

# BEAST

ISSUE 10  
£4

## ARTISTS IN RESIDENCE

People  
Buildings  
Places





PHOTOGRAPHY BY PETER LANDERS

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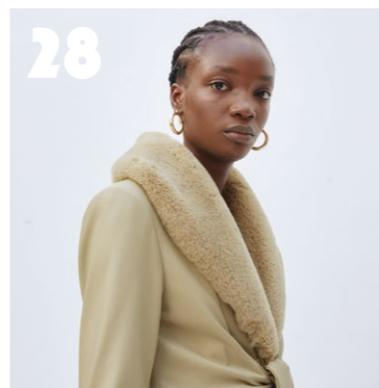
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BEAST magazine is brought to you by Publisher & Creative Director **Nicky Acketts** Executive Director **Helen Samuel** Editor **Lara Mills** Editor-at-large **Emma Winterschladen** Sub Editor **Morwenna Lawson** Features **Chantelle Pattermore, Sylvie Wilkinson, Leonie Helm, Becca Billis** Contributors **Jean Egbunike, Gemma Wardle, Joe Morel** Press [press@beastmag.co.uk](mailto:press@beastmag.co.uk) To advertise contact [helen@beastmag.co.uk](mailto:helen@beastmag.co.uk)

**ON THE COVER** Chris Dyson, Isabella Dyson, Gilbert & George. Photography **Jamal Thomas** @whyjamal.  
Shot on location at **Chris Dyson Architects, 1 Fashion Street, London E1.**

Beast magazine makes every effort to ensure the information contained in the magazine is correct. We cannot accept responsibility for omissions or errors. Opinions expressed in the content are strictly those of the authors.

# DILLY DALI DAYS

We can all luckily still enjoy the constantly changing open-air exhibition that is East London's street art – a surefire way to brighten our daily walks around town. Head to Commercial Street, E1, to soak up some of @zabouartist's latest work.



# OUT THERE

Eyes wide open and ears to the ground



## Sundae School

Life may be throwing us curveballs left, right and centre, but that's surely all the more reason to eat cake (and ice cream) Happy Endings are providing some fun amongst the chaos, serving up epic takeaway desserts every Sunday, from Arch 437, just a 10-minute walk from Mile End station. Pay a visit to the production kitchen, where you can expect the likes of Ms Whippy soft serve ice cream, hot chocolate, popcorn custard tart, choc chip cookies, and their fancy HOT self-saucing chocolate pudding, along with their regular Ice Cream Sammies Pick 'n' Mix. Look out each week as they'll be mixing things up – you can find the full menu released each Friday on their Insta stories.

**Arch 437 Burdett Road E3 4JS**  
**Every Sunday until mid December, 12-4pm**  
[happyendingsldn.com](http://happyendingsldn.com) @happyendings

## East London Rocks

A heart-warming film, *Rocks*, is about the resilience, joy and spirit of girlhood. Rocks, the film's teenage protagonist, has big dreams for the future, loyal fun friends and an adoring though mischievous little brother Emmanuel. Rocks enjoys school (as much as any teenager does) and lives a full vibrant life in East London with her team of London-centric female best friends. Her world is turned upside down when she returns from school to find her mum gone. Determined to stick with her brother and avoid being taken into care against all odds, Rocks leaves her home and hides in pockets of East London with various degrees of success. Poignant, heart-breaking and uplifting all at the same time; one not to be missed this Lockdown! **On Netflix now.** @altitudefilmUK



WORDS: LARA MILLS, JEAN EGBUNIKE



**HAPPY ENDINGS**  
Serving up epic  
takeaway desserts  
at Sundae School,  
Mile End



## PASTA MASTER

It's hardly an exaggeration to say pasta has been one of the year's most coveted products. With the shelves stripped bare of the stuff, has there ever been a better time to master the art of making your own fresh pasta? Throughout December Gaia Enria, founder of the Shoreditch pastificio **Burro e Salvia** is hosting a series of festive 'filled' workshops teaching its history, followed by a step-by-step lesson on making fresh cardinali pasta, filled with Gorgonzola and pear. Each workshop includes a festive welcome drink and all of your handmade pasta; the session is £60pp, will last 1½ hours and will strictly adhere to social distancing. Count us in!

52 Redchurch Street, Shoreditch E2 7DP  
[burroesalvia.co.uk/workshopsvouchers](http://burroesalvia.co.uk/workshopsvouchers)

## ESSENTIAL SHOPPING

We're all about sustainability and independent businesses – and we're in luck, thanks to **CRATE Brewery and Silo**, who've launched a new sustainable produce and retail market in Hackney Wick's **The White Building**. Already home to **CRATE Brewery**, the building now welcomes an abundance of artisanal producers and pioneers to showcase their sustainable offerings. From refillable household goods supplied by **Fill Refill** to sustainable ceramics and pandemic cleaning essentials. The White Building Market is perfect for rainy days and weekend ambling, even during lockdown. Check it out everyday from 10am-9pm.

**The White Building,**  
 Unit 7, Queen's Yard,  
 43 White Post Lane E9 5EN  
[cratebrewery.com](http://cratebrewery.com)  
 @cratebrewery

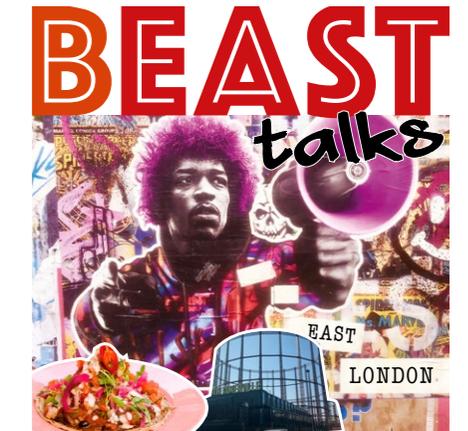
Walthamstow-based **Dr Zoë Broughton** launched **Make and Create17** after feeling frustrated by the lack of mental health resources available available within the NHS. Selling handmade jewellery (designed as tangible pieces of emotional support), 'neurotransmitter-inspired candles (we LOVE the oxytocin one), and mindful craft kits (including make-your-own crackers), each product is made with mental wellbeing and creativity in mind. Necklaces start at £20, @makeandcreatee17, [makeandcreatee17.com](http://makeandcreatee17.com)



The Royal Docks' cultural programme, **Join the Docks** returns with a spectacular virtual lineup of 20 original works including film, photography, heritage projects, light installations and community archiving. Perfect for art and culture lovers, those wanting to explore the area's history or families looking for some local entertainment, **Join the Docks** can be streamed online throughout November and December. [royaldocks.london/jointhedocks](http://royaldocks.london/jointhedocks)

## ART FOR YOUR HEART

There's never been a better time to fill our walls with art to lift and inspire us. Enter **The Hungry Heart Club** – the newly launched print shop of our very own Editor-at-large Emma Winterschladen. You'll find a selection of affordable art prints, from Marmite to mental health, nudes in nature to line art, all illustrated and signed by Emma in East London, and sustainably printed in the UK. Mounting and printing is available on request – perfect for a ready-to-hang gift – to yourself, or a loved one. 'Held' print (above), available in A5, A4 and A3, from £25. [thehungryheartclub.etsy.com](http://thehungryheartclub.etsy.com)



Listen out for the first series of our new podcast, **BEAST Talks**, launching in the new year. Featuring conversations with people who live, work and play in East London, guests will include broadcaster **Vick Hope**, actor and musician **Shruti Haasan** and local artist **Stephen Anthony Davids**. Follow us on Instagram @[beastmag\\_london](https://www.instagram.com/beastmag_london) to stay up to date on our launch.

GET 10% OFF  
 Pillars online shop with discount code: **BEAST10**

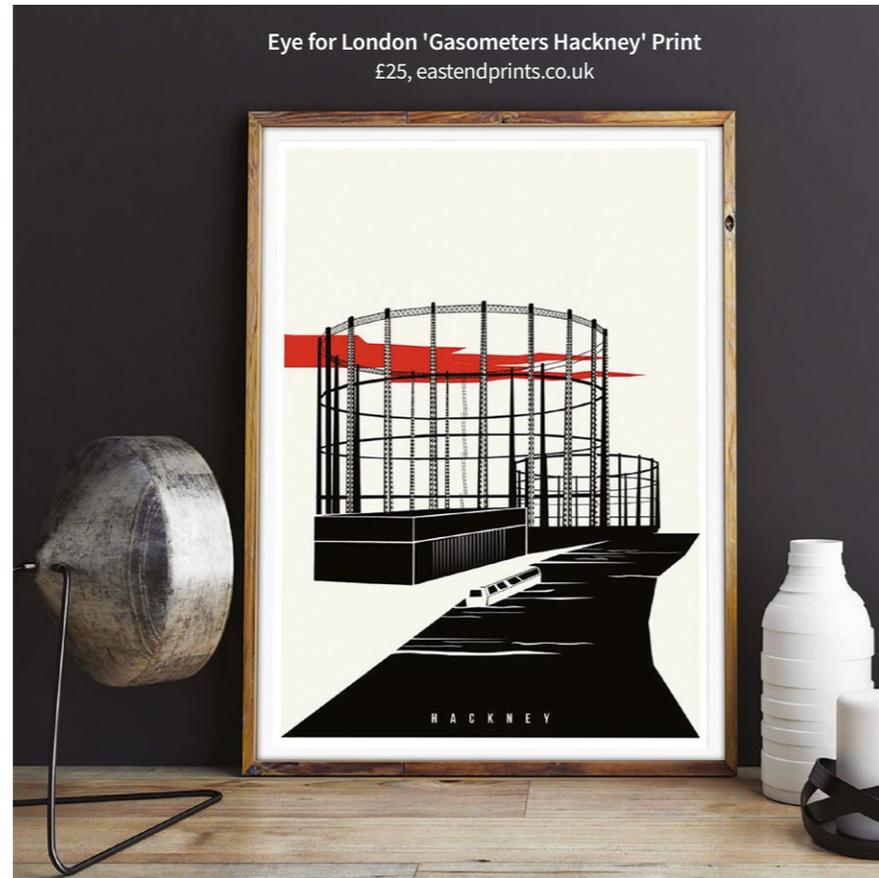
## THE HOME OF LAGER

As we head into a long winter and another lockdown, there are many obstacles in the way of a decent pint! Fortunately, Walthamstow-based **Pillars Brewery** have pledged to bring the pub to you. Pillars are a specialist craft lager brewery – the first of their kind in London. Fresh from a rebrand, the family-run business are offering free same-day delivery within their local delivery area, so you can have quality lager on your doorstep whenever the thirst hits you. From their shiny new bottles, to fresh draught lager and a selection of world beers, there's a lager for everybody at Pillars. [pillarsbrewery.com](http://pillarsbrewery.com) @pillarsbrewery





Another Year Wiser facial oil  
£28, neighbourhoodbotanicals.com



Eye for London 'Gasometers Hackney' Print  
£25, eastendprints.co.uk



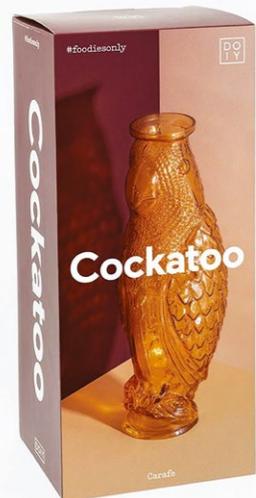
NIWA Design's Hydro herb kit  
£20, fourstore.co.uk



Santa 2020  
£16, wagreen.co.uk



Perky Blenders Christmas Blend  
£7.50 per 250g, perkyblenders.com



Cockatoo Carafe  
£33, aidashoreditch.co.uk

Apricot Jam with Jamaica Rum  
£8, labourandwait.co.uk



Colombia Road soap, £10, soapsmith.com

# THE JOY OF GIVING

Shop small and local this Christmas with our pick of East London's festive goodies



East London Gin, 40% ABV  
£21.50, eastlondonliquorcompany.com



The Art of Instruction postcards  
£17.99, easternbiological.co.uk



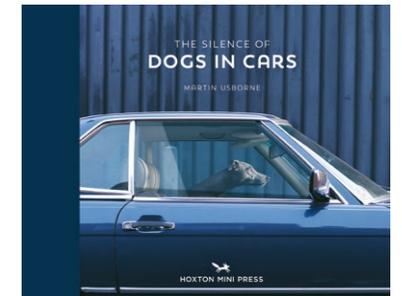
London Willow side plate  
£24, lunaandcurious.com



Mini Acid Smiley set  
£33.00, wagreen.co.uk



Fir Tree, Orange Oil & Mulling Spices winter candle  
£16 - £24, boucle.uk



The Silence Of Dogs In Cars  
£12.96, hoxtonminipress.com



Anden Valet II  
£89, madebyanden.co.uk

# HOME

## is where the art is

For Spitalfields-based architect Chris Dyson, design is far more than just bricks and mortar: it's an opportunity to develop and enhance a sense of community

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAMAL THOMAS

It's not often that residents are fortunate enough to see their local landscape develop and evolve in keeping with community spirit and character. But most neighbourhoods don't have a Chris Dyson in their midst.

An award-winning architect, Dyson has lived in East London for almost 30 years and in Spitalfields – where he currently resides with his wife, Sarah and daughter, artist Isabella. While his firm does take on projects further afield (such as current ventures in Italy), much of his work is located closer to home – where he can both give back to and collaborate with those who supported him from the start.

Dyson founded his practice 16 years ago, following highly successful tenures as an associate at Michael Wilford & Partners, and design director at Sir Terry Farrell's studio in London. "I felt I needed to take the plunge and set up on my own rather than work for other people," he recalls. "I had really good contacts here in the East End, Spitalfields in particular, who were really supportive and came forward with projects for me to take on."

However, being just a stone's throw away these new undertakings did lead to a few issues. "I was literally walking out of my door... to projects on my doorstep," says Dyson. "It was great, but it had its downside, as clients could just come and knock at any time." Although out-of-hours-calls are (fortunately) now a thing of the past, the local network remains a key aspect of his business.

"Growing up as a practice in the neighbourhood, being surrounded by an artistic community has been very interesting, and continues to be," he muses. "We like to collaborate with local artists whenever we can, amongst them Martin Richman, Mona Hatoum, Alexander Belashenko, Jock McFadyen RA, Richard Wilson RA and Polly Morgan. So it might be artworks hung inside a private home, or a decorative feature on a building. All these things that give each project its character." ■■■▶

INTERVIEW: NICKY ACKETTS. WORDS: CHANTELE PATTENMORE





PHOTOGRAPHY BY PETER LANDERS

However, as a Spitalfields resident, Dyson's connection to the area extends much further than just professional interest – and his passion and pride for the neighbourhood and the people in it is evident.

“It's a fantastic area and, having neighbours that stick around, there's not a great deal of churn,” he smiles. “Some parts of London you get the feeling you might not see the same people twice. It's a great asset for the area and has built up a great sense of community.”

### Scaling up

As Dyson's practice has grown (“It was just me and one student to begin with, working from the top of a house in Spitalfields. By year 10 we were up to 20 people.”), so too has the scope of his projects. While the team has completed almost 30 houses

in the vicinity since 2003, their current ventures offer greater opportunities for real creativity.

One such project is Goodsyard in Shoreditch. “There, we're faithfully restoring the buildings, along with building new modern housing behind. It's a challenging site in the sense that it's got railways underneath it and secret tunnels,” Dyson states. “The project has been 10 years in the making and we go to the mayor in December for him to make the final decision on the scheme.”

Does he ever lose patience with projects that take years to come to fruition? “I'm not known for my patience, my family will tell you – but how I deal with that is to have lots of plates spinning and projects that keep me stimulated and financially viable,” he reflects. “I do get a kick out of seeing something finished and moving on.”



Close to home,  
project Albion Drive



Eleven Spitalfields: home to Chris, wife, Sarah and art studio to daughter, Isabella



Chris and Isabella outside the practice, just a minutes walk from home



A current project, Tenter Ground, formerly owned by artist Tracey Emin



His team is also working on developing Tenter Ground, a Spitalfields-based site formerly owned by Tracey Emin. The new owners plan on transforming the space into a home for themselves and their three children, as well as a gallery. "It's surrounded by bland office buildings and not very good architecture," Dyson says. "We see that as a foil to do something more interesting."

Plus, an upcoming project in Bell Lane, near Emin's studio, is set to further enrich the neighbourhood. "It's in an old cycle shop called Cycle Surgery, and it will be the new headquarters for a psychotherapy group," he reveals, adding that it will incorporate a book shop, café and space for mental health conferences.

But, even when their imaginations run wild, Dyson and co. always keep the community's interests at heart. "It's all about context: what's the context of the building and its connection with its neighbourhood," he notes. "The thing about architecture is that it's not just about buildings. It's about town planning, and the street space, and the argument for certain projects because they are very important."

Aside from corporate ventures, Dyson has dedicated much time to civic and conservation projects, something he describes as 'rewarding' and which has earned him plenty of professional esteem. "We've been shortlisted for restoring the concert platform at Crystal Palace Park that was designed by another East London architect, Ian Ritchie," he says. "I see restoring old buildings as an equally important thing to do, along with developing new buildings. You can learn great things from other buildings and architects."

**'IT'S ALL ABOUT CONTEXT: WHAT'S THE CONTEXT OF THE BUILDING AND ITS CONNECTION WITH ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD'**

**Creation in the time of Covid**

Dyson's office space can be found on the corner of Fashion Street and Commercial Street in an old pub built in 1825, that has been fully converted to suit modern requirements. "We have four floors and the old bank vault that still has the original bank safe, along with a roof terrace that's great in good weather."

The building is rented from Dyson's neighbour Jack Fattal, "a lovely East End textile trader who has managed to keep all his property in the family. We've had a lasting client/architect relationship and, while I was digging out my old studio and looking for somewhere to move to, the building came up in

Fashion Street. We've renovated it around our ears from being a white painted brick building with awful windows into what it is now. Jack loves it, and we love it, too."

However, the start of the pandemic earlier this year forced his close-knit team members to temporarily relocate from the long-standing HQ to their own homes – something that Dyson says proved difficult.

"What I find rewarding about an architectural practice is sharing ideas – and that's not been easy to keep going. Through Covid it's been a huge challenge to communicate as a creative business. You can make a model at home and show it on screen, but it's not the same as being in the office and having people around the table, making comments ad hoc. You need the spontaneity that isn't there when you make a Zoom call."

Fortunately, the spacious nature of the building meant that, once lockdown restrictions eased, his staff were able to return to the office and implement social distancing.

But it's not only in the short-term that Dyson believes the pandemic will have impacted his business and the industry overall. "Architectural response to the current climate is quite interesting –

questioning the way we're spending more and more time working from home and local environments," he says. "It might not be the last pandemic we have in the next 10 years, so we need to look forward and deal with it now. Buildings are an investment, and you don't make any decision lightly. There probably won't be as much demand for new builds, but I do think the city will bounce back and could be amazing."

The past nine months have undoubtedly been difficult for all, but Dyson's motivated and upbeat nature means he has still been able to find positives during this tumultuous period – particularly with regards to the all-important local community. ■◆



**‘ALL THESE THINGS ARE A PASSION AND LEAD YOU TO DISCOVER OTHER THINGS IN LIFE – LONG MAY THAT BE’**

For starters, he and his neighbours have “had an amazing WhatsApp group, about 80 of us, who have been supportive and helpful.” Two of these neighbours – Turner Prize-winning artistic duo Gilbert & George – chime in to share how local community members have gone the extra mile. “For 50 years we’ve eaten out, as we didn’t have a kitchen,” reveals Gilbert. “But since the pandemic we eat at home, ham sandwiches mostly, delivered with a newspaper and milk by our assistant every morning. And our neighbours have been very kind in delivering meals.” Adds George with a smile: “I haven’t kissed a waiter since last Christmas!”

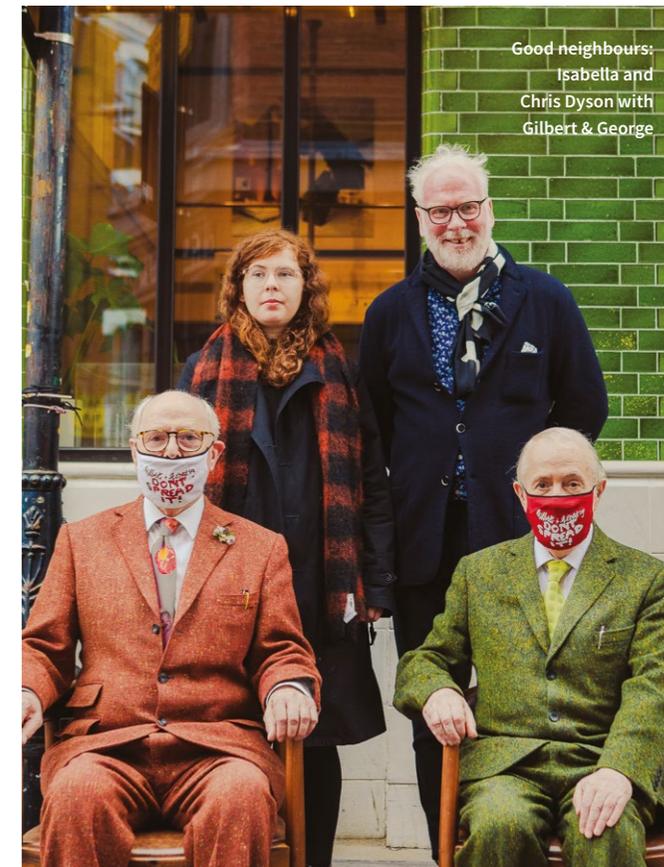
The pair have been keeping just as busy this year, completing 54 new pieces since the start of the pandemic; all of which are due to be exhibited at White Cube before being shown internationally.

Gilbert & George are known to prefer their comforts closer to home, and this is something Dyson has come to appreciate more, too. “Socialising has become much more local than going further afield,” he reveals. “I go to St John Bread & Wine and the Golden Heart, owned by a very close friend. There are so many places to go here, we’re spoilt for choice. I like to support local businesses. It’s rewarding seeing people finding the time and engaging again.”

**Full steam ahead**

Away from the office, Dyson uses his knowledge and expertise to support other creative projects, a couple of which have recently seen him venture into the world of film.

“We’ve started doing *Ugly House to Lovely House with George Clarke* (on Channel 4), where we show how we might



approach an ugly building and turn it into something really beautiful on a limited budget and within a year,” he enthuses. “What’s great is that it’s very much about the architect’s view – not like on *Grand Designs*, where the architect is rarely seen.”

On a smaller – but equally interesting scale, Dyson has lately been researching aspects of the city’s architectural history to help make films for The Temple Bar Trust, a livery for architects of which he is a member. “I was asked to do one on water, so I’ve been focusing on fountains. After the Great Fire it became difficult to obtain water, so a new river company was established – and they brought fresh water into the city through fountains. There were several hundred fountains and there are now about 40 left. They’ve been forgotten and I’d like to see them working again.”

When Dyson said he continually has many plates spinning, he wasn’t wrong. But it’s this desire to consistently explore new areas and push the boundaries that has earned him the respect of his peers and makes him a force to be reckoned with in the architecture industry.

“All these things are a passion and lead you to discover other things in life,” he smiles. “Long may that be.”

📧 [chrisdyson.co.uk](http://chrisdyson.co.uk) @chrisdysonarchitects



Drawings for project Goodsyard – in the making for 10 years



# Melting of minds

Niko Dafkos and Paul Firmin founded Earl of East London in 2014. From a candle-making side hustle to becoming an international brand, they continue to push boundaries and challenge traditional perceptions of high street shopping. Sylvie Wilkinson catches up with them to talk about their soaring success, scents and the magic of physical retail

**W**hen Niko and Paul set up a stall at Netil Market in 2014, they thought it would be a one-off. Before they knew it, they were trading every week and decided to take the leap from curators to creators. Their love of fragrance helped them develop their own line of products, starting off with just three candles, and gradually expanding to include incense and home mists as well as bath and body products.

The natural progression of the brand is something Paul's extremely proud of: "We launched the line in July of 2015, and the following year it just continued to grow. We went from making products in the kitchen to then taking a studio, and it just expanded organically from there."

Five years on they own four unique spaces, all of which contribute something special to the Earl of East brand. Their Hackney store on Gransden Avenue was the first to open, and is now a key creative hub serving the East London community. Earl of East Hackney also boasts a candle-making and teaching studio, as well as being a workshop space, coffee shop and events space.

Niko and Paul's retail creations play with perceptions of the traditional high street experience. Part of the Earl of East ethos is innovating and inspiring people through workshops and events. Collaboration's also key to what they do, and Earl of East sites often play host to other independent brands and designers' work.

The pandemic's devastation on retail has been well reported. However, amidst the doom and gloom, Earl of East London proves that all hope is not lost. Paul described how busy the brand has been over the past few months: "We've opened two spaces during the pandemic: a hotel residency and a bookshop. I think the pandemic has accelerated a seismic change in culture generally." ■■■▶

WORDS: SYLVIE WILKINSON



Seeing Earl of East thrive over the past few months has solidified their belief that physical retail is a cornerstone of community spirit: “It’s a really exciting time for physical retail. The pandemic meant that people realised how important it is – people are craving it more than ever.”

For Paul, East London provides the perfect environment for creativity to flow: “For both of us, our whole experience of London has been very centred around East London. It’s a real cross-culture of lots of different people who have a similar mindset – you’ve got a tribe of people who all want to do things and create things. It was being in this area that inspired us to start something of our own in the first place.”

On the rare occasion that Niko and Paul aren’t in one of their shops, they can be found exploring East London’s food scene. “We love The Pavilion in Victoria Park, the food is amazing and the setting is unrivalled. The owner Rob really inspired us back in the day – it was great to see people who were really hard working creating amazing businesses in the local area.” Aside from all the great places to eat in East London, Niko and Paul are big fans of Triangle, a lifestyle retailer, and A New Tribe, an interiors and home accessories store, both on Chatsworth Road.

The personal nature of Earl of East transcends Niko and Paul’s connection to East London. Paul describes the pair as “a couple in everything – we’re partners in life and in work.” The growth of the couple’s relationship alongside their brand gives Earl of East a deeply personal feel. Niko agrees that working with scent strengthens their products’ appeal to human emotion: “Scent is processed by the same part of the human brain that stores all your memories and controls your emotions and motivations.”

The scents created by Niko and Paul link directly to travel, and each of their profiles is based on places they’ve been to. Whilst some of the scents have been inspired by childhood memories, travel is extremely important to the creative pair: “We always wanted to hold onto the experience we had travelling, so we would try and play around working with different oils and see what scent profiles would trigger similar emotions that we experienced in different locations.”

The concept of linking scent to locations came into its own during lockdown. Earl of East teamed up with Uncommon Creative Studio to create the Scents of Normality candle range – a collection of life-affirming scents based on various locations we yearned for whilst stuck at home. The scents in



**‘IT WAS BEING IN THIS AREA THAT INSPIRED US TO START SOMETHING OF OUR OWN IN THE FIRST PLACE’**

the range replicated the local pub, the cinema and a festival setting. Not only did these beautifully designed candles offer a bit of much needed fun, but they saluted the loss of day-to-day social experiences and acknowledged the important role these settings play in our lives.

The Scents of Normality range was also a charitable endeavour – Earl of East were able to raise over £12,000 for Hospitality Action’s Covid-19 appeal. Choosing the right charity to support through the initiative was extremely important to the pair. Paul told me: “We wanted to do a charity initiative, but it needed to feel like the right fit and not just be a kneejerk reaction. In East London, hospitality is an industry that is really part of the fabric of society, and it made sense and felt like the right project for us and our business.”

Earl of East London is a brand which is constantly evolving and expanding. Niko and Paul have a number of exciting new

ideas in the pipeline, including dynamic new projects which stem from the workshops they deliver: “We’re releasing a workshop kit, which customers will be able to do from home with their family and friends. We’re also working on a gift set for the first time in six years.”

In a world of continuing uncertainty, Earl of East London offers a sense of hope and kindness – a brand embodiment of the spirit that makes East London so special. They have contributed towards a shift in how the local high street is perceived, with Niko believing wholly in the importance of retail staff: “A step we all have to take is to value the service

that any person in retail delivers. As an industry over the last few decades, it’s been one of the supposed ‘lower-skilled’ and less appreciated jobs. Retail staff are important, they mean a lot to us and can make or break your day. I think that’s still something we all have to work on.”

The next couple of years will see Earl of East London launch new products as part of their Japanese bathing line and look ahead to further collaborations with some of their favourite brands. With many new plans on the horizon, there’s no doubt that Niko and Paul’s future will be as bright as their past. [earlofeast.com](http://earlofeast.com), [@earlofeast](https://www.instagram.com/earlofeast)





# Local LEGENDS

**2020** A year we'll all remember, and for many, a year to forget. But, despite lockdowns, face masks, stockpiling, Zoom quizzes and Tiger King binges, we came together and helped each other out more than ever. Neighbours brought each other food. Children could play in the streets again. We all realised just how special the NHS is. It reminds us that we're lucky to be able to count on community for help. East London's charities went above and beyond to keep serving those in need and this year, more than any other, they deserve serious respect and celebration. Here are just a few to whom we can all continue offering our support...

## Made in Hackney

Made in Hackney, locally known as MIH, is a community cooking school and charity fuelled by the mission to help people to grow, cook and eat more plants. Following the first waves of coronavirus MIH has been heading out into the community to provide delicious, hearty meals. The charity teamed up with local restaurant Angelina's and successfully managed to deliver (by a tireless team of bike couriers) over 500 meals a day. As well as keeping people fed, Made in Hackney also hosted over 60 online cookery courses through the summer months to keep spirits lifted and foodie fans (or bored kids) occupied. Following the government's recent voting to not extend free school meals over October half term, MIH provided extra children's lunches for the families on their meal service and local school children. To help MIH continue their community meal service until March 2021, head to: [crowdfunder.co.uk/made-in-hackney](https://crowdfunder.co.uk/made-in-hackney)

BY BECCA BILLIS AND LARA MILLS

## East London Dance

From its base in Stratford, East London Dance brings dance to people and people to dance. Its ambitious performances attract wide audiences and get people of all ages and abilities moving. During the pandemic East London Dance built on its existing work – designed to support mental wellbeing and

resilience – by launching a new digital programme engaging young Newham residents in dance and creative activities. The programme saw 1238 unique attendances across 94 online sessions, strengthening the wellbeing of children aged 9-18 and keeping the over 65s active and connected to the community. [eastlondondance.org](https://eastlondondance.org)





## Poplar Union

Situated in the heart of Poplar, Poplar Union is an arts and community centre that brings people together and showcases the area's untapped creativity. In response to the pandemic, Poplar Union curated an extensive list of resources to aid the local community, shedding light on initiatives looking after mental health, refugees, food banks and deliveries, along with support for freelancers and artists.

Offering everything from health and wellness sessions to virtual cook-alongs, it tackled the day-to-day struggles of lockdown isolation head-on. The programme offered up something for everyone, from supporting home-schooling families with over 300 kid-friendly learning packs to curating a packed lineup of artists and musicians for its festival, 'Looking Out, Looking In, Looking Up.'

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

## The Wickers Charity

The Wickers Charity works to support young people and prevent them from entering a life of crime by providing a range of exciting classes, opportunities and workshops in Hackney Wick. During the Covid-19 crisis, The Wickers Charity worked with local organisations to deliver care packages. In total 1460 care packages reached more than 83 families, over the course of 20 weeks.

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

## Headway East London

Headway East London supports people affected by brain injury. Working across 13 London boroughs, Headway East London offers specialist support and services for over 200 survivors, family, friends and carers in the local area. Despite being initially closed during the first lockdown, the team jumped straight back into action supporting the community by providing freshly made lunches, art supplies and essential deliveries to vulnerable and isolated members. Headway East London also hosted mood-boosting virtual welfare activities such as dance, discussion and art tutorials, in addition to creating "The Headway Hello" – a newspaper designed for members who weren't able to access the digital activities on offer. To support its work, check out the new range of T-shirts created in collaboration between their members and local artists, and the Autumn 'Differently Various' fundraiser. [justgiving.com/headwaylondon](http://justgiving.com/headwaylondon)

## GrowTH

Based in Tower Hamlets, GrowTH is an initiative by local churches to respond to homelessness within the local community. Every winter it provides shelter to the homeless. Following

lockdown measures, GrowTH turned its night shelter into a day-to-night shelter, in a bid to minimise guests going out during the day, offering provision and lunch following the closure of day-centres and libraries. Following this, the charity worked with Housing Justice and the local council to arrange hotel rooms for GrowTH guests, in order to provide a safe space for homeless people to stay and self-isolate. It is working towards opening a shelter this winter, despite the difficulties that Covid-19 presents. GrowTH has also continued to support the residents in its separate GrowTH Housing project and has recently taken on more flats, ready to decorate, furnish and house rough sleepers.

[thisisgrowth.org](http://thisisgrowth.org)

## Hospitality Action

Since 1837, Hospitality Action (HA) has offered vital assistance to all those who work, and have worked in hospitality. With the pandemic crippling pubs, bars, hotels and restaurants, Hospitality Action has been a lifeline for many staff who no longer had jobs to go to. It has helped families put food on the table, pay their bills and care for their children. During lockdown, calls to their confidential

24/7 helpline increased by 175%, each needing support on a range of topics including virus anxiety, home-schooling during lockdown, domestic abuse and coping with redundancy. At the height of the pandemic Hospitality Action refocused its mental health work to develop a free online advice hub. It also rapidly recruited a network of volunteer telephone befrienders, who contacted 1,500 hospitality retirees to offer support to them and their wider household. [hospitalityaction.org.uk](http://hospitalityaction.org.uk)

## You Make It

Empowering East London women is at the centre of everything You Make it does, offering programmes packed full of start-up support, pastoral care and confidence-boosting mentoring to young women across Tower Hamlets and Hackney. Launched back in May when we were knee-deep in the first lockdown, the charity offers a range of workshops full of

tips for women to support their wellbeing and grow their confidence without having to leave their homes. On top of that, it also launched You Change It, an anti-racism development programme providing practical ways to stand up against injustice to help us all become stronger allies for diversity and inclusion. [you-make-it.org](http://you-make-it.org)

## ecoACTIVE

ecoACTIVE is an environmental education charity that works with schools to deliver workshops on sustainability, helping young people understand the importance of looking after the planet and inspiring them to take action. It also runs forest schools and supports community gardening projects. At the heart of ecoACTIVE is a mission to improve community green spaces and help connect people with nature. As we all saw in East London's green spaces during the August heatwave, getting outside is vital

for our health and wellbeing. In the face of the huge changes created by lockdown, ecoACTIVE developed a range of free online resources, as well as fun and creative packages to entertain us all from home. [ecoactive.org.uk](http://ecoactive.org.uk)

## Albert Kennedy Trust

The Albert Kennedy Trust celebrates LGBTQ+ identities and works to support LGBTQ+ young people in the UK facing homelessness or living in a hostile environment. It helps vulnerable young people find safe accommodation, employment opportunities, education, training and specialist assistance. During lockdown, the trust continued its usual work as well as providing advice about going back to a toxic family, accessing free online courses from the Open University, and shared free and fair priced online wellness resources led by People of Colour, Womxn and Queer folks. [akt.org.uk](http://akt.org.uk)



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# Nina Hopkins

The last decade has transformed the way we perceive and purchase clothes. With climate change becoming as much a personal matter as our wardrobes, East London designer Nina Hopkins, Creative Director at Jakke, is here to shed light on how to buy less and better by keeping it classic, seeking sustainable options and mixing it up with vintage

## Tell us a bit about yourself and how you founded Jakke

I was born and raised in Bow, East London by my Nigerian mother and Welsh father. It's safe to say both my parents influenced my creative tendencies; my father's love of conceptual art and my mother's passion for sewing and vintage markets definitely rubbed off on me. For as long as I can remember, clothes have always been my main interest – it came as no surprise that I went on to study at the London College of Fashion. In the years following, after working in the industry, I noticed a gap in the market for luxury yet affordable faux-fur jackets and coats. And here we are, filling that gap with Jakke.

## How does Jakke reject the concept of seasonal fashion trends? Why is this so important to shopping more sustainably?

The Jakke approach to design has always rejected the concept of seasonal fashion trends. It's a definitive aspect of the brand which I'm incredibly proud of. Instead of making items which may be 'in' for a season, we make pieces which easily slot into your wardrobe regardless of the season. What we

try to do is challenge that throwaway mentality which many fashion brands rely on, instead encouraging you to invest in clothes designed for longer use. For example, from AW21 Jakke will be producing smaller capsule collections; this new direction will refresh our signature shapes and add influence from timeless luxury pieces made from long-lasting, ethical fabrics that are designed to be worn year after year.

## How can we all be making smaller steps to shop and wear more sustainable clothing?

Fundamentally, it's all about educating yourself to buy less and buy better. Figuring out how and where to shop ethically is easier nowadays than it's ever been – there are loads of sustainable and eco-friendly brands offering quality garments at reasonable prices. When it comes to understanding the impact of your purchase, make sure you are aware of how your clothes are produced and try to choose garments made from recycled materials. To make that extra impact and lower your carbon footprint even more, mix your wardrobe up with a few choice vintage finds – there's nowhere better to find these sort of things than East London.

## To have previously been awarded "Best Faux Fur Brand" and "Best Wool Free Brand" by PETA is incredible. What alternative materials do you use to ensure we can wear Jakke with a clear conscience?

This is something we are incredibly passionate about. We're constantly striving to be more sustainable. This season, we created our Wear & Care campaign, which saw 45% of this collection's pieces made of polyester from recycled plastic bottles. On average, it takes approximately 30 plastic bottles to make one of our recycled polyester faux fur coats. In another life these bottles would end up in landfill or the ocean, and instead we've made it possible to wear them.

## Jakke has a gorgeous range of winter coats. What is your criteria when looking for your perfect winter coat?

Thank you! For me, I personally look for something season-less which can seamlessly integrate with what's already in my wardrobe. The perfect winter coat must be versatile; it has to be wearable from day to night, and obviously has to keep you warm. As

WORDS: LARA MILLS



**'TO MAKE THAT EXTRA IMPACT AND LOWER YOUR CARBON FOOTPRINT EVEN MORE, WITH SOME VINTAGE'**



fans of our range of Jakke coats know, I tend to look for something a little bit different to your bog-standard high street find by doing something more eclectic in colour, print or style.

## What does East London mean to you?

I love East London. Other than the fact that I was born and raised here, to me it's one of the city's most diverse and multicultural areas. I have such fond memories of my childhood scouring Brick Lane's vintage markets with my mother. East London is part of my DNA, and I would be lying to say it hadn't had a profound effect on my creativity and the way I dress.

## As an East London designer, how has the local area influenced your work and creations?

East Londoners have an enviable

street style which artfully balances laid-back and fashion-forward. It's not surprising when you see how many unique boutiques and countless vintage stores we have. On top of the fashion, East London is celebrated for its artistic atmosphere; almost every street wall is beautifully decorated with art that makes a statement about our world. All of these factors are represented in my designs.

## Where are your go-to spots in East London?

I LOVE Muxima – a cute little café, art and culture space fused with an African twist – which is tucked away in Roman Road market. Before lockdown, if I didn't head into the studio, I could always be found working away in Muxima. Also, anywhere in Shoreditch really – I love hanging out there! ● [jakke.co.uk](http://jakke.co.uk), [@jakkeldn](https://www.instagram.com/jakkeldn)



# HOME COOKING

During the first lockdown many of us sought comfort in the kitchen, cooking old favourites and trying to recreate hero dishes from our favourite restaurants. Second time around, we've teamed up with local East London chefs, authors and initiatives to offer some of their favourite recipes for you to try at home.

## Lara Lee's chicken nasi goreng

In her latest book, *Coconut & Sambal: Recipes from my Indonesian Kitchen*, East London author Lara Lee celebrates her Indonesian roots with a series of recipes paying tribute to the community kitchens, street food stalls and local markets that inspire her food. Lara's passion for Indonesian cuisine warms every page, including the staple chicken nasi goreng – a delicious and simple alternative when you're getting bored of hitting Thai or Vietnamese options on Deliveroo again.

### SERVES 2

- 2 skinless, boneless chicken thighs, cut into small, bite-sized cubes
- Coconut oil or sunflower oil, for frying
- 2 garlic cloves, peeled and thinly sliced
- 8cm piece of galangal or ginger (about 40g), peeled and woody stem removed, finely chopped
- 1 small banana shallot or 2 Thai shallots, peeled and thinly sliced
- Handful of green beans, chopped into small chunks
- 2 spring onions, chopped into large chunks
- ¼ tsp ground turmeric
- 95g jasmine or basmati rice, cooked and cooled (240g cooked weight)
- 2 tbsp kecap manis
- 1½ tsp fish sauce
- 2 tsp light soy sauce
- Sea salt and white pepper, to taste

### TO SERVE

- 2 duck or hen's eggs
- 1 tbsp Fried shallots (p.251)
- ½ long red chilli, thinly sliced
- Prawn crackers



**Coconut & Sambal:**  
Recipes from my  
Indonesian Kitchen  
by Lara Lee  
£26, [bloomsbury.com](https://www.bloomsbury.com)

1. Season the chicken pieces with salt and white pepper. Heat one tablespoon of oil in a large frying pan or wok over a high heat and fry the chicken until cooked through, about three minutes. Remove and set aside.
2. Add another tablespoon of oil to the pan, add the garlic, galangal or ginger and shallots and cook over a medium-high heat until fragrant. Add the green beans, spring onions and turmeric and cook for one minute.
3. Add the rice to the pan, breaking up any clumps with a wooden spoon. Ensure all the ingredients are well combined and the rice is warmed through. Return the chicken to the pan. Season with the kecap manis, fish sauce, light soy sauce and a large pinch of white pepper, and extra salt if needed.
4. Meanwhile, fry the eggs. Place a large non-stick frying pan over a medium-high heat and add one tablespoon of oil. Once shimmering, crack the eggs directly into the oil. Cook for 2–3 minutes until the whites are partially cooked. Tilt the pan and spoon the hot oil over the egg whites until they are fully cooked (I like my yolk runny, but cook yours to your liking). Season with salt.
5. Divide the fried rice between two serving plates and garnish with the fried shallots, sliced chilli and fried eggs on top. Serve with crackers.

## Naz's ricotta and pea ravioli, with wild garlic pesto

Born in Bangladesh and raised in Milan, chef Naz Hassan moved to London in 2012. After a time working in notable restaurants in the capital, such as Stem, Clipstone and Neo Bistro, Naz was appointed head chef at Crispin in Spitalfields in March 2020, just ahead of the first lockdown. He serves up a menu of fresh pasta and pizza, drawing on his Italian upbringing, as well as inspiration taken from his world food travels and Asian heritage. Here's one of his faves. [@the.shaman](https://www.instagram.com/the.shaman)

### PASTA

- 5 egg yolks
- 1 whole egg
- 250g 00 flour
- 2g olive oil
- Salt to season

### FILLING

- 180g ricotta
- 100g peas
- 2g honey
- Lemon juice and zest to taste
- Salt and pepper to season

### PESTO

- 220g olive oil
- 100g pistachio nuts
- 60g wild garlic
- 60g basil
- 55g Grana Padano or Parmesan
- Juice of a half lemon

### TO SERVE

- Grated Grana Padano or parmesan, and basil leaves

1. Whisk egg yolks, whole egg and olive oil until perfectly combined and smooth. In a separate bowl, add salt to flour and mix well.
2. Put the flour straight onto a clean worktop, and form a well in the centre. Pour the egg mixture inside the well, and with your fingers, start to slowly combine the two by drawing the flour in from the edges. Once you have a mixture that looks like



- bread crumbs, start kneading until you have a uniform dough. Form into a large ball. It should be smooth rather than sticky.
3. Wrap in cling film and put in the fridge for one hour.
4. While the pasta dough is chilling, start the filling by blanching the peas for three minutes in salted boiling water. Put peas in iced water to cool, but keep the boiling water aside to use later.
5. In a food processor or hand blender, combine all the filling ingredients, including the blanched peas, and process until you are happy with the consistency. Cover the filling with clingfilm and put in the fridge.
6. After an hour, take your dough and start to roll out using a rolling pin until the dough is flat and you have a large sheet that you can

- just about see your hand through. Cut into squares about 8cm x 8cm.
7. Take the filling from the fridge, and place a teaspoon of the filling in the middle of each square of pasta. Using a pastry brush, brush the four sides of each square with cold water, without touching the filling. Close up the pasta by folding the squares, so you have a triangle shape. Make sure all the air is out and seal properly by pinching the closed pasta between your fingers. Rest the Ravioli in the fridge while making the pesto.
8. Take the water you set aside from the peas and bring it back to boil. Blanche the basil and wild garlic for 45 seconds, and then place in iced water to cool. Squeeze the basil and wild garlic to get rid of the excess water, then roughly chop. Combine with the rest of the

- pesto ingredients in a food processor/blender and blend until smooth.
9. Boil some fresh water with a pinch of salt.
10. Lightly heat the pesto in a separate pan, but do not take to boil. Place your ravioli in the boiling water and cook for one minute and 30 seconds.
11. Add your ravioli and a spoonful of cooking water to the pesto and cook in the pan for another minute or so, until the water has cooked off and the pesto covers the ravioli smoothly.
12. Finally, serve with parmesan and a few leaves of your choice.

By Naz Hassan, head chef at Crispin, Spitalfields  
[crispinlondon.com](https://www.crispinlondon.com), [@crispin\\_e1](https://www.instagram.com/crispin_e1)



## Laura Jackson's aubergine parmigiana

During lockdown the founders of East London cult café Towpath, Lori de Mori and Laura Jackson, poured what they weren't able to deliver on a plate onto the page. The result? *Towpath: Recipes & Stories*, a unique collection of warming anecdotes which capture the history of this iconic canalside café. With joyous seasonal recipes and heartwarming tales from the local community, *Towpath Recipes & Stories* gives you the chance to enjoy the restaurant's seasonal dishes at home.

### SERVES 4 – 6

- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 3 red onions, peeled, halved and finely diced
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 bunch basil, leaves picked, stalks saved
- 2 x 400g tinned whole plum tomatoes, blitzed or mashed
- Sunflower or vegetable oil for frying
- 1.5kg aubergines, sliced lengthways into 0.5 cm slices
- 2 x 250g balls of buffalo mozzarella, torn into pieces
- 200g parmesan, finely grated salt and pepper

1. Start by making the tomato sauce. Heat the olive oil in a saucepan over a medium heat. When warm, add the red onions, garlic, basil stalks and season. Cook until soft and sweet – about 15 minutes.
2. Add the tinned tomatoes, making sure you rinse the tin with water and add all that goodness in too. Stir well and bring to the boil, turn down to a gentle boil and cook for 1 hour. Season again and remove the basil stalks. You want the sauce to thicken, reduce and sweeten.
3. While the tomato sauce is cooking, fry the aubergines. At Towpath I fry the aubergines in the deep fryer, but to fry the aubergines in a pan, put in a hot frying pan with generous amounts of oil (so it coats the bottom of the pan) and cook until brown. Once brown, turn over and brown the other side. You may need to do this in batches, as you don't want to overcrowd the pan. Once cooked, put the slices on kitchen paper to drain off all of the excess oil.
4. Preheat the oven to 210°C fan/450°F/gas mark 8. To assemble, take a 20 x 28 x 6cm/8 x 11 x 2in rectangular gratin dish.
5. Start with a layer of aubergine, slightly overlapping them so they are tightly packed in. Season. Spread over a very thin layer of tomato sauce (this is important – the dish should be dense, not saucy!) and season again. Dot the mozzarella over, sprinkle parmesan and scatter some basil leaves.
6. Repeat until you have four layers, finishing with the mozzarella and parmesan on top. Add double the amount of parmesan on the top, but do not scatter the basil leaves on this time as they will go brown and soggy.



Towpath Recipes & Stories  
by Lori de Mori &  
Laura Jackson  
£27, [towpathlondon.com](http://towpathlondon.com)

## Abdullah's Nokaw (lamb and chickpea soup)

Earlier this year, Waltham Forest based community interest company, Stories & Suppers published *More Than A Recipe Book* – an exquisite collection of recipes from Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Biafra, Turkey, India, Ghana, Kurdistan, Afghanistan, Sudan and beyond, as well as powerful migration stories from refugees and asylum seekers. Food is a language we all speak and it tells the story of so many cultures.



### SERVES 4

- 125g dried chickpeas
- 1 onion, peeled
- 3 garlic cloves, peeled
- 50g kidney fat (or 3tbsp vegetable oil)
- 500g lamb (ribs, shank or chops)
- 1 tsp chilli powder
- 1 tsp ground turmeric
- Salt, to taste
- 2 dried limes

1. Soak the chickpeas in plenty of water overnight. Rinse in clean water. Drain.
2. Chop the onion and garlic finely.
3. Put an empty pressure cooker on the heat for two minutes. Add the kidney fat and wait until it melts before adding the lamb, or add the oil and heat.
4. Fry the meat until brown. Add the onion and garlic and cook until lightly browned.
5. Carefully add 1 litre hot water, the chickpeas, chilli, turmeric and salt.
6. Make several small holes in each of the dried limes and add to the pan.
7. Place the pressure cooker lid on securely, increase the pressure over a high heat and then turn the heat to low and cook for 40 minutes. Gradually reduce the pressure before opening. To cook without a pressure cooker, bring the soup to a boil, without adding the chickpeas. Then simmer in a covered pan on a low heat for about 2½ hours.
8. While the lamb is cooking, boil the chickpeas on a high heat for 10 minutes, then add to the soup for the last 45 minutes of its cooking time. Serve with soft bread rolls.



More Than A Recipe Book  
by Stories & Suppers  
£17.50,  
[storiesandsupper.co.uk/buy](http://storiesandsupper.co.uk/buy)



# EAST

Flying the flag for East London eateries

## THE SEKFORDE

34 SEKFORDE STREET, FARRINGDON EC1R 0HA

Nestled in amongst the filmic perfection of Georgian terraces in Clerkenwell lies The Sekforde, a majestic long-standing establishment, first opening its doors as a public house in 1829. The place closed in 2015, reopening in the Spring of 2018 after local architectural hero Chris Dyson restored it to its former glory.

This was a nostalgic spot for a pre-lockdown lunch, a hark back to the Clerkenwell glory days of the 90s. With a grown up and stylish ambience, the spacious dining room is commandingly beautiful with its wooden panelling and curved archways.

Our food curated under the guidance of Hungarian born Chris Kiz brought an Eastern European twist that mixed 'notes' of his mother's kitchen.

We enjoyed tasty, hearty starters of a Scotch Egg, Korean Fried Cauliflower and Fish Cakes with Tartar sauce. Our selection was delicious but what stood out had to be the Scotch Egg – the softest yolk, combined with the perfect texture of sausage-meat that was beautifully crisp. ▶▶▶

The Sekforde, lovingly designed and refurbished by Chris Dyson Architects, along with the walnut pub chairs (left), designed by Chris Dyson



PHOTOGRAPHY BY PETER LANDERS



For our mains we ordered beer battered haddock and chips that came with mushy peas, as well as chicken schnitzel with new

potatoes – total classics, much like the interior – and both were absolute heaven. The haddock batter was sublime and we were let into the chef’s secret of mixing plain and self-raising flour to achieve the crispy batter perfection. The home-made mushy peas and tartare sauce were an absolute delight, no skimping on flavour there. The chicken schnitzel was tender, full of flavour as were the potatoes, taken to another level with moreish seasoning.

We just about had room for the warm, crisp plum aromatic crumble with a jug of vanilla custard. A very satisfying lunch as traditional pub classics take an impressive Hungarian twist at The Sekforde, starters were all £5 and the main courses were £15.

[@the\\_sekforde](http://thesekforde.com)

REVIEW: JEAN EGBUNIKE



## BAR BOLIVAR

2 REUTERS PLAZA E14 5AJ

It’s late October in Canary Wharf, on a dark midweek evening. If Covid doesn’t keep you indoors the cold, wind and rain will. But here we are – and so, surprisingly, is an entire restaurant and terrace full of other people. Most have a cocktail, tables are covered in sharing plates, and someone’s pretending to know which Buena Vista Social Club song is playing. It feels like a holiday.

Newly opened in Canary Wharf’s Reuters Plaza, Bar Bolivar’s interior and cocktail menu is inspired by 50s Cuba and serves up food from award-winning Venezuelan street food outfit Pabellón. Legend among Lower Marsh workers on lunch, Pabellón set up shop in the kitchen to offer punchy flavours and the crunchy/soft contrasting textures of plantain platters, arepas and rice bowls.

Bar Bolivar uses rum to replace vodka in an espresso martini, giving a more complex drink for long, late nights. Fruit fans get their pick of highballs too – a particular highlight was the Sauvignon Blanc and tropical combination of the La Rampa Fizz.

Bar Bolivar’s sweet potato chips are an absolute knock-out – the tempura coating makes them chunky and crispy, perfect for dragging through fiery sauces full of herbs and heat. Great as a side or bar snack to cope with a few daiquiris.

Pabellón is the national dish of Venezuela. The mix of spicy rice, black beans and shredded meat gets a facelift here with avocado, pico de gallo salsa and a Venezuelan dressing called guasacaca. The same tasty combo gets folded into a grilled cornbread puff as an arepa, livened up with garlic sauce and covered with melting cheese. It’s not elegant, but it’s deeply satisfying and is the sort of food that encourages you to lick your fingers between each mouthful.

Bar Bolivar is the perfect antidote to dreary, dark London winters. [canarywharf.com](http://canarywharf.com)

REVIEW: LARA MILLS

## TASTE OF INDIA

340 HIGH STREET NORTH,  
MANOR PARK E12 6PH

Never in history has The Takeaway held such an esteemed, and important, role in our lives. Beyond being a Friday-night treat, they’re now a way to both break the monotony of our own cooking, and inject a little excitement into our house-bound days. Many restaurants have pivoted to a takeaway model in recent months, but Taste of India has been serving the community in this way for 19 years now, alongside its two premises – one vegetarian, one meat-friendly. It’s a restaurant whose success has grown out of true ‘word-of-mouthery’, which can feel a real novelty in a noisy online landscape of #gifted meals.

You’ll know your food has arrived first by the smell under the front door – a heady mix of cardamom, garam masala, nose-tickling chilli, caramelised onions, cream and butter (depending on what you’ve ordered,

of course). Once you’ve unwrapped and lid-popped your way through your haul, the first thing to do is tear apart the light, buttered layers of a parotta (which is why it’s recommended you order a generous pile of them, each). As for the rest of the menu – the chilli paneer is a must: sticky and hot, with clumps of cheese huddled close in a thick red Manchurian sauce (a soy sauce-based ‘gravy’, popular in Indo-Chinese cuisine, and named after the region in northeastern China.)

Dal makhani (‘buttery’ dal), which is known by many as the ‘black dal’ on popular chain restaurant Dishoom’s Bombay-inspired menu, is buttery, creamy, earthy, spicy – and extremely spoon-in-the-mouthable. As for a heartier, carbier option, try the vegetable kothu rotti. This dish involves the Kerala street food parotta (mentioned above) chunkily chopped up, and fried in spices with mixed vegetables, onions and green chillies. It’s the sort of dish that tastes even better the morning after, when woken up with a squeeze of lime and some fresh herbs.



In fact, the same can be said for most of Taste of India’s menu, which is why it’s worth over-ordering and stretching out the feast over the next few days. Because the only thing better than a Friday-night takeaway is a weekend-long one.

[tasteofindia.asia](http://tasteofindia.asia)

REVIEW: EMMA WINTERSCHLADEN

## NEBULA

455 HACKNEY ROAD E2 9DY

Right on the bustling Hackney Road and lit by next door’s neon, Nebula Pizzeria is one of East London’s most exciting new restaurants. Serving up fresh cocktails, flavour-packed pizzas and a considered lineup of locally-sourced wines, beers and gins, Nebula sets itself aside from your standard pizzeria.

The restaurant’s self-proclamation as a ‘neighbourhood oasis with a cosmopolitan vibe’ hits the nail on the head. Sit in the hipster hangout of Containerville, dine and drink your evening away either in the plant-packed courtyard (perfect for socially distanced dinner dates) or the atmospheric bar. Head down in the evening to be welcomed by the out-of-this-world Nebula team and catch the feel-good tunes from the venue’s resident DJ.

Start with a pint of fresh draught beer, or maybe a wine from Bethnal Green winery Renegade. Once you’ve whet your palette,

REVIEW: BECCA BILLIS

dive into the array of spritz-style cocktails such as the signature Nebula Negroni, infused with basil essence. The earthy notes pair perfectly with one of Nebula’s mouth-watering pizzas: keep it simple with the Mothership, a mozzarella, basil and tomato combo. Meat eaters can indulge with the Sausage Supernova, a winning combination of Cumberland sausage, fresh green apple and a kick of fennel. Veggies aren’t forgotten either - as voted for by Containerville residents, the Big Bang Brie is a melt-in-your-mouth combination of caramelised onions, brie and peppery rocket. [nebulapizza.com](http://nebulapizza.com)





## ALTER AT SHAMAN

LEMAN LOCKE HOTEL, 15 LEMAN STREET E1 8EN

Opening a new restaurant post-lockdown is impressive enough; to do so and ace it is pretty staggering. We found ourselves sitting in the newly opened Alter at Shaman residency in Aldgate East, amongst the dusky dimly-lit interiors that overlook buzzing streets below, with an immense sense that something special was about to take place.

Alter is a concept like no other – it exists to challenge common perceptions of vegan food by never using substitutes, and instead championing dishes, techniques and cultures that are delicious without alteration. The most refreshing part about Alter is how un-vegan it feels; there's no vegan propaganda involved, the food speaks for itself and is delicious in its own right.

This vibrant menu fuses Asian cuisines with notes from Italy and Nigeria to create something completely unique. We began with a Tokyo Manhattan – a bold, smoky concoction that combines Japanese takes on whisky and vermouth into an Eastern remix of the classic Manhattan. Served alongside were a series of explosive starters: izakaya pickles with 1:1:1 relish, kung pao crackers, apple & coconut 'sabzi' with Mumbai flattened rice, and rice-fermented mustard green miang laos to stimulate our palettes.

Next up came the dish we'd been waiting for since we first saw the menu – pizza, ajo blanco, basil. Created to challenge sourdough's dominance of London's pizza scene, this dish forces you to rethink everything you felt about vegan food and pizza. Trust us, don't leave Alter until you've tried it.

At this point we hit the Chinese-inspired section of the menu – a shitake & preserved vegetable dumpling soup (which could fool any meat-eater) and Sichuan cold soba noodles with sesame and alliums kept the deliciousness coming. An invigorating "falling water" salad of Vietnamese herbs provided a refreshing palate cleanser before the warming indulgence of a khao-soi noodle laksa with oyster mushrooms.

So far, so surprising. An indulgent dessert of kesar mango with white sticky rice and Thai basil brought things back into mainstream Asian flavours, and felt like a modern take on rice pudding with sweet fruit jam from childhood memories. It was the perfect cap on a spectacular meal that kept delighting, course after course.

[shaman-coffee.com](http://shaman-coffee.com)

## MIEN TAY

106-108 KINGSLAND ROAD, SHOREDITCH E2 8DP

If you spend as much time in East London as we do, you'll know that along the Kingsland Road there is a thriving Vietnamese community. The street hosts dozens of restaurants each serving cuisine from all over the country.

Mien Tay specialises in South West Vietnamese cuisine, which is where the owners Mr Tran and Ms Lee originate. The restaurant is named after the Mekong-Delta that provides the abundance of fish and vegetation used in the dishes.

While the BYOB offer is always going to appeal, we could tell that everyone was genuinely there for the food.

The book-like menu offers a slew of choices for the hungry South East Asian cuisine enthusiast. To start we tried the Traditional Crispy Pancake filled with pork, prawns, beansprouts and onions. The large, crispy, wafer-thin pancake came stuffed with juicy pieces of pork and prawn and was served with a sweet and sour dipping sauce. The mingling of sweet, salty and sour flavours combined with the crunch of the crisp pancakes was addictively good.

We ordered the Cari Gai with chicken. This relatively simple dish is full of flavours making it impossible to leave even a drop of the flavourful curry sauce behind. A bowl of Egg Fried Rice makes the perfect accompaniment.

On a cold rainy evening it's hard to beat a huge steaming bowl of pho – we recommend the Pho Tai Nam. The rich beef broth is stuffed with oodles of noodles, slivers of tender beef brisket, and as much fresh herbs, bean sprouts, and fresh chillies as you can take. Every table also comes with a slew of sauces for you to adapt the broth to your taste.

Everything we ate was absolutely delicious. Almost everything on the menu is under a tenner and the portions are plentiful – and they'll wrap up the leftovers to go. [@mientayrestaurants](http://mientay.co.uk)



REVIEW: GEMMA WARDLE @FATGIRLFOODGUIDE



## TOWNSEND

77-82 WHITECHAPEL HIGH STREET E1 7QX

As bright light floods into a small, perfectly-formed dining room in Whitechapel's historic gallery, you'd be forgiven for thinking all was well in the world.

It's only the masked passers-by outside the window that give it away, but when you've got a honey-herringboned floor firm beneath your feet, a crisp white menu in one hand, a negroni in the other, and a smiley, kind-eyed waiter full of food stories, life feels (for a small pocket of lunchtime) just perfect.

In previous incarnations, this room has been occupied by the likes of Angela Hartnett, and the then team behind 10 Greek Street. But now it's home to Townsend, the namesake of the architect, Charles Harrison Townsend, who designed Whitechapel Gallery in 1897.

At the helm is duo Director Nick Gilkinson (previously of Anglo and Garden Café at Lambeth's The Garden Museum), and Head

Chef Joe Fox, of Petersham Nurseries, and together they have imagined a modern dining space to serve both gallery visitors after some culinary in their culture, and the local neighbourhood.

The menu is seasonal, small-plated and small in size, which thankfully means you don't have to pick and choose too much. It changes daily depending on what produce has arrived in, but expect to see the words 'marinated' and 'fermented', which we all know are two of the best things you can do with your food.

We started with a Paddock Farm pork, apple and cheddar toastie – crunchy, buttery and oozy, it was everything you need a toastie to be. Marinated tomatoes, which popped then melted in the mouth, were swimming in a smokey rapeseed oil and scattered in chives. It was the Devon blue croquettes served with a plate-lickingly good fermented chilli sauce that we couldn't get enough of though – all the comfort of crispy fish fingers and tomato ketchup, but the

refinement of a posh fishcake.

This refined comfort theme carried on into seconds and mains. Both of mine were of the potato variety – potato dumplings with potted brown shrimp, and then a Berkswell (cheese) and potato cake – served with pickled walnuts and an edamame salad to cut through. The dishes couldn't have been more different – the former warm soft pillows, the latter, layers of crispy potatoes fried up. Both dishes, along with the pink fir potatoes with smoked chilli we couldn't resist ordering too, tapped into a deep sense of nostalgia, and brought joy in a way only potatoes can.

Roasted duck breast with aubergine and beetroot, a freshly picked salad from Stepney Bank Farm, and a treacle tart with clotted cream to finish, proved that beyond its creative reimaginings of the humble potato, Townsend's commitment to the joyful, the beautiful and the delicious is paying off – at a time when we need all three of those things, wherever we can get them. [townsendrestaurant.co.uk](http://townsendrestaurant.co.uk)

REVIEW: EMMA WINTERSCHLADEN

# STAY EAST

Hunker down in style and comfort at Hart Shoreditch, where East London meets its colourful, art-rich heritage in a hotel with class

You don't have to stay at the Hart to enjoy it as a social hub; the informal spaces are for everyone. A stylish and laid-back lobby with a good range of mood lighting offers just the right relaxed vibe and welcomes you to settle a while. Catch up on emails or just take time to think, over a coffee – or hit the lobby bar, Tavla and lounge on the comfy leather sofas while sipping a delicious cocktail or two.

Part of the Hilton group, this boutique offshoot manages to strike a balance of local history with modern luxury and cool, which is owed in large part to its collaboration with local award-winning designers Fabled Studio. Drawing inspiration from East London's past as a centre of craftspeople and makers, much of its inheritance comes from the area having been a major centre of the furniture trade – the hotel takes its name from one of the building's previous occupants, the Harts, who were cabinet makers in the 1800s.

Soft woollen wall-hangings adorn the hallways to the rooms, while the views of East London and its buildings make for a scene out of Hitchcock's *Rear Window*. The rooms are comfortable and inviting, all designed to a high standard and split into nine bedroom and suite categories, featuring wonderful

HART'S  
INTERIORS TAKE  
EAST LONDON  
TO A WHOLE  
NEW LEVEL OF  
INDUSTRIAL LUXE

textures and layering of muted colour palettes, with copper mirror accents and green leather. Luxurious marble showers and roll-top baths with impressive views across Shoreditch are complemented by contrasting concrete vanities, herringbone flooring, bold geometric tiling and paired-back brass detailing.



Hart gets all the details right – special touches include a Nespresso® machine, bathrobes and your very own Marshall radio and sound system. And to put your mind at ease, as part of the Hilton CleanStay programme, you'll enjoy an even cleaner and safer stay.

Through to the restaurant, Baboun for dinner and you can experience the flavours of Eastern Mediterranean cooking without booking an expensive plane ticket. The interior is swathed in soft oak and exotic veneers, and a striking steel and copper staircase sits towards the back of the space, along with a central cascade of moon chandeliers – making a cool insta-friendly backdrop. An impressive floor-to-ceiling oxblood leather curtain frames the entrance to the street, taking Hart's East London interior to a whole new level of industrial luxe.

Dishes are inspired by the Levant and cooked over a wood fire. Love and adherence is given to traditional cooking methods, but with a modern, gourmet twist.



To start, make sure to order the Muhlama, a generous kefalatoryi gooey cheese fondue served with charcoal sourdough. The Blackened Aubergine with burnt tomato and almonds is also a must-try, and the intensely-flavoured Beetroot Fritters served with whipped feta and mint make for a delicious combo – all three

dishes alone are worth a return visit.

For meat eaters order the Beef Short Rib served on hot fluffy pita bread, lathered with a rich tomato and red pepper iskender sauce and drizzled with garlic yoghurt. The Sea Bass with smoked tomato, sea purslane (a crisp sea vegetable) and pul biber (traditional Turkish paprika) butter is a lighter option but just as delicious.

For dessert choose from (or if you have room try both) the Burma Baklava with cinnamon syrup, walnut and clotted cream ice cream or the richer Sticky Date Pudding with toffee sauce, banana ice cream and candied walnuts.

After your feast from the east, make your way to your room where you'll be sure to fall fast asleep under the cloud-like duvet and soft pillows with crisp white linen.

Beyond the comfort and good food of Hart, you're surrounded by great coffee shops, bars and restaurants. Less than a mile away lies Columbia Road, home to London's favourite flower market. Independent boutiques and markets such as Brick Lane, connecting Shoreditch to Spitalfields and Whitechapel are all within walking distance of the hotel. If you'd like to see the sights by bicycle, guests staying at Hilton hotels across London can now take advantage of Lime's fleet of electric-assist bikes, along with sanitised helmets at reception providing a more socially distanced, sustainable and greener way to get around the capital.

Whether you're planning your next foray to the local markets, or merely contemplating the approach of cocktail hour, Hart Shoreditch makes a perfect escape from it all. 📍

**Rooms from £105 per night (including breakfast).**

**Hart Shoreditch Hotel, 61-67 Great Eastern Street, Shoreditch EC2A 3HU**  
[hartshoreditch.com](http://hartshoreditch.com) @hartshoreditch

REVIEW: NICKY ACKETTS



# Walk this way WOOD STREET

Waltham Forest has evolved rapidly in recent years, making a name for itself as one of the coolest boroughs in London, and giving its neighbour Hackney a run for its money. Leonie Helm guides us through



Freshly-baked pastries at Chocolatine Bakery

The Borough of Culture 2019, Waltham Forest boasts stunning woodland walks through Epping Forest, fantastic independent restaurants, its very own beer mile, and the longest market in Europe. However, it is also home to one of London's best kept secrets, Wood Street. A major filmmaking hub in the early 1920s, the area would have been crawling with Hollywood's best and brightest stars. While the glitz and glamour may have moved on, Wood Street endures as one of the few remaining corners of London where real treasure can be found.

## EAT HERE

### Homies on Donkeys

An independent Mexican joint nestled in the Indoor Market serving what Eater London described as the 'best taco in the city'. Juicy prawns or a spicy chicken adobo taco will set you back £4 or £5 and is the perfect flavour hit to set you up to explore the rest of Wood Street. [homiesondonkeys.com](http://homiesondonkeys.com)

### Dudley's

There are many breakfast options to choose from on Wood Street including brunch specialists Dudley's, which has nailed millennial interior design and does the best eggs in town. [dudleyscoffee.com](http://dudleyscoffee.com)

### Chocolatine Bakery

If you're an early riser make sure you head straight to one



of the newest additions to Wood Street's food scene, Chocolatine Bakery. Open every day from 7:30am, the stripped-back bakery makes everything on site, and vast trays of freshly baked pastries can be seen on racks behind the counter. And the perfect pick-me-up with coffee made with beans from our very own Waltham Forest-based makers. [chocolatine.co.uk](http://chocolatine.co.uk)

### The Old Station Yard Café

You'll find the café hidden behind Lancaster's Garden Centre where it offers an incredibly rare thing in London: a fry up made with organic local produce – and

free parking! This is proper home-cooked food in a charming tea house setting. Choose anything from a build-your-own breakfast to a cream tea, and a big roast on Sundays. [oldstationyardcafe.co.uk](http://oldstationyardcafe.co.uk)

## DRINK HERE

### The Duke E17

A vast pub smack bang in the middle of Wood Street offering a decent pub garden and a newly updated food menu. The Duke is fast



The Duke E17

becoming known for its beer scene, and a decent local selection is on tap, including Wild Card and Hackney Brewery, as well as a selection of cocktails like the decadent Salted Caramel White Russian. [thedukee17.com](http://thedukee17.com)

### The Flower Pot

This is a proper old-time boozier serving cask ales in a bygone Walthamstow setting. [flowerpotwalthamstow.co.uk](http://flowerpotwalthamstow.co.uk)





Gigi's Dressing Room

## SHOP HERE

### Gigi's Dressing Room

A stunning boutique full of beautifully displayed vintage gems. Gigi has a passion for slow fashion: buy less but by better. Browse the gorgeous pieces, as she goes in and out of the back room finding things she thinks you'll love. Pick yourself out a magnificent Valentino blazer or an Yves Saint Laurent suit in great condition, and for a very reasonable price. [gigisdressingroom.com](http://gigisdressingroom.com)

### Second Nature

Just a few steps from Gigi's is the small but mighty Second Nature, situated in one of the oldest buildings in Walthamstow. A Grade II listed weatherboard shack, this was once Jones's Butchers Shop dating back to 1750, and is now a health food shop with everything you need, from organic cruelty free beauty products to fresh produce. The shop stands next to one of the great trees of London, the Wood Street Horse Chestnut, thought to be over 175 years old.

### Wood Street Indoor Market

No mention of Wood Street is complete without the unique indoor market, built on the site of a cinema from 1912 to 1955. The twisting, colourful tunnels are full to the brim with independent businesses selling delicious food, vintage clothing and jewellery, antiques, vinyl and local art. Top tip: Don't let the quaint wooden front fool you, it's much bigger than you think, keep going! [woodstreetindoormarket.co.uk](http://woodstreetindoormarket.co.uk)

### The Viking Store

Just a very brief mention of one of the more unique

places on Wood Street, The Viking Shop, providing the community with all their Viking needs from helmets to period tents. Well worth a look! [thevikingstore.co.uk](http://thevikingstore.co.uk)

## SPOT THIS

Being the Borough of Culture 2019, you would expect to find a healthy dose of talented artists here. Turn right as you come out of the Overground station and you'll see a mural for Portrait of Neon artist Chris Bracey, the inspirational figure behind the beloved God's Own Junkyard, painted by Wood Street Walls, an organisation that seeks to empower and support the local community through thoughtful and engaging artworks. Wander in the direction of Forest Road to see more wonderful street art.

## AND ONE MORE THING...

Local artist Angry Dan has been brightening up parts of Walthamstow for some time. Look out for his bold paintings merged with limericks, eight of which were commissioned for Waltham Forest's year as the London Borough of Culture. [angrydan.com](http://angrydan.com)



## And beyond

Roughly a five-minute walk from the Overground station you'll find God's Own Junkyard, surrounded by local gin distillers **Mother's Ruin**, and well-known brewery **Wild Card**. After a refreshing beverage, walk around the corner to Orford Road, the heart of Walthamstow Village, a picturesque road packed full of shops, pubs and restaurants including **Eat17**, **Orford Tapas** and **The East London Sausage Company**. It's also home to one of the poshest Spar's ever, part of Eat17. The minimart is now also home to a sushi bar by **Ohba Leaf Kitchen**. Find it at the back.

## DON'T MISS

Two new arrivals coming to the area soon, a branch of much-loved ramen bar **Tonkatsu** and new independent fish and chip shop and restaurant **Orford's Chippy**.



## CHEFS IN SCHOOLS

Founded in a Hackney primary school in 2014, Chefs in Schools was set up to transform the health of children through food culture, education and training chefs and kitchen teams to make school food from scratch. But since the pandemic, their work has become as vital, and urgent, as ever. They've been working tirelessly on the ground to provide vulnerable children and their families with meals. To date, they have cooked and delivered over 300,000 meals.

Most recently they launched the short film, *Tinned Pears*, directed by Libby Burke Wilde, to raise awareness for #EndChildFoodPoverty campaign, which is calling on the Government to implement changes to the National Food Strategy. 🍷

**READ MORE AND DONATE AT:**  
[chefsinschools.org.uk/end-child-food-poverty](https://chefsinschools.org.uk/end-child-food-poverty). You can also donate and download a copy of *Staying In: Recipes and Stories from Isolation* at [stayinginthebook.com](https://stayinginthebook.com)



PHOTOGRAPH: KATE KUZMINOVA



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