established here in 675AD. Even before that, of course, the vicinity was considered a hallowed site – the thermal springs feeding what is now the Roman Baths was a shrine that the Celtic Britons dedicated to the goddess Sulis. With its rich and healing mineral properties, it's no surprise that the Romans, who arrived

in Britain in 43AD, would continue the Celts' tradition, building a temple and, eventually, the baths we see today over this sacred springs. Co-opting the local goddess and infusing her with Minerva, the Roman deity for wisdom, the cult of Sulis Minerva was born, becoming the focal point of what became the town of Aquae Sulis, or the 'Waters of Sulis'. After the Roman withdrawal from Britain in the early 5th century, both the temple and baths fell into disrepair. By then, Christianity had already established itself in Britain. The 7th-century convent in Bath became a monastery and, although there is no clear archaeological evidence, it seems there was an Anglo-Saxon church on this site, just adjacent to the Roman Baths and the Temple of Sulis Minerva, as early as 757AD. The first King of all England, Edgar, was crowned here in 973AD and the service, including the Biblical texts used then, became the precedent for subsequent coronations of the English monarchs. (You can see a fine 19th century stained glass window commemorating Edgar's accession in the abbey.)

After the Normans arrived in Britain in 1066, the Bishop of Bath, John of Tours, launched an extensive building programme, which including the construction of a new cathedral to replace



Clockwise, from right: The magnificent fan vaulting inside Bath Abbey; Sean Bowers, the abbey's Assistant Director of Music, leading the girls' choir; the tower tour takes you to the top of the abbey as well as a close look at the 127-year-old clock.



“The abbey, formally known as the Abbey Church of Saint Peter and Saint Paul, is the sacred centre of the city.”



the church. This precursor to the current Bath Abbey was completed around 1160 and prospered until the 13th century, when the city's importance declined. By the late 15th century, the abbey was in all but ruins before the then bishop, Oliver King, decided to tear down the Norman building and replace it with one of the last great medieval cathedrals to be built in England. Work started around 1499 and the abbey, as it is mostly today, was barely completed before Henry VIII's Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1539, when it suffered the same fate as other great priories and churches in England during this time and had its valuable parts stripped away. Its empty shell was sold before it was given to the city to be used as a parish church in 1572.

Periodic restoration of the abbey took place in the centuries since (including a complete transformation of its interior in the 19th century), its regeneration mirroring the fate of the city and its renaissance as a fashionable spa resort. It might be ironic that the thermal springs, the site of pagan and Roman shrines, would contribute, indirectly, to the abbey's fortunes. The popularity of Bath as a fashionable place 'to take the waters' made the city a tourist destination from the 17th century onwards.

Today, Bath attracts more than a million staying tourists a year as well as close to

four million day visitors. Half a million of them visit the abbey, many drawn by its architectural splendour – its magnificent fan vaulting, for example, is one of the finest in England, while the angels' ladders on the west front and flying buttresses are spectacular. By its location and ministration to the city's residents, however, Bath Abbey is more than just a destination for sightseeing. It is as much part of the city's fabric as the Roman Baths and the thermal springs around it.

"It is, literally, the centre of Bath, both communally and spiritually," says The Reverend Prebendary Edward Mason, Rector of Bath Abbey. "We have a commitment to the city's spiritual needs as well as a duty of pastoral care to anyone who requires it." This means keeping the abbey's doors open – "We can't be shutting off the world," Mason explains – and evolving continuously to make itself relevant as the needs of the community change, and becoming engaged in the larger society. One of its many initiatives is the Lifeline Centre, a drop-in centre offering advice and support for the homeless, ex-homeless and vulnerably housed, located in the abbey vaults. "We try and solve problems but not everyone comes for that – some just want a cup of tea and company," he says.

Even as the abbey looks outwards, it

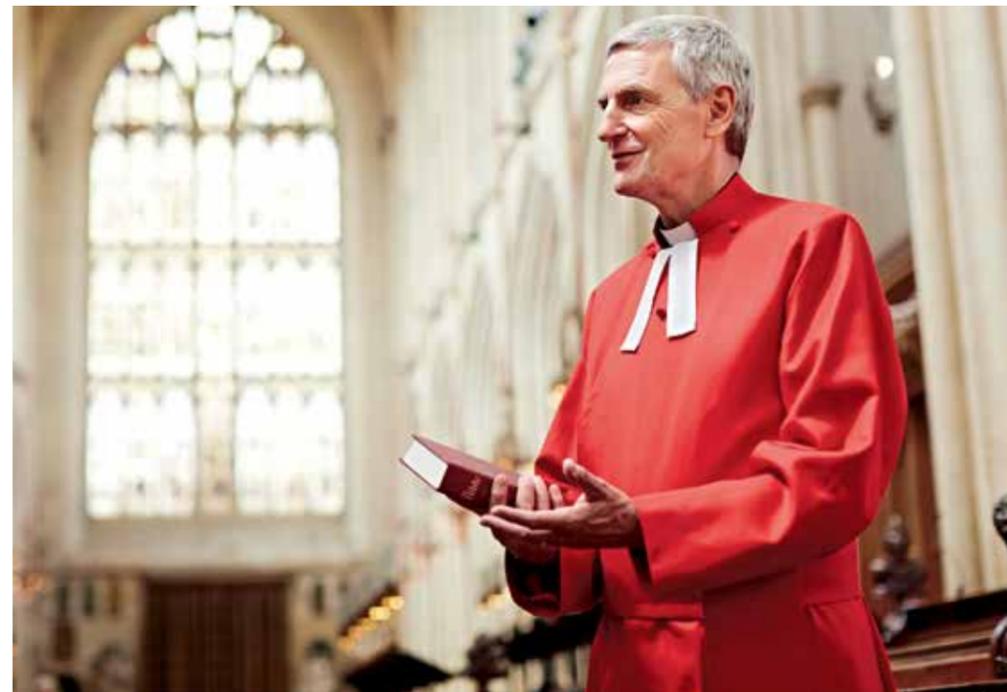
continues to maintain and strengthen its spiritual core – services and prayers, organising and supporting home groups, as well as schemes that reach out to students and youths. There is also a much-loved tradition of music, both through the Klais organ and the remarkable Bath Abbey Choir. "They are quite good," Mason shares proudly. "And the choristers do it because they are passionate about it." Under the guiding hands of Dr Peter King, the abbey's Director of Music, and Shean Bowers, the Assistant Director of Music and Choral Director for Schools, the choir, consisting of three groups – for men, boys and girls – perform not only during service in the abbey, but also in concert, famously sharing the stage with the Three Tenors at their Royal Crescent, Bath, concert in 2003, which was sponsored by YTL Corporation.

Looking around the busy building, Mason, who has been rector since 2004 and was appointed Honorary Chaplain to HM Queen Elizabeth II in 2015 ("A great



life feature //

honour," he says), is cognisant of the abbey's place in the city's larger scheme of things. "There is so much history here and that comes with a certain burden, which is where faith and the belief you are doing something right or essential for the well-being of everyone play a part." As it excels in its current vocations of spiritual and communal centre as well as tourist attraction, the abbey is looking ahead. Its multimillion-pound Footprint project aims to carry out essential repairs to the collapsing floor, install a new eco-friendly heating system using the hot springs as a source of energy and creating 200 sq m of new facilities to fulfil the abbey as a place of congregation, equal access and hospitality. "Not everyone comes here to pray, of course," Mason says with a smile. "But everyone's welcome – whether it's to admire the architecture, climb the towers, attend a service and listen to the choir, or even for a bit of quiet reflection. We're here for you. We have been here for a long time and we will continue to be here for a while longer." ■



Clockwise, from left: The Reverend Prebendary Edward Mason, Rector of Bath Abbey, in his Honorary Chaplain to HM Queen Elizabeth II gown; memorial stones can be seen on the walls of the abbey's interior; the abbey's choir tradition goes back to the 18th century; the west front of Bath Abbey.

FEASTS & FESTS

Chances are, there is almost always something going on when you're visiting Bath – a literary event, food fest or, if you're so inclined, a marathon through the city and its gorgeous surroundings.



Above: The annual Bath Carnival is a colourful parade of dance and music through the city.



Pictures courtesy of Wendy Matthews/Mark Bishop/Simon Taylor/Bath Fringe Festival



MAY

BATH FRINGE FESTIVAL

Founded in 1981 as an alternative to the more 'mainstream' or 'classically minded' International Bath Music Festival, the Bath Fringe showcases a plethora of artforms that include the spoken word, digital arts & media, standup comedy, cabaret, physical theatre, circus arts, folk and world music, Latin dance, jazz as well as pop, rock and black music. One of the Fringe's highlights is the *Bedlam Fair*, held on the second weekend of the festival and featuring a wide range of street performances around the city. bathfringe.co.uk



You can enjoy a wide range of street performances during the Bath Fringe Festival.

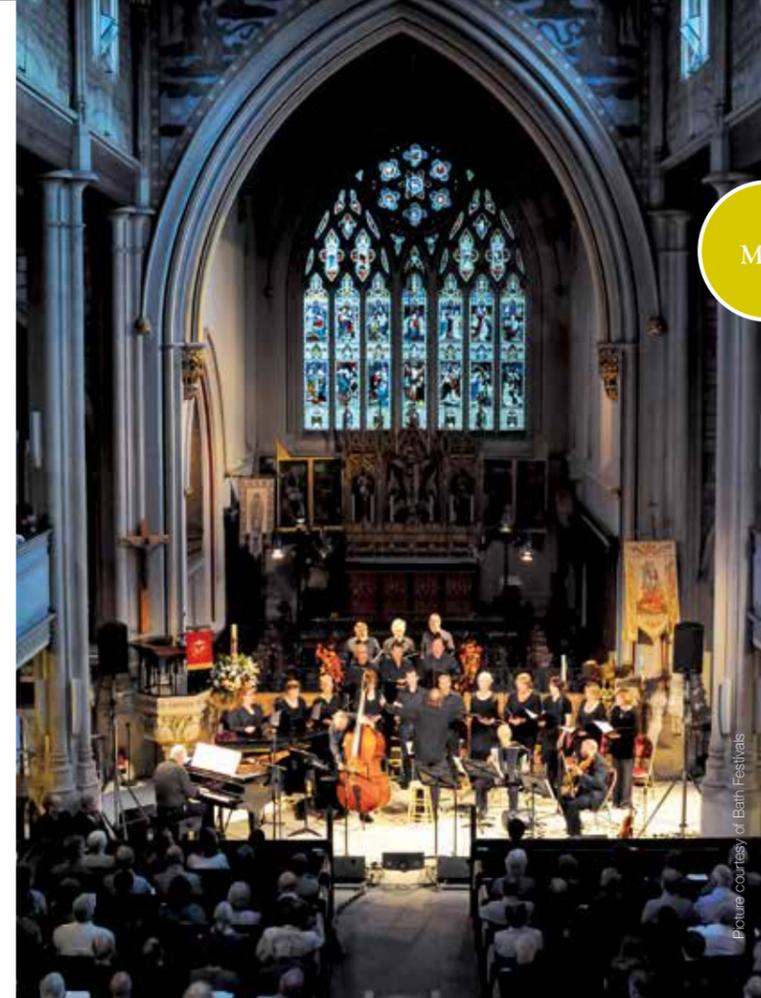


FEB

BATH LITERATURE FESTIVAL

One of the city's top festivals, the Bath Literature Festival celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2015. In that time, it has established itself as one of the UK's leading literary events, having drawn writers as diverse as JK Rowling, Hilary Mantel, Jennifer Saunders, Kazuo Ishiguro, Alastair Campbell, Jon Snow, Jonathan Dimbleby, Richard and Judy, Kate Mosse, David Nicholls, Omid Djalili, Mary Portas, Germaine Greer, Henry Blofeld, Rowan Williams and Lionel Shriver. Events are held in many of Bath's historic buildings, including the Guildhall, Masonic Hall, The Forum (just around the corner from The Gainsborough Bath Spa), Holburne Museum, Milsom Place and Theatre Royal, giving visitors a strong connection with the city, as well as nearby towns like Midsomer Norton, Keynsham and Radstock. bathfestivals.org.uk

Picture courtesy of Bath Festivals



MAY

INTERNATIONAL BATH MUSIC FESTIVAL

Held in the late spring of each year, the Bath International Music Festival is one of the city's most illustrious events. Inaugurated in 1948, the festival showcases a wide range of musical genres, including jazz, classical, world and folk. It draws from a diverse range of performers, ranging from established and emerging talents, students as well as local professional and amateur musicians. Events are held throughout Bath and include the opening day's *Party in the City*, dubbed 'The Biggest Free Show in Bath', which features, literally, more than a hundred performances spread all over the city. bathfestivals.org.uk

The International Bath Music Festival holds events in some of the city's most picturesque venues.

Picture courtesy of Bath Festivals

BATH CHILDREN'S LITERATURE FESTIVAL

The biggest dedicated children's book festival in Europe, the Bath Children's Literature Festival was established in 2007 in an effort to entertain and encourage children to read. Featuring masterclasses, workshops, storytelling, author talks and other activities, the festival has attracted some of the biggest names in children's books, including Michael Rosen, Michael Morpurgo, Jacqueline Wilson, Judith Kerr, Harry Hill, Meg Cabot and Axel Scheffler. Events take place in various venues around the city, including schools.

bathfestivals.org.uk



SEPT

The Bath Children's Literature Festival organises activities that encourage children to read.



OCT

GREAT BATH FEAST

A relatively recent addition to the city's calendar, the Great Bath Feast has become a beloved celebration of food and drink. A melting pot of flavours and personalities, the month-long gastronomic feast offers demonstrations, tastings, curated activities as well as celebrity chef appearances. Taking place throughout October, this fabulous feast features themed events, including, memorably, an adults-only *After-Dark Mad Hatter's Masquerade Dinner* (above) to mark the 150th anniversary of *Alice in Wonderland*, which was held in Bath's atmospheric Masonic Museum.

greatbathfeast.co.uk

SEPT



JANE AUSTEN FESTIVAL

This 10-day celebration of all things Jane Austen and the Regency has gone from strength to strength since it first began in 2001. Packed with concerts, talks and tours related to Austen and her novels, there are also dance and etiquette workshops, as well as the Regency Costumed Promenade, which kicks off the festival. Also look out for its Annual Summer Ball in, of course, full Regency costume.

janeaustenfestivalbath.co.uk



NOV

BATH MOZARTFEST

The Bath Mozartfest celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2015 and, contrary to its name, is not exclusively about Mozart. Created in 1991 with a bequest by Mary Purnell, in memory of her late son, Mark, who adored the music of Mozart and the city of Bath, the Mozartfest devotes its nine-day festival to artistic excellence and the finest classical music. (Another memorial to Mark Purnell can be found in the city's Parade Gardens – a bronze statue of a young Mozart playing the violin while standing on a base of Bath stone.) Shows are held in the city's historic Guildhall, Assembly Rooms and even Bath Abbey.

bathmozartfest.org.uk



The Bath Mozartfest has featured some of the the classical world's best performers, including (clockwise, from top left) the Galliard Ensemble, Jerusalem Quartet and Andras Schiff.



DEC

BATH CHRISTMAS MARKET

If you happen to be visiting Bath in winter, you're unlikely to miss the Bath Christmas Market. This year will see more than 170 chalets pack the streets around the Roman Baths and Bath Abbey, with high-quality artisan products, including Christmas decorations handmade toys, crafted candles, festive food and drink, local artwork, tasty cheeses and funky jewellery. Regularly voted one of the UK's most popular events, it's unlikely you won't find something for everyone on your Christmas gifts list here.

bathchristmasmarket.co.uk

ALSO...



Picture courtesy of Bath Tourism Plus

There are plenty of other events that take place in Bath throughout the year. These include **Bath in Fashion**, which is usually held in March, **Comedy Festival** (April), **Guitar Festival** (July), **Folk Festival** (August), **Heritage Open Week** (October) and **Film Festival** (December). There are also many one-day events, including **Bike Bath**, **Bath Rotary Club Fireworks Display**, **Bath Carnival** and **Bath Festival of Nature**. For those with a sportier bent, do look out for the **Bath Running Festival**, which takes place around the beautiful hills and valleys outside the city. The **Bath Half Marathon**, on the other hand, is run entirely within the city, while the **Bristol to Bath Marathon** is a 42km trial through the beautiful South Gloucestershire countryside.

Bar None

You can, literally, get a drink just about anywhere in Bath. If you're staying at The Gainsborough Bath Spa, however, there's no need to step out as The Gainsborough Bar will quench just about any thirst you can think of.

Is there really a right or wrong time to visit a bar? Does one need to wait for evening to fall before having a sundowner? Honestly, one should go to a bar when the mood strikes. There is, after all, no better reason for having a single malt than simply because one feels like it, or a glass of champagne just for a whiff of the aroma from the fizzing bubbles. What's more important, however, is that the establishment one steps into, the bar itself and its furnishings, the shelves and ambience, feel just right.

There is much to like at The Gainsborough Bar. If you're staying at The Gainsborough Bath Spa, it is handily within reach on the ground floor. The fact that the house champagne is Billecart-Salmon clues you in on the seriousness of the place. A medium-sized producer, the house of Billecart-Salmon has been creating some of the most elegant champagnes for more than two centuries. This is not a champagne to be sneezed at. A look at the shelves holds more revelations – a selection of single malts name-checks some of the best producers; a serious formation of vodkas that include Beluga, Belvedere, Ketel One, Mamont and Snow Leopard; and a hearteningly solid assortment of liqueurs and mixers that suggests this place takes its cocktails seriously.

And since it's open from noon to midnight, The Gainsborough Bar synchronises sweetly with your dining rhythm. It's a place for a quick pick-me-up as well as addressing the earnest business of drinking. Come before or after a meal (or both!) at the Johann Lafer at The

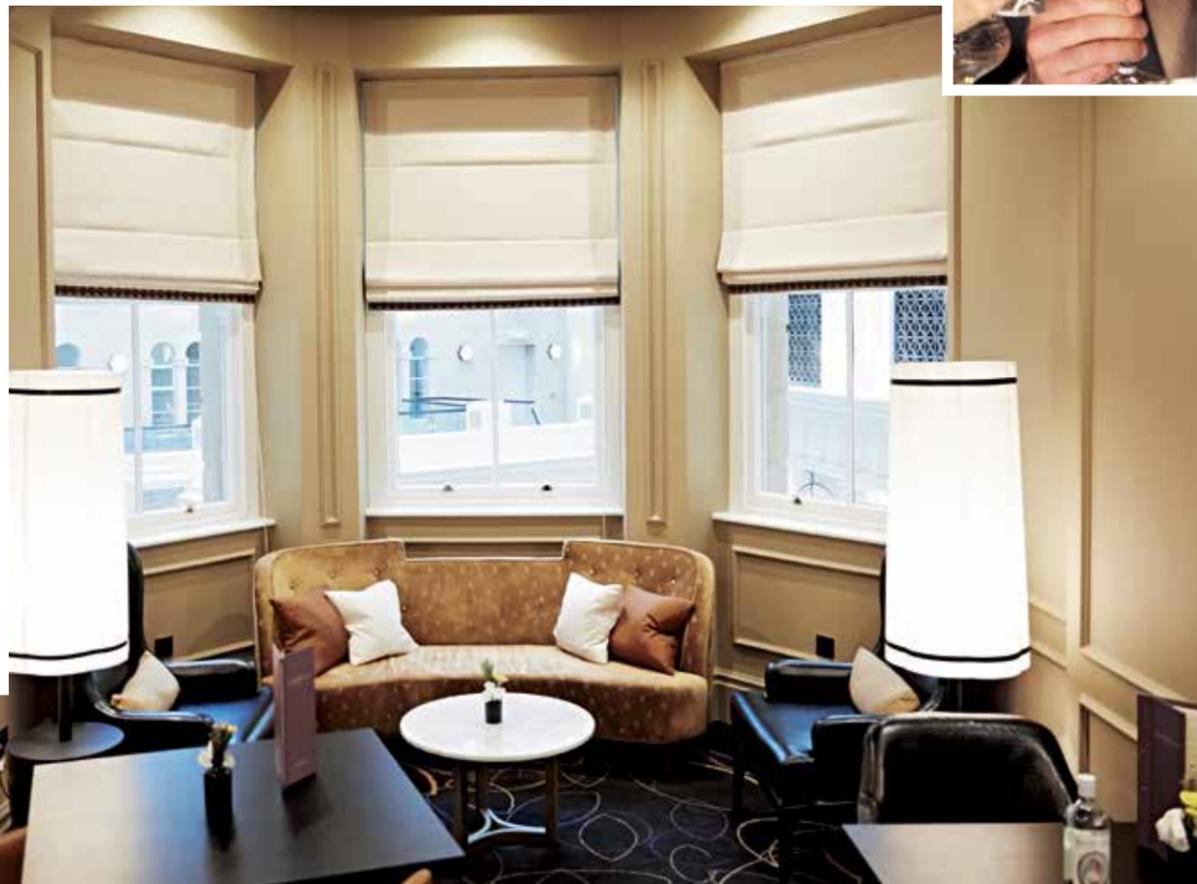
Gainsborough restaurant opposite. The sitting area, partitioned from the bar, is colourfully comfortable. You can bring a friend or a book, and be cosily ensconced within one of the leather armchairs as you sip and chat or read. It's a cheerful place, with a striking polyptych of 10 panels, inspired by the history of Bath, on the wall. You could also sink into the settee by the windows, curved around the sides just so that you can pleasantly stretch out.

The bar is wood and marble, while the back bar is illuminated. Spirits here, as noted earlier, take pride of place. Those who quibble over their botanicals will be impressed by the alphabet soup of gins lined up: Bathtub, Beckett's, Black Cow, Boodles, Burleigh's, Caorunn, Edgerton's Original Pink, Fifty Pounds, Gordon's Sloe, Hayman's, Hendrick's, Ish, Monkey 47, No 3, Portobello Road, Sacred, Sipsmith, Tanqueray, The Botanist, Williams... as well as the local brew, Bath Gin, completed with a winking Jane Austen on the label. The bartender will make any cocktail you like, or mix something special to suit your preference. There is a nice selection of wine and sample of local ales too.

To go back to the original question, there really is no wrong time to drop into a bar. Sometimes, it's just the bar that isn't right. The Gainsborough Bar, though, ticks all the right boxes: a lovely ambience, satisfyingly snug furnishings, attentive and accommodating staff, and a thoughtful and thorough approach to spirits. It's the place to quench a thirst all right, and it feels right any time, all the time. ■



Clockwise, from top right: The Gainsborough Bar takes spirits seriously; the locally-distilled Bath Gin is among the wide range of gins available; leather armchairs and a comfortable settee help make your stay here that much cosier; the artisanal Sacred Spirits is one of the highlights of The Gainsborough Bar.



Dough, A Dear

Celebrity baker and patissier **Nigel Skelchy** walks down memory lane in Bath, recalling his student days in the spa town and a more recent adventure in search of sun, fun and a few famous Bath buns.

It was such a strange sight. Sunlight streaming onto golden roofs and the spire of St John the Evangelist piercing a bluer-than-blue sky greeted me as the train trundled through the tunnel as it neared Bath Spa station. My memories of the city were infinitely greyer as the standing joke of England having only two weeks of sun a year seemed to be etched in my memory as God's honest truth.

It had been almost 15 years since I visited Bath and forever since I had left school. It was a bittersweet 'homecoming'. My first memory of Bath was when Mum,

Clockwise, from right: Bath Olivers are a satisfying accompaniment to cheeses, pâtés and other soft toppings; the Bath Bun is a sweet roll with a lump of sugar baked in the bottom; the Sally Lunn Bun has even been immortalised in a Gilbert and Sullivan musical.



My dear friend, Pei, gave me a warm welcome and we set off down memory lane, savouring old ones and gleefully anticipating the new. The day was warm but the chill was just coming off the morning, with the sun shining. Before long, we had shed our jackets and people had begun to pour out onto the streets, shopping, eating and, yes, taking selfies.

Bath is a tourist attraction. It's almost a theme park. On a warm, sunny day in late spring, it's golden. All buildings in Bath are, by city ordinance, built of Bath stone, a type of limestone which, until the 18th century, was deemed unsuitable for construction as it was considered too soft. Its popularity was due to a Cornishman, Ralph Allen, who used it to build a proof of concept, which would eventually become my old school, Prior Park College.

sewing name tags onto my blue Marks & Spencer underwear, accompanied me to school on the InterCity 125. It has been a lifetime since then. Mum passed on and, while those left behind are happy in good memories, the place in the heart that carries her memory misses her greatly. A few good tears were shed but the city held many happy memories and more were waiting to be made.

The city dates back almost 2,000 years when it was an important Roman spa town for the worship of Sulis, a Roman mother goddess of Celtic origins. People used to come to 'take the waters' and bring votive offerings to Sulis Minerva. After the fall of





Sally Lunn's Historic Eating House, in Bath's Parade Passage, is said to be the city's oldest building and is famous for its Sally Lunn Buns, served either sweet or savory.

Battle of Badon (an old name for Bath). Alexander Pope, the poet, lived here at Ralph Allen's residence, my old school, for a while. In more recent times, the deposed and exiled Emperor of Ethiopia also lived in Fairfield House. Christopher Patten, the last British Governor of Hong Kong before its reversion to China in 1997, was a long-serving MP of Bath Spa from 1979 to 1992. In a corner of Bath Abbey, there's also a small memorial to the famous castrato, Venanzio Rauzzini. What we might find ironic is that he had quite a reputation for being a 'casanova'. The memorial is hidden behind some scaffolding and bric-a-brac in the south-east end of the abbey.



“Bath Buns are a sweet roll and can be made with a brioche or a milk dough. They were reputedly created by one Dr William Oliver, although this theory has since been disproved by a local scholar.”

the Roman Empire, Aquae Sulis or 'Waters of Sulis', as it was then known, fell into general decline. It experienced a revival only in the 17th century when it once again became a spa town and this time known as Bath Spa. The city experienced a renaissance during the Stuart period as it was a stronghold for Charles I and, as such, enjoyed the royal patronage of Charles II after the Restoration of the English monarchy in 1660 and, especially, the later Georgian period during the Regency and Mad King George's reign.

Bath had always been traditionally part of Somerset and, for an interregnum, was part of County Avon from 1974 till 1996, when Avon was abolished and Bath once again, became the principle centre of what is now known as Bath and North-East Somerset. It is also a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Nobility and the gentry came from around the country to partake of the curative waters of Bath Spa and, in many ways, it was as busy as parts of London today. Bath has been connected with moments of history, which have changed the world. King Arthur was supposed to have defeated the Anglo-Saxons here at the



Left: Enjoy the quintessential English Afternoon Tea at The Gainsborough Bath Spa's Canvas Room. Above: Delicious Bath Buns can be found at The Bath Bun Tea Shoppe in Abbey Green.

and breaking into a rich, buttery, fruity Bath Bun after a Shepherd's Pie made the birds positively sing and the cherry blossoms flower.

It did, however, sit in the tummy. As a bit of a snide aside aimed at a mean aunt, Jane Austen is reported to have said she would make herself an inexpensive guest by "disordering my stomach with Bath buns" in catty reference to their richness. As such, Pei and I were both very grateful that we decided to walk a little more, a practice deemed good for the constitution, like Oliver's true and authentic creation, Bath Olivers. Essentially, flour, butter, yeast, and milk, Bath Olivers are a hard, dry biscuit. It was said the good doctor created it for the benefit of his rheumatic patients. This, we were assured, is a true story.

Bath Olivers make a perfectly neutral, textured foil for pâtés, cheeses and all sorts of soft toppings, lending a satisfying crunch to a flavourful mouthful. In his generosity, and in recognition of his service, Oliver bequeathed his coachman, a Mr Atkins, the recipe along with £100 and 10 sacks of the finest wheat flour. Needless to say, Mr Atkins was industrious and clever enough to make a bundle selling these biccies.

Pei, who is also a street photographer, and I continued to walk along Dorchester Street before taking a left onto Manvers Street while walking past the St John's the Evangelist Catholic Church towards a new bakery called Bertinet's. Richard Bertinet is a French pastry chef who specialises in bread but has been working in Britain since the 1980s. We had to sample the *de rigueur* Bath Buns. Bath Buns are a sweet roll and can be made with a brioche (rich egg, yeast dough) or a milk dough (yeast, milk, flour). They were reputedly created by one Dr William Oliver (although this theory has since been disproved by a local scholar).

Dr Oliver was notably a physician, well known to Bath society and generally

well regarded. Like Ralph Allen, who he was close to, he was born in Cornwall, educated at Cambridge and the University of Leyden. He attached great store to the curative mineral waters of Bath for both drinking and bathing. The popular chef, Jamie Oliver, (no relation to Dr Oliver) has a recipe for it that, by all accounts, is authentic right down to the liquorice-y caraway seeds and the sugar cube shoved into the 'bum' of the bun. Yes, the pun is deliberate.

We meandered our way to Queen Square on a day that was fast becoming glorious. It was one of those days that the British talk about when they first greet someone. Sitting on a park bench with a view of the Beau Nash Obelisk in the Square's centre

“The original recipe of the Sally Lunn Bun is passed down along with the deed to the house, which was built in 1482.”

By all accounts, the recipe passed to James Fortt in the 1950s and is now currently produced by United Biscuits which owns the Jacob's brand – the same one behind the famous cream crackers. The great irony is that William Oliver, a physician, made this intentionally healthy treat for rheumatic sufferers but suffered from gout himself for many a year before his death.

Rudyard Kipling, the author of *The Jungle Book*, references Bath Olivers in his book *Puck of Pook's Hill*, a historical fantasy, where he writes "... the child heroes of the story ... took their supper – hard-boiled eggs, Bath Oliver biscuits, and salt in an envelope – with them." In every reference to Bath Olivers, it sets a scene of Englishness: the stiff upper lip, gentility, scones and crumpets, which they were invariably served with; not to mention the charlady.

The next little, well, maybe not so little, thing is another must-try for the Bath visitor: a Sally Lunn Bun. Now, here's the thing; Sally Lunn wasn't Sally Lunn at all. In fact, it is speculated, that she was a Huguenot refugee by the name of Solange Luyon, who fled France to escape persecution by the French Catholics.



Top: Visitors to Bath will not go wanting where baked goods are concerned. Bottom: Sally Lunn's Historic Eating House draws both locals as well as visitors from all over the world.

The Sally Lunn Bun uses a rich brioche dough and its shape actually calls to mind a chef's hat (not the *toque*) and is almost as large. That is to say the size of a small dinner plate at its largest point. Unlike the Bath Bun, it doesn't have any fruit or filling. It's very light and fluffy, with an almost pale yellow colouring on the inside. It's equally delicious with savoury salt beef as it is with butter and jam.

The original recipe of the Sally Lunn Bun is passed down along with the deed to Sally Lunn's Historic Eating House, which was built in 1482, during the closing years of the Wars of the Roses between two

cadet houses of the Plantagenet dynasty, the Houses of York and Lancaster. By the time Sally Lunn came to occupy the house, the 'Merry Monarch', Charles II, had been back on the throne for a good 20 years. The house itself is acknowledged to be the oldest in Bath. There is even a masonry oven in the basement that dates back to the 12th century.

It seems appropriate that Sally Lunn is immortalised in song by the great duo, Gilbert and Sullivan, in their work, *The Sorcerer*, who sings of "...the gay Sally Lunn! The rollicking, rollicking bun!" ❖



Out and About In The Country

Bath is indeed beautiful. But given the proximity of The Gainsborough Bath Spa to some of England's most picturesque and historical sights, it would be a shame not to spend a day exploring some of these timeless lovelies.

Corsham

The name *Poldark* might not be instantly recognisable to most people living outside of Britain, but the BBC series, which features lots of bodice-ripping and a particularly popular brooding male lead by the name of Aidan Turner, is a big hit indeed, with millions of fans and counting. It is pretty-as-a-picture Corsham, which provided the setting for what was 18th-century Truro in the series. Located at the south-western edge of the Cotswolds, there's plenty to see and do in this historic market town; from touring Corsham Court and its extensive gardens to a leisurely stop at The Flemish Weaver for something with which to fortify the constitution. Corsham is also



referred to in the *Domesday Book* as Cosseham. Those with an interest in heraldry should stop and pay attention to the mythical wyvern, a popular symbol in what was once known as the West Country Kingdom of Wessex, on the façade of the town hall. And, as you wander the high street, nipping in and out of shops, don't be surprised if you see a peacock, and not the proverbial chicken, cross the road. Corsham is particularly famous for its peacock population, which, traditionally, have lived on the grounds of Corsham Court since the time of Elizabeth I (peacocks are also the symbol of the manor house) but may generally be found roaming about freely.

Lacock

Lacock Village might have been popularised of late as a favourite television and film location, but photography enthusiasts would do well to know that Lacock Abbey is, in fact, the birthplace of modern day picture-taking after William Henry Fox Talbot took the very first photographic negative in 1835. If you're spending the day here, make time to discover all the secrets of Lacock Abbey and the history of photography. If you prefer to be behind the camera, then head over to the Abbey garden and grounds where it would be literally blooming in spring. There are paths to traipse down, leading you to, perhaps, the apple orchard or rose garden (June is said to be the best month to catch the blossoms, with the perfume of the flowers hanging heavy in the air), while the Bide Brook stream is a pleasant place to while away a few hours with a snack or a good book. If your youngsters are being stroppy over a day out in the country, cheer them up with tales of Lacock being the setting for



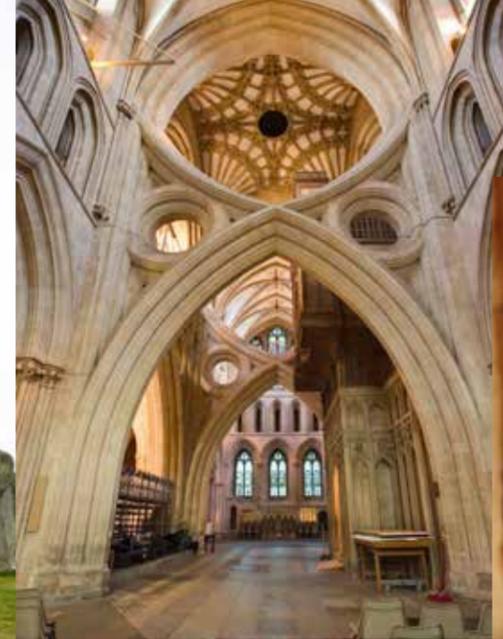
The villages of Lacock and Castle Combe are among the most beautiful in England. Make time to explore Castle Combe's beautiful St Andrew's Church, which dates back to the 13th century. While in Corsham, be sure to watch out for peacocks, which, although technically relegated to the gardens of Corsham Court, tend to wander the entire village.



several of the Harry Potter movies. They might recognise Lacock Abbey's warming room as a classroom in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* or Chapter House, which can be seen in *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*. Such is the Harry Potter connection with Lacock Abbey that it has since been teasingly referred to as 'Harrywood'. Lacock's other brushes with cinematic fame may be seen in the film version of *The Other Boleyn Girl* and the BBC's production of *Pride and Prejudice*. Anyone seen Mr Darcy yet?

Castle Combe

If there's a reason why Castle Combe looks familiar, it's probably because it has been the setting for numerous films, including Steven Spielberg's 2010 movie, *War Horse*. Hollywood glamour aside, Castle Combe is also known as 'the prettiest village in England' and should you be lucky enough to pay it a visit, you'd soon see why. 'Charming' might be a clichéd word but Castle Combe simply oozes it; from the little By Brook which runs through it to the 13th century St Andrew's Church, which houses a rare English medieval clock (still in use) and the tomb of Sir Walter



de Dunstanville, the Baron of Castlecombe, who died in 1270, presumably on crusade. It is of particular interest to point out to younger visitors the absolute lack of television antennas and other signs of modern alteration, including telegraph poles and satellite dishes. There are a few spots for afternoon tea, although it might be a nicer idea to pack along a picnic, to be enjoyed by the By Brook, or perhaps under the shade of the beautiful 14th century market cross in the square, erected when the village was granted the privilege of holding a weekly market.

Avebury

If you have already ticked off magical, mystical Stonehenge from your 'must-see' list and are still hankering for the touch of sacred stones, then a visit to Avebury, just 30km south, is in order. Locals would actually recommend Avebury over Stonehenge, as it is less crowded and more accessible, with visitors being able to get up close to the ancient megaliths themselves. Avebury is also older than Stonehenge and, according to general consensus, more spectacular. Certainly, as you approach the largest known stone ring in the world, you would realise the significance and importance of this complex prehistoric site. Cloaked in mystery, there's certainly no shortage of folklore or legends. One of the most massive megaliths has been given the name, The Devil's Chair, due to the stone's natural seat-like formation. It was said that young women would sit there on Beltane, or the Gaelic May Day festival, to make a wish. It has also been said that the massive rock formations were chosen to depict man and woman, with the rectangles and diamonds representing male and female, respectively.

Stonehenge

With its mystical connections to the fabled druids as well as King Arthur and Merlin, it's no wonder this windswept place in Wiltshire's Salisbury Plain remains as the most important prehistoric monument as well as one of the most visited sites in Britain. Who and why this circle of trilithons – gigantic stones placed upright with a cross lintel on top – was built remains a mystery but scholars, for the most part, have agreed that it is a primitive temple of the sun, aligned to its movements, and built around 4,500 years ago by sophisticated prehistoric people. Come early in the morning or in the late afternoon to avoid the crowds and, if you are in tune with the spirit of the sacred, the summer solstice is, without doubt, the most important time to be here as it is believed to be the longest

day of the year, happening when the tilt of the Earth's axis is inclined most to the sun. Thousands descend upon Stonehenge to witness the sun rise on this date and, in recent years, has taken on an almost festival-like atmosphere.

Wells

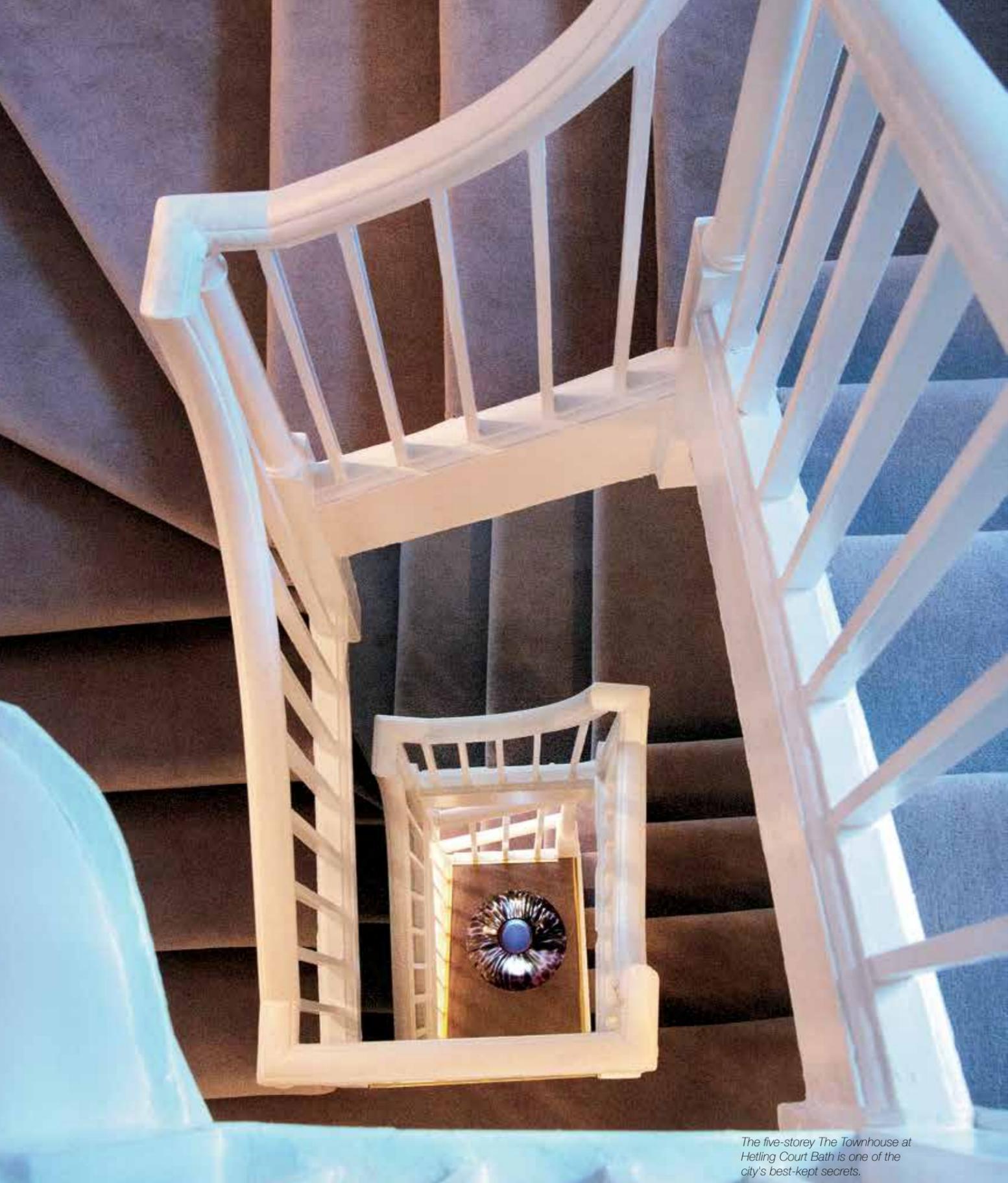
Just as peacocks are synonymous with Corsham, swans are inextricably linked with Wells. For over 800 years, these graceful birds have patrolled the 13th century Bishop's Palace – the official home of the Bishop of Bath and Wells. By law, all swans in England belong to the Crown but the swans of Wells are special. If you wait by the Bishop's Palace moat, fed by the city's ancient springs, look out for the gatehouse bell where the swans have been trained

to ring the bell by the Palace drawbridge if they want to be fed. And although Wells is known as England's 'smallest city', its main place of worship, the Cathedral Church of St Andrew, is a towering gem. Make time to marvel or admire the illustrated bible stories or gasp at the gorgeous Gothic interior as well as wait for the chiming of the famous 623-year-old cathedral clock, which strikes every quarter. It's reputed to be the second oldest clock mechanism still surviving and in use in the world today. Festival days are particularly wonderful to soak up the atmosphere of Wells, with Palm Sunday, the start of the Holy Week, which ends with Easter, being the most colourful and festive, complete with the voices of choristers singing and trumpets sounding from holes carved in between ecclesiastical sculptures. ■



Clockwise, from top left: If you believe in the power of sacred geometry, soak up the mystic vibe of Stonehenge, arguably the UK's most famous prehistoric site, whose origins and purpose continue to baffle and intrigue scholars; the Cathedral Church of St Andrew in Wells is an ecclesiastical gem; the windswept plains of Wiltshire is also home to another precious prehistoric site – Avebury, home to the largest known stone ring in the world as well as massive rock formations that are believed to depict man and woman.

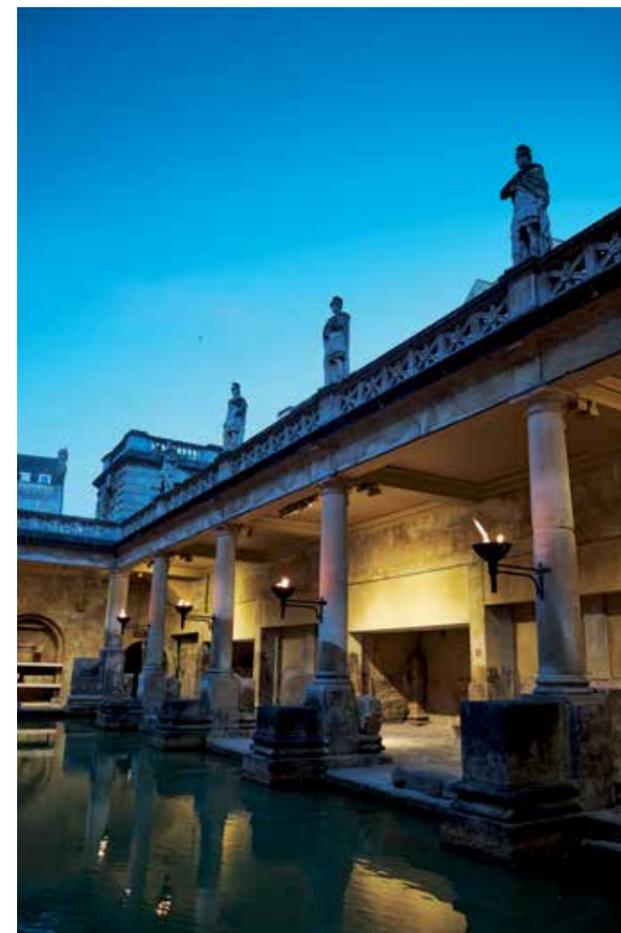




The five-storey The Townhouse at Hetling Court Bath is one of the city's best-kept secrets.

Luxury in the Heart of History

The ancient spa city of Bath has been attracting visitors for more than two millennia, drawn by its healing thermal waters and history. One of its best-kept secrets, The Townhouse at Hetling Court Bath, offers unparalleled access to both and to really know what it's like living within so much history.



It's a late spring evening, the sky finally darkening, and I'm exploring the myriad pleasures of The Canary Gin & Wine Bar in Bath. Located on Queen Street, the bar – home to its own Bath Gin even as its shelves groan with more than 130 brands of gin from around the world – is one of the new discoveries I stumbled into while exploring the city of Bath's historic heart.

If Bath doesn't exactly sprawl in the way that, say, London (a mere 90-minute train ride away) does, its centre is positively tiny, effortlessly accessible on foot, but packed with a historical significance that belies its size. Not for nothing is Bath a UNESCO World Heritage Site: just around the corner from The Canary is the Guildhall, which dates back to the late 18th century. Across the street, literally, is the imposing Bath Abbey. While the present-day building was started in 1499, the site has been a place of worship since Anglo-Saxon times.

Directly in front of the abbey is an even older attraction – the Roman Baths, which first began construction around 60-70AD on a site that once held a Celtic shrine from the 8th century BC, dedicated to the goddess Sulis (hence Aquae Sulis, or the waters of Sulis, the Roman name for Bath). One of the more interesting exhibits in the Roman Baths is the Beau Street Hoard, a collection of more than 17,000 silver Roman coins, spanning the period from 32BC to 274AD, that were discovered during the construction of The Gainsborough Bath Spa.

Built on a Celtic shrine that dates back to the 8th century BC, the Roman Baths is one of the city's most popular tourist attractions.



“At The Townhouse at Hetling Court Bath, time is at a standstill. On the other side of the door, history and the centuries swirl, waiting your discovery.”

Clockwise from top: The Master Suite's copper bath in front of the imposing fireplace; the large orange sofas in the Drawing Room offer cosy comfort; the Master Suite is decorated in teal, silver and grey accents; the kitchen in The Townhouse at Hetling Court Bath, with a pink Smeg refrigerator for a touch of colour.



The just-opened The Gainsborough Bath Spa is the latest addition to the YTL Classic Hotels portfolio and its Georgian façade will enclose the UK's only natural thermal spa within a hotel. It is right next door to the publicly accessible Thermae Bath Spa (a YTL wellness operation), which is a quick stroll from the Roman Baths. A few cobblestone steps away is another YTL gem and one of the city's best-kept secrets – the luxurious The Townhouse at Hetling Court Bath. This gorgeous property is part of Hetling House, formerly known as Abbey Church House, and is probably the city's last surviving Elizabethan building.

While parts of it date back to the late 16th century, the five-storey The Townhouse at Hetling Court Bath is anything but antique. The sumptuous interiors were designed by Peter Higgins of Bath-based Eton Design, who was also responsible for the refurbishment of the MUSE Bray Cottages in Berkshire, England. The discreet front door opens into a soothing garden room that also includes a large



glass table with cushion chairs for meetings or informal meals. Further back, through a short passage, is the thoroughly fitted out kitchen, with a marble top breakfast bar for two. Standing out, incongruously, from all the modern amenities is a pink Smeg refrigerator, filled with tempting goodies that the house manager, has personally selected, including pastries, confectioneries, cheeses and wines.

One floor up the thickly carpeted stairs is the Drawing Room, dominated by a pair of plush orange sofas – too large to fit through the doorway, they were actually put together in the room itself – and a velvet ottoman. A small library, music system and Bang & Olufsen flatscreen see to your leisurely pursuits, while a well-curated drinks tray add to the relaxing ambience.

The capacious Master Suite, on the third level, features an enticing copper freestanding bath, thoughtfully placed before the imposing fireplace. A king-sized canopied bed, with 18-inch mattress, silk bed linen and sumptuous pillows, ensures a snug night in among the room's pale teal, silver and grey accents.



While the bath easily fits two, an adjoining bathroom, with walk-in shower and twin vanities, is just steps away. While The Townhouse at Hetling Court Bath is the perfectly private escape for two, there's more than enough space for five. Apart from a single room on the fourth floor, the Queen Bedroom on the top level is a colourfully decorated self-contained suite, with a large double bed, fireplace and enclosed shower amidst the pretty cream, pink and lilac hues .

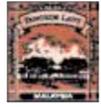
It will take more than a night's stay to fully appreciate the full details – I took particular delight in the ribbed fabric pig doorstops – of the luxurious sanctuary that is The Townhouse at Hetling Court Bath. Yet, it is its location, within the busiest part of the city, that appeals most. As night falls, a tranquil hush descends and, apart from the occasional footsteps or subdued murmurs outside, there is nothing to interrupt your quiet enjoyment of the house. As you enjoy a glass of wine while watching the television or curl up in bed with a book, it's truly impossible to believe that you are in the heart of Bath. Here, within The Townhouse at Hetling Court Bath, time is at a standstill. On the other side of the door, history and the centuries swirl, waiting your discovery. ■



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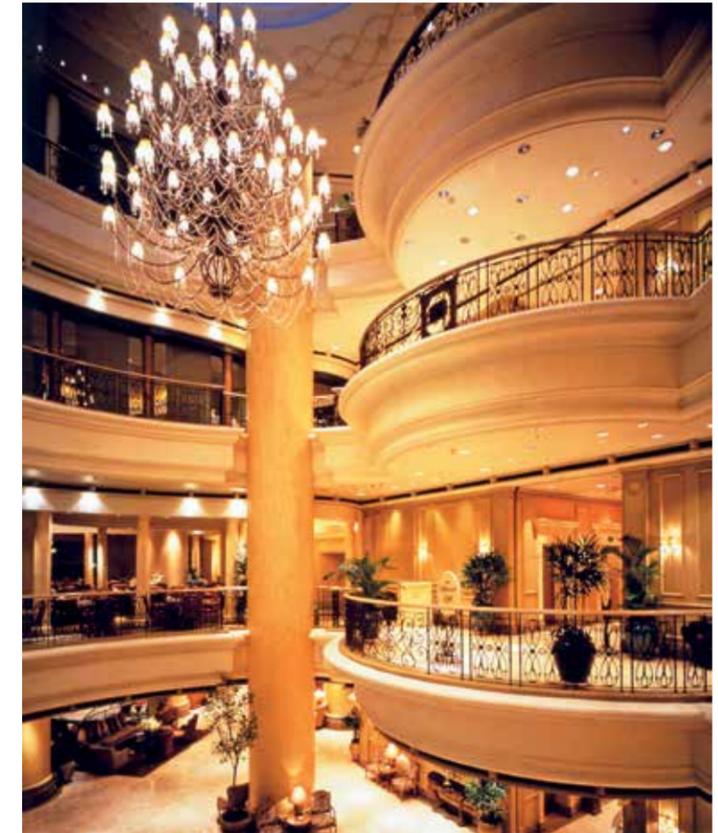
EMBODYING THE ESSENCE OF MALAY CULTURE AND TRADITION, TANJONG JARA RESORT ON THE EAST COAST OF PENINSULAR MALAYSIA OFFERS THE PERFECT EXPERIENCE OF MALAY HOSPITALITY. FRONTED BY THE SOUTH CHINA SEA AND SURROUNDED BY THE LUSH GREEN BEAUTY OF THE LOCAL COUNTRYSIDE, TANJONG JARA OFFERS YOU AN EXPERIENCE OF MALAYSIA LIKE NO OTHER.
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THIS UNIQUE HILL STATION COMBINES ALL THE SPLENDOR, ROMANCE AND NOSTALGIA OF THE AREA'S GRAND COLONIAL HERITAGE WHILE THE RESORT, WITH ITS LUXURIOUS ROOMS AND AWARD-WINNING SPA VILLAGE, REMAINS THE BEST PLACE TO EXPERIENCE IT ALL, FROM VERDANT HILLS, TEA PLANTATIONS, ROSE GARDENS AND STRAWBERRY PATCHES.
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FULLY RESTORED TO ITS FORMER GLORY, THIS ELEGANT PROPERTY THAT DATES BACK TO THE 1930S, IS AN ART DECO MONUMENT THAT BLENDS HISTORY WITH WORLD-CLASS HOSPITALITY. DINING OPTIONS INCLUDE HAINANESE FAVOURITES AT THE COLONIAL CAFÉ OR AN INTERACTIVE DINING EXPERIENCE AT CONTANGO, WHILE THE ROOMS ARE A BLEND OF CONTEMPORARY STYLE AND OLD WORLD ELEGANCE. WWW.MAJESTICKL.COM

REGARDED AS THE CRADLE OF MALAYSIAN HISTORY, EXPLORING MALACCA IS LIKE STEPPING BACK IN TIME, WHEN THE PORT-CITY USED TO WELCOME SPICE TRADERS, SULTANS AND WARRIORS FROM BYGONE DAYS. SOAK UP ALL THE MAGIC AT THE MAJESTIC MALACCA, ONE OF THE CITY'S FINEST HOTELS WHOSE STRUCTURE DATES BACK TO THE 1920S AND WHOSE INTERIORS ARE A REFLECTION OF THE CITY'S FINE PAST. WWW.MAJESTICMALACCA.COM

ITS NAME ALREADY CONJURES UP IMAGES OF OLD WORLD ELEGANCE AND OPULENCE. LOCATED IN KUALA LUMPUR'S DOWNTOWN GOLDEN TRIANGLE BUSINESS DISTRICT, THIS LUXURY HOTEL IS CONVENIENTLY LOCATED TO UPSCALE SHOPPING, DINING AND ENTERTAINMENT. IT ALSO BOASTS OF ITS OWN AWARD-WINNING SPA WHILE GOURMETS WOULD BE HARD-PRESSED TO FIND BETTER CANTONESE CUISINE THAN AT LI YEN, ITS FINE DINING CHINESE RESTAURANT. WWW.YTLHOTELS.COM

LOCATED RIGHT ALONG BUKIT BINTANG ROAD IN THE HEART OF KUALA LUMPUR, THE JW MARRIOTT IS IDEAL FOR ALL TRAVELLERS. FROM BUSY EXECUTIVES TO FAMILIES WISHING TO SOAK UP THE CITY'S SIGHTS, SOUNDS AND WORLD-CLASS SHOPPING, THIS WELL-PLACED HOTEL WITH ITS EXTENSIVE RANGE OF FACILITIES IS UNDOUBTEDLY THE PERFECT CHOICE. WWW.YTLHOTELS.COM

NV Niseko Village
Always in Season

KASARA
NISEKO VILLAGE
TOWNHOUSE



THE HEART OF THE VILLAGE IS NISEKO VILLAGE'S MAIN PULSE WHERE PAVED INTIMATE WALKWAYS ARE FLANKED BY CONTEMPORARY SHOPPING AND DINING CONCEPTS. JUST MOMENTS FROM NISEKO VILLAGE'S AWARD-WINNING HOTELS, RESIDENCES AND LIFTS, ITS SLOPESIDE LOCATION ALLOWS FOR A SEAMLESS SKI-IN, SKI-OUT ACCESS BETWEEN MOUNTAIN ADVENTURES AND INDOOR DIVERSIONS. THE MODERN AND THE TRADITIONAL ARE INTERWOVEN TO EVOKE A GENTEEL LIFESTYLE AT THE VILLAGE WITH ITS AUTHENTIC JAPANESE MACHIYA ARCHITECTURAL SETTING. APRÈS-SKI IS EXCITINGLY REDEFINED AT NISEKO VILLAGE.
WWW.NISEKO-VILLAGE.COM

SITUATED AT THE BASE OF MOUNT NISEKO ANNUPURI, KASARA NISEKO VILLAGE TOWNHOUSE OCCUPIES A UNIQUE POSITION AT THE HEART OF NISEKO VILLAGE. EIGHT EXCLUSIVE 3-BEDROOM TOWNHOUSES MARK THE FIRST HIGHLY ANTICIPATED PHASE OF YTL HOTELS' REDEFINITION OF ALPINE LIVING AT NISEKO VILLAGE WITH SKI RUNS AND LIFTS A MERE HEARTBEAT AWAY. EMBODYING AUTHENTIC JAPANESE CHARM WITH CONTEMPORARY ELEGANCE AND SENSITIVITY TOWARDS NATURE, THE DWELLINGS ARE AN ODE TO JAPAN'S HERITAGE TOWNHOUSES THAT WERE INHABITED BY CRAFTSMEN AND WEALTHY MERCHANTS TOWARD THE END OF THE EDO PERIOD.
WWW.KASARA.COM



SET AT THE FOOT OF MOUNT NISEKO ANNUPURI, THE HILTON NISEKO VILLAGE OFFERS YEAR-ROUND ACTIVITIES, FROM SKIING DURING THE WINTER SEASON TO A HOST OF WHOLESOME, FAMILY-FRIENDLY ACTIVITIES DURING SUMMER. THERE ARE ALSO TWO 18-HOLE CHAMPIONSHIP GOLF COURSES, A TENNIS COMPLEX AN EQUESTRIAN CENTRE AND A NATURE-BASED ACTIVITY CENTRE.
WWW.HILTONNISEKOVILLAGE.JP

THE
GREEN *gb* LEAF
Niseko Village



LOCATED IN THE HEART OF NISEKO VILLAGE IN HOKKAIDO, JAPAN, THIS PREMIUM CONTEMPORARY RESORT OFFERS GUESTS A SEAMLESS EXPERIENCE OF STAY, SNOW AND SKI. GOSHIKI OFFERS A WIDE RANGE OF FLAVOURS TO SUIT EVERY PALATE WHILE APRÈS-SKI DRINKS ARE BEST ENJOYED AT THE CONTEMPORARY TOMIOKA WHITE LOUNGE.
WWW.THEGREENLEAFHOTEL.COM



THE SURIN
PHUKET



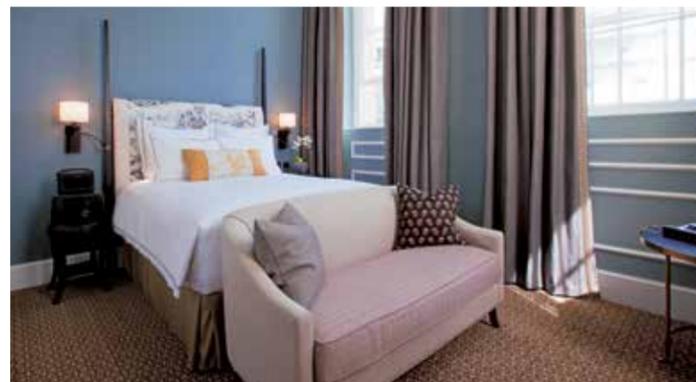
SITUATED ON PANSEA BEACH, WITHOUT DOUBT ONE OF PHUKET'S LOVELIEST AND MOST PRIVATE, THE SURIN OFFERS A PERFECT SLICE OF THAI BEACH LIFE. CHARMING COTTAGES AND SUITES ARE ALL DISCREETLY BUILT INTO A CAREFULLY CONSERVED LANDSCAPE AMIDST COCONUT TREES. FROM SUMPTUOUS CUISINE TO WATERSPORTS, A WORLD-CLASS SPA AND SPECTACULAR SUNSETS, IT COMBINES IDYLIC TROPICAL CHARM WITH ALL THE WARMTH AND GRACE OF THAI HOSPITALITY.
WWW.THESURINPHUKET.COM



BLACK VOLCANIC SAND, MAJESTIC MOUNT AGUNG, THE DEEP BLUE OF THE INDIAN OCEAN AND THE MYSTICAL BALINESE WAY OF LIFE ALL COME TOGETHER IN STYLE AT THE SPA VILLAGE RESORT TEMBOK, BALI. SET IN THE NORTH OF THE ISLAND, IT IS A PLACE OF ENCHANTING PEACEFULNESS AND A HAVEN OF WELLNESS, WHERE GUESTS CAN ENJOY ALL THE BENEFITS AND PLEASURES OF SPA LIFE IN TRANQUIL, SPIRITUAL SURROUNDINGS.
WWW.SPAVILLAGERESORT.COM/TEMBOKBALI



THE
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BATH SPA



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WWW.THEGAINSBOROUGHBATHSPA.CO.UK



GUESTS WHO WISH TO ENJOY A MORE SPACIOUS STAY WHILE EXPLORING THE HISTORICAL SOUL OF BATH WOULD DO WELL TO CONSIDER THE ELIZABETHAN CHARMS OF THE MUSE TOWNHOUSES. SPREAD OUT OVER FIVE LEVELS, EACH WITH ITS OWN INDIVIDUAL CHARACTER, THE MUSE TOWNHOUSES COMBINE SPACIOUSNESS, MODERN COMFORT AND QUIET ELEGANCE ALL WITHIN THE HEART OF THIS FINE ANCIENT ROMAN SPA TOWN.

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MUSE BRAY COTTAGES ARE SITUATED IN THE HEART OF THE PICTURESQUE VILLAGE OF BRAY-ON-THAMES, BERKSHIRE, ENGLAND. THE RENOVATED PERIOD PROPERTIES CONSIST OF BRAY HOUSE, ORIGINALLY THE STABLES FOR THE NEARBY MANOR HOUSE OF BRAY IN THE 1780'S. DORMER COTTAGE IS A PARTICULARLY QUIANT AND BEAUTIFUL 500 YEAR OLD COTTAGE WHILE LAVENDER HOUSE IS ONE OF THE MOST STUNNING HOUSES IN THIS BEAUTIFUL 14TH CENTURY VILLAGE.

WWW.MUSE-HOTELS.COM



SPA VILLAGE PANGKOR LAUT



SPA VILLAGE CAMERON HIGHLANDS



SPA VILLAGE MALACCA



SPA VILLAGE GAYA ISLAND

A GLAMOROUS YET PRIVATE HIDEAWAY IN STUNNING SAINT TROPEZ, LIVING THE SOUTH OF FRANCE LIFESTYLE DOESN'T GET BETTER THAN AT THE MUSE SAINT TROPEZ. LOCATED IN RAMATUELLE AND SURROUNDED BY FORESTS OF UMBRELLA PINES, THIS BIJOU PROPERTY BOASTS JUST 15 SUITES, EACH NAMED AFTER FAMOUS 'MUSES'. MAKE IT YOUR BASE TO EXPLORE ALL THE SIGHTS, SOUNDS AND DELIGHTS OF THIS JEWEL OF THE RIVIERA.

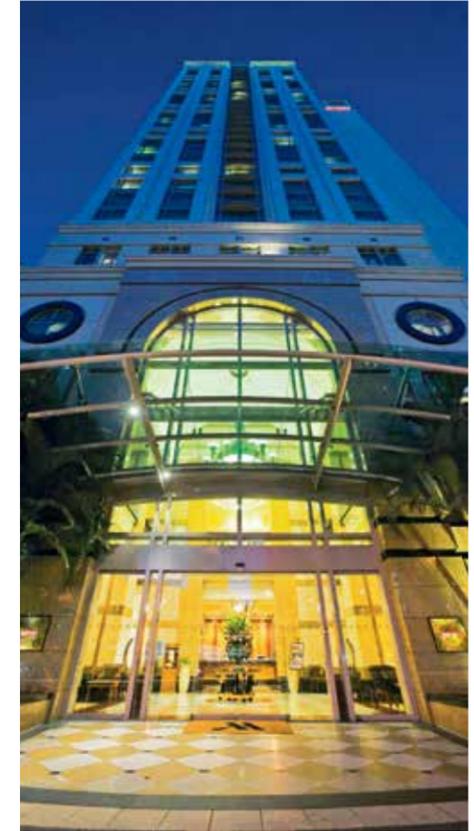
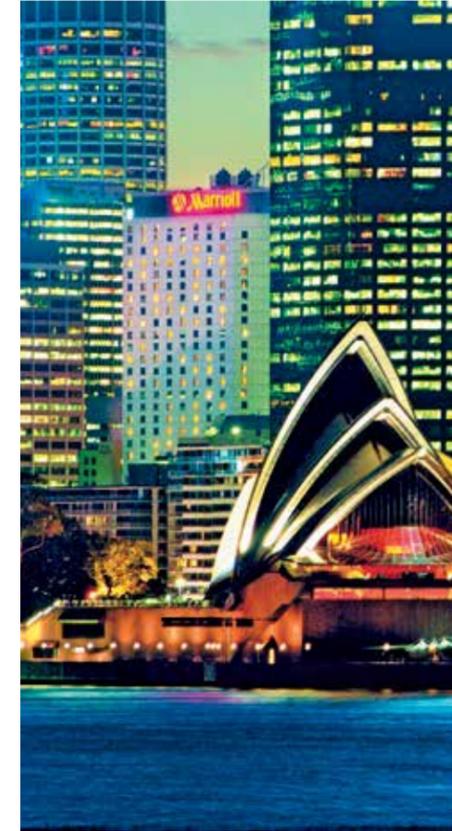
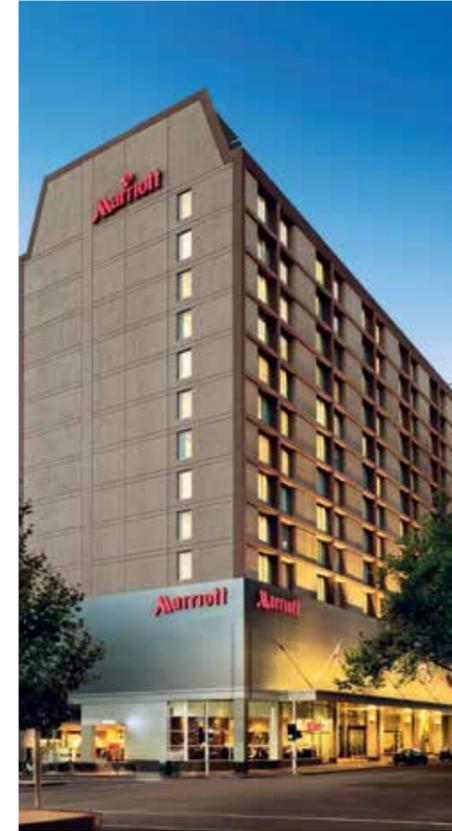
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TWO GORGEOUS AND LUXURIOUS VILLAS, WITH 9 AND 6 BEDROOMS RESPECTIVELY, OFFER COUNTRYSIDE LIVING, TRANQUILITY AND PEACE AS WELL AS THE SECURITY OF AN EXCLUSIVE RESIDENTIAL ESTATE, YET REMAIN IN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO ALL TYPES OF AMENITIES AND ARE IDEAL FOR EXPLORING THE FAMOUS COSTA DEL SOL.

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THE SPA VILLAGES HONOUR THE HEALING CULTURE OF THE REGION IN WHICH EACH IS BUILT. EACH SPA VILLAGE HAS ITS OWN CHARACTER AND AUTHENTICITY, WORKING WITH LOCAL HEALERS AND TRADITIONS.

WWW.SPAVILLAGE.COM



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CHOICE IS THE KEY WORD WHEN IT COMES TO DINING AT SHOOK KL AND LOT 10 HUTONG. THE FORMER OFFERS FOUR CUISINES FROM FOUR LIVE KITCHENS, INCLUDING ITALIAN, JAPANESE, CHINESE AND THE GRILL, WHILE THE LATTER IS THE DE FACTO DESTINATION WHEN IT COMES TO ENJOYING THE BEST OF MALAYSIAN STREET FOOD UNDER ONE WELL-FORMED ROOF. WWW.STARHILLGALLERY.COM WWW.LOT10HUTONG.COM

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