

# TimeOut

LONDON

## ‘We all climb the ladder together’

Ashley Walters guest-edits our  
Black-owned business special

Londoners have been searching for “Black owned business” more than ever before, so when we heard that Time Out was planning an edition dedicated exclusively to Black business and culture in the capital, we knew we wanted to be involved and get behind this very special issue.

Within these pages you’ll hear from Swiss, the founder of the Black Pound Day campaign — a grassroots initiative that we’re extremely proud to support. With every pound spent, a real difference can be made to Black businesses, communities and families.

We’ve sponsored ad space in this edition to promote 12 brilliant Black-owned London businesses and we’re helping out with free mentoring and digital skills training for other businesses in the Black Pound Day directory too.

The work of Swiss and Black Pound Day has so inspired us and we hope that this edition of Time Out inspires you. Black Pound Day is the first Saturday of every month. Let’s make this coming Black Pound Day something every Londoner can be proud of.

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in no time at all

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PEIGH RICKY DABKO; ILLUSTRATION: NGADI SMART; RESTAURANT: BEZAZ



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# Hello, London

**Ashley Walters**  
Guest Editor



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LONDON

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What's going on, Big Smoke? I'm sorry to stop you from turning the page and enjoying this tremendous issue of Time Out, but I've been asked by The Powers That Be to say a few words...

If you haven't guessed yet, it's me, Ashley Walters. Time Out asked me to edit your fave mag this week: what a privilege!

This year has been challenging for everyone, but especially for those creatives who bless our city with its unmistakable character and life. This issue is a celebration of London's talents and cultures, as well as a spotlight on its amazing Black-owned businesses. I'm also proud to say we commissioned only Black writers, illustrators and photographers.

You are about to embark on a journey through the London that I know. Through the diverse and creative hub that I have experienced our capital to be. If you're having a tough time right now, this issue is for you. And if you don't have much optimism about our future right now, perhaps in these pages you will find something to spark some hope. There's a lot to feel hopeful about. Thank me later.

## THE EDITOR'S ESSENTIALS Three things you have to do in London



**GO here**

**@f4fade** is an amazing barbershop that I use and love. Believe me when I say their hair technicians are skilled in cutting all hair types.



**EAT this**

**@onelovekitchen** is on Crouch Hill. I started off ordering for delivery but now I go in to collect because it's a vibe. The food is out of this world.



**SHOP here**

**@fullypaid\_clothing** is a rising brand that's growing fast. I've been wearing their trucker caps for a while. Check out their stuff online.

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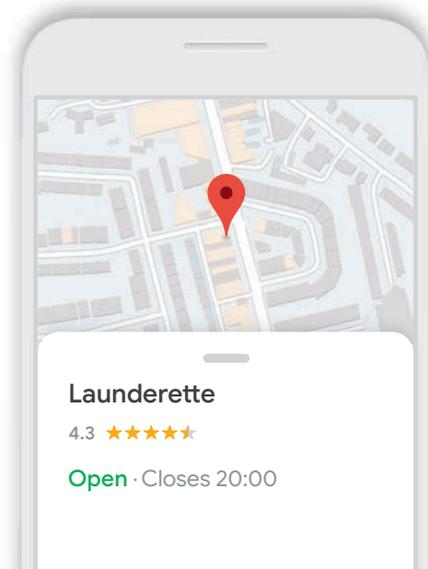


Muqem Bakhtari, owner of Launderette, London

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Black Pound Day  
SATURDAY  
7 Nov

# Choose Charles's business this Black Pound Day

**Brother Charles, Camden**

Charles Augoye and his business partner Ogbe Isibor named their company after Charles's late father – and their handmade shoes are a fitting tribute.

Black Pound Day falls on the first Saturday of every month. This Saturday, consider spending differently. Spend Black. #BlackPoundDay

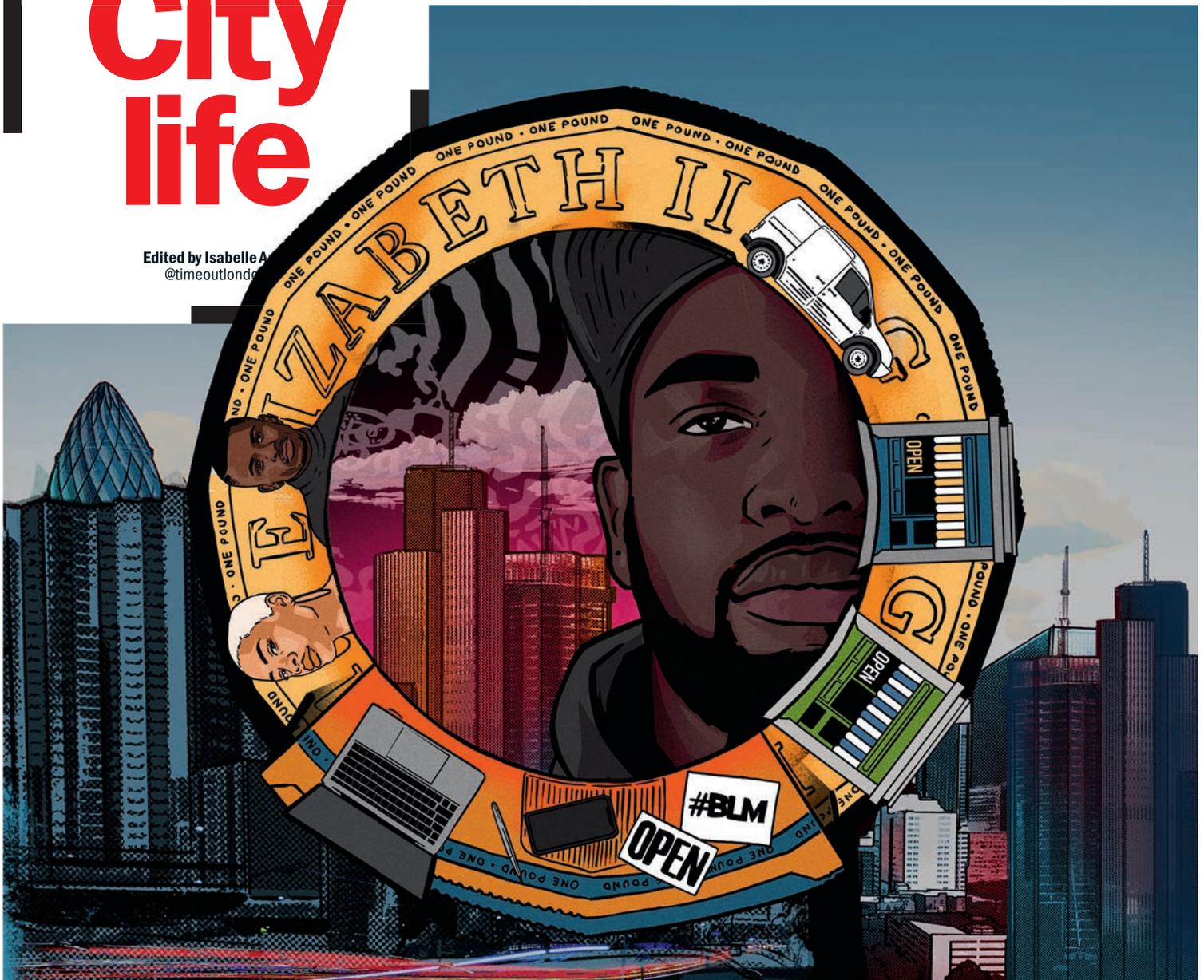
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# City life

Edited by Isabelle A  
@timeoutlond



## Why Black Pound Day matters

We should all be economic activists says Black Pound Day founder Swiss. He explains why having a day to spend only with Black businesses is essential to tackling systemic racism. Illustration *Kingsley Nebechi*



**I'VE HAD THIS** idea for about 12 years: to choose one day to spend with Black businesses and call it Black Pound Day. I decided to launch it this summer because of

the Black Lives Matter protests in London. I thought: How can I engage with this in a positive way? I wanted to redirect the energy in our city. Instead of being political activists, people could be economic activists. Emotions come and go but spending with Black businesses can help rebuild our community.

The discrimination that we face is at all levels: education, health, employment, the justice system and as entrepreneurs. It's important

people understand how discrimination affects us holistically as a community. It's a long line of economic disparity which goes back to the slave trade. It's systemic – and things need to change. Black Pound Day is something people can engage with to help rebalance that.

Since the launch in June, businesses have been highlighted in a way they haven't before. Black businesses now have a day to say: here I am, this is what I do, engage with me. And it means consumers can give back in an instantaneous way. One business owner said he made five figures on Black Pound Day. Another woman told me she'd been saving up to pay for her son's tuition, and on Black Pound Day she finished raising the funds.

I want us to continue this initiative on the first Saturday of every month. I want us to have more spaces in shopping centres and supermarkets. I'd also like [the anniversary of the first] Black Pound Day to become a national day. It launched on June 27 and the date is important to me: 27 is the inverse of 72 and we were celebrating 72 years of the Windrush Generation this year in June.

I've been spending Black for more than a decade, but a lot of people haven't thought about it. We have to become conscious spenders to address the economic injustices that affect the Black community. The more people become aware of that, the better society we'll live in. ■

→ The next Black Pound Day is on Nov 7.

HYPE DISH  
Chuku's' reinvented  
egusi bowl  
DISSECTION

What goes into the London plates that everyone bangs on about

**IF NIGERIAN TAPAS** sounds like an unusual concept, that's because it is. In fact, Chuku's, run by siblings Emeka and Ifeyinwa Frederick, bills itself as the world's first Nigerian tapas restaurant. The menu is built on classic Nigerian dishes with a twist. Take the egusi stew:

traditionally, it's a mix of blended melon seeds, a hearty sauce, bitter leaves and meat or fish. 'Egusi is the soup that we ate at home, it's our favourite', says Emeka. Here, he explains how he gave the dish a modern vegan makeover. ■ *Riaz Phillips*  
→ Chuku's, 274 High Rd. £7.50.



EAST STREET SE17

THE STREET THAT CHANGED MY LIFE

Author *Candice Carty-Williams* on the street market of her childhood

**I GREW UP** in Streatham but my family and I would go to different markets most weekends. East Street Market in Camberwell was my favourite. It was where my nan would get nighties, socks and knickers from. I have all these memories of being in this loud market filled with people from every walk of life. It was an incredibly vibrant place.

When I was younger, with no sense of direction, I didn't understand where exactly East Street Market was. It dawned on me when I got older and started getting the bus to Camberwell. The first time I heard 'East Street Market' on the tannoy, I nearly lost my mind. It had been this mythological place from my childhood and suddenly it was real.

I've never visited the market as an adult. I wanted to leave it as it was because I was so heartbroken at Brixton Market turning into something I didn't understand. Visiting the same spaces and being respectful of them since I was a child means that I've always had gentrification on my radar. So much of my work is concerned with how things change and how we lose the connection that we had to them. I want to remember East Street as the magical marketplace I visited at the weekends. ■  
*Interview by Paula Akpan*



The dumplings

'They're called swallows, and they're made from root vegetables. We use yam. Usually it's one big ball and you break it off. We make them smaller so they're ready to eat.'

The red stew

'Growing up, our mum always added red peppers and tomatoes to her egusi stew. Our red stew is a blend of those things. Just like Mum's stew, it adds sweetness.'

The spinach

'Traditionally, there isn't a green stew. Spinach is usually mixed into the egusi, but we created the spinach stew to celebrate the dish's individual colours and components.'

The technique

'The ingredients in an egusi stew are usually mixed together, but we wanted to present the parts separately so people trying it for the first time could taste all the elements.'

The egusi

'Egusi is the name of the melon seeds that are key to the dish. It's not honeydew melon or cantaloupe, it's more of a bitter melon. We grind them in a blender.'



# Choose Damilola's business this Black Pound Day

## Mother Be, Kings Cross

Damilola Lateefat Bakare created a personalised gift bag for her cousin's baby shower; it went down so well that she now sells them professionally.

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## HE'S A LEGEND



### 'I remember crying in the middle of Holborn'

Londoner and Dope Black Dads founder Marvyn Harrison on his support system for Black fathers. Portrait *Serena Brown*

**FATHER OF TWO** Marvyn Harrison is one of many Black dads in London who's proudly and publicly challenging outdated stereotypes. In 2018, he set up a WhatsApp group with other Black fathers in the city to share their experiences. That was the start of Dope Black Dads, a support group and podcast that works to change the narrative around Black fathers and cultivate a progressive, supportive community.

**It started on Father's Day 2018.** My daughter was six months old, she's my second child. I I couldn't connect with her for whatever reason. It started to affect my mental health. I'm a proud person and I had to accept that it wasn't possible to do something through willpower alone.

**I knew I wanted to talk to somebody,** a way to share experiences. I started a WhatsApp group with other dads I knew and respected and said: 'I'm so proud of you guys. When I get stuck I think about you guys being highly functioning Black men and fathers'. Ironically, everyone felt the same way I did. We were all keeping each other going without ever having to say anything.

**One day, we were discussing suicide in the group,** and four people who I'd known for ages said: 'I've considered it, I still think about it.' I remember crying in the middle of Holborn, and feeling overwhelmed. I thought: I want this as a podcast, because then we can talk about it rather than type it out. It's become a powerful resource.

**There was one guy who'd moved to a different country,** away from his ex and their child. He needed assistance with a letter he'd written to her. We all chipped in with edits, toning down the emotion to make it more palatable. Two months later, he was able to see his child.

**The majority of our podcast listeners are women.** I think that's about them trying to understand us in a deeper way. The things that we won't say to our partners, you'll hear on the podcast.

**The men that birthed us in the '70s, '80s and '90s,** that generation was going through such a harsh socio-economic situation. Dads from all races were running off all the time. There was a particular psychology at that time as a Black

man in London. There was so much injustice, so much oppression and a lack of wealth and social mobility. It created a whole generation of absent fathers.

**When we launched Dope Black Dads, we did it under the banner of changing the narrative.** Before the WhatsApp group, I didn't actually consider that I could just look at my life and the men who have created a new legacy of being active, present fathers.

**I think there's been a permanent shift in the last few months.** People are more aware of the things that impact us and want to do something about it. There's an intention to remove some of the barriers we had. I'm optimistic that change will be lasting this time or, at the very least, we've hit a new minimum experience. We're never going to go backwards. ■ *Interview by Marcus Barnes*  
→ Find out more at [www.dopeblackdads.com](http://www.dopeblackdads.com)



Black Pound Day  
SATURDAY  
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# Choose Natalie's business this Black Pound Day

## Bespoke Binny, Wood Green

Former therapist Natalie Manima gave herself a year to make her homeware hobby a full-time business; now her aprons and oven gloves bring colour to kitchens worldwide.

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# Meet London's Black female academics

Why are there so few Black female professors? We shine a light on academics across the city

**WHEN DR NICOLA** Rollock was given a grant two years ago to look into the careers of Black female professors in the UK, there were just 25, out of 19,000 professors at British universities. 'I had so many questions,' says Rollock. 'Why are there so few? What was their journey? What stories and advice did they have to share?'

With her research, the academic made some recommendations for change, but she also wanted the public to engage with these shocking statistics and the stories of the professors. 'Many of the experiences resonated with me. Some of the professors talked about a competitive, toxic and unwelcoming academic terrain.'

As well as provoking a much-needed conversation, Rollock wanted to celebrate the now 35 Black female professors at UK universities. The result is 'Phenomenal Women', an exhibition at the Southbank Centre, which features portraits of the scholars by photographer Bill Knight, including the four London-based professors pictured here. Rollock hopes that people learn something from the project. 'I want them to think: I didn't know this data existed. I want them to be disturbed by that, but I also want them to be fascinated by these women. They come to life in Bill's portraits.' ■ *Paula Akpan*

→ 'Phenomenal Women: Portraits of UK Black Female Professors'. Southbank Centre. Until Nov 8. Free.



**Nelarine Cornelius**

Professor of Organisation Studies at Queen Mary, University of London. She looks at how policy can aid social inequality and injustice.



**Sonia Boyce**

Professor of Black Art and Design at UAL and, in 2021, will be the first Black woman to represent Britain at the Venice Biennale.



**Tracey Reynolds**

Professor of Sociology at the University of Greenwich. Her research focuses on families, migrants and gender and racial identities.



**Bernadine Evaristo**

Professor of Creative Writing at Brunel University London. In 2019, she became the first Black woman to win the Booker Prize.

Get the full picture at [timeout.com/blackldn](https://www.timeout.com/blackldn)

# The city's streets are full of Black history

Black History Walks founder *Tony Warner* talks us through some of London's Black history landmarks

**IN TERMS OF** statues that celebrate Black history, there's **The Bronze Woman** next to Stockwell tube station, which was created to honour Black women. There's also the **Mary Seacole statue** next to St Thomas' Hospital. It took 12 years to fundraise for it and there was a lot of opposition. That's the only named statue of a Black woman in London. When it comes to men, there's a statue of **Nelson Mandela** in Parliament Square that was built in 2007. It was supposed to be in Trafalgar Square but Westminster Council said no. There's also a bust of Mandela next to the Royal

Festival Hall. It was put up in October 1985, when he was still in prison, but vandalised soon after, so they had to re-erect it two feet higher. It's still there now. And there's a bust of **Oliver Tambo**, Mandela's right-hand man, in Albert Road Recreation Ground near Alexandra Palace. He lived in north London for years.

There's a long history in the UK of Black civil rights demonstrations. **All Saints Road** in Notting Hill was the headquarters

of the west London Black Panthers. They'd meet at **The Mangrove**, a restaurant run by Frank Critchlow.

He was an activist and had a lawyer stationed at the restaurant who'd give free advice to Black men who'd been unfairly arrested. It's closed now, but there's a plaque there in honour of Critchlow.

It was a centre of political activity and is a landmark for the Black community. ■

→ 'Black History Walks' by Tony Walker (published by Jacaranda Books) is out on Dec 12.



**Nelson Mandela**



Black Pound Day  
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# Support George's business this Black Pound Day



## Kiroto Coffee, Notting Hill

On visiting East Africa, George Eyo realised he could help local farmers get better yields, grow organic crops and get a fairer price for their coffee.

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# DO- GOODERS

Four great London causes we want to highlight right now



### Hackney Wick FC

**They say** 'We want the youths to think bigger than the environments they live in. Bigger than the estates, bigger than the gangs, and outside society's expectations.' *Bobby Kasanga, founder*  
**Why we love it** This local team is more than a football club. Through mentoring and workshops, it aims to tackle youth violence and rehabilitate ex-offenders.  
**How to help** Buy merch, donate or volunteer your time as a mentor.  
→ [www.hackneywickfc.com](http://www.hackneywickfc.com)

### Black Ticket Project

**They say** 'We work with cultural institutions, youth workers, youth organisations, schools and charities to foster cultural experiences for Black young people.' *Tobi Kyeremateng, founder*  
**Why we love it** This initiative works to make theatre more accessible to young, Black, working-class Londoners.  
**How to help** Donate via PayPal or Patreon to fund theatre tickets.  
→ [www.patreon.com/blackticketproject](http://www.patreon.com/blackticketproject)

### Sistah Space

**They say** 'Can you see us? Can you hear us? When it comes to domestic and sexual abuse, rape and most matters, Black women are usually "invisible in plain sight".' *Ngozi Fulani, CEO*  
**Why we love it** It provides essential support for women and girls from the African and Caribbean community facing domestic violence and sexual abuse.  
**How to help** Sign up to volunteer or make a donation online.  
→ [www.sistahspace.org](http://www.sistahspace.org)

### Rise 365

**They say** 'We support young people and the community to navigate the challenges they come up against in life.' *Joyclyn Brodie-Mends, founder*  
**Why we love it** This social enterprise is working with local groups Concorde Youth Centre and Made Up Kitchen to deliver meals to locals in Hackney's Kingsmead Estate.  
**How to help** Donate to its Young Leaders Fund on GoFundMe.  
→ Follow @rise.365 on Instagram.

# WORD ON THE STREET

The most ridiculous things we've overheard in London this week

'Masks are the underwear of the face!'

'I think my hymen grew back over lockdown.'

'I once went on a couple of dates with a guy because he looked like Tim Vincent.'

'Wow, he's really keeping the butt plug business alive, isn't he?'

'She lives in Bristol, which is very much the north of the south.'

Overheard something weird? Tweet us #wordonthestreet @timeoutlondon

## LONDON MAKERS

In 2015, Amarachi Clarke taught herself to make chocolate in her north London flat. Now, **Lucocoa Chocolate** produces bean-to-bar creations in its Bermondsey factory, including this solid 125g brick made of 70 percent dark chocolate.

→ Lucocoa x Bricksixty solid London brick. £12.50. [www.lucocoachocolate.com](http://www.lucocoachocolate.com)

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# Support Siobhan and Naomi's business this Black Pound Day

**Streetgrets, Ealing**

After spotting a gap in the greeting card market, sisters Siobhan Wauchope and Naomi Nicholas launched Streetgrets; a range of bold designs celebrating Black British culture.

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A portrait of Natty Kasambala, a Black man with short hair and a goatee, looking slightly to the left. He is wearing a black and white patterned sweater. The background is a solid red color.

# 'I just want a fair shot'

Guest editor Ashley Walters talks to *Natty Kasambala* about growing up in Peckham, the responsibilities of being Black British TV royalty and, unexpectedly, Brian McFadden. Photography *Udoma Janssen*

**IT'S A CARTOONISHLY** dull day in London. Heavy raindrops spatter windows, buses splash unsuspecting pedestrians, Uber prices surge astronomically as trails of red lights stand still in traffic. Ashley Walters, on the other hand, has just cruised into the Time Out office on a robot. The 38-year-old south Londoner is here to guest-edit a special issue of the magazine championing Black-owned businesses in London. And it's clear he's already at ease with the idea of making a statement.

Within minutes of his arrival, Walters is in his socks, lugging the wet AI-enhanced segway across the room to a wall socket while animatedly telling the story of how he got it to an amused crowd. He picked it up from 'one of those GoFundMe companies'. He even invested in it. Then the brand went bust, meaning that the toy – which occasionally declares 'I cannot find you' when you're stood out of sight – is, in a sense, a limited edition.

'When I bought it they said "do not use in the rain",' Walters pauses, stroking his chin for dramatic effect. 'So the whole way over here I was just wondering... "Why not?"'

Thankfully, there is no spontaneous combustion before we sit down for our chat.

### The fun one

Damp and adrenaline-filled, there's a lightness to Ashley Walters off duty. He stands up to act out stories and teases me (falsely) for being too young to know about the rappers and actors he's talking about. It's a wildly different energy level than you might expect from the SoSolid Crew rapper-turned-actor, given his catalogue of past characters.

In the 23 years that he has been on British screens, there has often been silent but stirring darkness to the roles he has inhabited. Walters played Antoine in 50 Cent's 'Get Rich or Die Tryin'' and Ricky in 2004 indie 'Bullet Boy', but he's most famed

for his work as Dushane in London gang drama 'Top Boy', a calmly cunning kingpin whose every move is considered.

Currently in rehearsals for the next season of the show, Walters is getting back to grips with playing a character so different from himself. 'Yesterday it was me, [and my castmates] Kane [Kano] and Micheal for five or six hours. I was just like: I'm done with this guy,' Walters says of Dushane. (His husky voice adds the same gravity it carries on screen, making it hard to tell whether he's joking or not after a particularly deadpan delivery. In this case, the answer is both.)

Walters's Dushane fatigue is partly because: 'I have none of the fun on set.' While the show's more volatile scenes have included the likes of a 'Joker'-esque prison escape, Walters's character doesn't often get to – for want of a better phrase – lose his shit in the same way as some of the show's less-hinged cast members. 'I'm like a referee,' he laughs. 'Every day is like "yeah, go there, collect the food. And then go back there. Oi, talk to my man".' It's the opposite of how he really is: comfortably the centre of attention without ever really demanding it. In fact, he emphasises with fake incredulity, and a finger to his chest, that, out of everyone on set, 'I'm the fun one!'

### Black British representation

When he's not cracking jokes with his team, one thing that Walters does take very seriously is championing Black British stories. Particularly through realistic tales of the capital. He thinks that a lot of the issues Black people face are economic. 'I don't really care about slurs and monuments and statues,' he says, 'I just want a fair shot.' And by that he means: 'I'm strong enough to hear you call me a n\*\*\*er. It doesn't affect me, because I know who I am. But when it comes to the system being rigged in a way that disadvantages me? That's an issue.'

STYLING BY TUNU ONE. HAIR BY FRANKLYN NNAIDIKOWEDY @ FARDE. BLACK AND WHITE ALPACA BLEND MOCKNECK SWEATER £220 BY MR P AT MR PORTER



## Ashley Walters

It's why he's taken on this guest edit and, he explains, part of the reason why he's supporting the initiative Black Pound Day, founded by his So Solid crewmate Swiss. He thinks that Black and non-Black Londoners have a duty to 'wake up and understand that we've got to help each other to climb up the ladder'.

For him, personally, that also means staying grounded here, while many Black British actors journey across the Atlantic to Hollywood. Instead, he – alongside friend and actor-producer Noel Clarke – is determined to carve out spaces for those kinds of voices within the UK industry.

The pair star together as detectives in the Clarke-penned Sky buddy-cop drama 'Bulletproof'. 'Noel's whole thing was, when we were younger, we all loved "Knight Rider" with David Hasselhoff. He was a detective and he had this car that talked and had gadgets or whatever. And the car was black...' He pauses. 'So in the playground, as kids, we would be... the car.' For Walters, the best part of playing his 'Bulletproof' character, Ronnie Pike, is helping to populate that void. 'We want to create people that [Black] kids can be like: family-oriented, moral and in a healthy relationship with a Black woman' he says, listing off his character's best qualities. 'And we did it under people's noses,' he smiles.

As a prime-time show with two Black leads that isn't about race, featuring Black men not as the fugitives, the production hasn't come without resistance. It took eight years of being told by TV executives with certainty that the show 'just wouldn't work'. He quotes the feedback: 'One of you has to be white. Make one of the characters Tom Hardy, make one of them Benedict Cumberbatch.'

These words make me wince visibly, but Walters looks back blankly as he reflects on that time, like he couldn't roll his eyes back far enough in his head if he tried, so why bother? It was a different story when he was in the midst of it, though. Clarke even told Walters he was glad he attended the meetings without him, scared of what his response might have been. Walters deadpans, 'I probably would've ripped someone a new one.'

In 2018, the show's first episode garnered the biggest Sky One



audience of the year to date, with a total of 1.6 million viewers. But the image of these two strong Black leads seemed to evoke a reaction in people. Like when a billboard featuring Walters and Clarke as armed police officers went up in Walthamstow to advertise the first series. Walters lets out a half laugh, half sigh before recounting what happened next: 'Two white fathers from the area covered up the guns.' He explains slowly: 'So they took the time to get a ladder, climb up to the billboard and cover them up. And they had MP Stella Creasy backing them.' He was livid, he says. 'There are so many posters of white men with guns that are never covered up.'

### South of the river

The Walthamstow poster wasn't the first time in Walters's career that he has broken a ceiling impenitently and faced a backlash in return. In 2011, 'Top Boy' was similarly antagonising. The show told stories of an inner-city underbelly that many would rather have kept in the shadows. The result? 'We got shut down by a lot of people. Hackney Council didn't want us to film in a lot of their locations. And when the Olympics came [in 2012], they were against 'Top Boy' because it showed that area in such a bad light.' (He's visibly tickled as he imagines Olympic tourists curiously searching 'What's Hackney like?', only to be greeted with clips of Kano's character cutting off the finger of one of his rivals.)

Though his 'Top Boy' alter ego was east London born and bred, Walters grew up in Peckham. Back

then, the area's dicey reputation preceded it. 'I always felt safe,' Walters shrugs, 'but if you told someone to come to Peckham, they'd be like "huh?"' Now based in north London, he finds it strange to return and see how much it's changed. Like the time rapper Joe Grind invited him to a show he was doing at an old West Indian bakery off the high street, sponsored by Wray & Nephew. Walters stares at me and says, 'And there were no Black people in there. I was like, this is a bit mad?' He raises an eyebrow and lists: 'It's Wray & Nephew... It's rum... It's Joe Grind, a Black hip hop artist... and it's in Peckham. And there were no Black people?'

Walters grew up good mates with Grind and his brother, the rapper Giggs, going to all-dayers in the park and hearing artists perform. His teenage years were consumed by music, watching



Clockwise from top: Ashley with Kano in 'Top Boy', in So Solid Crew and with Noel Clarke in 'Bulletproof'



Black Pound Day  
SATURDAY  
7 Nov

# Back Don's business this Black Pound Day

## K9 Exclusive Walks, Wembley

Since childhood, dogs have been a big part of Don Jordan's life. Now he walks his two rescue lurchers daily around London's open spaces – accompanied by a pack of new friends.

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Watch our exclusive video at [timeout.com/ashleywalters](https://www.timeout.com/ashleywalters)

sadly, there was the death of two teenagers caught in crossfire in Birmingham in 2003, and a violent incident that took place after one of their shows in Luton, where a fan was beaten to death in an attack.

'I'm not stupid. We were getting caught with guns,' Walters is measured as he clarifies. (He was sentenced to 18 months in a young offenders' institution for possession of a gun.) 'So there is definitely something to be said about that. But I don't think they [critics] fully understood it.'

There's a ring of déjà vu when comparing the group's treatment to the current over-policing of drill artists, by both the media and government at the moment, as an alleged driving force for London's knife-crime crisis, rather than a symptom of it. So a thriving career amid all the controversies became untenable. They had to cancel a tour halfway through. Walters thinks for a second, 'I suppose they call it being blackballed?'

### Looking forward

Now a dad of eight, with more than 20 years of experience navigating British music and TV, Walters has found a passion for discovering and mentoring new talent. Whether it's a wannabe actor who approaches him in his local park in Crouch End or a student at Kingdom Drama School, which he runs with film producer Najan Ward, he hopes to inspire young Black talent.

His biggest piece of advice: it's going to be hard, you're going to hear a lot of 'nos' and it's going to take forever to succeed. 'Only 20 percent of it is going to be bliss,' he says. 'So actually, the part you need to embrace is the 80 percent: the hardship. That's what's going to shape you and mould you.'

Given the chance, would he live through all the hardship *he* experienced again? He's at his most earnest as he poses the question to me, and possibly himself too: 'How can someone like me go to prison, at the height of my career, for nearly a year, be in all the papers, but still come out and be sitting here today doing what I'm doing?'

Answering before I can: 'There's a positive in every negative in life, so just...' he screws his face up in a playful scowl, '...fucking find it!' ■



By **Natty Kasambala**  
who writes on music and culture. [@nattykasambala](https://twitter.com/nattykasambala)

Biggie Smalls, Camp Lo and Jay-Z on 'Yo! MTV Raps' – 'I think that was the first time I saw people like me represented in the mainstream media' – and listening to pirate radio stations like Supreme FM and Delight FM. That's how Walters discovered hip hop crew So Solid at 18. First as a fan, then as a member, under the moniker Asher D.

He looks back on the time with the crew fondly, but there's one particular memory that stands out... 'Brian McFadden's gonna hate me for this.'

### The Brit Awards 2002

The year is 2002, the event is the Brits, and So Solid have just won Best Video for '21 Seconds'. Brian McFadden is sat with his then-girlfriend Kerry Katona. 'Everyone

had been drinking,' says Walters. 'We had to walk past his table to go collect this award and you can imagine like 35 of us, walking in our leathers, gassed up, with our bandanas and that.'

Walters remembers the boyband member heckling them repeatedly, saying, 'you don't deserve it!'

'Next thing, one of our guys says, you know, "shut up". And then someone throws champagne, and then someone throws a glass, and then,' he claps his hands, 'it becomes this mass brawl.'

It wasn't all punch ups, the collective had been working away at shows on pirate stations for a while before they took the music industry by storm. With the release of chart-topper '21 Seconds' they soon became the voice of the inner-city

underdogs. In many ways, Asher D and the rest of So Solid Crew became that same kind of beacon for young Black people as the stars of 'Yo! MTV Raps' had been for him: Britain's own street rock stars.

The indeterminately large ensemble managed to blend UK garage and hip hop with a dystopian aesthetic as they rapped (and sang) in an unapologetic manner that was fairly new to the British mainstream. There was a grit and chaos to them that either enticed or enraged all who witnessed it.

With the group ascending to fame at a time when gang violence and crime were on the up in the UK's major cities, So Solid found their lyrics blamed for incidents occurring across the nation. Most



Black Pound Day  
SATURDAY  
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# Back Kiera-Lorelle and Lewis's business this Black Pound Day

**Cinnamon Leaf Food Hall, Tottenham**

During lockdown, Kiera-Lorelle and her brother Lewis launched an Afro-Caribbean and wholefood grocery; it's now a north London staple for everything from banana ketchup to baked goods.

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Google

# A great leap forward needs an honest look back

Author and broadcaster *June Sarpong* says engaging with Black history and supporting Black-owned businesses are essential to a fairer future. Illustration *Ngadi Smart*



**AS WE LEARN** to deal with the devastation and uncertainty of a global pandemic and the racial reckoning we see unfolding on the streets of the US, UK and beyond, it feels like the world is at a crossroads. And that includes London.

The noughties definitely felt like an upward trajectory for the city, characterised by opportunity and aspiration. London was quickly becoming the international capital of the world, where people from all different backgrounds were able to feel at home. Difference was not something to hide. It was exciting, vibrant and valuable – something that our Olympic bid team found out in 2005. Winning the right to host the Games, not just in London but in Newham, the borough of my birth, was a moment that, to me, felt comparable with the election of Barack Obama – something that would previously have been thought of as impossible. It was a moment of

personal and communal pride. To be part of The Legacy List, the official charity for the redevelopment of the Stratford area after the Olympic Games, was an incredible privilege and an honour.

However, in just over a decade, my city and my country started to feel very different. That burning optimism and resilience symbolised in the Olympic flame had seemingly burned out or even been extinguished. Where the spectre of terrorism had failed to divide us, it seemed that inequality and identity would prove a far more potent force. Difference had become divisive.

So, where does London go from here? What needs to happen for it to remain an ethnically diverse, progressive city that strives to be inclusive of both difference and tradition? What do we as Londoners need to do to heal our city and get back on course, to move forward towards a better future for everyone, regardless of

racial origin? I believe that we all need a greater understanding and awareness. And to achieve that, we need to do something that may seem paradoxical. We need to look back to leap forward. Quite simply, we need to teach Black history properly.

For those of us working within the inclusion and equity sector, it can be confusing and frustrating when a drive for greater fairness and justice for marginalised groups

becomes a point of controversy. This will continue to be confusing and frustrating until we take on the uncomfortable task of looking back and doing a proper analysis of our story. The full story. And when we do that, the movement against teaching Black history – which is essentially part of our shared story – and the ban on teaching critical race theory and diversity makes a lot more sense.





To be white and actively anti-racist is to acknowledge and overcome the consequences of the historical pursuit of power by those who have shared your identity but not your values. It's imperative to understand and accept the reality of the impact this legacy has had on 'others' who do not share all of your elevated characteristics. This is not about the victimhood of one group or blaming another.

It means educating yourself on the contextual journey of individuals who are not operating on a level playing field and asking yourself why they're not.

One of the fastest ways to level the playing field is through the economic empowerment of minority communities. So here's a new habit for allies to consider: committing to actively supporting Black-owned

businesses. Of course there is much more that needs to be done to create real systemic change. However, this one simple act – carefully considering how and where you deploy your resources – can go a long way to making a real difference in our city. London already has the diversity and creativity for you to patronise should you choose to. I've even made a few suggestions to get you started. ■

## FOUR TO SUPPORT

June's fave Black-owned businesses worth your time and money



### Kelechnekoﬀ Fitness

Founded by 'fitness badass' Kelechi Okafor, this Peckham studio is all about inclusivity and fun in fitness.

→ 161 Sumner Rd.

### Charlotte Mensah

An award-winning salon on Portobello Road, run by the pioneering British-Ghanaian hairstylist.

→ 347 Portobello Rd.

### Sika Designs

Clothes designed in London and made in Africa. Positive change is at the heart of the company's ethos.

→ [www.sikadesigns.co.uk](http://www.sikadesigns.co.uk)

### Spinach and Agushi

Starting off at Broadway Market in Hackney, this supper club now brings the flavours of Ghana to your door.

→ [www.spinachandagushi.com](http://www.spinachandagushi.com)



# How to actually, actually help London's Black-owned businesses

A guide to ditching old, embarrassingly unethical spending habits and making shiny, new, better ones. Words *Jessica Morgan*. Photography *Ricky Darko*. Illustrations *Naomi Anderson-Subryan*

## Remember: purchasing is political



Every item you buy pushes the world in a direction. Which way it goes is up to you, says MP *David Lammy*

Over the past five months, I've received countless emails from people asking me what they can do to be effective allies in the struggle for racial equality. Most commonly I'm asked to recommend books that can help people understand, navigate and challenge their own structural privilege. If there is anything that gives me hope that history is being made right now, it's that so many people are determined to be on the

right side of it. Black literature, however, is not the only thing that I'd encourage people to consume.

Even before the pandemic, opportunities for Black businesses were slim. Black-owned businesses are four times more likely to be rejected for loans. Black victims of fraud are more than twice as likely to be denied a refund by their banks. All minority ethnic groups are subject to higher interest rates.

Pre-existing funding gaps and financial prejudice already represented a toxic combination. Throwing a global pandemic into the mix created a truly poisonous blend. Nearly two thirds of Black and Asian business owners said they were unable to access state-backed loans and grants in the early days of the pandemic. This is just one reason why Britain's 250,000 minority-owned businesses have been disproportionately hit by the coronavirus crisis.

Typically concentrated in urban areas that have been hit hardest by lockdown restrictions, Black-owned businesses are bearing the brunt of the nation's collective economic hardship.

My advice to those wishing to show solidarity? Put your money where your mouth is and support Black-owned businesses in your area. This isn't just about giving a leg up to an innovative few. This is about ensuring Black communities can continue to thrive once the pandemic is over.

Shopping is not a neutral act. Decisions about how to spend your money impact the distribution of wealth. We need to make personal choices to support business owners who are struggling, from all racial backgrounds – but this should include a focus on Black businesses, which have been affected more than most. Together, by making choices to support those most in need, we can protect jobs and wealth for every community.



**Go here!**

## ‘Running a shop in the pandemic has been trying’

Gynelle Leon launched Prick London, a cactus shop in Dalston, as the houseplant trend kicked off in 2016

**I chose to follow my passion, which just so happened to be in a very white, male industry.**

My presence alone shows that you can succeed in any industry you want and, being a visible Black female owner on the high street, inspire other Black people.

**I love plants, especially succulents.** They are great for my wellbeing and they fill me with wonder. I am constantly learning and love passing that on.

**We are the first and only cacti and succulent boutique in London.**

All of our plants are low maintenance and long-living, which suits [our customers’] modern lifestyles and contemporary interiors.

**Running a business in a pandemic has been trying.**

I went from having all my systems in place – staffing and childcare – and then these all went out the window. At the same time, the business increased five-fold.

**Supporting Black-owned businesses is a small way to try and level out the playing field.**

Due to the disruption of our communities, the slave trade and other colonial acts, we lack the generational wealth that other communities have.

**I’d love people to support our business by making a habit of leaving reviews.**

Or by following and liking posts on social media. → 492 Kingsland Rd.



## Buy Black

### Sign up for the long haul

Do you buy independently once and then never again? Get yourself on the mailing list for some extra good subscription boxes. Take **The Spring**, a bimonthly box of ethically produced and Black-owned self-care products. Think luxe lip scrubs and fragrant organic candles. If self-care to you means books not beauty, then **Black Book Box** has you sorted. For £25 a month, you'll receive a mystery read and a selection of gifts delivered straight to your door. October's box was impressive, featuring 'To Sir, With Love' by ER Braithwaite, plantain chips and more.

### Listen to Black-run podcasts



#### Black Gals Livin'

Jas and Victoria discuss mental health, pop culture and 'random shenanigans', focusing on issues affecting the Black community.



#### 2 Queens in a Pod

Join Iman Leila and Leah Mai as they chat about the government's lockdown measures and other important topical matters.



#### 90s Baby Show

Somehow, presenters Fred Santana and Temi Alchemy manage to unpack big world issues while making you rock back and forth in hysterics.



### Ditch your bad shopping habits



Comedian *Munya Chawawa* on how to stop being a terrible, terrible person

I'm a scrimper. Yep, I'm a cheapskate, a miser, a man with an arse so tight it deserves a cameo in the 'WAP' video. I'm the guy who walks into a top-tier establishment and asks the waiter for a 125ml serving of its finest tap water.

However, over lockdown, I became a deranged spending machine. Susan from Halifax's anti-fraud team has been in meltdown: how did Munya Chawawa transform from the Holy Father of Frugal to The Wolf of Reckless Spending?

The culprit: the internet – an infinite sea of objects and accessories at one's fingertips. Seriously: a transparent kettle that emits blue light during boiling? Yes, please. Novelty false teeth for a one-off Insta story? Absolutely – they're a business asset. A foot scraper that looks suspiciously like an actual cheese grater?

No-brainer – chicks dig smooth heels. Suddenly my bedroom looks like the promo pic for a new Channel 5 doc called 'The Hoarder Next Door'.

If you're going to put pennies into someone's pocket, put your spend where that makes a difference. It's been a really tough year for small businesses – and I don't want to see them go broke just because I cba to shop smarter. Slowly but surely, I'm making changes, so here are my tips on shopping smaller and supporting indies:

1. If there's an item you want, check on Google whether there's a place selling it locally. You may end up turning a two-day delivery into a two-minute walk, and your hard-earned cash goes straight to the seller.

2. How good does it feel knowing the person who made your product? Have a little pree on Insta, see who you're buying from and what you're investing in – and then enjoy a warm glow in your soul as you press 'pay'.

3. We all love that smug feeling of being asked, 'Where did you get that from?' People love finding hidden gems, so spread the word on small businesses you love and earn yourself all the street cred that comes with being 'The Plug'.

→ [www.instagram.com/munyachawawa](https://www.instagram.com/munyachawawa)





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# Support Simone's business this Black Pound Day

Rare Culture London, Brixton

Stylist Simone Connell encourages self-expression through her label, producing everything from West African face masks to Rosa Parks T-shirts.

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## ‘Seeing elation on people’s faces is priceless’

South Londoners Peigh Asante (right) and Baff Addae launched Trap Fruits London this year when they saw a gap in the market for Black fruit sellers

**It all started with the custard apple.** We were paying £5 for a Jamaican custard apple, going to the wholesalers to get it and picking some up for our friends and family. That was when we realised there was a gap in the market.

**We couldn’t believe that Black people weren’t selling fruits that originated from their home countries.** It didn’t sit right with

us, so we wanted to change the narrative and make our community healthier in the process.

**We must support Black businesses and support Black communities.** Who

better to give you a service than someone who looks like you, speaks like you and comes from a similar background as you?

**What’s powerful is our ability to create jobs for family members**

**and the rest of our community.** Trap Fruits has given them a chance to earn a living. In January, the team was just us. Now we have five other employees.

**Bringing joy to someone’s day makes us happy.** Delivering fruit and seeing the elation on their face when we’re at their door is priceless. → [www.instagram.com/trapfruitslondon](http://www.instagram.com/trapfruitslondon)

## Change your industry



Gavin Lewis runs #talkaboutblack, a campaign to diversify the corporate world

### What’s #talkaboutblack about?

I work in finance where there’s an acute under-representation of Black professionals. The aim is to get rid of the issues behind that, which are broader than the industry.

### What are those?

Economic deprivation and underperformance in education. The industry historically recruits in its own image. Even if Black people get in, they often don’t have mentors. And, of course, there’s racism.

### What’s the impact of this?

We lose a lot of Black talent. Plus, lack of diversity in investment companies exacerbates problems – like how Black-owned businesses struggle to get funding.

### What can people take from your campaign?

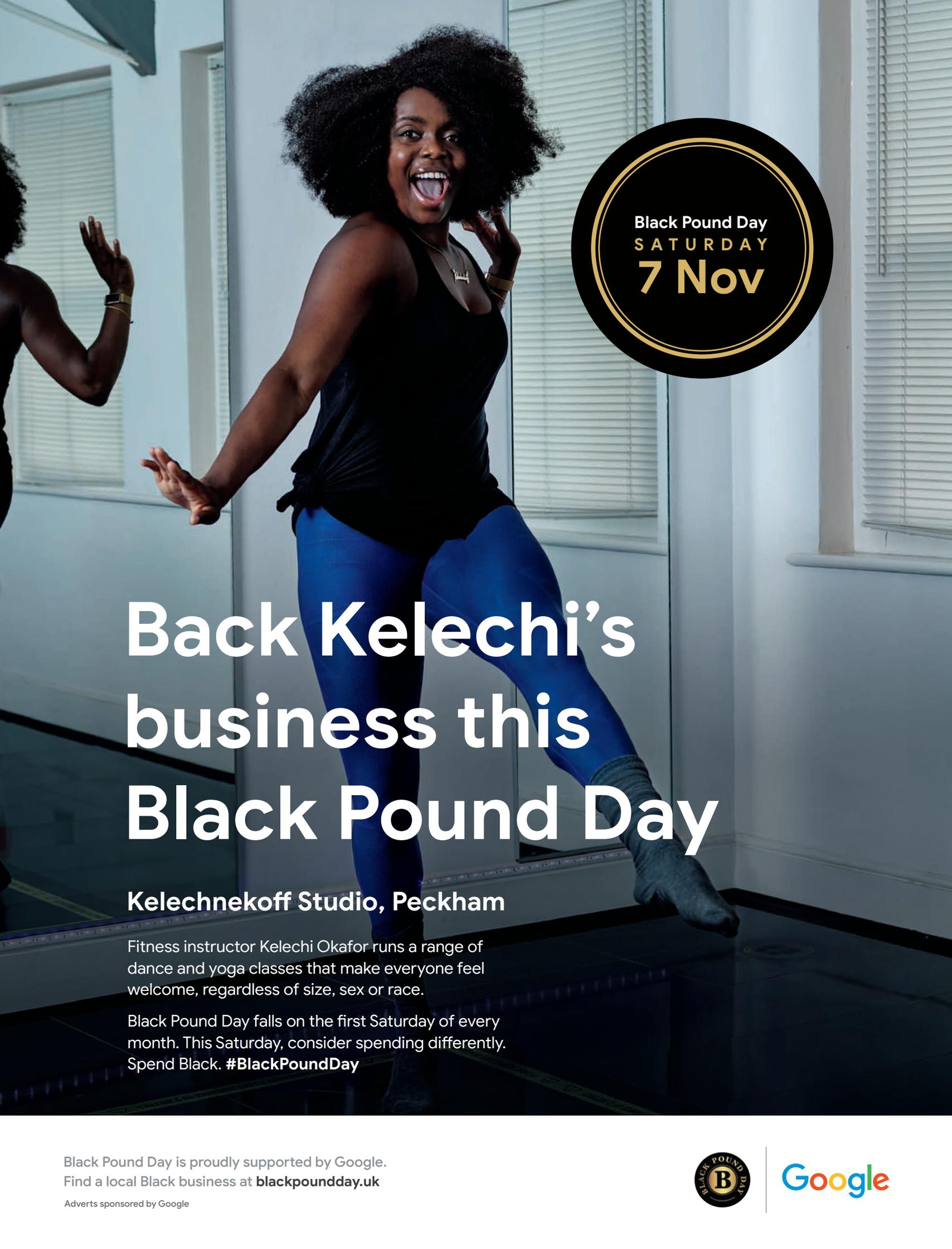
If your industry has a diversity issue, make people aware. That said, it’s not only the role of Black people to do this. We’re leading #talkaboutblack to drive the awareness, conversation and action for change.

→ [www.twitter.com/talkaboutblack](http://www.twitter.com/talkaboutblack)

## Work out in this

‘I started **Damihow** to showcase Black women in fitness,’ says founder **Dami Howells**. ‘They are very under-represented.’ Her range is filled with slick styles, but the lilac cycle shorts (£30) are the most 2020. → [www.damihow.com](http://www.damihow.com)





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# Back Kelechi's business this Black Pound Day

## Kelechekoff Studio, Peckham

Fitness instructor Kelechi Okafor runs a range of dance and yoga classes that make everyone feel welcome, regardless of size, sex or race.

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## Buy Black

# Support ventures that look out for others



Iona Mathieson and Romy St Clair are co-owners of Sage Flowers in Peckham. Their course,

FutureFlowers, is for non-white florists looking to train

'FutureFlowers was born from wanting to remove some of the real barriers to entry that non-white people face trying to get into floristry: courses that cost thousands of pounds, not feeling welcome, not being able to undertake paid internships for experience due to other priorities, such as needing to earn more money or care for family members. The whitewashing of our industry is doing everyone a disservice, though unfortunately, those within it don't always seem to see that.'

→ 232 Rye Lane.

## Eat these

**African Food Boxes**, delivered straight to your door, provide you with all the ingredients to make delicious meals, like spicy-and-sweet puff puff or jollof rice, at home.

→ [www.african-foodbox.com](http://www.african-foodbox.com)



## Let Black makers restyle your shitty flat

**1** Check out this woven soft lilac bowl (£32) made by **La Basketry**, an ethical homeware brand offering handmade baskets by female artisans from Senegal. → [www.labasketry.com](http://www.labasketry.com)

**2** As **Bespoke Binny**, CBT therapist Natalie Manima sells handmade homeware produced from West

African cloth, like this lampshade (£41.99) in gold, purple and blue. → [www.bespokebinny.com](http://www.bespokebinny.com)

**3** Made using natural soy wax infused with essential oils, **Selfmade's** sage-and-rosemary candle (£24) is the aromatherapy equivalent of a long, long weekend at an extremely bougie spa. → [www.selfmadecandle.com](http://www.selfmadecandle.com)

**4** Featuring messages like 'Trust in your journey', the pretty notepads (£18) from **Hyphen London** will help you make it to the end of WFH season. → [www.hyphen-london.co.uk](http://www.hyphen-london.co.uk)

**5** Collapse on to a cosy beanbag (£125) from **The Cornrow**, 'an affordable, vibrant home and lifestyle edit that puts the modern

Black aesthetic on the front row'. The website is soon to launch, but follow the company on Instagram for details. → [www.instagram.com/thecornrow](http://www.instagram.com/thecornrow)

**6** This Lac Rose cushion cover (£25.50) from **OsimeHome**, in this Ankara print, is named after the stunning pink lake found in Senegal. → [www.etsy.com](http://www.etsy.com)

## Don't forget long-running businesses too



Sam Mensah runs Uncle John's Bakery, a family business

'Over the years, I've seen more support for Black-owned businesses in terms of diversity

within communities. There's more ownership. But what makes it difficult for Black businesses is gentrification of areas which alienate certain customers who seek local businesses to shop with. As we've been there for so many years, and own the real estate, we've been able to cement ourselves within the community. I love that our legacy is inspiration for the generation that I am in and for younger generations, to see that they too can achieve success in business.'

→ 76 West Green Rd.





Black Pound Day  
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# Support Natalie's business this Black Pound Day

## Embrace Body Skincare, Hammersmith

After using essential oils to improve her skin, Natalie Vincent launched her range of plant-based blends to help others do the same.

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## ‘I love to deliver good food to people’

Roger Shakes, head chef and owner of Roger’s Kitchen, set up the restaurant with his business partner in September 2020

I feel proud delivering food to people. It feels so special when they come back again.

I grew up cooking with my grandparents in Jamaica. They were incredible cooks.

I have been working in Camden restaurants for 19 years. Everybody knows me, so it was the best time to launch a new business because it was easy for people to find me.

We launched three weeks ago. It’s really brave of us to launch during a pandemic. But we have customers in and people collect their takeaways.

It is hard and you feel the stress of the business. You sleep less because you’re

waking up early to deal with cleaners and other staff. Before, I used to work my hours and go home. Now I manage all of it.

People can’t find this flavour anywhere in England so they travel far and wide for our Caribbean food. I work

with different flavours, like peanut, mango and coconut sauce.

I have cooked for Samuel L Jackson, as well as Paul McCartney and Ashley Walters. It’s an honour.

People need to support Black businesses more. If we don’t stand on our own feet, we hold ourselves back. But we need to come together more, too. → 71 Camden Rd.

## Bookmark a few directories

### Best for beauty

Afrocenchix has your hair sorted. Meanwhile Brown BeautyTalk has a huge list of Black beauty brands.

### Best for homeware

Snatch up clothes, beauty products, jewellery and homeware from more than 100 businesses listed at Ebonyx.

### Best for books

From novels to non-fiction, you’re spoilt for choice at vendor marketplace Wakuda.

### Best for food

Jamii gives you a year of discounts for Black-owned businesses for just £14.95.

### Best for services

The people behind Black Pound Day say that Black-owned service businesses (from law firms to plumbers) are often the most hidden. Its directory fixes this.

## Drink this

Zobo (hibiscus) is infused into bevs on special occasions in Nigeria and is believed to have healing powers. We can’t confirm how healing it is when used to brew beer, but we can verify that Suyaman’s Zobo Pale Ale is very delicious. ■

→ www.onemileend.com



## Download these apps

Forget Deliveroo. If your stomach calls for well-seasoned soul food, download Chopstreets. Founder Vivian Ngwodo launched the app after discovering how difficult it was to locate African and Caribbean restaurants. Now, users can find them all in one place. For the beauty aficionados, look no further than Sharmadean Reid’s Beautystack, a clever app that allows you to browse beauty trends and book treatments at the touch of your fingertips.

## Plan your Christmas presents now

It’s easier to make ethical choices when you’re not racing down Oxford Street on Christmas Eve, grabbing the nearest festive shower gel set you can get your hands on. Instead, make a list, check it twice and get ordering from Black-owned businesses now. Stuck on what to get? Check out Maya Njie Perfumes, a niche fragrance brand with scents deeply rooted in the founder’s Swedish and West African roots. Or if a friend is Going Through It, gift them one of Loveness London’s luxurious scented candles, packed full of calming essential oils. Want to give the gift of a timeless Christmas decoration? March Muses offers Black angels to stick atop the tree, as well star babies and nativity sets to decorate your house this holiday season.

Get the full picture at [timeout.com/blackldn](http://timeout.com/blackldn)

Black Pound Day  
SATURDAY  
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# Back Valerie's business this Black Pound Day

## Jacaranda Books, Holborn

Award-winning independent publisher Valerie Brandes has a simple ethos: make space on the bookshelf for diverse ideas and writers.

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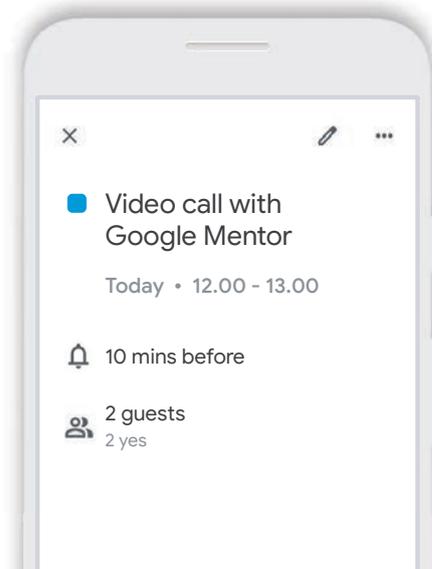


Mahdis Moghadam, owner of Piacere restaurant, London

## Google is providing free 1-to-1 mentoring to help your business adapt.

We're helping businesses across the UK adapt to new ways of working.

Find free tools for you and your business at [g.co/helpforbusiness](https://g.co/helpforbusiness)



# Things to do in London

Written by **Stephanie Phillips**  
[timeout.com/thingstodo](http://timeout.com/thingstodo) @timeoutlondon



ADRIAN BOOT / URBANIMAGE.TV

We're celebrating events centring Black artists, performers and organisers, like 'Dub London: Bassline of a City', an exhibition full of retro shots of Londoners cutting loose in front of speaker stacks. **Turn to p41 to read more.**

## Things to Do

### Painting sesh

#### **E** Sip 'N Stroke

Sip 'N Stroke painting sessions give budding artists (and people who just want to splash some paint on a canvas) the chance to unleash their creativity in a party atmosphere near Old Street. The theme for the event is neo-soul. Punters are encouraged to get into their fanciest gear and enjoy a cocktail or two with a brush in hand to the sounds of late-'90s R&B. Once you've created your finest work, hop on the open mic to perform your best Montell Jordan impression.

→ Sink Pong, Nov 4. From £20.



### Spoken word

#### **S** The Poet's Corner

For anyone who's missed snapping their fingers in a crowd to the beat of a particularly spectacular rhyme, listen up. After a brief move online, The Poet's Corner, a poetry and spoken-word night, is back at the Black Cultural Archives in Brixton. The now bi-weekly socially distanced event (which often sells out) sees some of the UK's finest up-and-coming poets grace its stage. Beret and cigs optional.

→ Black Cultural Archives, Dec 4. £7.50.

#### **C** Memory Is a Weapon

What makes us who we are? Is it art, language, history or something entirely different? The Being Human Festival is a celebration of humanities research and features 300 events across the country. One of the highlights of the season is Memory Is a Weapon, an online event which invites Black female artists and activists to reimagine a new world post Covid, told through video essay, spoken word and musical performances.

→ Nov 13. Free, register in advance. [www.beinghumanfestival.org](http://www.beinghumanfestival.org)

### Big online talks

#### **C** Alicia Garza: 'The Purpose of Power'

Along with fellow community organisers Patrisse Cullors and

Opal Tometi, Alicia Garza gave birth to BLM, one of the most potent political movements of a generation. Hear Garza discuss her new book 'The Purpose of Power', which asks how we can inspire others to fight for a world free from discrimination.

→ Available to stream until Nov 5. From £5. [www.southbankcentre.co.uk](http://www.southbankcentre.co.uk)

#### **C** Caleb Femi in conversation with Brenda Emmanus: 'Poor'

'Oh my God, he's just stirring me. Destroying me', is what Michaela Coel had to say about the debut book by Peckham poet Caleb Femi. Find out more about his 'love letter to the endz' at this online talk.

→ Nov 5. From £5, register on Eventbrite.



Sip 'N Stroke



Scratch That



## Theatre that thinks

### S Dylema

Conversations on self-love and Black female beauty take centre stage as spoken-word artist Dylema presents a new exhibition. As well as a performance of her powerful piece 'What If a Black Girl Knew?', Dylema's paintings will be on view. There will also be guest spots from up-and-coming artists like songwriter Chelle OT. Cultural nights out are at a premium, so an exhibition-performance hybrid is the ideal lockdown combo.

→ Theatre Peckham. Nov 7. From £10.

### C Hoopla: Do the Right Scene

At times like these you've got to laugh, at least that's what the folks over at Hoopla Improv think. After a brief break, the London Bridge event is back with a socially distanced show from the all-Black improv

group Do the Right Scene. The performers for the night have credits on Radio 4, Comedy Central and the BBC, so we're expecting a lot of big belly cackles from those 'Yes and...' moments.

→ The Miller. Nov 6. £5.

### S Scratch That

After a summer search for fresh new writing talent, the work of two Black writers will be performed by young actors in the Theatre Peckham network. The theatre's resident directors worked with the performers and writers to test these scenes in their unpolished form for a live audience. If you're looking for a way to get out and support young Black talent, this is the way to go.

→ Theatre Peckham. Nov 4. From £10.



Do the Right Scene

## The NT returns with an exploration of Black Britishness

### C 'Death of England: Delroy'

The NT could have returned with another David Hare play. Instead, it's staging a brand-new work, written and directed by Black British playwrights Clint Dyer and Roy Williams. 'Death of England' will be a sequel-of-sorts to their production 'Death of England', a considered take on the current racism discourse that actually addressed the dynamics of British social class, a key factor in distinguishing the UK experience from that of our comrades across the pond.

Told through the eyes of Michael, a white, working-class man – played by a charming Rafe Spall – the first play was clever in the way it forced us to reckon with the flawed 'good-people-cannot-be-racist' argument.

The sequel was initially announced with Giles Terera – who won an Olivier for his performance in the original West End cast of 'Hamilton' – in the lead role. Sadly, Terera is currently in



recovery following recent (not Covid-related) emergency surgery. And so up steps another fine homegrown acting talent, Michael Balogun, to take the lead.

The character of Delroy featured heavily in 'Death of England', but only in name. We got to know him through the eyes of his childhood friend, Michael. Here, Delroy's story takes centre stage. He is arrested while on his way to

visit his girlfriend in hospital. During his time in custody, he reflects on the moments in his life that might have led to a different future – giving us an exploration of a Black working-class man confronting his relationship with Great Britain.

If 'Death of England' is anything to go by, Dyer and Williams have delivered a play we urgently need, and one we'll likely be talking about for years to come, when the closure of London's theatres will be a distant memory. ■

JN Benjamin

→ National Theatre. Until Nov 28. From £20-£69.

## Historical walk

### C BlackAbolitionist WalkingTour

The history of abolition is often told through the eyes of charitable English people, ignoring the agency of Black people. This central London walking tour brings back that agency to former enslaved African-Americans, who in the nineteenth century travelled to Britain and made a lasting mark on the country. On this educational outing organised by Dr Hannah Rose Murray, you'll be able to tread the same path as Frederick Douglass or visit the spaces where journalist Ida B Wells spoke about the horrors of lynching to captivated crowds.

→ Meet at Freemason's Hall. From Dec 9.

Free, register in advance.

# Rising to the challenge

What does it take to run a successful small business – and steer it safely through 2020? We meet Samuel Mensah, the CEO of Uncle John's Bakery, to find out how he did it with the help of Google



**T**he Ghanaian-owned Uncle John's Bakery, which specialises in bread, cakes and sweet treats, has been proudly serving the people of Tottenham and beyond since 1995. Samuel Mensah, the son of the company's founders, took over six years ago and has been building the bakery's profile ever since. As we've seen with many local businesses, Covid turned 2020 into a rocky year, with sales and footfall dramatically decreasing. But with enough resilience and creativity – and a little help from some of Google's free products – Mensah and countless others have been able to weather the storm, alongside tackling the difficulties that come with being a Black small-business owner.



## How did the genesis of Uncle John's Bakery come about?

When my parents came over, they began noticing that people in their community didn't really have a chance to get the kind of quality goods they would back home. So 25 years ago, they decided to do their own thing and set up the business. Word of mouth spread, getting the news out about the bakery, and it just grew from there.

## Why did you choose to follow in your parents' footsteps by running the business?

It wasn't something that I wanted to get into because I saw it as my parents' business, but I stepped in because I saw that they had reached a glass ceiling. Plus, as I got older, I started to realise the power of legacy and ownership and what it meant, not just for me, but for generations to come, including my daughter. It spurred me on to step up.

## How has Covid-19 impacted your business?

We've had our ups and downs. I think one of the main things has been the impact on the mental wellbeing of staff and low customer morale. The bakery being an essential food business means that we provide something people need daily so it's been okay to a certain degree... but we've definitely seen a decline in footfall.



## Support these awesome Black-owned businesses

### Samuel picks out three of his favourites in London

#### Bespoke Binny African print homewares

'I like how this business showcases the heritage and culture behind the brand. It also has a similar story to ours, coming from humble beginnings.' @bespokebinny

#### Jamii A discovery platform and marketplace for Black British businesses

'Uncle John's Bakery is part of this network, which is a portal for shopping, food, drinks and clothing brands. It's so intuitive and user-friendly!' @ukjamii

#### TreasureTress Hair product discovery box

'I love knowing that when my nine-year-old daughter gets older, she'll have a go-to brand where she can shop and know that they're catering for her hair.' @treasuretress

**Reviews are an important part in helping people decide where to shop. Leave a review for the local businesses you love to help them thrive.**

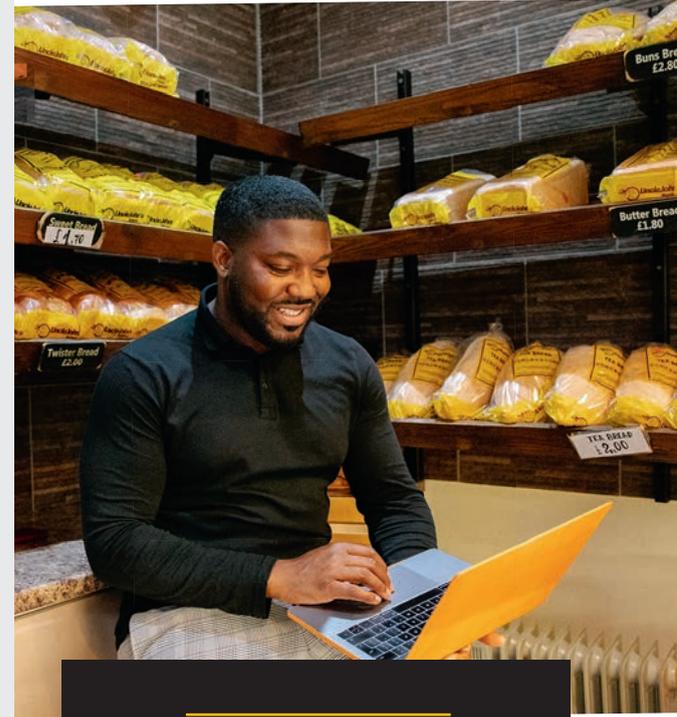
## How have some of Google's products helped you to adapt throughout 2020?

We were already planning to bring in an online delivery service for our bakery, which we fast-tracked when the pandemic hit. To let people know this was now an option, we updated our Google My Business listing in Google Maps with links to the ordering platform. For those in areas where we couldn't directly deliver, we used Google Maps data on our own website to help people find their nearest stockist.

## Why do you believe it is critical for people to actively support Black-owned businesses?

I think it's important for people to support Black businesses, particularly those within your community, because this is where you live; it's an extension of you. It also gives young Black people more options for what they can aspire to and create.

## Advertisement feature



## GROW YOUR BUSINESS WITH GOOGLE

**Google My Business free tools are here to help you at any stage of your journey:**

### Build your online profile

By creating a complete Business Profile on Google Maps, you can display your operating hours, delivery options, booking availability and more. You can use your profile to respond to Google Reviews, and share offers directly with customers to help keep them coming back.

### Create a website

Google My Business can help you build your first website for free. Its built-in features let customers call, message, book services, place orders and more.

### Enrol in a course

Through its Digital Garage, Google offers free online courses which are designed to grow your business – including digital marketing and making sure people find you online.

→ Find free Google tools for your business at [g.co/helpforbusiness](https://g.co/helpforbusiness)





'Windrush: Portrait of a Generation'

## Learnin' skills

### **N** Headties and headwraps

Although a well-tied headwrap can be your best friend when your tresses just aren't doing what you want, the history of headwrapping has a long and complex connection to the Black community. As part of Camden Black History Season, Sandra Soteriou of headwrap company Knots will walk attendees thorough the cultural significance of wearing headscarves in the African diaspora. Bring your own fabric and make it fashion.

→ Gabeto. Nov 11. Free, register in advance on Eventbrite.

## Virtual theatre

### **S** 'The One Woman Black History Show'

Originally conceived as a socially distanced outdoor performance, 'The One Woman Black History Show' will be streamed online for families and other inquisitive types looking for a carefree way to soak up essential knowledge. Listen to Afro Caribbean folk tales and sing along to original songs about key moments and figures in Black British history, while appreciating the origins of traditional Caribbean music and dance.

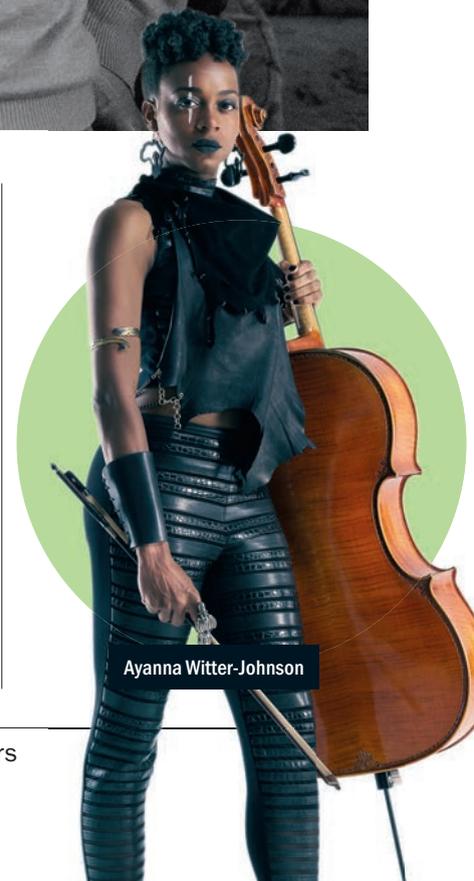
→ Nov 28. Free, register in advance on Eventbrite.

## Into the archives

### **S** 'We Are Here'

At its new home in The Sojourner Truth Community Centre in Peckham, The Feminist Library opens its archive to the public with an exhibition that shows just how central Black women have always been to the British feminism movement. It gives insights into how grassroots groups ran radical campaigns in the '80s and '90s, with a rich display of posters, badges and flyers from the movement's history.

→ The Feminist Library. Until Nov 30. Free.



Ayanna Witter-Johnson

## C 'Dub London: Bassline of a City'

Heard in the political cries of Black British culture and the rebellion of bands like The Clash, dub is a slice of soundsystem culture that has influenced countless genres of music. 'Dub London' is an attempt to explore its connections to culture, spirituality and fashion. Postponed from March because of the THING, the exhibition finally opened last month. Among the displays is the iconic Channel One speaker stack that has appeared at Notting Hill Carnival every year since 1983, along with plenty of retro photographs of Londoners letting loose by the speakers.

→ Museum of London. Until Jan 31 2021.

Free, register in advance.

## Jazz fest

### N Ayanna Witter-Johnson

The EFG London Jazz Festival is known for bringing new, often avant-garde, talent to the stage, and this year is no different. One of the many standout acts on the roster for 2020 is classical cellist Ayanna Witter-Johnson. The Mobo-nominated artist is known for her brand of eclectic classic soul, heard on her debut album 'Road Runner' and its neo-soul-influenced first single 'Crossroads'. Witter-Johnson made lockdown infinitely more bearable with her streamed performance for the Royal Albert Hall way back in April, and we couldn't be more excited to see her work the strings in real life.

→ The Jazz Cafe. Nov 17. £14.

## Photography

### S 'Windrush: Portrait of a Generation'

In this recently-opened photo exhibition at Brixton Library, the Windrush Generation are given the admiration they fully deserve in award-winning photographer Jim Grover's illustrative photo story. Originally shown in 2018 at the Oxo Gallery as part of the seventieth anniversary of the arrival of the SS Empire Windrush, the photographs – many of which were taken in Brixton – show the family gatherings, Sunday services and rowdy domino games that are part of the daily lives of the Caribbean community.

→ Brixton Library. Until Mar 31 2021. Free.

## Queer excellence

### E What's Good

For the uninitiated, a self-proclaimed bad bitch can change your life, make your dreams come true and spark your wildest desires. From the sounds of it, you can find the best of them at cabaret night What's Good, where the Bad Btch Cabaret will be rolling into town. A celebration of all body sizes and shapes, expect a night of queer excellence and copious rump-shaking as artist Shakona Fire brings dance, politics and dad jokes crashing into The Glory.

→ The Glory. Nov 11. £6 per person, book per table.



## Cyber parties

### ► The Online Carnival

That annual summer highlight of drinking rum and pineapple juice at 2pm, dancing with randoms next to the soundsystem and losing your mates in the crowd at Carnival just wasn't meant to be this year. To soothe our bass-loving needs, the show went online this summer. It was such a success that Rampage, one of the biggest, baddest and loudest soundsystems at Carnival, will be bringing its mix of dancehall, jungle, garage and R&B to our screens this winter, too.

→ Dec 5. Free. Find out more by following @rampagesound on Instagram.

### ► No Bass Like Home

Reggae has made a lasting impression on the UK. You name 'em, Brent made 'em. Trojan Records was founded in the borough and both Britain's first homegrown reggae band, the Cimarons, and singer Janet Kay (the first British-born Black female reggae artist to score a UK number one) were from the area. Is all this news to you? Then it's time for an education. At the No Bass Like Home lockdown party, you can get a crash course with a seven-hour online festival of music from the borough's reggae and bass pioneers, all curated by 1Xtra DJ Seani B. As well as the Brent stars there'll be acts from Florida, Miami and Jamaica. Most importantly though, there's a live set from Willesden royalty, Janet Kay herself.

→ Nov 15. Free. Find out more at www.brent2020.co.uk

## BEHIND THE CABARET

# Sadie Sinner



### S The Cocoa Butter Club

Over the last four years, The Cocoa Butter Club has been coming up in London's cabaret scene. Led by Sadie Sinner, the company celebrates performers of colour, many of whom are queer, from all walks (and struts and sashays) of life. Mixing spoken word, aerial displays and drag, its showcases serve as one big fabulous reminder that Black and brown cabaret artists not only exist but are here to stay – with flair.

#### How did The Cocoa Butter Club get started?

'Back in 2016, I decided to put the wheels in motion because when I attended a Pride event that year, I saw that there were no Black lesbians booked on the cabaret stage. When I talked about it on online forums, the responses were "maybe there are no Black lesbians in cabaret" or "maybe there are none that are good enough performers to be on stage". My response was, "obviously you haven't seen me perform". So I created a showcase to help talent scouts easily find us, but then it became clear that, actually, people who shared our identities wanted to see us perform too.'

#### What can we expect at one of your showcases?

'There's just always such beautiful energy, it's palpable and you can feel it from both performers and the audiences. I would honestly describe it as a sacred space.'

#### How do you manage the business side of things?

'It's tricky sometimes finding the balance, especially because I'm also age-mates to most of the people in our company. It can be complex... making those tough business decisions. I'd say we're doing an okay job though – many people assume that we're a fully fledged company.'

#### How has the London cabaret scene changed over the last few years?

'It's very white, but at the same time it's not, because all of these exciting initiatives and projects are popping up... London is really DIY, with people creating for themselves the spaces that are needed to champion and celebrate their communities.' ■ Interview by Paula Akpan  
→ Next show: The Albany. Nov 13. From £9.

ONE  
UNMISSABLE THING



Lynette Yiadom-Boakye: 'Fly in League with the Night'

British artist Lynette Yiadom-Boakye's work focuses on fictional Black subjects created from found images and her own imagination. The figures wear contemplative facial expressions and relaxed postures, often captured in dark palettes that are potentially representative of any era. See these expressive oil paintings up close at the first major UK survey of her art.

→ Tate Britain. Nov 18-May 9 2021. £13.



Steve McQueen 'Year 3'

Must-see art

**C Steve McQueen: 'Year 3'**

The diversity, hope and future of the next generation of Londoners is captured in Steve McQueen's ambitious 'Year 3' project. The Turner Prize- and Oscar-winning artist invited every year 3 class in the city to have their photograph taken. The resulting exhibition captures a generation at a crucial stage in their development, with the potential to become whoever they want.

→ Tate Britain. Until Jan 31 2021. Free.

**W #CantStopOurFlow'**

The question of how Black artists create work for their community will be at the centre of this online

and physical exhibition. It explores themes of intimacy between the sexes, the politics of hair, Black feminism, and the connections between art and healing. Held at J/M Gallery, the physical exhibition is a chance to view work by Nigerian artist Oluwole Omofemi and the Jamaican-born Tony Daley.

→ J/M Gallery. Nov 4-10. Free, register in advance on Eventbrite.

Alfresco art

**W Brent Biennial: Yasmin Nicholas**

The arrival of a full-scale biennial was a first for Brent. The idea was to

take art from the walls of galleries and museums and bring it out to the people, to be shown everywhere from launderettes to billboards.

Artists from the borough have created 20 new pieces. They are all different in style, with one thing in common: each is inspired by Brent. One of those artists is Yasmin Nicholas, who has developed a new collection of collage works, 'The Children of the Sugar', which are made with poetry and found images drawn from the histories that form her Brent identity. See how many you can find.

→ Various locations in Brent. Until Dec 13. Free.

Fundraiser

**E BlackOut Hackney Wick**

As protest becomes part of our daily lives, finding new ways to fight for what's right while protecting our spirit will be necessary to keep going. BlackOut aims to do just that by becoming a platform for under-represented Black voices that brings together the passion of protest with the joy of a festival. The first event, held at Colour Factory in Hackney Wick, features Basement Jaxx vocalist Vula Malinga.

→ Colour Factory. Nov 21. From £10.



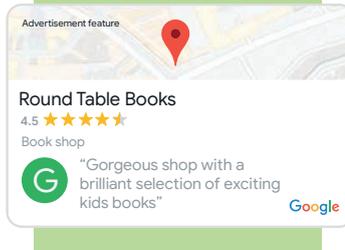


## Brilliant bookshops

### Round Table Books

Though a relatively new arrival in Brixton Village, Round Table Books feels like it's been around for years. The shop started life as a pop-up event organised by children's publishers Knights Of, to celebrate diversity in kids' literature. After an overwhelmingly positive response to the stall, Round Table Books became a permanent fixture in Brixton and is packed with a wide selection of children's books and comics. It's the perfect place for the young (and not so young) to mooch around for an afternoon.

→ 97 Granville Arcade, Coldharbour Lane.  
www.instagram.com/roundtablebooks



### No Ordinary Book Shop

After a struggle to find books with positive representations of Black people, Angel Miller took matters into her own hands. She opened No Ordinary Book Shop, stocking books for and about Black youth. Miller's library is available to peruse online and travels the city in pop-up form, appearing in local libraries and town halls. Follow No Ordinary Book Shop on social media for updates.

→ www.noordinarybookshop.co.uk

### Pepukayi Books

Set up by activist Elder Pepukayi, this Tottenham bookshop based in the The Maa Maat Cultural Centre sells African-centred books. The literature spans many topics from Black pride to Black history.

→ 366A High Rd. www.instagram.com/peppayourmind

## The UK's first Black publisher is still educating us, 50 years on

### New Beacon Books

Waking up super early. Picking the perfect outfit. Slicking your hair down with brown gel. Glossing your lips. This might sound like preparation for going 'out out' in the Before Days, but for me that was my weekend ritual for getting ready to meet my girlfriends to venture to 76 Stroud Green

Road and visit New Beacon Books.

This was the UK's first publishing house and bookshop specialising in the works of Black writers. Founded by Trinidadian political and cultural activist, poet, writer, publisher John La Rose and his partner Sarah White in 1966, it has been a safe haven for those of us wanting to lose ourselves in the work of Black writers for more than 50 years.

The world of Black authors was not prominently featured on the school curriculum but, at New Beacon Books, I got my education. I was introduced to the works of Ralph Ellison, Bernardine Evaristo, Jackie Kay, Audre Lorde and Sister Souljah. Fellow patrons would signpost me to books that they thought a young Black girl needed to read. The bookshop has



been key not only in amplifying the work of Black writers, but ensuring that we have a place to showcase our achievements.

New Beacon Books is a fundamental part of Black British history that provided the blueprint for when I co-founded Black Girls Book Club – a literature and social events platform that celebrates literature by Black womxn writers.

Speaking of La Rose, the novelist, playwright and critic

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o wrote: 'John La Rose is immensely aware of the revolutionary potential of literature and culture in the world today. As a writer, publisher and cultural activist, he has helped in the growth of many writers in Africa, Caribbean, Europe and America. Rarely has anybody come into contact with him without being affected by his generous, searching, modern renaissance spirit.'

New Beacon is not just a cultural institution: it is a safe space for Black writers and readers alike. Seventy-six Stroud Green Road is the birthplace of Black British literature – and somewhere I can call home. ■

Melissa Cummings-Quarry, co-founder of Black Girls Book Club.

→ 76 Stroud Green Rd. www.newbeaconbooks.com

## Shopping

### Afro Pop

Until very recently, Afro Pop market was known as 'Afro Pop Peckham', and took place every week on Rye Lane. Now it's moved locations to Canary Wharf. It might be far removed from what some Peckham locals affectionately call 'Little Lagos', but the free weekly market is still packed full of African-inspired arts, crafts, jewellery, homeware, fashion and more, all made by Black-owned indie businesses. Visit its 'literature lounge' for books on Black history and African culture, have an African heritage photoshoot in the media studio or hit up the 'mind, body and spirit health hub' where experts will be on hand to help you get a post-lockdown glow.

→ 59 Millharbour, E14. Every Sat. Free entry.

# EAT of EDEN

-VEGAN- (E)

Black Pound Day  
SATURDAY  
7 Nov

## Support Erika's business this Black Pound Day

Eat Of Eden, Lewisham

Erika Regis remembers when vegan options were limited, so at her own restaurant she recommends platters that allow customers to try a little bit of everything.

Black Pound Day falls on the first Saturday of every month. This Saturday, consider spending differently. Spend Black. #BlackPoundDay

Black Pound Day is proudly supported by Google.  
Find a local Black business at [blackpoundday.uk](https://blackpoundday.uk)

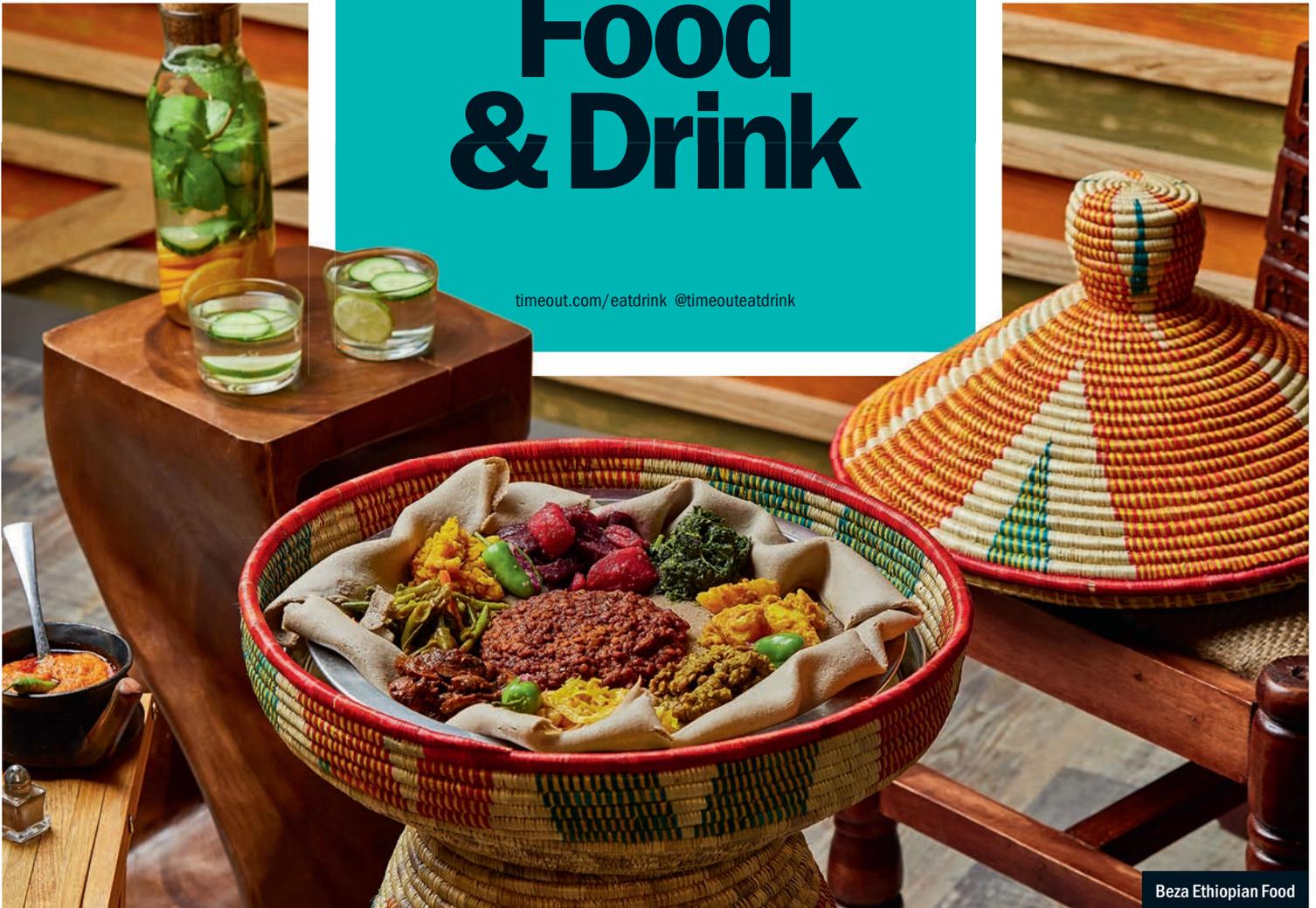
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# Food & Drink

timeout.com/eatdrink @timeouteatdrink



Beza Ethiopian Food

## Where does a top chef go when he's hungry?

### 1 Kate's Café

Tucked away in Plaistow, this simple spot is worth travelling to – and not just for its extensive list of tasty gin cocktails. The real draw? The British and Ghanaian fusion menu here is a mega who's who of every African comfort carb: plantain, yam, rice, fufu – you name it.  
→ 174 Balaam St, E13 8RD.

### 2 Island Social Club

Marie Mitchell and Joseph Pilgrim have created an inclusive space with Island Social Club. The duo run food projects around the city – from storytelling supper clubs to their bright and airy Haggerston pop-up – all with the aim of helping people connect to

### Nigerian tapas, wood-smoked meat and a spot that does vast Ethiopian sharing platters. 12:51's James Cochran picks his favourite Black-owned restaurants in London

British Caribbean culture. And they serve up some great rotis too.  
→ Various venues. See [www.islandsocialclub.com](http://www.islandsocialclub.com) for details.

### 3 Alhaji Suya

This Nigerian spot specialising in suya (grilled seasoned meat) makes a welcome change from the copy-and-paste

chains you're more likely to see in Greenwich. Its menu is small but succinct: you can choose between beef, chicken or ram suya – boneless or on the bone. You can also get kilishi here – a version of jerky that originated in Hausaland – if you're looking for even more protein gains.  
→ Unit 15, Angerstein Business Park, SE10 0RT.



### 4 Beza Ethiopian Food

This Ethiopian joint does vegan food, sure, but not that you'd notice meat missing! Its vast sharing platters are made up of all kinds of vegetable and pulse stews that are served nestled into an injera. Really flavourful and addictive stuff. It has an outdoor space, which is good news at the moment.  
→ 8A Sayer St, SE17 1FH.

### 5 The Tramshed Project

I met Dominic Cools-Lartigue around a year ago. He's a pioneer of the street-food scene – he was the original founder of Street Feast – and he's also an avid supporter of Black Lives Matter. That's why I teamed up with him on

More on what chefs eat at [timeout.com/recipes](https://www.timeout.com/recipes)



Smoke & Salt

Advertisement feature

**Smoke & Salt**  
4.7 ★★★★★  
Small plates restaurant

**L** "The pheasant dish we had was out of this world"

this project. Tramshed is a socially distanced dining room in a massive gallery space. I'm doing some of the food and so is Zoe Adjonyoh (Zoe's Ghana Kitchen) and a few others. Expect lots of fried chicken from me – plus co-working spaces and a bar as well.

→ 32 Rivington St, EC2A 3LX.

## 6 The Bash

There are no fancy Instagram flower walls enticing people in at Tottenham's The Bash. In fact, unless you've been taken here by someone before, it's unlikely that this unassuming gem would be on your radar – but it should be. It does really simple African and Congolese cooking that's incredibly high quality. Its grilled fish and meat options are so tasty and the value is off the charts. I love that its customer base is powered by word of mouth: it really says a lot about the standard of its cooking.

→ 71-73 West Green Rd, N15 5DA.

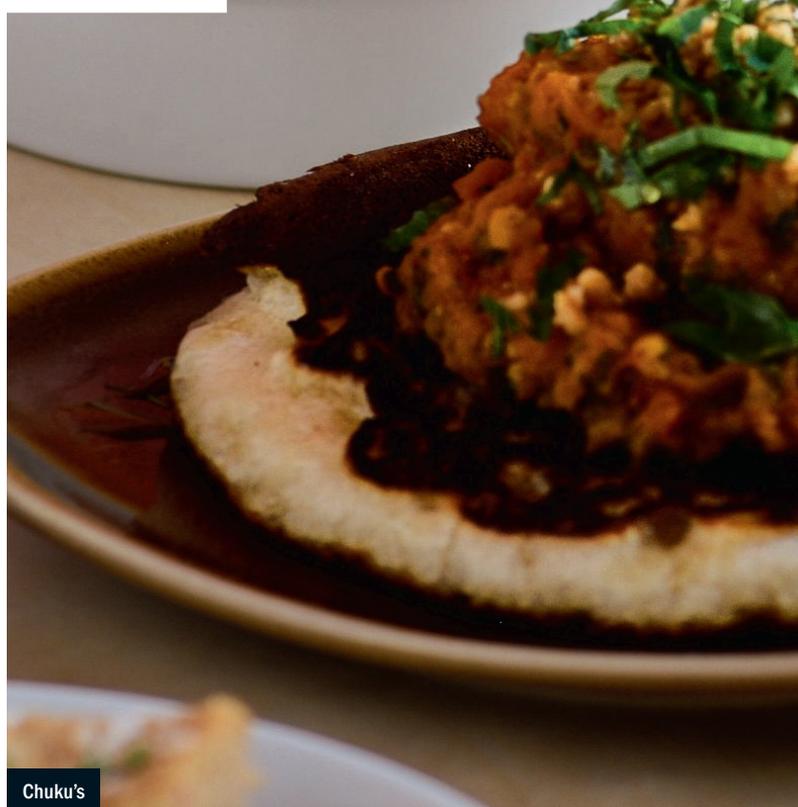
## 7 Smoke & Salt

I first went to Remi and Aaron's spot when they were in Pop Brixton and was blown away by what they were producing from a tiny kitchen. Now they're in Tooting. They offer an ever-changing menu of beautiful small plates created using traditional methods such as smoking, curing and preserving. But what I love most about them is that they try to make their food reflect the diversity of south London and the UK.

→ 115 Tooting High St, SW17 0SY.

## 8 Chuku's

I've not been here yet, but I'm dying to go. The founders, Emeka and Ifeyinwa, are siblings and they combine the Nigerian flavours they ate as kids with tastes they found while living in Spain and Martinique. It's great to see a



Chuku's

CHUKU'S: REBECCA DICKSON

CHUKU'S: REBECCA DICKSON; ISLAND SOCIAL CLUB; MARIE MITCHELL; CHIRON COLE

brother-and-sister team doing what they love: capturing the spirit of their childhood eats and culture, and serving it up with flair. Would you expect anything less from Nigerians?

→ 274 High Rd, N15 4AJ.

### 9 Michael's BBQ Kitchen

This Brixton restaurant is quite new on the scene but it's doing awesome things. Chef-owner Michael cooks traditional smoked meats. Everything is smoked with natural wood (the proper way). He does my absolute favourite smoked pork belly pieces in the whole of the city and some very, very great jerk chicken too. Not into smoky stuff? The fried chicken is really banging too – but not quite as good as mine, ha!

→ 292 Brixton Rd, SW9 6AG.

### 10 Kaieteur Kitchen

Now in Enfield, this street-food truck was one of the best in Elephant & Castle Shopping Centre (RIP). Run by chef Faye Gomes since 2003, it focuses on Guyanese food. The influence of India in the cooking here is great and pronounced: the rotis are something else, there's amazing grilled chicken and an ace playlist. ■

→ 750 Hertford Rd, EN3 6PR.

**James Cochran is one of the contributors to 'Community Comfort', a cookbook featuring more than 100 recipes from Black, Asian and minority ethnic chefs, raising funds for BAME Covid victims.**



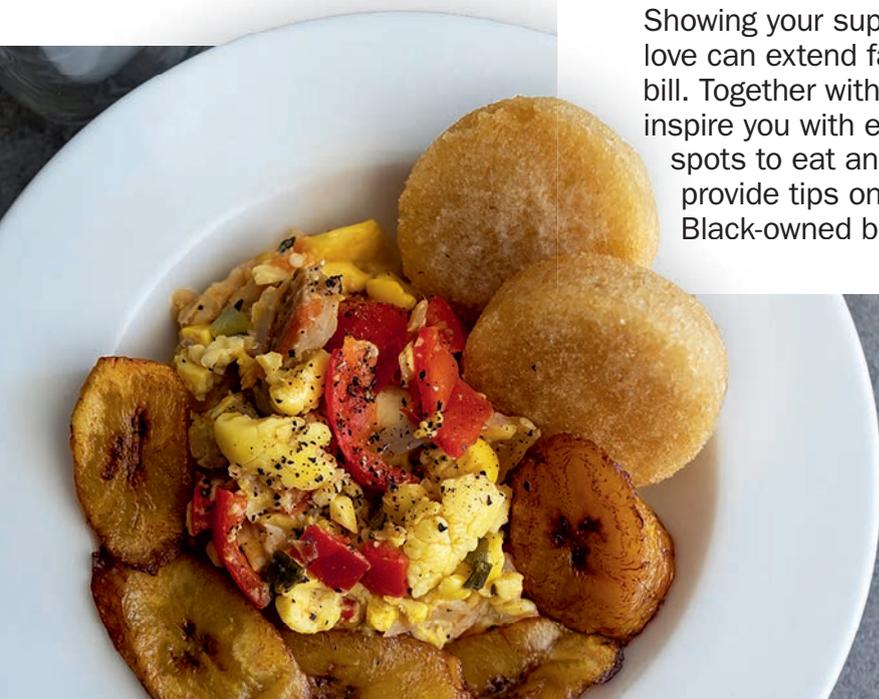
Island Social Club



# Say it **loud!**

Showing your support for an eatery you love can extend far beyond paying the bill. Together with Google, we're here to inspire you with excellent Black-owned spots to eat and drink at – and to provide tips on how you can help Black-owned businesses thrive

**T**here is no doubt that 2020 has been incredibly tough on small businesses across the capital – but the hard-hit hospitality industry faces unique challenges. Today we're shining a light on some brilliant Black-owned businesses and celebrating the people that run them. We'll also show you how to give a little bit of help to local businesses using Google Maps features, and by getting involved in Google's #DearLocal campaign.



Three Little Birds

### Three Little Birds

This little Jamaican café nestled on Coldharbour Lane in Brixton (with a second location in Clapham) is a local favourite, with reasonably-priced dishes and a rum bar that packs a punch. A way of celebrating her roots, owner April Jackson's boutique eatery offers an escape to the Caribbean with its remixed classic recipes and authentic cocktails.

**If you try one thing, it should be...** The crispy and golden sweet plantain.

→ Various locations.

Businesses (like Ikoyi!) can now let you reserve your table online within Google Maps, which means you can help the restaurant better manage capacity

Google Maps can show you which places offer takeaway and delivery options (like Roti Joupa!), so you can continue to support your local even if you prefer to stay in

### Trap Kitchen

South London's Prince Cofie Owusu, otherwise known as Shakka, set up the celeb favourite back in 2016 in Manchester. Now with a second restaurant in Balham, the previously online takeaway business has drawn huge support from famous fans, including Stormzy and model Leomie Anderson, for its decadent bang bang prawns and mac 'n' cheese.

**If you try one thing, it should be...**

The generous half slab, which offers a choice between snow crab cluster and lobster tail.

→ 76 Bedford Hill, SW12 9HR.

### Chuku's

Touted as the UK's first, and only, Nigerian tapas restaurant, Chuku's is headed up by brother and sister duo Emeka and Ifeyinwa Frederick. Growing up in east London, the pair dreamed of bringing a slice of their heritage to the capital – but the idea to put a unique tapas-inspired spin on traditional dishes came about during Emeka's time living in Spain. Word spread as the duo opened their first pop-up in 2016, and, following a highly successful crowdfunding campaign, they finally opened their long-awaited permanent restaurant in Tottenham at the beginning of the year.

**If you try one thing, it should be...**

Suya meatballs: delicious grilled beef with ginger, chillies and a spiced kuli kuli (peanut) blend.

→ 274 High Rd, N15 4AJ.

### Chuku's

### Eat of Eden

With branches in Shepherd's Bush, Clapham, Brixton and Lewisham, Eat of Eden has taken London's vegan-friendly food game up a notch. Boasting pumpkin and chickpea curries, lentil stew and a host of plant-based burgers, this spot is perfect for some filling Caribbean nosh.

**If you try one thing, it should be...**

The sharing platter, so that you can get a taste of everything: we're talking dumplings, callaloo (leafy veg with spices), stews and more.

→ Various locations.

Google Maps can show you the popular times for some local businesses to help you visit when it might be easier to socially distance

### Roti Joupa

For London-based Trinidadians, Roti Joupa is like a home away from home. Opened by a Trinidadian family back in Clapham in 2001, this Caribbean café has now expanded to Finsbury Park and Shepherd's Bush, gaining a cult following as it goes. It's best known for its doubles, the country's

signature snack – fluffy, hot roti filled with chickpea curry and spiced, slightly sweet condiments. Staff are super-friendly and more than happy to take you through the daily baked goods selection or other menu highlights – one of which is its macaroni pie, topped with sweet tamarind sauce.

**If you try one thing, it should be...**

Buss-up shot (shredded buttery roti) with a curry of your choice.

→ Various locations.

### Ikoyi

When Lagos-born Iré Hassan-Odukale co-founded this central London restaurant with his friend Jeremy Chan (who had previously cooked at high-end restaurants like Noma and Dinner by Heston Blumenthal), Londoners relished their first taste of West African-influenced fine dining. With a Michelin star under its belt, this joint is all about innovative and creative gourmet dishes, including creamed spinach ehuru and aged short rib with suya.

**If you try one thing, it should be...**

Plantain caramelised in ginger and kombu.

→ 1 St James's Market, SW1Y 4AH.

**For loads more tips on how to support Black-owned businesses, turn to page 24.**

## #DEARLOCAL

**Is there a local business you would be lost without? Google is encouraging people to share the love for their favourite local spots on social, then leave a Google review to help others discover it. Here's how to get involved:**

- 1 Take a selfie outside a business you love (or just a photo of the business if you're camera-shy!). Make sure the scene you've shot complies with Covid-19 guidance.
- 2 Search Instagram stickers for 'dearlocal' and add Google's #DearLocal sticker.
- 3 Tag the business in your post using their handle.
- 4 Tag three friends and nominate them to share a #DearLocal selfie too.

# Love Local

Edited by Kate Lloyd  
timeout.com/lovelocal

## The Crouch Hill youth club that's making stars

A community project in Ashley Walters's neighbourhood is changing the lives of the kids who live there. Portrait *Anselm Ebulue*

**THE NUMBER OF** youth clubs in London has nearly halved since 2011, yet their historical importance in providing a safe space for young people is still unmatched. And Shawdon Smith is one man who knows this all too well. He's dedicated his life to uplifting the young people in his community through Ambitious Academy.

The centre aims to support the youth of Archway and on the nearby Elthorne Estate – where he grew up – through mentoring schemes, connecting them to professionals and showing them they are valued and seen.

After finishing university and returning home, Smith knew he wanted to work with the young people in his community, reaching them in a way that parents or teachers often couldn't. 'I just said "this is my passion, this is what I want to do".'

Although he says the estate he lives on has a 'pretty bad history', Smith always understood the potential of the people who grew up around him and had first-hand experiences of the power of youth centres. 'Me and my friends always used to go every week when we were young!' he says.

While Ambitious Academy is a wonderful place to socialise, 'it's a lot

deeper than that,' Smith explains. It offers one-to-one sessions, residential trips, mentoring and skills-based workshops. He sees places like it as spaces where those pushed to the outskirts can have their potential nurtured. 'Young people in our area want to make a difference and do something constructive,' he says.

And now Smith and his community have found their calling in film. Working alongside production companies, they are telling their own stories. In collaboration with youth-led media organisation Fully Focused and Arsenal in the Community, in 2018 Ambitious Academy created the short film 'Drawn Out', which gives a glimpse into the harsh realities some experience in the capital. Since its release, the film has had more than 4 million YouTube views. Its success has seen Ambitious Academy's young people appearing in shows like 'Top Boy' and 'Bulletproof'. 'We're trying to get funding so we can continue creating films,' he says.

Smith is proof of the power of community. 'It's not about money or making an income for me, it's more of just having that moment when a young person can be proud.' ■ *Niellah Arboine*



### Crouch End



Jacqui Sealy has run Crouch End florist The Blossom House since 2014.

### Time2chill

'It's a 100 percent plant-based cosy coffee shop with organic coffee beans and teas that are sourced from Scotland. The bagels are delicious. Also, they do the best vegan burger I have tasted. Beata, the owner, only opened a few weeks ago, but has made her mark in the area already. They also have a secret garden that is covered and accessible through the cold weather. Love it.'

→ 316 Park Rd.

### Kimura

'What can I say... it has the most amazing sushi I have tasted. It's always so busy. My favourite is almost anything with salmon in, so when I feel like something warm, I will have a donburi bowl with mixed seafood. And I also love, love, love uramaki with tobiko prawn, asparagus and spicy salmon.'

→ 167 Priory Rd.

### Rejuven8

'I love this place. I had my first facial here and go back regularly - it's so clean, warm and friendly. It offers really lovely mini spa treatments.'

→ 224 Middle Lane.

### The Curl Bar London

'It's the place to go to get your curls looked after. It does excellent conditioning treatments. I take my granddaughters here to get their hair treated. It's great for a spoiling session.'

→ 210 Middle Lane.

### Bottle Apostle

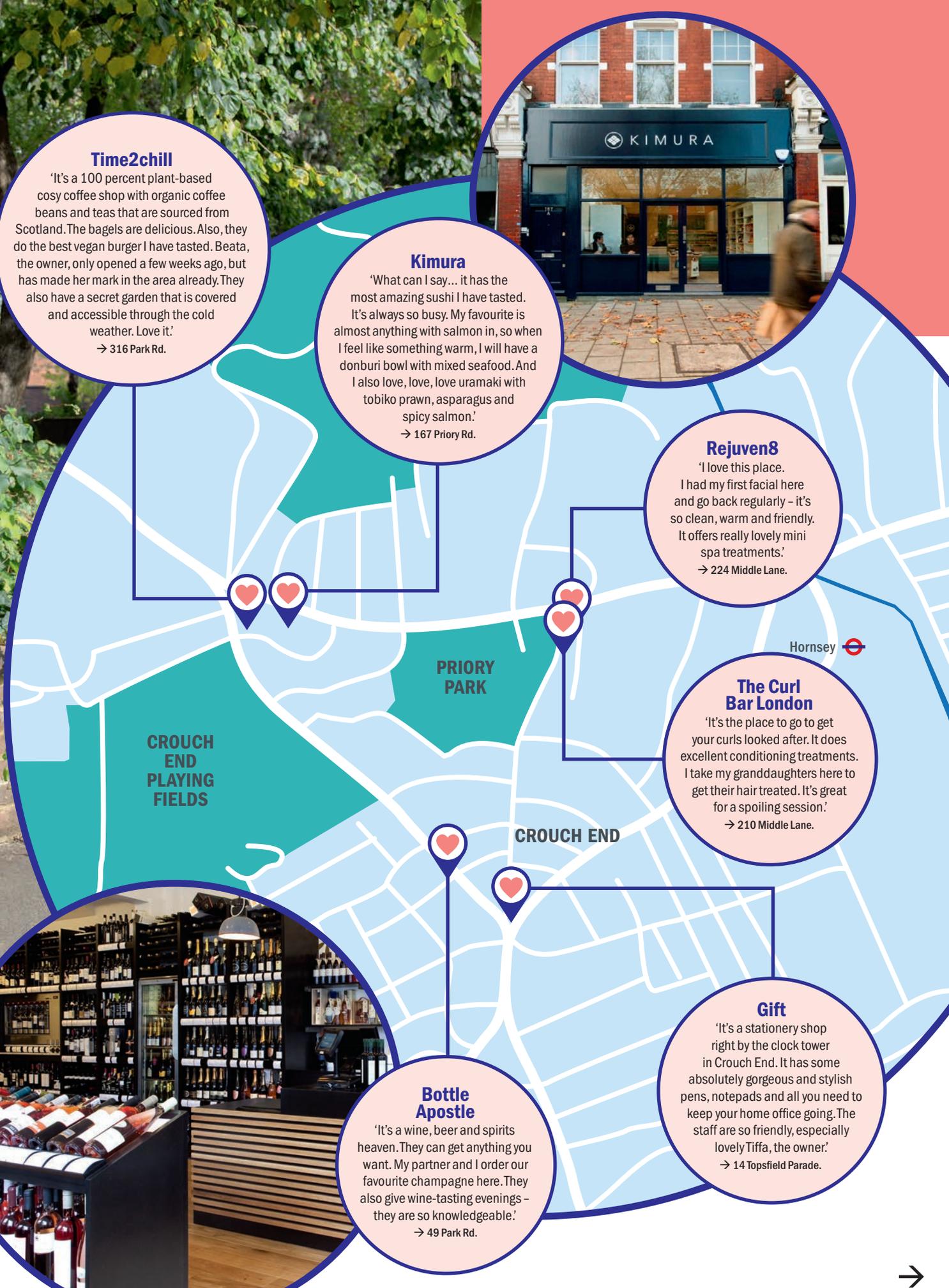
'It's a wine, beer and spirits heaven. They can get anything you want. My partner and I order our favourite champagne here. They also give wine-tasting evenings - they are so knowledgeable.'

→ 49 Park Rd.

### Gift

'It's a stationery shop right by the clock tower in Crouch End. It has some absolutely gorgeous and stylish pens, notepads and all you need to keep your home office going. The staff are so friendly, especially lovely Tiffa, the owner.'

→ 14 Topsfield Parade.





## The Peckham pub that's a community hub

It's only taken Prince of Peckham three years to become a local institution

**'PUBS SERVE THE** communities in which they reside. Without pubs there's no outlet, no mutual social ground, and the pandemic has highlighted how necessary they are,' says Clement Ogbonnaya, owner of Prince of Peckham.

Since it opened its doors in 2017, Prince of Peckham has become a cult favourite in the area. Inspired by how the barbershop in the Channel 4 show 'Desmonds' became a hub for local Peckham residents, Ogbonnaya wanted to provide a space for the community by the community. Set against the backdrop of Peckham's rapid regeneration that has often

left long-standing residents out in the cold, it was crucial that the pub was one where everyone could coexist.

'Being Black and from south-east London has afforded me insight into every layer of the community, allowing me to cater for all. Ownership within hospitality is predominately white. My mission is to reinvent pub culture, making it more accessible and welcoming for all,' he explains. The pandemic has seen Ogbonnaya double down on his efforts to wrap his arms around the community that he says has 'stuck with [Prince of Peckham]'. He adds: 'We offer discounts for local businesses, students and OAPs

and free drinks for NHS staff, as well as space for co-working'

There's a pervasive myth that pubs are an inherently white cultural phenomenon. But Ogbonnaya puts this down to how owners have traditionally approached the space.

'My dad never went to the pub and, as a Nigerian-born Brit, it wasn't so prominent in my upbringing,' he says. 'Yes, they are still quite white in their ownership and clientele but I'm here to change that up, for sure. Nobody should feel unwelcome in a public house, ever.'

With quiz nights hosted by the quirky Kweens Quizzes, football match screenings and variety shows compered by drag artists, the pub is keeping Peckham nightlife alive against the odds, while maintaining its inclusive edge. ■ *Kemi Alemoru*



Clement Ogbonnaya

**CLF Art Lounge**

**Cyndi** 'Owned by grassroots creative Mickey Smith, who famously saved the Bussey Building with CLF, this cosy bar is a calm oasis in the centre of Peckham with a beautiful rooftop area. I love the eclectic music played there, plus - shameless plug - I DJ there every so often.'  
 → 4A Station Way.



**Zionly Manna**

**Cyndi** 'Delicious, affordable Caribbean vegan food that's fondly and originally known in the Black diaspora as ital cuisine. The chickpea and potato curry is gorgeous.'  
 → Unit 41, Rye Lane Indoor Market.

**Peckham Food Hall**

**Monique** 'A firm lunchtime favourite for us. The space is home to three food outlets: Copeland Jerk Centre, Steamer and Izatu's Kitchen, offering Caribbean, Chinese and Sierra Leonean cuisine.'  
 → 74A Rye Lane.

**Gisella Boutique**

**Cyndi** '[A place] for those very special occasions, Gisella Boutique has been Peckham High Street's personal styling stalwart for 29 years. It's done pieces for the likes of Doreen Lawrence and Gina Yashere, and is run by mother-daughter team Gisella and Jan Asante.'  
 → 95 Peckham High St.

**Bidhaar**

**Monique** 'We love getting choice bits from this self-described Afro-urban fashion, art and lifestyle outfit. I got a swanky Ankara-designed mug there the other day.'  
 → 133A Rye Lane.

**Little Sister**

**Cyndi** '[Owner] Nicola always selects quality pieces for the store, great prices too! I can't get enough of her wares. The last purchase I nabbed there was an amazing £10 ex-factory shirt that always gets a compliment when I wear it.'  
 → 12-14 Holdrons Arcade.



**Peckham**



Cyndi Anafo and Monique Tomlinson are directors at hairdressing hub Peckham Palms.



Time Out's Love Local campaign supports local food, drink and culture businesses in London. Find out how you can help the places that make our city great.  
[timeout.com/lovelocalondon](http://timeout.com/lovelocalondon)

# Escapes

Edited by Ellie Walker-Arnott  
timeout.com/daytrips

WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH

## Black Girls Camping Trip

Tianna Johnson tells *Paula Akpan* why she wants to share the therapeutic power of pitching a tent, and ensure nature doesn't feel like a white space

### WHEN LONDONER TIANNA

Johnson set off on an impromptu camping trip in North Carolina in 2017, she had no idea that it would be the genesis for creating Black Girls Camping Trip, a London-based outdoor retreat for Black women and non-binary people. 'We watched the sunrise from the mountains and it was incredible. It was my first time camping, so when I came back to the UK, I tweeted one night asking if any Black girls wanted to go camping with me.' Johnson woke up the next day to a flood of enthusiastic responses. The first trip took place three weeks later.

Alongside activities that cater to all sorts

of campers, from party people to exercise enthusiasts, the heart of Black Girls Camping Trip hinges on healing and vulnerability within a welcoming and receptive environment. 'A lot of our attendees have experienced different forms

**'Nature is stronger than any individual'**

of violence, such as domestic or sexual abuse, at the hands of men. Through being Black, they also experience racial violence in the UK. When you're healing from traumas, it's important for it to take place in as safe a space as possible.'

With 90 percent of Black people in the UK living and being raised in cities and urban spaces, taking time out surrounded by nature



often feels like a white pastime. 'When it comes to us thinking about getting away, it's often about going to other cities,' shares Johnson. 'I think one of the powerful things about Black Girls Camping Trip is that it's in the UK, not even that far from London, but you're isolated and that pushes you to look inwards.' And camping is not easy – it requires teamwork and trust. 'You're battling with nature, which is considerably stronger than any individual, so you

have to rely on the network of people around you.'

Tianna and her team have had to consider Covid as they devise their next adventure, due to happen in August 2021. 'We'll be planning our trip as normal with social distancing and we're also looking at masks.'

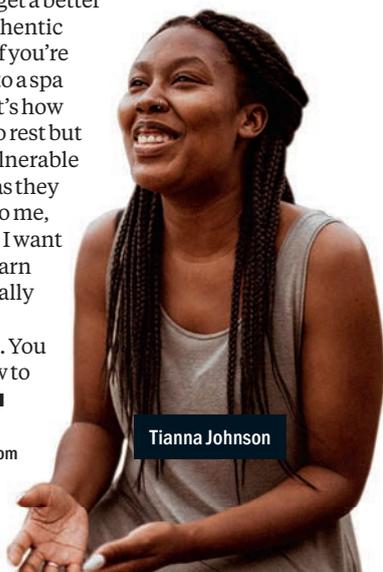
In the meantime, the organisation has been running 'e-campfire' sessions, such as therapeutic writing with author Bolu Babalola. 'When we've been physically around the



campfire, that's literally where all the best conversations take place, with jokes, learning and healing. We wanted to create that in people's homes,' explains Johnson.

Whether people join the retreat online or IRL, Johnson hopes attendees will get a better understanding of authentic rest and relaxation. 'If you're somebody who goes to a spa for massages, yes that's how you technically like to rest but you still have to be vulnerable in front of a stranger as they touch you, and that, to me, is not true relaxation. I want people to be able to learn how to rest authentically in ways that aren't difficult or expensive. You just need to know how to carve out the space.' ■

→ Find out more at [www.blackgirlscampingtrip.com](http://www.blackgirlscampingtrip.com)



Tianna Johnson

# Autumnal day trips from London

Five amazing reasons to leaf (sorry) London this autumn



New Forest National Park

**HIBERNATING IS SO** autumn 2019. As long as we're allowed to go outside our flats – and the city – we'll be doing so. (Day trips are totally allowed under Tier 2 rules, FYI, as long as you don't mix with other households indoors.)

## The pretty-much-essential workshop

One way to get through this chilly, frankly miserable season is to gain some serious baking skills and load up on handcrafted carbs. Make a day of it and take a class at **Two Magpies Bakery** in Darsham, Suffolk. Try out pastry in the Scandi baking class or learn how to make perfect, and highly coveted, sourdough.

→ Classes from £65. [www.twomagpiesbakery.co.uk](http://www.twomagpiesbakery.co.uk)

## The otherworldly bookshop

St John Boys House, also known as the Crooked House, is well-known for its super wonky, leaning architecture. Built in the seventeenth century, the three-storey building in Canterbury is now home to **Catching Lives** second-hand bookshop. Treat yourself to a classic to read curled up in bed and, before you leave, take a snap of the building. It looks a bit like 2020 feels.

→ [www.catchinglives.org](http://www.catchinglives.org)

## The huge sigh out

After the year we've had we all deserve a treat and **Haeckels** in Margate is where we want to cash in ours for a treatment inspired by the sea, like a detoxifying

seaweed wrap or a warm seaweed bath. Bonus: the venue has uninterrupted views of the waves so you can pretend you're at the beach without having to deal with the practically Arctic sea breeze.

→ Treatments from £25. [www.haekels.co.uk](http://www.haekels.co.uk)

## The Sunday lunch

**The Rose** has stood as a landmark on Deal's high street for more than 200 years. These days it's the kind of place you want to retreat to after a long, blustery beach walk and never leave. If, after a lazy lunch in the plush dining room, you actually can't bear to depart, book a room for the night, then all you'll need to do is make it up the stairs.

→ [www.therosedea.com](http://www.therosedea.com)

## The ultimate autumn walk

**The New Forest National Park**, an ancient woodland nestled between Bournemouth and Southampton, is the perfect spot for a break from the city. The area has 140 miles of footpaths to tread, as well as rolling heathland and free-roaming ponies. Take a trip to any of the idyllic villages nearby (we like Brockenhurst and Beaulieu) and pop into a pub for a pint of Ringwood and some local fare. ■

*Stephanie Phillips*

→ [www.newforestnpa.gov.uk](http://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk)

Find more seasonal scenes at [timeout.com/daytrips](http://timeout.com/daytrips)

# Film

Edited by Phil de Semlyen  
timeout.com/film @timeoutfilm

## 'It's the exception that proves the problem'

Steve McQueen's five-film anthology 'Small Axe' is a masterpiece, but opportunities for London's Black filmmakers are still painfully limited, writes filmmaker and historian *David Olusoga*



**IF YOU WALKED** on to a film set in London and more than a third of the crew – camera, sound, lighting, costume, make-up – were Black or Asian you would really notice it. It would feel unusual. Yet for a production based in London, where much of the UK's film and TV is made, a production team that was more than a third BAME would merely be a reflection of the capital's ethnic make-up. Around 36 percent of economically active Londoners are BAME. In the UK's film and TV industries, what should be entirely normal would seem like an aberration.

TV and film have a race problem. The last big push for change, the BFI's Diversity Standards, introduced back in 2014, have not succeeded in radically improving BAME representation in British

films, and behind the failures of today lies a long history of missed opportunities and false dawns. Just as long is the list of Black directors who made breakthrough films but were never given the funding or support to make follow-ups. It is the same story over and over again: careers with no second acts; initiatives created to bring about change but didn't; breakthroughs that weren't.

These failures have long been disguised by the success of Black British actors. But how much of that success can the UK lay claim to? Idris Elba, John Boyega, Letitia Wright, Daniel Kaluuya and many others made it on US TV and in Hollywood long before producers here recognised their headline potential. And the success and visibility of Black British actors camouflages the UK's failures in behind-the-camera diversity.



One of the few areas where there has been progress is in the writers' room. The list of Black British writing talent is long and growing. Writers like Lennie James, Levi David Addai, Baby Isako and others are booked up months, often years, in advance. Theresa Ikoko was the driving force behind 'Rocks', a rare British film with genuine diversity on both sides of the camera. Getting their names attached to a project can open doors and wallets. But

despite these success stories, Black people make up just 1.6 percent of TV screenwriters, and when Black writing rooms produce scripts, with roles for Black British actors, the crews assembled to make them often fail to include Black people – as multiple reports testify.

This year, spurred into action by Black Lives Matter, the TV and film industries have made new promises and launched initiatives. We may well look back at 2020 as a



chapter change in the story of Black film and television in the UK, but not just because of decisions made by industry power brokers. Two of the most significant projects of this year are the work of Black British creatives. Both, in different ways, put Black British experiences and Black characters centre stage. This month sees the release of 'Small Axe', five incredible films by Steve McQueen. Between them, 'Mangrove', 'Lovers Rock', 'Red,

'Small Axe' is reviewed at [timeout.com/film](https://www.timeout.com/film)

White and Blue', 'Alex Wheatle' and 'Education' plot the history of Black Britain from 1968 to 1982. This spring saw Michaela Coel's 'I May Destroy You' astonish audiences. With Coel playing the lead character, writing and directing, it's arguably been the most talked-about drama of the year.

Both McQueen and Coel are extraordinary talents, but they are also the exceptions that prove the problem. The careers of two geniuses, with unusual and unlikely career paths, does not mean the race problem has gone away. What their work offers is a glimpse of what we are missing out on.

When will we know that TV and film have properly addressed their race problem? What Black and Asian producers and writers long for is the day when they can easily hire crews that reflect London's population. They long for the day when they are no longer told that their stories are 'uncommercial'. The industry gatekeepers who argue that audiences will only warm to characters like themselves apply that judgment selectively. While Black stories are said to be 'niche', there is never any shortage of films and series about another one of Britain's smallest minorities: the rich. Ninety-three percent of us do not attend private schools; 99 percent of us do not go to Oxbridge. Yet it is never suggested that audiences might struggle to connect with posh people. When the stories of the 14 percent of us who belong to BAME communities are deemed as mainstream as those of the 7 percent who go to private schools we will have made progress, and McQueen and Coel will no longer be exceptions. ■

→ 'Small Axe' airs on the BBC starting Nov 15.



## About Endlessness



**LIFE IS SAD** and ridiculous in the deeply original films of Roy Andersson. The Swedish director's black comic movies are more collections of dry, offbeat, painterly vignettes than feature films in any traditional sense. This new one, scarce on laughs and brief, may be his last, says the 77-year-old. It's smaller in scale than his last two, 2014's 'A Pigeon Sat on a Branch Reflecting on Existence' and 2007's 'You, the Living'. It also has a more maudlin air to it overall than those others – which, if you've experienced their bleak absurdity, you'll know is saying something.

Great art brings perspective, and let's face it: we could all do with some of that right now. There's plenty of everyday pain and suffering to chew on here, as well as filmmaking craft to swoon over. We hear the voice of a woman recalling various people she's met, and that's the only clear connection between the scenes that unfold – each of them single-frame, static shots, drained of colour and featuring everyday-looking, extra-pale characters, as is Andersson's signature style.

There's a man crying on a bus because he doesn't 'know what he wants'. There's another facing a firing squad (a nod to Goya, one of Andersson's favourite painters). Elsewhere, a priest is going through a crisis: 'What should I do now that I have lost my faith?' he asks the doctor. 'I'm sorry, I have to catch a bus,' is the reply. That's Andersson's worldview in a nutshell: we stare into the existential abyss daily – and yet life still ticks over, beautiful in its banality and miraculous that it exists at all. ■ *Dave Calhoun*

### WHAT IS IT...

The latest opus from Sweden's don of deadpan, Roy Andersson.

### WHY GO...

For the anaesthetic-free dentist scene. Ouch.

→ Director Roy Andersson (12A) 78 mins. In cinemas and on Curzon Home Cinema Nov 6.



MY STREAMING SALVATION

# Samurai Champloo

Film writer *Kambole Campbell* on his small-screen happy place



**'THIS WORK OF** fiction is not an accurate historical portrayal. Like we care. Now shut up and enjoy the show.' With these title cards the anime series 'Samurai Champloo' announced itself to me with amusing aggression three years ago. It saved me during a lonely period stuck at home, and I'm still comforted by it now. It follows a vagrant, a rōnin and a young girl as they travel across Edo-era Japan to find 'the samurai who smells of sunflowers'. Their adventure is weird, wild and moving.

The man behind it, Shinichirō Watanabe, already gave us the jazz-tastic sci-fi 'Cowboy Bebop' (check it out at Funimation). Also blessed with seriously Spotify-able theme music, 'Samurai Champloo' marries hip hop and Japanese history – all with a thoughtfulness that I love and deep themes that include repressed feelings, intergenerational change



and frayed familial bonds. It immediately ticked all my boxes.

Shinichirō's love of splicing genres seeps into every detail, from Mugen's breakdancing-like fighting style to scene transitions that use record scratches. 'Champloo' offers an electric combination of chanbara (sword-fighting) and a frankly incredible soundtrack.

But it's not just the style that keeps me coming back. Its epic odyssey story is a balm at a time when the living room walls occasionally seem to be closing in. The show's in-your-face style also makes a lot of room for gentle contemplation about bonds between people from different backgrounds and countries. 'Samurai Champloo' is occasionally melancholic but it's also hopeful in its interactions between strangers – a show where you end up cherishing the memories of even the briefest encounters. ■

→ Available on Netflix now.

## Love Child



**SAHAND AND LEILA** flee from Iran to Turkey after their extra-marital affair leads to the birth of their son Mani. Towards the end of this often heartbreaking doc, Sahand asks Leila: 'Do you think we're expecting too much from life?' They've just learned that Donald Trump has closed the US to refugees from seven Muslim countries, ostensibly to protect the country from terrorists. Sahand and Leila are not terrorists but they are in danger. Adultery is still a capital crime in Iran. Leila fears she could be stoned to death; both fear their families could be arrested, even tortured. Leila has pretended that Mani is her husband's child. Now they are stuck in Turkey in agonising bureaucratic limbo, a family of unrecognised parts.



The film's great achievement is to show how faceless bureaucracy pervades every aspect of life. Buying a bike, attending a school play, having a day out: everything is coloured by the spectre of rejection. Sahand compulsively checks the United Nations portal to see if their case has progressed.

Every positive step is countered with a setback. Years pass, as we see the couple move from the breathless anxiety of escape to the daily grind and occasional good times. They can finally get married. They fall out over Mani's birthday: you feel that it's almost a relief to direct their frustration at something else for a change. 'Their system,' says Leila, 'it destroys people.'

'Love Child' sweeps you up in its story, though it's barely sentimental. They're never presented as



a saintly family. Mani initially angrily rejects Sahand as his real father; Sahand inexplicably contacts someone in the Iranian secret service. Part of the predicament of the refugee, it shows us, is that you never know if you're doing the right thing. But it also reminds us that that's the same for any family.

It's that link that makes this film so powerful. Sahand, Leila and Mani's situation is everyone's situation, just with the pressures, fears for the future and endless self-questioning amplified a thousand times. Are we expecting too much from life? Yes. No. I don't know. ■ *Chris Waywell*

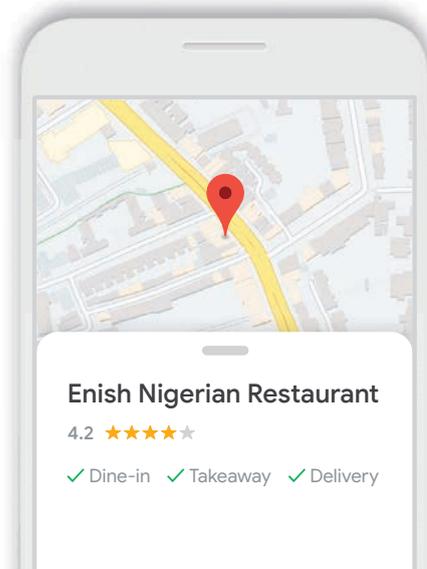
→ Available on PVOD Nov 6.



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# Find a local Black business at [blackpoundday.uk](https://blackpoundday.uk)

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