

99 REASONS WE LOVE BRITAIN

America and Britain may be connected by a common language, but it's a whole different world as you venture down the rabbit hole. And, for this issue, to Wonderland we traveled, assembling a trove of treasures along the way. Here is our collection of favorite things from the kingdom where no man is an island, but there is an Isle of Man.

Compiled by *Out* editors Brandon Presser, Aaron Hicklin, Matthew Breen, Jerry Portwood, R. Kurt Osenlund, Julien Sauvalle, Jesse Steinbach, and James McDonald



1.

JODIE HARSH

For Britain's best-known drag queen it's all in the music.

No lip-syncing, no singing, no dancing, no jokes. But if that makes British performer Jodie Harsh sound like she wouldn't last the first round in, say, a televised search for the next drag superstar, think again.

Harsh is the hottest drag DJ going. Her current gay club night, Room Service, has requests from people from the other side of the world, desperate to get photographed there. "I get people from Australia going, 'I want a Room Service picture,' " she explains, referring to the ultra-airbrushed, wildly sexy shirtless shots the club takes of its patrons, which inevitably end up as slightly disingenuous profile pictures on dating apps. "They can get a bit cartoonish sometimes, but I don't care."

A journalism graduate of the London College of Fashion, Harsh—real name Jay Clarke, drag name adapted from "a crappy British celebrity called Jodie Marsh"—started working club night doors but quickly became queen bee at Circus, her champagne- and celebrity-fueled noughties club. Circus ran for six years from 2006, featured credible DJs (Robyn, Róisín Murphy, and the xx all played), and drew incredible guests: Kate Moss brought the paparazzi, the Geldof girls were regulars, and actress Jaime Winstone and pop star Paloma Faith became proper pals. "Alexander McQueen, Kelly

Osbourne, and John Galliano were regulars; Amy Winehouse would usually rock up for the last five minutes," recalls Harsh. "It was a real moment."

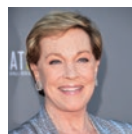
But it's as a DJ and producer that Harsh has really pushed the limits of what a drag queen can do. She was too busy to organize her 30th birthday party in February this year because she was playing Madonna's U.K. launch of *Rebel Heart*. She's DJed the MTV and Brit Awards. Her remixes of Beyoncé's "Blow" and "Pretty Hurts" both hit number 1 on the Billboard dance charts, and she's been number 1 in her own right in Europe on an EP featuring former Spice Girl Mel C. All of this, you'll note, way before any of RuPaul's children heard of iTunes. "I don't jump on stage and perform. DJing has always been my hook," she says. "I get booked because I'm a really good DJ, and I have this look. And there aren't any other drag queen DJs. Well there are, but..."

Right now Jodie Harsh is at a pivotal point in her career, her trajectory headed onward and upward. She will be a judge on the U.K. version of *Drag Race*, and there's a publishing deal, with her co-writing with ex-Girls Aloud star Nicola Roberts and *Ray of Light* producer William Orbit. She doesn't rule out stepping in front of the mic herself either. "That's kind of up for negotiation at the moment. I would like to be Diplo in a wig. That's where I'm aiming for." —COLIN CRUMMY

2.-5.

DAMES & SIRS

Lancelot could swing a sword, but could he throw a zinger like Maggie Smith?



DAME JULIE ANDREWS

Whether it's bringing the hills to life with a tune or helping to revive Lady Gaga's career, the woman many remember as Fräulein Maria or Mary Poppins has a knack for emitting regal vitality.



SIR IAN MCKELLEN

This gay legend had a banner year in 2015, giving the performance of his career in *Mr. Holmes*, and serving as a grand marshal for New York's Pride parade. But he'll always be the world's fiercest wizard to us.



DAME JUDI DENCH

She ended her stint in the Bond series as the other divine Miss "M," but Judi Dench is still an actress to be reckoned with at 80.



DAME MAGGIE SMITH

Whether she's bringing audiences to their feet in the West End, or questioning the concept of a "week-end" on *Downton Abbey*, this drama queen can command a room without lifting a finger—save the extended pinky at tea time.



6.

AFTERNOON TEA

Tea drinking has been popular in Britain since the 17th century, when the great diarist Samuel Pepys recorded drinking his first "Cupp of Tee," in September 1660, but it was a 19th-century duchess who popularized Britain's signature ritual. Anna Russell, Duchess of Bedford, was reacting against the pesky Victorian trend of eating dinner at 9 P.M. when she instituted a mid-afternoon stopgap of tea with rounds of bread and jam that quickly caught on with the neighbors. It took the gregarious Edwardians to elevate this humble snack into a social event, by taking tea out of the home and into the lobbies of London's fashionable hotels, such as the Savoy in Covent Garden, which still does it best, and Claridge's in Mayfair. Wherever you end up, if you don't find cucumber sandwiches, and scones with clotted cream (always from Devon or Cornwall), you're doing something wrong.

7.

EAST LONDON

The East End has come a long way since Jack the Ripper.

London's lofty rents have forced students and struggling artists to desert the West End in favor of the East, where they find more livable space to let their creativity fly. But with the 2012 Olympics and the new Overground rail came yuppies and hipster families, and those who made Spitalfields and Shoreditch hubs for design and nightlife are now looking for affordable grounds in Dalston and beyond. Still, there's fun to be had when you go East, and we've got the lowdown.

8. STREET ART

Shoreditch has increasingly been under threat of real estate developers, who favor luxury flats over its street art masterworks. Luckily, the local community is fighting back to preserve the neighborhood's facades. Book a tour with Pepe Martinez to go on a fascinating hunt for Banksy and his acolytes (some pieces are tricky to find on your own) before they disappear completely. JoseMartinez@hotmail.co.uk

9. THE HAWKSMOOR

A meat lover's haven tucked in a dimly lit tavern, The Hawksmoor boasts some of the tastiest chateaubriand we've ever sampled, and cocktails to match. Beef is served by the gram here, and the waiters are skillfully trained to help you decide how much you're able to handle. Just make sure you save enough room for the sticky toffee pudding—beyond delicious (find the recipe on page 87). TheHawksmoor.com

10. HOUSE OF HACKNEY

Until it opened in 2010, British prints were dominated by Liberty, the West End fashion institution. But HoH's exotic birds, leafy palm trees, and Moorish patterns bring a fresh twist to tradition, and they're available on anything from mugs to armchairs. Warning:

If you go in, it's virtually impossible to leave empty-handed. HouseOfHackney.com

11. ALBAM

If you must make one quick stop to refill your closet, Albam is your go-to. The British menswear brand recently set up shop in Spitalfields, its third outpost across the city. Look for its perfectly cut tees, outstanding outerwear, and made-in-U.K. denim jeans. AlbamClothing.com

12. CEREAL KILLER CAFE

You could hardly get more hip than this bar, which specializes in cereals—and not much else. Even though you can buy an entire box for the price of a small bowl here, Cereal Killer's main draw isn't affordability, but sugary 1980s nostalgia. As you peruse the cafe's expansive menu, you'll feel like a kid in a supermarket, except this time Mommy won't pay the bill. CerealKillerCafe.co.uk

13. ONE FINE STAY

Headquartered in London, the savvy hospitality service puts a luxury spin on Airbnb with upscale digs and a legion of dedicate gofers committed to offering hotel-like service. East End pads really embrace the area's mod-artist vibe. OneFineStay.com





VISIT BRITAIN (STREET SCENES). COURTESY OF LOCATIONS (CEREAL KILLER CAFE, HOUSE OF HACKNEY, THE HAWKSMOOR, ALBAM), TRISTAN FEWINGS/GETTY IMAGES (CRAIG GREEN), JOHN PHILLIPS/GETTY IMAGES (AGI & SAM)

14-16. LONDON MENS- WEAR STORES WE LOVE

14. SUNSPEL

If you admired Sunspel when Daniel Craig donned the navy Riviera polo shirt in *Casino Royale*, then grab one for yourself at this Soho boutique. The brand has been specializing in high-quality cotton knit apparel since 1860. We're big fans of the boxer shorts and super-soft Pima tees—and, of course, whatever Craig is wearing. 40 Old Compton St.; Sunspel.com

15. NATURAL SELECTION

Founded as a denim brand in 2009, Natural Selection has since expanded its ready-to-wear collection to include all men's essentials. The young label features a neutral color palette—whites, grays, blues—combined with clean lines and relaxed, slimming tailoring. We wanted just about everything in the store, but settled for a pair of navy-dotted white shorts. 46 Monmouth St.; NaturalSelectionLondon.com

16. THE VINTAGE SHOWROOM

This shop's museum vibe and extensive collection of mid-20th-century work-, military-, and sportswear will have you trying on more 1960s-era leather jackets and green army coats than you can count. Check out the additional racks of goods downstairs, and consider booking an appointment at the showroom, near Notting Hill, for personal design and styling inspiration. 14 Earldom St.; TheVintageShowroom.com



17-20. THE NEW GARDE

When it introduced a separate menswear fashion week to its calendar in 2012, London returned as a game changer on the global style map. It also shed light on a new generation of U.K.-based talent. Meet the wild creatives.

17.

CRAIG GREEN

His designs defy the conventions of ready-to-wear: Is this fashion or abstract art, or perhaps a bit of both? Whether he catches on or not, Green has made his way into edgy editorials for *GQ Style*, and FKA Twigs wore his label in her latest music video.

Craig-Green.com

18.

J.W. ANDERSON

Master of androgyny Jonathan Anderson can be credited for bringing back an unabashedly queer twist to menswear. His influence is felt in the new fall collections, from Gucci to Baja East, which all echoed his taste for gender bending.

J-W-Anderson.com

19.

AGI & SAM

Agi Mdmulla and Sam Cotton's print-tastic collaboration with Topman in 2013 raised their status worldwide. Now their smart and playful runway shows are always a seasonal must-see.

AgiandSam.com

20.

CHRISTOPHER KANE

His love for geometric patterns and deconstructed silhouettes recalls some of Nicolas Ghesquière's best work at Balenciaga, but with a very British retro-futuristic feel.

ChristopherKane.com



21.-22. MY FAVORITE HANGOUTS J.W. ANDERSON

The British Museum

"It is the world in one building. It is one of the most incredible combinations of old and new architecture." *Great Russell St.*

Clissold Park

"It is beautiful and vast. You forget you are in the center of London." *Green Lanes*



Men's personal shopping lounge



Amy Beth Hayes in Mr. ERLAIN Selfridge



23.

SELFRIDGES & CO.

At a glance, Selfridges & Co. looks more museum piece than contemporary hub. The sole majestic presence on the British capital's congested Oxford Street, the London store opened in 1909, and the building retains much of its period charm. The Queen of Time, a 1931 bronze-and-blue clock, sits grandly above the front entrance, crying out for couples to meet under it. But if the architecture speaks of bygone romance, Selfridges' shopping is a much more contemporary experience. A fashionable vision runs throughout the project, from luxury goods to hip restaurants.

At Selfridges, commerce is raised to an art form. The shopfront window displays, whether sending political messages (the current campaign, Project Ocean, raises water pollution awareness) or Christmas cheer, are set as if in picture frames in an art gallery. A Selfridges shopping bag is a graphic design dream of block black text on egg yolk yellow.

For more exclusive attention, try the personal-shopping experience. As you search for the perfect blazer or fitted pants, lounge in the sitting room, with its comfy sofas and ample fashion reference materials. Three suites are used for private fittings, where natty royals and movie stars are known to show up regularly, according to Joe Ottaway, the stylist who heads up the service.

Once you've exhausted yourself browsing, head to the rooftop to refuel at Vintage Salt. Inspired by a Cornish fishing village, the concept restaurant is relaxed and perfect for lounging on a summer afternoon. Along with great fresh seafood (try the harissa-roasted sea trout), don't pass up the Chocolate Burger for dessert; it's a confection that mimics a bun and fixings with sweet surprises, along with a side of sugary churros as "fries." —**COLIN CRUMMY**

24.-27.

WORD ON THE STREET

Good reads in Great Britain



FOYLES

The new Foyle's flagship location on London's Charing Cross Road is an impeccably designed literary heaven. The 112-year-old bookstore, which once held the record as the world's biggest, still claims the largest range of books in the U.K. It's a welcome place to get lost. 107 Charing Cross Rd., London; Foyle's .co.uk



MR. B'S EMPORIUM OF READING DELIGHTS

A claw-foot tub book display, Tintin comic wallpaper, and toilets covered in reviews make Mr. B's Emporium in Bath a standout go-to for bibliophiles. Head to the shop for an author discussion, or opt for some quiet time in a rentable reading booth. 14-15 John St., Bath; MrBsEmporium.com

28.

SCARFES BAR AT ROSEWOOD HOTEL

The Rosewood London, a gorgeous heap of marble, was once the stuffy headquarters of an insurance company. Today the 5-star property is a favorite of pop and movie stars (Taylor Swift, Cameron Diaz, and Leonardo DiCaprio among them), and its bar is the center of the action. Located in Holborn, Scarfes—named for artist Gerald Scarfe, whose cartoons adorn the walls—serves up classic cocktails and bottles of bubbly in what feels like a stately library in a baronial mansion. Behind the bar, the sexy guys filling your drinks want to make you feel like a regular. Let 'em.

252 High Holborn, London; ScarfesBar.com



29.

THE SHARD

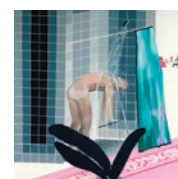
Move over Big Ben—London's got a new phallic homage to human progress: more than a thousand feet of spiking glass. Britain's 21st-century response to Paris's Eiffel Tower, the Shard has dramatically changed the city's landscape, pulling away from its museum-like center. Visitors can tour the tower with a ticket straight to the top, but we prefer the full experience at the **Shangri-La Hotel**, which lives high in the translucent structure. Try dinner at Ting, the signature restaurant, and enjoy a menu of elegantly prepared food that mirrors the chic simplicity of the Shard itself. At sunset, sip cocktails that draw upon the brand's Asian roots. 31 St. Thomas St.; Shangri-La.com

30.–33.

LOVE IS FREE

A homoerotic art tour of London's many public museums

Venus and Mars by Sandro Botticelli (c. 1485) This Renaissance masterpiece depicts the goddess of love desperately trying to get the attention of Mars, who would rather lie there, flaunting his flawless bod. National Gallery



Man in Shower in Beverly Hills by David Hockney (1964)

Hockney's famed male nude gives serious competition to the other contemporary works in the museum's dizzying collection, including those of Warhol, Rothko, and Mapplethorpe. Tate Modern

Triptych—August 1972 by Francis Bacon

This harrowing series painted after the suicide of Bacon's partner, George Dyer, shows the pair in a pose that suggests a sexual encounter. Tate Britain



Discobolus by Myron (c. 450 B.C.)

There's no shortage of naughty bits in room 69 of the British Museum, but this athletic nude by Myron might be our favorite. Look also for marble busts of gay Roman emperor Hadrian, displayed next to his lover Antinous. The Warren Cup, embossed with man-on-man sex scenes, adds an extra X-rated touch to your visit. British Museum



PAPERSMITHS

The airy light-wood aesthetic will remind you of a Scandinavian shop. You'll find beautiful desk accessories at this Bristol gem—everything from brass pencil sharpeners to dyed-fabric notebooks—as well as an impressive array of local and international zines. 6A Boyces Ave., Bristol; Papersmiths.co.uk



RICHARD BOOTH'S BOOKSHOP

Tucked in the center of Hay-on-Wye (page 60), Richard Booth's Bookshop offers a comprehensive selection of reads. Peruse new and vintage collections (we found a first-edition James Baldwin!) before grabbing toast with jam at the café followed by a movie in the cinema down the hall. 44 Lion St., Hay-on-Wye; BoothBooks.co.uk



34.

THE W LONDON, LEICESTER SQUARE

Best for... Design

At the Leicester Square outpost of the urbane W hotel brand—on the doorstep of Chinatown and central London's so-gay Soho district—design is the star of the show. The exterior is frosted like a giant metropolitan iceberg. Guests step off the lobby elevator and are greeted by a phalanx of hanging mirrorballs. The room design is all sex-forward minimalism: Showers and toilets are hidden behind mirrored walls and glass. In some rooms, rather distinctively, the sink, vanity, and desk space are condensed into a central structure—like a kitchen island. Breakfast is served at Jean-Georges Vongerichten's chic Spice Market restaurant: It's like admittance to an opium den with a buffet. WLondon.co.uk

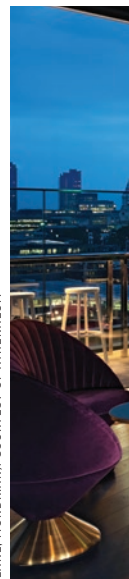


35.

ST. MARTINS LANE

Best for... Hospitality

You'd think this hotel would have a penchant for the dramatic, considering its West End location, but St. Martins keeps things slick and simple, merging natural touches with modern decor. Elevators soothe with their Asian-inspired grass imagery, and many suite walls display a single small, mounted plant. The service, however, is anything but minimalistic. Staffers greet VIPs with champagne and candy on ice, and their 24-hour room service menu is as vast as it is convenient, with fresh fruit and coffee for the early bird and ice cream and thin-cut chips for the night owl. Those in search of a drink will be welcomed to the Blind Spot, a semi-hidden bar that's a favorite among locals, and specializes in tea-infused cocktails. StMartinsLane.com



COURTESY OF W HOTELS. NIAL CLUTTON (ST. MARTINS LANE, MONDRIAN). COURTESY OF ATHENAEUM

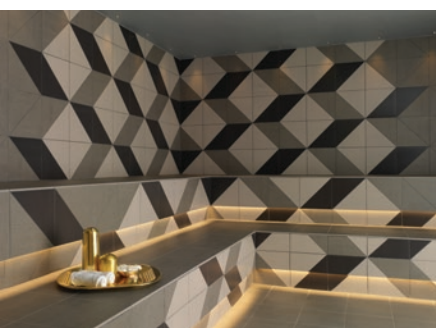
36. ATHENAEUM HOTEL AND APARTMENTS

**Best for... Ab Fab
Living**

This hotel in Mayfair is all about friendly glamour, so find a spot to relax in the Garden Room, with the “living wall”—a vertical garden stretching eight stories up—as a backdrop, or enjoy a lavish afternoon tea service (the “Gentleman’s” tea includes savory items and a dram of whisky). If you really want to feel like a local, however, book one of the luxury apartments in the Victorian townhouses. Complete with a kitchenette, stylish



sitting room, and private entrance, these suites will make you feel like you’ve decided to call London home rather than bop in for a short stay. The townhouses are where many A-listers have had discreet stays (Steven Spielberg reportedly set up an editing suite and cut *E.T.*, *Close Encounters*, and *Indiana Jones* there), so be on the lookout: You might get a star sighting at no extra charge. AthaeneumHotel.com



37. MONDRIAN LONDON

Best for... Views

Conveniently located west of the Tate Modern and Tower Bridge on the South Bank, the Mondrian London, inaugurated in 2014, is one of the city’s newest luxury design hotels. The nautical-inspired lobby, dotted with massive contemporary sculptures and copper-coated walls, feels like a submarine right out of Jules Verne’s imagination. But the real show here is in the rooms: Book one of the river view suites, complete with sliding windows and balconies overlooking the Thames, and you’ll have front-row seats to the city’s daily ebb and flow. The Malin + Goetz products in the bathrooms, a state-of-the-art spa, and a 56-seat screening room are some additional perks that will make you wish you could extend your stay. MondrianLondon.com

38.–42. FIVE THINGS TO BRING HOME

These souvenirs we found along the way are worth coughing up the extra baggage fee.



FROM LONDON
Pajamas by **Derek Rose**,
\$275; Derek-Rose.com



FROM BATH
Shave oil by **Refinery**,
1 oz., \$44; [Aromatherapy
Associates.com](http://AromatherapyAssociates.com)



FROM LLANDEILO
Triangle-weave throw by
Toast, \$380; Toa.st



FROM WYE VALLEY
Mug by **Halcyon Days**,
\$45; HalcyonDaysUSA.com



FROM EDINBURGH
Isle of Lewis Chess
Set, \$325, available at
National Museum of
Scotland; NMS.ac.uk



43.

LA ROUX

Singer Elly Jackson is a girl on fire.

From Kate Bush to Amy Winehouse, Britain has long proved a wellspring of strong, singular, and iconoclastic female musicians. Elly Jackson, better known as La Roux, is nothing like Kate Bush or Amy Winehouse, of course, except in one key regard: “We’re quite ballsy women,” she says. “There’s definitely an attitude there.” She recalls being thrown out of classes for challenging the teachers. “I’ve always just questioned everything, and some people find it infuriating in me, and some find it refreshing,” she says, before quickly reconsidering. “Actually, very few people find it refreshing.”

Away from the classroom, Jackson’s spiky, playful, anti-authoritarianism has found expression in two terrific albums. The first, her Grammy-winning 2009 debut, *La Roux*, put Jackson and her then-collaborator, Ben Langmaid, on the map as exponents of a refurbished ’80s synth-pop that found comparisons with early Eurythmics and the Human League. By her own account, the road to her 2014 follow-up, *Trouble in Paradise*, was long and arduous—she and Langmaid parted ways en route—but the result is an epic of muscular songwriting and slinky hooks, from the bouncy invocation of Tom Tom Club in “Kiss and Not Tell,” to the cool, disco-inflected “Sexotheque,” and “Tropical Chancer.”

Jackson, who grew up not far from Adele and Florence Welch, in London, attributes much of her distinctive voice to Britain’s cities. “I don’t think I would have been nearly as inspired to make music if not for the culture that surrounded me,” she says. “Tooting, just down the road, is completely Asian, and Brixton, where I live, is completely

Jamaican and African, and all that mixed in with a very liberal kind of left-wing thinking derived from white hippies from the ’60s.”

It’s tempting to suggest that the dynamic of the city—its brashness and vitality—has rubbed off on her, too. “I definitely have always had a fire,” she says. “I get angry very easily, I get very emotional, I can cry with happiness at the drop of a hat.” She struggled in 2009 after her single “Bulletproof” reached number 1 in the U.K., and number 8 on the Billboard Hot 100. Celebrity proved a double-edged sword that earned her new fans but threatened to overwhelm what made her distinctive. “I’d meet people who didn’t even know my name was La Roux, but they knew the song,” she recalls. “They didn’t know what I was trying to represent, or that I was trying to be another woman to look up to, one who didn’t have her tits out, and who represented something else for people, sexually, all of which is fine—that’s the mark of having a common ground of success—but it’s not as easy to live with.”

That’s one reason it took five years for Jackson to release her sophomore album. La Roux may have lost fans in the interim—*Trouble in Paradise* was more of a critical than a commercial success—but don’t expect that to faze her. “There was too much possibility, after ‘Bulletproof,’ for me to be seen as a female pop star with not a great deal more to offer than some dance moves and a catchy melody, which I couldn’t live with at all,” she says. “Unless you believe 100% in what you do, it will get fiddled with and diminished. I’ve seen people lose their fire, and I don’t ever want to lose mine.” Don’t worry; she won’t.

—AARON HICKLIN

44.-48.

GIRL POWER

Our favorite Union Jackies of pop



SPICE GIRLS

Hit Song: “Wannabe”
Our Pick: “2 Become 1”

The high-kicking, peace sign-wielding queens of Girl Power will reign (viva!) forever with their five-spiced recipe of zig-a-zig-ah. We fell head-over-platform-heels in love with each of them; tracksuits and flag dresses be damned.



LITTLE MIX

Hit Song: “Wings”
Our Pick: “Black Magic”

Manufactured in the same X-Factory that created One Direction, these R&B-belted Bratz dolls are currently carrying the Girl Power torch.



ALL SAINTS

Hit Song: “Never Ever”
Our Pick: “Pure Shores”

This British-Canadian quartet gifted us with the best 57 seconds of spoken-word (never) ever.



THE SATURDAYS

Hit Song: “What About Us”
Our Pick: “Missing You”

This five-some (think Spice Girls 2.0) have been dutifully cranking out radio fodder for the last eight years, bolstered by Vanessa’s legit vocal chops.



BANANARAMA

Hit Song: “Venus”
Our Pick: “Cruel Summer”

The original flavor of lady-singing arguably paved the way for the legion of aforementioned chanteuses.

66

49. LONDON FOR LOVERS

TOM DALEY &
DUSTIN LANCE BLACK

Duck and Waffle

“It’s the highest restaurant in the U.K., on the 40th floor of the Heron Tower, with wrap-around floor-to-ceiling windows, accompanied by the best views in the city. It can be a great romantic spot, particularly if it’s raining. Each time Lance is in London, we eat there at least twice, once for breakfast and once for dinner.”

*The Heron Tower,
110 Bishopsgate*

50.

POLARI LITERARY SALON

For five years running, the Polari First Book Prize, announced in October, has been awarding its top honor to a U.K.-based writer whose first book tackles LGBT topics in poetry, prose, fiction, or nonfiction (last year’s winner was Somali-British writer Diriye Osman for *Fairytales for Lost Children*). The prize is an outgrowth of the monthly Polari literary salon—named for the gay code language adapted from slang used by sailors and theater folk. The salon, at the Southbank Centre, began in 2007 in the upstairs room of a bar in Soho, and has been invigorating London’s literary scene ever since. PolariLiterarySalon.co.uk



54

51.

WALES

For a tiny country, Wales can feel surprisingly spacious, particularly in the Wye Valley, where hills ripple in all directions, and in the West, where the dramatic Pembrokeshire coastline rises and tumbles through a series of prismatic coves. Like much of Britain, Wales has become adept at mixing old-school charm with contemporary savoir-faire. And there's a strong locavore trend that animates restaurants and hotels alike. You'll likely end up eating Welsh lamb, drinking Welsh cider, and being reminded by locals at every turn that Wales is like England. Only better.



56



52. LLANGOED HALL

A sprawling Edwardian manor, Llangoed Hall is straight out of the board game *Clue*, though instead of finding Miss Peacock with the candlestick, you'll discover feather-stuffed couches and dripping chandeliers. The immaculately manicured 17 acres feature a chicken farm (pick out your egg for breakfast!) and organic gardens with just about every green you can imagine—obscure edible flowers alongside traditional herbs like sage and mint. Don't miss the hedge maze—impossible to navigate after a few cocktail-hour whiskys.

53. HAY-ON-WYE

Like some kind of holy land for bibliophiles, Hay-on-Wye is a village in which nearly every establishment has been transformed into a bookshop, from the church to the local cinema. It's a secondhand shopper's dream. Don't miss the Honesty Bookshop, where you

can drop 50 pence in the slot and grab as you go.

54. TINTERN ABBEY

This massive Cistercian abbey overlooking the river Wye has inspired poets including Wordsworth, Tennyson, and even Ginsberg, who wrote of the "clouds passing through skeleton arches," in his poem "Wales Visitation." Founded in 1131, it's an imposing stone carcass of its former grandeur, the church's hallowed interior and gaping windows exuding a creepy but majestic spirit.

55. LUNCH

Let your nose guide you deep into the countryside to find Wright's Food Emporium, one of Britain's most legit farm-to-table establishments. House-made pickles, vats of wine (for regulars to replenish their own bottles), locally smoked meats, a cake buffet, and freshly baked bread woo discerning eaters from all over



58. TENBY

With all the British whimsy of *Mary Poppins*, and the oceanic charm of the French Riviera, Tenby is a bolthole for summer-seekers looking for sociable beaches dotted with shade-bearing umbrellas, throwback ice cream parlors, and a small town center hemmed by old fort ruins.

59. BARAFUNDLE BAY

The snaking hedge-lined road grows thinner as the smell of sea salt fills the air, and when the path peters out in Stackpole you're a short walk away from Wales's most prized beach. Follow the scores of towel-toting locals along the unmarked path up the bluff, and at the far side of the cliff walk, the haunting ruin of a medieval fortification points the way down into the idyllic sandy basin. The thick green foliage and curling blue tide seem practically Caribbean, though the water remains refreshingly cool, even on the sunniest day.

60. ROCH CASTLE

Towering above the village of Roch, its namesake castle is an elegant relic from more than over 800 years ago. Until recently, the site was just another structure haunting the countryside. Then a locally born architect bought the property and transformed the castle into a six-room boutique hotel. Though the exterior remains antique, the interior is positively modern, with stark black-and-white stylings throughout.

61. ST. DAVIDS

The burial place of the patron saint of Wales, the settlement of St. Davids is the U.K.'s smallest city—a designation traditionally given to any civic area that possesses a cathedral. Hidden away at the very western edge of the rambling Pembrokeshire coast, it was a place of worship so coveted that it was believed a pilgrimage twice made to St. Davids should bear equal weight to one visit to Rome.

the island. Try the rarebit sandwich, an elevated version of the Welsh original, and wash it down with a regional cider.

56. CARREG CENNEN

Wales's most compelling crumbling castle sits atop a grassy mound with an expansive view of rolling meadows. Once it was a turreted stronghold; all that remains today is the elaborate bones of a multi-story fortress—a jungle gym for curious tourists. Don't miss the cave below, signposted with a small arrow. The grounds are perfect for a picnic lunch.

57. ST. BRIDES SPA HOTEL

Perched above the village of Saundersfoot, the hotel welcomes guests with sweet staff and marine-themed decor. The rooms on the second floor have beautiful views of the harbor below, but the pièce de résistance is the on-site spa's outdoor infinity pool.





62-66. DOCTOR WHO?

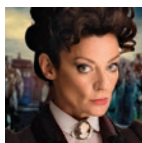
A cult favorite for more than 50 years, the BBC's enigmatic time-traveler has become a queer icon.

It turns out that 1963 was a banner year for British pop culture. Both the Beatles and The Rolling Stones released their first singles, and on November 23 the BBC broadcast the premiere episode of its greatest-ever TV franchise, *Doctor Who*. The long-running series features a time-traveling sleuth whose various charms have included oversized colorful scarves, a tendency to wolf down jelly babies, and traveling through space and time via a 1950s police phone box known as the TARDIS. He is also sardonic, impatient, and frequently cranky, particularly as played by current incarnation Peter Capaldi. Like great British sleuths James Bond and Sherlock Holmes, much of the character's success rests on his ability to keep his head while everyone else is losing theirs. After a fallow period through the 1990s, when the show was off the air, *Doctor Who* was revived in 2005 by the gay screenwriter Russell T. Davies, best known for *Queer as Folk*. Davies has brought the series thoroughly up to date, bolstering female roles, and even introducing some queer characters. A few of our favorites:



CAPTAIN JACK HARKNESS

This pansexual space hopper claims to have dated Marcel Proust, enjoys playing naked hide-and-seek, and earned immortality and a steamy spin-off series, *Torchwood*.



THE MASTER/MISTRESS

The Master, a fellow Time Lord, was always the Doctor's archenemy, until he regenerated as a woman and is now known as The Mistress, or Missy.



MADAME VASTRA

The prehistoric lizard-queen took a Victorian chambermaid as a wife. They even shared a sexy lesbo-reptilian on-screen kiss in an episode watched by seven million Brits.



CANTON DELAWARE III

In a 2011 episode, "Day of the Moon," this former FBI agent from 1969 helps save the earth. Then the Doctor asks Nixon to offer his blessing to Canton's marrying his boyfriend. How's that for positive representation?



67.

GREAT BRITISH BAKE OFF

Britain's sauciest export

For a master class in double entendres, the British public tune in to a surprising outlet: a BBC baking competition. Here, in the most genteel setting imaginable, where drama is concocted out of making a Victoria sponge cake, contestants are marked down for their "soggy bottoms," congratulated on "hot baps," and asked to refrain from "fiddling with [their] pirates."

The spicy innuendo is routinely doled out by the BBC's most prominent lesbian presenter, Sue Perkins. And with silver-bearded judge Paul Hollywood (a big hit with the bears), it's little wonder that the reality show has become an LGBT favorite worldwide, sold to over 20 territories globally.

Though baking was once thought the preserve of middle-aged straight women, the show allows aspiring bakers of all persuasions to come out in the kitchen. Like Edd Kimber, the season 1 champion and one of two male winners, both of whom are gay. "I wasn't the sporty or popular kid growing up, and baking was a bit of an escape for me," he says. "It was something I did with my mum, so doing it on the show almost felt like bringing it full circle." But perhaps the power of *Bake Off* is exemplified in runner-up Ruby Tandoh's journey. Pretty, young, popular, and female, she was vilified for appearing to flirt with judge Hollywood, an accusation unmasked as simply misogyny when she came out as gay in April.

While *Bake Off* revels in cheeky, old-fashioned innuendo, its freshness lies in challenging old-fashioned recipes of what it means to be a baker, be that middle-aged lady, gay boy or girl. —COLIN CRUMMY

68. NOËL COWARD HEARTS IAN FLEMING

The Original Bromance

One of the more unlikely friendships in English letters was that between Noël Coward, the gay bard of middle class England (whose plays, like *Brief Encounter*, made him a household name), and Ian Fleming, the creator of James Bond, and a notorious womanizer. Typically, Coward would act as Fleming's wingman, setting him up for affairs with women—then comforting them when he sought pastures new. The men were so close that Coward would sign his letters to Fleming "with smacking great



69–75. SARAH WATERS

One of Britain's most accomplished and successful authors, Waters has published six novels, including three—*Fingersmith*, *The Night Watch*, and *The Little Stranger*—that were shortlisted for the prestigious Man Booker Prize. Here, the writer identifies six British literary classics.

Great Expectations, Charles Dickens

I admire all of Dickens's novels, but this story of class, guilt, shame, and desire is the one that's affected me most. It often pops up in my own writing, in ways I never expect.

Rebecca, Daphne du Maurier

Du Maurier was a brilliant storyteller, and a great evoker of place. *Rebecca* is far and away her best work: troubling and vivid and slightly queer.

The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories, Angela Carter

This fabulous collection of reworked fairy tales blew me away when I first read it, at 18. I've returned to it many times since then, and always find something new in it.

The Persian Boy, Mary Renault

Renault was one of the great historical novelists, able to do justice to the strangeness of the past, even while bringing it to life for modern readers. *The Persian Boy*, I think, was her masterpiece.

Ghost Stories of an Antiquary, M.R. James

I've always loved a good ghost story, and James's supernatural tales are among the best. This collection contains the supremely unnerving "Oh, Whistle and I'll Come to You, My Lad."

My Secret Life, Anonymous, "Walter"

This anonymous multi-volume erotic memoir offers extraordinary insights into Victorian sexual life. Absolutely un-putdownable.

kisses," and when Fleming married for a second time in 1952, it was Coward and his lover, Cole, who were witnesses. By that time both men had bought homes in the Caribbean—Fleming called his Goldeneye—and entertained one another, and their Hollywood friends, at louche and lavish parties.



76. SCORING MR. BOND



SEAN CONNERY (1962–1971)

"You're a woman of many parts, Pussy!" (*Goldfinger*)

James Bond creator Ian Fleming wasn't too keen on the beefy, working-class, Scottish Connery's casting, hoping instead for suave Cary Grant. But like all those Bond girls, and generations of Bond fan boys, he was soon won over.

Style: 007

Gayness: 006 (Ex-bodybuilder, ex-chorus boy, those wigs, those short swimsuits!)

Sex appeal: 007

Total Bondness: 020



TIMOTHY DALTON (1987–1989)

"I'll do anything for a woman with a knife." (*The Living Daylights*)

The Royal Shakespeare Company Bond—Jean-Luc Picard plus hair, polo shirts, and too much angst—Dalton made only two Bond movies. Some say that was two too many.

Style: 004

Gayness: 003

Sex appeal: 001

Total Bondness: 008



GEORGE LAZENBY (1969)

"I've never had much to do with young women." (On Her Majesty's Secret Service)

The craggy Aussie was one of the world's highest-paid models working in Europe when he was cast to play Mr. Bond—after being spotted by producer Cubby Broccoli at the hairdresser. It's not known whether he was wearing the famous kilt he fills out nicely in the movie at the time.

Style: 006

Gayness: 006 (He even pretends to be gay at one point)

Sex appeal: 007 (That chin! Those calves! That sporrán!)

Total Bondness: 019



PIERCE BROSNAN (1995–2002)

Bond: I always enjoyed learning a new tongue.

Miss Moneypenny: You always were a cunning linguist, James. (Tomorrow Never Dies)

A good actor but an antiseptic Bond, Brosnan played Fleming's antihero updated politically by feminism but not aesthetically. By *Die Another Day* (2002), he resembled an '80s knitwear catalog model trapped inside a noughties computer game.

Style: 005

Gayness: 001

Sex appeal: 005

Total Bondness: 011



ROGER MOORE (1973–1985)

"Don't worry, darling. It's just a small hat belonging to a man of limited means who lost a fight with a chicken." (*Live and Let Die*)

The longest-serving Bond, and also the least physical, the always elegant Moore played Bond largely for camp laughs. A bit like a very heterosexual, well-armed Noël Coward.

Style: 007 (He was a *Persuader* and a *Saint*)

Gayness: 006 (Those catty quips, the arched eyebrows)

Sex appeal: 003 (Can you find his arse in those high-waisted flares?)

Total Bondness: 016



WINNER!

DANIEL CRAIG (2006–present)

Raoul Silva: [Caresses a restrained Bond's thighs and chest] ...first time for everything.

James Bond: What makes you think this is my first time? (*Skyfall*)

The first working-class Bond since Connery and also the first since the '60s to possess a body. And what a body! In that famous *Casino Royale* beach scene, Bond finally became his own Ursula Andress. No wonder the villains can't keep their hands off him.

Style: 007

Gayness: 007 (The first Bond to come out about his M4M past)

Sex appeal: 007 (You so would)

Total Bondness: 021



77.

NORTHERN IRELAND'S COASTAL CAUSEWAY ROUTE

Named for the legendary Giant's Causeway, a UNESCO World Heritage site, the coastal road in Northern Ireland takes in some of the most stunning scenery in all of the U.K. From lonely grassy valleys to towering seaside escarpments, it's easy to see why the region is frequently used as a filming location for *Game of Thrones*.

As you follow the road from Belfast, the first stop is the nine **Glens of Antrim**, a cluster of quiet villages tucked between a dramatic sequence of sawtooth fjords. Each glen has its

own name and fairy-tale legend, not to mention several charming shops, cafés, and B&Bs. *GoT* fans should pause at **Steensons** (TheSteensons.com) in Glenarm to check out the original jewelry used in the HBO hit. Not to be missed are the Lannister lion pendants, the Daenerys dragon brooches, and the "Hand of the King."

The winding glens straighten out as the sea cliffs climb higher near **Giant's Causeway**. Built by the gargantuan hero Finn MacCool to battle the Scottish giant Benandonner (according to local

lore), the collection of hexagonal stone is a testament to the intense volcanic activity that rocked the region more than 50 million years ago. Follow the **Shepherd's Steps** up along the cliff's edge for a bird's-eye perspective of these curious geological formations (including a boulder shaped oddly like a mammoth shoe).

Portstewart, farther beyond the realm of basalt stone, is the perfect reward after the trek through the surrounding rock ledges. During the summer, the town has a pleasant

vacation vibe, its long spread of peach-toned sand stretching below the main seaside street.

Head down to the beach via the public access point to find **Harry's Shack**, a bustling lunchtime joint framed in light wooden boards and scattered with picnic table seating. Voted one of the best eats in all of the U.K. by the National Restaurant Awards, Harry's makes no attempt to distinguish itself with its decor, but instead focuses completely on the food. The juicy megrim falls right off the bone, and the fish and chips are unfailingly soft and flaky.

Leave room for dessert at **Morelli's** (*MorellisOfPortstewart.co.uk*) in the center of town. A local institution opened by Italian immigrants before World War I, it seems the much-loved ice cream shop hasn't changed its Formica styling since the day it opened. Scoops of Honeycomb and Sea Salty Caramel are the biggest hits.

Follow the interior highway back to Belfast and reward yourself with a Pimm's Cup at **The Merchant Hotel's** cocktail bar (*TheMerchantHotel.com*). Situated in an old bank, the bar retains much of the original elegance, with Baccarat chandeliers and lounge chairs upholstered with sumptuous fabrics. The bar menu is so long that the managers have bound and printed its contents as a book, which is available for purchase and comes with a slew of recipes inside for DIY drinking.

—BRANDON PRESSER



78. THE RED HAND OF ULSTER

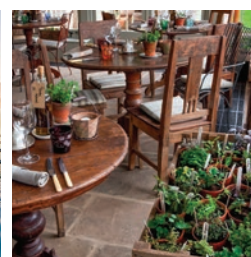
As the story goes, long ago there was a time when there was no rightful heir to the kingdom of Ulster (present-day northeast Ireland), so a boat race was organized among tribal overlords to determine the next in line—the winner would be the first to “touch” the land. When one aspiring king saw that he was losing the competition, he severed his hand and threw it at the shore. His badass gesture of bravery won him the race and made him king, while his bloody appendage served as the emblem of his rule.

The red hand is still used today to represent the Irish province of Ulster, the nine counties of which are divided: six belong to the United Kingdom, while the other three are a part of the Republic of Ireland. The division was made in 1921 largely to carve out a Protestant majority in Northern Ireland (mostly Scots and English people who had resettled on the island), away from the Irish Catholics.



80. HAMPTON COURT PALACE TURNS 500

Who doesn't love a costume drama? Though it hasn't been a home to the royals since 1760, Hampton Court Palace was once a favorite of Henry VIII, whose ghost (actually an actor portraying the corpulent monarch) still roams the halls. Just a 35-minute train ride south of London's Waterloo station, the palace, now celebrating its 500th anniversary, will excite any *Wolf Hall* fan and Anglophile. Among the can't-miss spots of the massive construction, created in both domestic Tudor and baroque architectural styles, are the kitchens Henry built to feed his entire court—some 1,000 people, whom the massive wine cellars kept in good spirits. The private apartments, drawing rooms, and royal tennis court (also Henry's) are spectacular, and the monumental gardens include the world's biggest grapevine. Don't forget to pick up a scratch-and-sniff map of the Georgian Court—featuring scents one might have found in the public dining room, the royal bath, and the royal toilet—and ponder the herbs and flowers that were sprinkled on the floor, to mask the stench of many unwashed bodies.



81. BATH

On your way to Bristol, stop in Bath for some well-deserved pampering. A popular student hub, Bath was colonized during Roman times when its natural hot springs were used to cure various ailments. Today the **Thermae Bath Spa** (*ThermaeBathSpa.com*) still taps the ancient source to supply its treatment rooms, four scented saunas, and two pools—including one on the roof with views of the city. For food and shelter, pull over at **The Pig-Near Bath** (*ThePigHotel.com*), a charming farm-to-table experience where all of the furniture and cutlery is mismatched, but in the most beguiling way. Try the homemade juices and flatbread pizzas to refuel, and don't forget to wave hello to the resident swine before getting on your way.

“

79. MY FAVORITE BELFAST HANGOUT

KRISTIAN NAIRN, *Hodor* on *Game of Thrones*

“Courtyard Cinema

takes place twice a month at White's Tavern, the oldest bar in Belfast. It's outdoors and they have wings and popcorn and show *The Goonies* and *Ghostbusters* and stuff like that. It's such an amazing atmosphere, gay and straight all together, and with the weather here, there's just enough cover to hide if it rains.”



82. 24 HOURS IN BRISTOL

You'll only need a day to discover why the European Green Capital of 2015 is also our pick for the U.K.'s beating heart of creativity.

11 A.M.

Start with a heart-pounding view from the **suspension bridge** atop **Clifton Village [1]**, Bristol's most picturesque neighborhood. Admire the bewitching Georgian and Regency-style row houses throughout, then book a "Swim and Lunch" package at the **Lido [2]** spa (\$54) to enjoy fresh smoked salmon on sourdough or Turkish poached eggs. Don't forget to wait 30 minutes before your dip in the open-air pool flanked by retro shuttered changing booths.

3 P.M.

Follow **Park Street** down the slope back into the city center, noting the neo-Gothic **Wills Memorial Building** before window-shopping amid the eclectic row of boutiques. **Fopp** offers a deftly curated selection of books, music, and films at bargain prices. The **Bristol Guild** is stocked with locally made ceramics and glassware. There is plenty of street art to discover as well—like Banksy's **Well Hung Lover [3]** at the intersection with Frogmore Street. If you're wandering around in late June,

as we were, you may catch the annual **Naked Bike Ride**, the theme of which is "as bare as you dare."

4 P.M.

Bristol's docklands have been lovingly overhauled into a hive of public projects, like prim parks and inventive sculptures—don't miss the metal tree made from solar panels that also charges your phone! Tour the **SS Great Britain**, an impeccably preserved passenger steamship from the mid-1800s, then check out **Watershed [4]**, a haven for artists across all media that doubles as an indie movie theater and café. Sample the brownie—made from a secret recipe that uses espresso beans to enhance the rich flavor.

7 P.M.

Hidden in a metal-lined basement bank vault, **The Ox [5]** is so much more than simply Bristol's best steakhouse. Sure, the mains are superlative—and the waiters offer a crash course on beef cuts and cooking styles—but the side dishes and savvy cocktails make

this meat house one of the best bites in Britain, and the National Restaurant Awards agree. Slather your rib-eye in the homemade béarnaise, and cut through the heaviness with the savory burned carrot salad (see page 87 for the recipe). Wash it down with the Quick Fix (Tanqueray gin, lemon, rhubarb syrup, rosé vermouth), the signature cocktail.

10 P.M.

Owned and operated by the Ox clan, **The Milk Thistle [6]** hides its sprawling space behind an unmarked, speakeasy-style door. Once inside, climb the Escher-like staircases to find four floors worth of large lounges with dark-wood moldings, gilded oil portraits, and taxidermic game. Try the Long Walk Home (brandy, sherry, chocolate bitters) or the Plum Bum (whiskey, Somerset Pomona, plum syrup). Reservations are recommended.

12 A.M.

Get your gay on in the blink-and-you'll-miss-it "gay village," where you'll find **Bent** and **Queenshilling** directly across the street from each other. Cheap swill and electro-pop thump tracks come in different iterations depending on the evening (revenge of the '90s, anyone?) and draw in a steady stream of the local folk until dawn.

83. BRISTOL ARTIST JOE MAGEE

British artist and filmmaker Joe Magee blends typography with bold colors and designs (see his original piece on page 48). "We're in an era of infinite images that are available via digital capturing," Magee, who studied graphic design at London College of Communication, explains. "The trick is to know how to sort through them and pick ones that tell the story you want to tell in the most economical way."

After living all over the U.K., Magee names Bristol as his favorite place to live and visit. "The city combines the prettiness of the harbor—with its cafés and bars—and the vibrancy that comes with a big arts sector. There are cool and interesting people who are opting to live just far enough away from the grinding aspects of London, but who can visit and work there easily on a day trip."

84.

EDINBURGH

When a city's New Town is roughly 300 years old, you know there's a lot of history to absorb; it's the perfect spot to find great new takes on haggis or a cozy café where you can curl up with a book. The annual Fringe Festival—when the city's population swells with jugglers, comedians, actors, and oddballs—brings in culture vultures, but Edinburgh has something for just about any visitor, any time of year. After traipsing the Royal Mile, from its imposing castle on a volcanic mountain to the Queen's Holyrood Palace, be sure to wander through Haymarket's bohemian thrift shops and pop into a pub. With all those bare men's legs peeking from below their kilts, Scotland's capital never disappoints.



86. ROYAL BOTANIC GARDEN

Let us count the reasons to make time for Edinburgh's beautiful garden (founded in 1670). First: The elemental slate cone by environmental sculptor Andy Goldsworthy sits in perfect equilibrium with the surrounding lawns and trees. Second: the Victorian Temperate Palm House, which—at 72 feet—is the tallest glasshouse in Britain. Then, sniff the New Reekie—the Scots' nomenclature for the titan arum, one of the world's largest and smelliest flowers. We also love Inverleith House, the 18th-century mansion at the center of the estate, one of Britain's loveliest galleries of contemporary art. And finally: It's free. RBGE.org.uk



85. PRESTONFIELD HOUSE

Located just outside the city center in a quaint neighborhood, the lushly decorated former Lord Provost's home (erected in 1687) is awash in crushed red velvet and gilded detail. The crimson aesthetic spills into the suites, giving it the feel of a chic, baroque bordello. The lavish breakfast spread will make you feel as pampered as past guests Grace of Monaco and Elton John. A framed portrait of Charles II hangs alone in an alcove since he's reported to have wanted a room to himself. Who can blame him? Prestonfield.com



88. ROSE STREET

A 10-minute walk from Edinburgh's Royal Mile is Rose Street, or the "amber mile"—a stretch of pedestrian-only alleyways between the larger Princes Street and George Street in Georgian-era New Town. What was once a lineup of servants' quarters and entrances—and, for a time, the red-light district—is now chockablock with restaurants, shops, and pubs (hence "amber"). We liked the Element pub and restaurant (ElementEdinburgh.co.uk) for its seafood and bite-sized haggis balls (complete with neeps and tatties), and there were indeed more pubs than you could sample in a month. Try the student-popular completist pub-crawl at your own risk.

87. CC BLOOMS

Named after the beloved *Beaches* character (played by Bette Midler), CC Blooms remains Edinburgh's foremost gay meeting point. It's in fact so iconic that "Do I know you from CC's?" is local code for "Are you gay?" Less of a dive than a glittery gay beacon, it's the anchor for the city's gay scene. CCBloomsEdinburgh.com

THE ISLE OF SKYE

Skye didn't get its moniker by chance. The name of the Inner Hebrides' largest island probably comes from the Norse words *ski* ("cloud") and *ey* ("island"). It's a misty, romantic place off the coast of the Scottish Highlands.

The island is approximately 50 miles long and just 25 miles at its widest, but the immensity of mountain ranges, lakes, jagged coastlines, bays, waterfalls, and tidal islands means that days of sightseeing could only scratch the surface. There are hardly a few square meters of land that aren't dramatic and ripe for Instagramming.

Skye is great for history hunters—the relative remoteness and the agricultural inhospitability mean the oldest evidence of human settlements hasn't been covered up by motorways and bedroom communities. Many ancient cairns (stone memorials or burial sites) and Iron Age subterranean earth houses are accessible via walking tours.

For sheer camera-ready topography, the **Cuillin mountain range** is a dramatic departure from any other British landscape. Climbers traversing the range—a rough seven miles from sea level to the bar of the **Sligachan Hotel** (Sligachan.co.uk), the cozy mountaineers' lodge—should plan on 15 to 20 hours. The **Trotternish landslide** is a geological feature that runs though 19 miles of the northernmost peninsula. The **Quirang** is a range of striking cliffs, and **The Old Man of Storr**, a photogenic pinnacle that can be seen for miles around, is a must-do for trail hikers. Want a dip instead of a lift? The **Fairy Pools of Glen Brittle**, near Carbost in the west, are popular with swimmers unafraid of the bracing, clear waters and magical surroundings.

90. DUNVEGAN CASTLE

The ancestral home of the chiefs of Clan MacLeod for 800 years, Dunvegan Castle is the oldest continuously inhabited castle in Scotland. The idyllic loch-side setting and tattered Fairy Flag lend the castle a certain ethereal feel. Legend has it that the flag possesses magical properties and has been used to win battles—and maybe even helped put out a fire that could have destroyed the entire place.

After ogling the antiques and formal gardens, hop on a soggy tour of the loch to peep chubby seals that flop around adorably, with no natural predators for miles.

92. MERCHANT BAR AT THE BOSVILLE

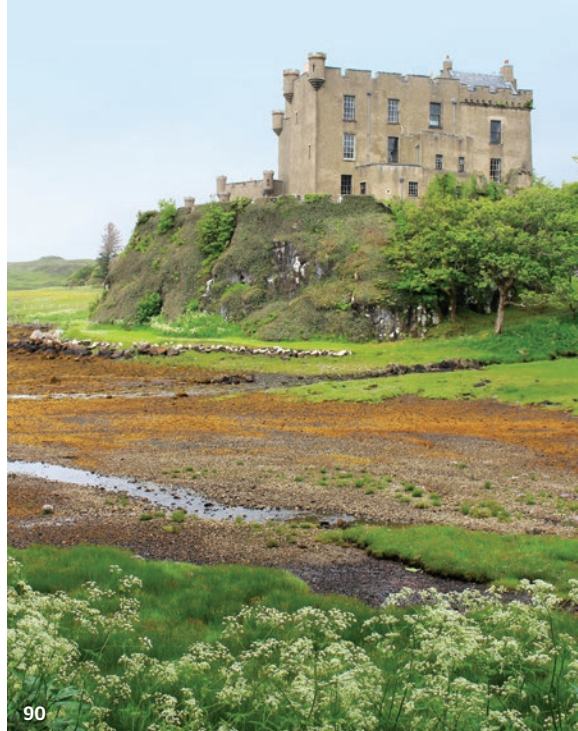
We followed our noses to Portree, the Isle of Skye's biggest settlement, and ended up at Bosville, a hotel overlooking the town's picturesque harbor. The smart Merchant Bar inside serves wine and craft cocktails, but you should set your sights on the whiskies and gins from Scotland and its isles. Travelers unite between the walls of wood and stone, sipping swill well into the night. In summer, the Scottish skies stay bright 'til late—the glow had barely left the sky when we stumbled out at midnight. BosvilleHotel.co.uk

91. CLAN DONALD CENTRE

The ground beneath the Centre is uncharacteristically fertile for Skye, as evidenced by the lush, 40-acre botanical gardens at Armadale Castle, which was built not for defense, but as a mock-castle mansion in grand baronial style. Though it was destroyed by a fire in 1855, the ivy-covered ruins are a romantic display. Today the property also houses the Museum of the Isles, which traces 1,500 years of local history, including that of the Clan Donald, the most powerful of the clans of the Highlands and Islands. Pencil in a bit of extra time if you plan to research your ancestry in the museum's genealogical library. ClanDonald.com

93. KINLOCH LODGE

Staying at this former hunting lodge along Loch na Dal feels like a night in a friend's home. And that's partly because it is: Owned by Lord Godfrey Macdonald and his wife, Claire (a well-known chef with several cookbooks), it's where the couple brought up their four children. Today it's run by their daughter Isabella—a warm and welcoming character in her own right—and features a Michelin-starred restaurant by chef Marcello Tully. Kinloch-Lodge.co.uk



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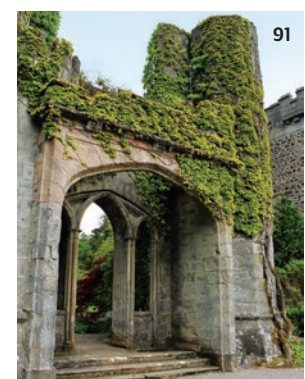
Quirang



90



Portree



91



94. COLONSAY (TILDA SWINTON'S FAVORITE HONEY & ISLAND)

The actress has been spending vacations on the remote Hebridean island of Colonsay since childhood, and always brings back pots of the unctuous local honey. Home to about 50 colonies of native black bees, the tiny island is unique for being free of the Varroa mite, which has infected bee populations worldwide. As a result, to keep the native bees genetically pure and disease-free, no other variety can be brought onto the island.



95. RULES FOR KILTS—AND HOW TO BREAK THEM

The best of Edinburgh's traditional kiltmakers is Gordon Nicolson (NicolsonKiltmakers.com), who will find your clan tartan—or design you a new one, and outfit you with a sporran (the Scottish fanny pack), *ghillie brogues* (shoes), and all the proper gear. The Nicolson's seamstresses have strong opinions—and some strong language—regarding proper kilt etiquette, so make use of their expertise. They're definitely fans of darker socks, but loathe kilts with pockets—like the short, sexy thighwear (made by 21st Century Kilts, 21stCenturyKilts.com) donned by the men on staff at the **G&V Hotel** (QuorvusCollection.com; pictured above).

But you won't hear any complaints from us.



SCOTLAND THE BONNIE

96. JACOBITE TRAIN

The appeal of this anti-quoted steam train (a.k.a. the Hogwarts Express), which begins in Fort William and terminates in the fishing port town of Mallaig, is to rack up some serious Harry Potter cred. The money shot happens near the end of the trip, when you get the stunning view of the 21 arches of the Glenfinnan Viaduct. Well worth the bumpy ride. WestCoastRailways.co.uk

97. INVERARAY CASTLE

The Armory Hall, with its pattern of guns on display, is world-famous, but you might recognize other interiors of this iconic castle from the special Christmas episode of *Downton Abbey*, in which the Dowager Duchess and the rest of the family visited. It's still home to the 13th Duke of Argyll and his family, and if you want to feel like a royal, they even rent bedrooms to visitors who plan in advance. Inveraray-Castle.com

98. CAMERON HOUSE

The rooms in this former baronial mansion on Loch Lomond near Glasgow are the epitome of masculine chic, thanks to Scottish designer Gavin Crawford. The swagger continues at the Cameron Grill and the Great Scots Bar, where there are more than 200 whiskeys available. For something a bit breezier, nip down to the Boathouse for fresh seafood, and watch Cessna seaplane tours take off and land on the lake. PreferredHotels.com

99. ISLE OF ERISKA HOTEL

The 350 acres of luxury accommodations include an epic hotel and a Michelin-starred restaurant with a 40-page wine list. We were wowed by Eriska's mix of classic service and modern touches (the spa, with its sleek wood design, is notably contemporary). This is the anti-island getaway, where posh details take the place of castaway fantasies. www.Eriska-Hotel.co.uk