

ETERNAL LONDON

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*'Go where we may, rest where we will,
Eternal London haunts us still'*
- Thomas Moore

London. Few places are as instantly recognizable, as passionately iconic. From Notting Hill to the South Bank, bohemian to bespoke, London is a city of contrasts and superlatives; a collection of eclectic neighborhoods and historic landmarks that has for ages lured habitués to the center of the island we know as England.

Long hailed as a quintessential, luxury destination; upscale hotels and savvy purveyors of fine goods have finessed their approach in capturing the attention of travelers looking to experience London in a new, posh way. From sprawling suites to bespoke experiences, London has acuminated their focus to pinpoint the desires of guests hungry for luxury and in doing so, has become a premier emise en scène for indulgence.

At the forefront of these splendor-seeking endeavors is the InterContinental Park Lane. Set on the very spot where the childhood home of Her Majesty once stood, the Park Lanes its across from Hyde Park in the elegant London vicinage of Mayfair. Offering impeccable service, impressive dining choices and one of the most indulgently decadent spas to be found anywhere in the UK, this flagship property is a destination unto itself. A testament to stalwart British style, the Park Lane is a place where one may wake in a bed outfitted with Frette, begin their day sipping tea from bone chine, watch the royal horses being led from the Mews or simply stroll to the Palace in order to listen to the royal piper serenade Her Majesty over



breakfast – all before the stroke of nine. It is, simply put, London at its finest.

Despite the obviously opulent amenities, impressive provenance and majestic accommodations, what sets this property – as well as her sister hotel the InterContinental Westminster – apart are the exclusive “Insider Experiences” offered to guests. It is through these experiences where visitors to merry old England may choose to take tea in the couture showroom of one of Britain’s most hallowed designers, work with an celebrated Chef to create the perfect plum pudding or view a collection of royal uniforms after being fitted for a hand tailored shirt on Savile Row.

Of those custom offerings, alluring to those for whom Chaucer holds more intrigue than Choo, is an afternoon of exploration with Rose Balston of Art History UK. As any anglophile worth his salt will attest, London’s treasure trove of history is a delight to discover – more so when accompanied by this veritable, albeit wonderfully charming, encyclopedia of fine art. Balston brings the history of London to life with her melodic British tone and fascinating narratives, allowing guests to truly experience – rather than merely visit – the paradigmatic offerings of the city.

“What we offer our guests is the ability to take the typical London experience

and combine it with a wholly bespoke interaction” explains Ed Purnell, InterContinental’s Area Director of Marketing. “While the Park Lane and Westminster hotels are part of the InterContinental luxury brand, each has its own charm and each strives to create unique, desirable, luxury experiences. The hotels offer the distinction of being destinations within a destination”.

Gourmands and oenophiles traveling to London, take note. Not to be outdone by the area’s decadent accommodations and heady enticements, the dining scene in London has also risen to the luxury occasion. One stellar standout among myriad marvels is The Harwood Arms.

DEPARTURES





Bucolic and chic, the establishment sits in the quiet London enclave of Fulham. A gastropub with a coveted Michelin Star to its credit, Chef Anthony Hill has taken traditional dishes and reinvented them through his visionary interpretations. From sublime roast venison saddle to exquisite Cornish sea bream, Hill has indelibly elevated the experience of pub food. Another notable destination is Little Social in London's tony Marylebone neighborhood. The little sister to Jason Atherton's star-studded masterpiece, Pollen Street Social, and a favorite with local elite; Little Social offers British specialties served with a delicate yet decidedly French accent.

One of the newest "it" restaurants to debut in London is the Blue Boar Smokehouse & Bar where artisanal beer from the renown Meantime Brewing Company shares the stage with artfully mixed cocktails – including one of the most comprehensive odes to Gin found anywhere in the city - and barbeque so excruciatingly delicious, it could bring an American pit master to tears. Set within the InterContinental Westminster, the Blue Boar is a perfect starting point from which to explore the vast collection of satirically inclined, museum-worthy art found throughout the hotel.

"Chefs are becoming the protagonists

of upscale hotels," says Tom Rowntree, Vice President of Brand Management for the InterContinental Hotel Group's European Luxury & Upscale Brands Division. Over an elegant tasting dinner replete with sommelier chosen wine pairings at the award-winning Theo Randall Restaurant - the glittering, Italian gem in the InterContinental Park Lane's culinary crown—Rowntree went on to explain how these high profile chefs travel the world to hone their skills and spur their imaginations. The resulting effect, Rowntree adds, "Is putting the culinary experience at the forefront of the future of luxury travel".

Ah London, may she live eternal. ➤