Festivals special

Forget the Pyramid Stage, the south-west has plenty more festivals worth getting covered in mud for. Here's our pick of the best

Words —— Clemmie Millbank
Illustrations —— Nay Groves

Love Saves the Day
Ashton Court Estate, Bristol
June 2-3

Known for giving a platform to future icons (previous first-time stage holders include Stormzy and Slowthai), Bristol's friendliest rave will be a legendary Bank Holiday party. For its ten-year anniversary, LSTD finds itself at the iconic Ashton Court, where production will be slicker than ever before. Lineup includes Bicep, Kurupt FM, Chase & Status and Arlo Parks.
lovesavestheday.org

Hay Festival
Hay-on-Wye
May 26 – June 5

Each summer, in the tiny town of Hay-on-Wye, curious thinkers take over the streets and become part of the world's leading festival of minds. This year's dazzling lineup includes Stephen Fry, Bernardine Evaristo and Jarvis Cocker, along with a selection of Nobel Prize winners, novelists, scientists, comedians, historians and musicians. Intersperse talks with entertainment from world-class performers and leave feeling thoroughly inspired.
hayfestival.com

NASS Festival
Bath & West Showground, Shepton Mallet
July 7-10

A festival where you're encouraged to BYOB (bring your own bike/board, that is). Watch world skate and BMX pros battle it out for cash prizes and sweat out your hangover by practising your own tricks too. Music will be much more than a street sport backdrop, with some impressive names like Headie One, Mabel, AJ Tracy, Becky Hill, Andy C and live acts until 3am.
nassfestival.com

Big Love Festival
Monmouthshire
July 15-17

Taking place at a secret location on the Welsh border, with over 100 DJs and acts – including Transglobal Underground, Afro Cluster and Dr Syntax – you can bank on the finest house, drum'n'bass, hip-hop and techno. All. Weekend. Long. Choose from five stages – join the glittery promise of the Disco Barn or dance among the trees at the Forest Dome.
biglovefestival.co.uk

Dot to Dot
Bristol, various venues
May 28

Pick up your all-access wristband and join the force of music fans traversing the city from venue to venue, sampling a smorgasbord of delicious indie-rock: from acts including Squid, Ghetts and Baby Queen. It's tempting to stop by the big names first, but don't forget the emerging talent – who will no doubt be playing on repeat on BBC 6 Music in a few months time.
dottodotfestival.co.uk

Bigfoot Festival
Clayden Estate, Buckinghamshire
June 17-19

Not a fan of waking up on a deflated air mat and eating watery noodles out of a plastic tub? Bigfoot could be just the festival for you. With a whole load of boutique camping options, plus an all-star cast of chefs and restaurants (paired with the best craft beer), this is festival fun plus curated comfort. The stellar lineup features Caribou, Happy Mondays and Self Esteem.
bigfootfestival.co.uk

Sea Change
Tribes, various venues
May 27-29

With art, film, literature and music from Porridge Radio, Gwenno and many others, Sea Change covers a lot of ground both figuratively and literally (it takes place across some of the most atmospheric buildings in Totnes). After a two-year hiatus, the launch show, featuring an intimate solo piano concert by Chilly Gonzales at Dartington's Great Hall, will be unforgettable.
seachangepresents.co.uk

Stroud Festival of Food & Drink
Stroud, various locations
May 20-22

Nothing is off the menu at this new food festival based at various locations around Stroud. There's breakfast yoga, live music brunches, a Bavarian extravaganza, expert talks and workshops, plus a buzzing atmosphere of local street traders and food trucks offering everything from Cotswold Wagyu beef to mouthwatering hogless roasts.
stroudfoodanddrink.com

Forbidden Worlds Film Festival
Former IMAX, Bristol
May 13-15

Lights. Camera. Action. Bringing Bristol's former IMAX screen alive once more, this new festival marks the 40th anniversary of the world's longest-running video rental store: Bristol's 20th Century Flicks. Prepare to immerse yourself in all the film classics and curios of 1982, including sci-fi masterpiece *Blade Runner* and *The Dark Crystal*.
forbiddenworldsfilmfestival.co.uk

Forwards
Clifton Downs, Bristol
September 3-4

This new festival aims to offer more than just great music, although with headliners confirmed as The Chemical Brothers, Jamie XX, Róisín Murphy, Caribou, Little Simz and Sleaford Mods, there is plenty of that on offer. It's also a space for inner-city activism and debate, with discussions from some of the world's most challenging thinkers and disruptors.
forwardsbristol.co.uk

Farmfest
Gilcombe Farm, Brixton
July 29-30

Come find your groove at this pocket-sized party (crowd numbers are capped at 5,000) in a luscious Somerset setting. It includes seven stages of emerging and established acts from across the plains of folk, indie and electronica, including Elder Island, BCUC and Do Nothing. Don't forget to enter the annual hat competition too – you'll be bowlered (ahem) over by the creations.
farmfestival.co.uk

Valley Fest
Chew Valley Lake, near Bristol
August 4-7

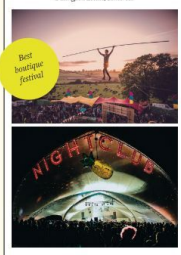
Roni Size, Craig Charles Funk and Soul Club, and Clean Bandit headline at the best-tasting music festival in the west. By day, the much-loved Woodland Tribe will offer all kinds of family-friendly fun, while by night, the playground becomes an immersive dance floor with mind-boggling light shows. The Pony chef Josh Eggleton heads up the feasting programme. Come hungry!
valleyfest.co.uk

PROMOTED

MAY 26-29

Shindig

Dillington Estate, Somerset



Lineup: **De La Soul, Roy Ayers, Odyssey, Nightmares on Wax, Ibibio Sound Machine, François K, Don Letts, Terry Hall**

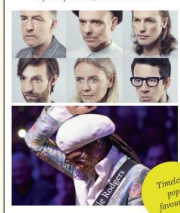
Signalling the start of summer and taking place in a new location, this year's Shindig is set to be the finest yet. Bringing a healthy dose of foot-stomping funk and a packed programme of entertainment for all ages, it offers relaxation and revelry in equal measure. Voted 'Best For Family Rave' and number one in the Guardian's list of best boutique festivals in 2019.
shindigfestival.co.uk

PROMOTED

JULY 13-15

Bristol Beacon Presents...

Lloyds Amphitheatre, Bristol Harbourside



Lineup: **Nile Rodgers & CHIC, Belle & Sebastian , plus special guests to be announced**

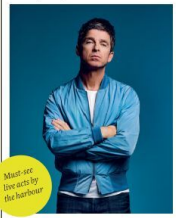
Bristol Beacon presents two gigs on Bristol's Harbourside. Nile Rodgers is one of music's greatest living legends with an unrivalled back catalogue of hits and timeless collaborations. Meanwhile, indie-pop icons Belle & Sebastian have provided the soundtrack for love-struck teens and adults for over 25 years. Their beautiful, sensitive pop melodies will make for a gloriously joyous indie pop party.
bristolbeacon.org

PROMOTED

JUNE 22-26

Bristol Sounds

Lloyds Amphitheatre, Bristol Harbourside



Lineup: **Noel Gallagher's High-Flying Birds, Jungle, First Aid Kit, The War on Drugs, Paolo Nutini, Elbow**

Bristol's open-air concerts return with an eclectic mix of artists, including headliners Noel Gallagher's High-Flying Birds. British electronic duo Jungle play a dynamic dancefloor set on Saturday and First Aid Kit headline their biggest-ever south-west show on Sunday. New additions include Paolo Nutini, who plays his first Bristol show in eight years and The War on Drugs, who bring their arena-filling show to Bristol's harbourside.
seetickets.com

PROMOTED

JULY 9

Smoked & Uncut

THE PIG-near Bath, Limpley Stoke

Lineup: **Jools Holland and his Rhythm & Blues Orchestra**

Hold onto your hats... Smoked & Uncut is back with a full-scale festival at THE PIG-near Bath. Expect laid-back tunes, a bunch of bars and feasting with a few of THE PIG's renowned chef friends. Get your music kicks from Jools Holland and his 19-piece Rhythm & Blues Orchestra. Plus disco-dancing legends Sister Sledge, English electronic band Dub Pistols and many more acts will be warming up the crowds – this isn't one you want to miss!
smokedanduncut.com

Bristol New Music
Venues across Bristol including Arnolfini and St George's
May 5-8

A sonic exploration of the city, showcasing artists from the far reaches of contemporary music and sound – both homegrown and from overseas. For four days Bristol will be buzzing with commissioned works, sonic responses to rarely used spaces, landmark concert hall performances and club nights. Lineup includes Sarah Davachi and Mica Levi.
bristolnewmusic.org

Soho Radio at Marston Park
Marston Park, Frome
July 15-17

The awesome Soho Radio broadcasts 250+ live shows a month from London and New York. This summer it is venturing out of London to enjoy a holiday in our own sunny Somerset, broadcasting live from Marston Park and bringing headline performances from DJ Yoda, Norman Jay MBE and guests.
marstonpark.co.uk

Forest Live
Westonbirt Arboretum
June 9-12

A long weekend of live music featuring Keane, Texas and Rag'n'Bone Man at one of the country's most atmospheric locations. Plus, all profits support Forestry England and help to look after the nation's forests sustainably, so you can feel all warm and fuzzy about that ticket purchase.
forestryengland.uk

Gottwood
Curraghyard Estate, Holyhead
June 9-12

This independent electronica event takes place in the middle of mystical Welsh woods, where the lasers and bass bounce off the swaying trees. Make a weekend of it and treat yourself to a plush 'emperor tent' complete with a proper mattress and duvet. Lineup includes Helena Hauff, Move D, Saoirse, Hunee, Palms Trax and DJ Tennis.
gottwood.co.uk

Bath Carnival
Bath city centre and Sydney Gardens
July 9

The city's largest free outdoor arts event of the year. Hundreds of musicians, dancers and giant puppets parade through the streets to celebrate Bath's community spirit and cultures from around the world. Sydney Gardens hosts a range of family activities, with live bands, workshops and plenty of food and drink stalls.
bathcarnival.co.uk

Frome Festival
Frome
July 1-10

A ten-day community and arts fringe festival which takes place in venues, pubs and outdoor spaces throughout Frome. The lineup includes David Olusoga, Roger McGough, Wilko Johnson and Blake. The events cover classical music, theatre, poetry, Small Publishers Fair, children's events, the Hidden Gardens, exhibitions, walks, talks and more.
fromefestival.co.uk

If Opera Season 2022
Belcombe Court and Holy Trinity Church, Bradford on Avon
August 19 – September 17

Classical more your thing? Here's a festival showcasing a season of familiar and not-quite-as-well-known opera. With performances of Puccini's *La Rondine*, Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* and a double bill of Donizetti's *Rita* and Wolf-Ferrari's *Il Segreto di Susanna*, take a picnic, get a drink from the bar and take in the stunning grounds of Belcombe Court.
ifopera.com