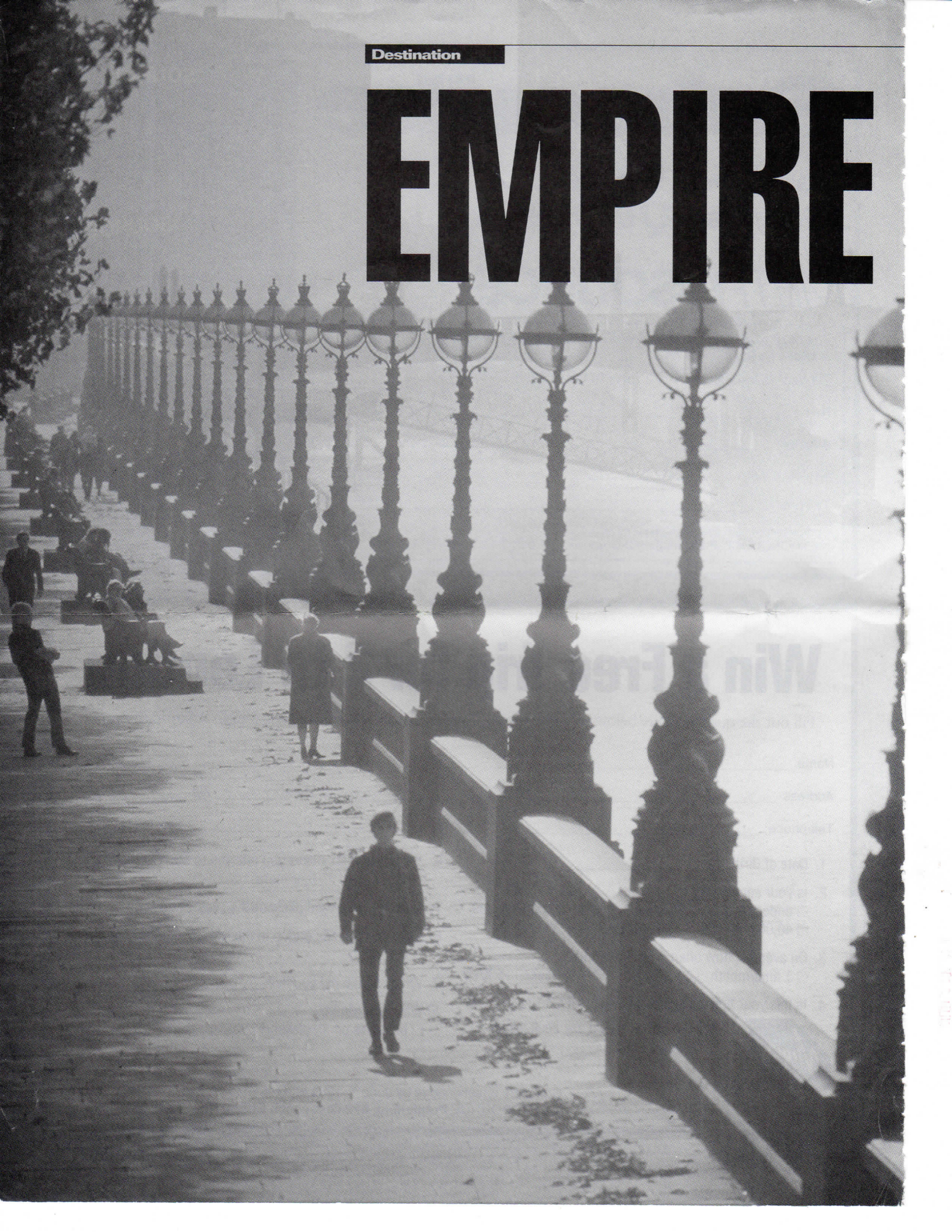


Destination

# EMPIRE



# AFTER DARK

They used to say the sun never set.

**P**ICTURE DOZENS OF CUTE GAY BOYS splashing around in a swimming pool. The scene is not San Francisco in the hedonistic '70s, it's not New York, nor is it Berlin, Paris or Amsterdam. It's London in the '90s. I witnessed this aquatic bacchanalia during Winter Pride, one of two annual gay-pride celebrations in the city that has suddenly become the gay capital of Europe.

Don't believe the friends who claim they are going to London for the theater! If you thought the gay scene here was a provincial affair — dingy bars, dour bank clerks and prim headmistresses — you're in for a pleasant shock. We've all heard of traditional British reserve, but look out when our gay cousins across the Atlantic let their hair down! London is gay, and more openly so every year. Just take a walk down Old Compton Street in Soho, the city's new gay mecca in Central London, and you'll see. Gay businesses are flourishing, gay cafes and bars are open till one in the morning, and smartly dressed gay men and lesbians are everywhere.

The new exuberance of the gay community has helped throw off the city's once stodgy demeanor, and the new London, I'm happy to say, has also become a bustling 20th-century metropolis well equipped to greet international visitors. Americans will discover that all those little irritants — not enough public telephones, lousy restaurants, instant instead of brewed coffee, and low-

Happily,  
those days  
are over.

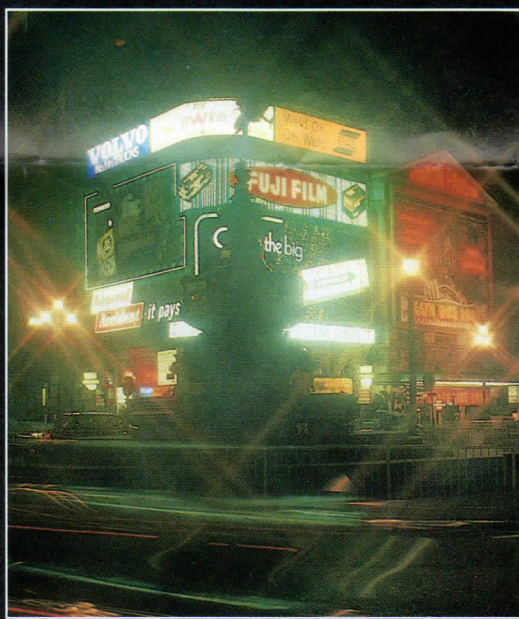
pressure showers — are history. The downside, of course, is spit and you'll hit a McDonalds. There is not much one can do about London's notorious gray weather, so keep an umbrella handy. But every time I have visited, several times a year since 1989, I've found it mostly bright and sunny, so go figure.

The city has much to offer in addition to its vibrant gay scene. London theater is arguably more vigorous than that in New York; there are countless museums and art galleries, and plenty to keep the sightseer busy for weeks. Interspersed with the trappings of a modern capital city are beautiful parks and countless landmarks, palaces, monuments and other reminders of the past.

Situated on the banks of the meandering River Thames, London is a conglomeration of villages and boroughs. To the east is the financial hub, London's Wall Street, in the area the locals refer to as The City. Originally covering one square mile, The City is a maze of narrow streets and glass buildings and includes remnants of the original wall built by the Romans,

who established the original settlement of Londinium in AD 43. Westminster, which houses the government and contains the royal palaces and parks, lies west of The City.

The West End, actually the center of modern London, is the axis of tourists' London and the commercial theater world. The East End is a working-class neighborhood which



Picadilly Circus in London's Times Square, a few steps from gay Soho

Introducing  
New, Gay  
London.

Gerard Raymond takes us on a tour

was traditionally home to Jewish immigrants and now has a large South Asian community. London Docklands, eight square miles along the eastern waterfront, is being rapidly transformed into office towers and tourist malls. To the north lie the villages of Hampstead and Highgate, separated by the eight-hun-

oldest in the world, is much easier to figure out than New York's subway system. The Picadilly Line brings you into Central London directly from Heathrow Airport; take it if you are not overladen with baggage.

A travel-card system makes London transport very economical. You can make

streets these days. Remember, cars drive on the left here, so be careful when you cross the street. You won't get lost if you consult a *London A-Z* (remember, they say "zed" in England, not "zee"). Most London listings below indicate the postal code (Soho is in W1, for example) and the nearest tube station, which makes getting around simpler.



The Houses of Parliament with its famous clock tower, Big Ben, dominate the River Thames

dred-acre Hampstead Heath, and Camden Town, an area known for its sizable gay population and Saturday market.

London snobs tend to look down on the neighborhoods in the south and guidebooks seldom refer to places beyond the South Bank cultural complex. But you might cross the river to visit Brixton. Fags, skinheads and a trendy set strangely coexist in this ethnically and culturally diverse working-class neighborhood, which hosts the city's main gay-pride rally in June.

### Getting Around

The quickest way to get about London is by underground train, known locally as "the tube." Buses are a slower, but more scenic way to travel through the city. At any tube station you can pick up a Journey Planner, the pocket-sized card that maps out the eleven train lines that serve the city. London's tube system, the

unlimited stops and embark on any number of trains or buses in the course of one day or one week (according to the card you buy) within the zones specified on the card. To purchase a week's travel card, you will need a passport-sized photo.

The train service shuts down at midnight, and missing your last train can mean some waiting for night buses (which originate at Trafalgar Square). But then taxis are available at late hours also.

The best way to explore the city is on foot. Unexpected pleasures await the London pedestrian: picturesque alleys, historic monuments, and of course friendly Londoners. Boys cruise each other quite brazenly on the

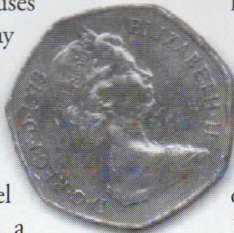
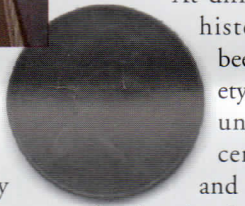
### A Short History of Gay London

Some people will claim that London has been gay since Roman times. And who's to disprove it? Many a queen has sat on the British throne, and not all of them female. Monarchs such as William II Rufus (son of William the Conqueror), Richard the Lionheart, Edward II and James I are widely believed to have been gay. (I shall resist dishing the current House of Windsor; there is a surfeit of gossip about the royal family these days.)

At different periods in English history, homosexuality has been relatively open in society or it has gone completely underground. In the 16th century, King Henry VIII and Queen Elizabeth I legislated against it vigorously.

Gay taverns known as molly houses proliferated in the early 18th century. By the reign of Queen Victoria, sodomy was the scandal du jour, as the great wit and playwright Oscar Wilde discovered when he was put on trial in 1895. Nevertheless, the "love that dared not speak its name" and gay culture still flourished. (The story goes that Victoria refused to believe that lesbianism could exist in her empire, so sapphic love was never criminalized).

The Bloomsbury group, which included Virginia Woolf and E.M. Forster, was famous for its sexual liaisons as much as for its witty writers. In the 1920s and '30s, when celebrities were getting arrested with their trousers down in public toilets, Sir Noel Coward, who turned his camp sensibility into an art form, was the toast of the West



ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE BRITISH TOURIST AUTHORITY, EXCEPT WHERE NOTED

End theater. In the Swinging '60s, the age of the Beatles and Joe Orton, the sexual revolution brought more freedom for gays including the decriminalization of homosexuality in 1967. Following Stonewall, London's Gay Liberation Movement was established in 1970, paving the way for a modern, politicized gay community. In the '80s the London branch of ACT UP was formed, which, along with the more in-your-face group OUTRAGE, took gay activism to the streets. But there is still much work to be done.

You may be surprised to learn that British gay men cannot legally have sex with each other until they are 21. (Even then, it must be in private and cannot include a third person!) Activists are currently working on getting the age of consent lowered, or at least dropped closer to 16, the legal age for heterosexual sex. The Thatcher regime's infamous Clause 28, which forbids local government bodies from funding projects that "promote homosexuality," is still on the books. Police still spend an indecent amount of time trying to entrap gay men "cottaging" or cruising. In 1990 the police conducted the notorious Operation Spanner and arrested 16 gay men for consensual S/M activity held in the privacy of their own homes.

But the paradox of gay London is that while British law is more repressive to gays than most of Europe, the queer profile of English society, particularly in the cultural world, is stronger than ever. Jimmy Sommerville, Elton John, Boy George and the Pet Shop Boys are very much a part of the European music scene. It's ironic that the government-subsidized BBC can program more explicit gay-themed material than, say, public television in the United States. For the BBC adaptation of David Leavitt's *The Lost Language of Cranes*, an alternate version of the love scene, with the boys wearing underwear in bed, had to be shot for the more prudish American television. And it's the BBC and not an American company that will make the film version of Martin Duberman's book, *Stonewall*. Spurred

by the Clause 28 controversy, Britain's well-known theater star Ian McKellan has come out of the closet, reaching greater heights as an actor and becoming the first openly gay man to be knighted in England. After about a decade on the fringes of the avant garde, filmmaker and painter Derek Jarman is now a highly regarded figure in British cinema.

### The Gay Scene

Look at London's Lesbian and Gay Pride celebrations of the past two years and you'll get a sense of the growth of the gay scene. In 1992, London was selected as the venue for EuroPride, the first attempt to form solidarity within the queer European community. The march and carnival coincided with the city's own annual June event — 100,000 lesbians and gays attended. With my Winter Pride memories, I will always treasure the experience of traveling with a trainload of screaming gay boys and girls to Brockwell Park in Brixton for the carnival after the march. As the train went from station to station, fags and dykes kept piling in. The entire city seemed to have gone homo for the day. It was the largest



PHOTO: ROBI DAVIS

From vintage clothing to a street-side lunch, you can find anything at London's hottest flea market in Camden Town every Saturday

Inexpensive off-peak Travelcards, pocket-sized maps and easy-to-follow signs make the tube a breeze to navigate





**Old Compton Cafe in the heart of Soho where gay restaurants, pubs and shops have taken over, making for a lively and entertaining, new neighborhood**

gay turnout London had ever witnessed. You might have put this down to being a European event. But then last year, London's local celebrations completely eclipsed EuroPride, which was held in Berlin. A new record of 120,000 attendees was set. You can bet there'll be more this year.

What strikes me most about London's new gay scene is the range of choice available. In the old days there was only one kind of gay pub and not much else. Today, there are still the old-fashioned English pubs like Comptons in Soho or The Colherne in Earl's Court, but now you can add the hot new continental-style cafe bars in the West End to your must-visit list. These new venues have become the locus of a new gay cafe society. Kudos, for instance, provides a gay-friendly environment for several social activities: you can take your mom there for coffee during the day, or conduct a business meeting over lunch in the afternoon. You can then return in the evening for the active bar downstairs. London also offers the American-style stand-up cruise bar like Crews, also in the West End, with its East Village-like atmosphere, or The Base, where strippers raise the tempera-

ture for the evening. If you're looking for something more raunchy, you may find the longtime favorite London Apprentice, located near The City, provides just the right touch of no-frills sleaze.

Soho was once a magnet for immigrants (London's Chinatown lies adjacent), but it acquired a seedy reputation over the years as London's red-light district. The recent gay explosion here can be traced to the 1990 recession. When straight businesses folded and rents tumbled, young gay entrepreneurs stepped in, demonstrating an economic power the media immediately dubbed the "pink pound." Amazingly, the new gay center is smack in the middle of tourist London. Straight strip joints and trendy restaurants stand cheek by jowl with gay bars, shops and a high-tech homo hairdressing salon. Soho's name, by the way, is apparently derived from the hunting cry

"So-Ho!" which dates back to a time when the area was a hunting ground. And the hunt's not over yet — if you can tell by the boys prowling up and down Old Compton Street.

The emergence of gay Soho has meant the near demise of Earl's Court, once the Greenwich Village of London. Located to the southwest, Earl's Court is still a haven for inexpensive bed and breakfast accommodations and often the first stop for tourists traveling on the Picadilly line from Heathrow. Two of the largest gay B&Bs, The Philbeach Hotel and The New York Hotel, are located here, but most gay visitors prefer to hang out in the West End and leave the Earl's Court bars and clubs to the neighborhood regulars.

When I first visited London it took me a while to get used to seeing people crowding the bars between noon and three during their lunch breaks. The pubs start filling up again by 6 pm and most places still shut down by 11:00 or 11:30 pm. Several bars now have late licenses which enable them to stay open till 1am and the clubs stay open until the wee hours, similar to New York's nightlife scene. Don't forget that the tube closes as midnight, so if you're out late, plan to take a cab.

You must be at least 18 years old to be served a drink in England. If you simply ask for a beer at one of the older pubs, you will likely be given a hefty pint, which may be more than you are used to, and it will probably be a dark bitter. You can ask for half pints, and if you want American-style beer, specify lager. Most English bars do not make a distinction between Pepsi and Coke

and will serve you whichever cola they have on tap; ask about what you are getting if this matters to you. The newer cafe bars try to cater to American tastes and are better equipped to handle specif-



**The Village Soho draws a clean-cut, Splash-like crowd**

ic requests.

As you can imagine, London also has a very active club/disco scene. Just as in New York, clubs pop up one day and disappear the next, and are quickly replaced by others often in the same venues. Saturday is the night for clubbing and currently four well-established clubs dominate the scene: Heaven, G.A.Y., The Fridge and Trade. Europe's oldest disco, Heaven, situated under Charing Cross Station, is still going strong and attracts an ethnically mixed crowd. The large dance space is said to have been inspired by New York's now

defunct Saint, but there are also three separate bars, each with its own ambience. The campily decorated Powder Room is the only drag bar in the city. There is also a snack bar and a shop selling t-shirts, condoms and cards on the premises. Another Saturday night option is The Fridge in Brixton. A special shuttle leaves the bar Kudos carrying young club kids south who groove on commercial



dance and garage music and one of the best sound systems in London. You can pick up flyers and promotions offering discounts to the various clubs and many London gay establishments.

London's gay community encompasses a very well defined leather/uniform/fetish subculture. You must follow a strict dress code to go to venues such as Backstreet (in East London at Mile End), The Block (in Islington, North London) and The Anvil (near London Bridge). Don't even think of wearing jacket and tie, preppy clothes or even sneakers. It doesn't get any raunchier than this in London. Testosterone runs very high in these dimly lit spaces. If latex turns you on, watch out for events from Gummi, the sole rubber-only club in Europe.

Also, check the gay press for the activities of The Sadie Maisie Club, a kinky disco for the gay and lesbian S/M crowd

## Lesbian London

A striking aspect of the London gay scene, when compared to that of New York, is the greater mingling of gays and lesbians. Lesbian visibility has grown with the evolution of London's gay cafe society, but you're still more likely to see two boys, rather

than two girls, holding hands on the streets of London. Unlike the men who tend to hang out in their largest numbers in the heart of London, you'll probably find more dykes concentrated in the East London borough of Hackney.

Last fall, Heaven abandoned a 14-year male-only policy for Saturday nights. Men and women mix very congenially here as well as at other discos. However, apart from The Duke of Wellington, a pub with a daily woman's bar, in North London, and The

Fountain, a predominantly lesbian bar in Deptford, South London, women are limited to special nights in predominantly male venues. Women-only Mondays at the Covent Garden Spa, aptly titled Dykes Delight, have become a huge hit. For women into S/M there's The Sadie Maisie Club and the monthly Clit Club at Central Station. The lesbian scene is covered by two free publications, *Shebang* and *Lesbian London*.



Start your evening at the Edge, where the crowd is sharp and stylish

Do something unusual while you're in London—stay in The New York. With reasonable rates and a cozy back yard, The New York Hotel is your best bet for an Earl's Court B&B



## Sightseeing

For the tourist in London, all guidebooks and maps provide the necessary information for the famous sights like Westminster Abbey, where practically all the monarchs of the country since 1066 have been crowned; the Tower of London, which, though teeming with tourists, still casts its sinister spell; Sir Christopher Wren's magnificent St.

Paul's Cathedral; Big Ben and the Houses of Parliament; and Buckingham Palace, which was recently opened to the public. On the southeast bank of the Thames is the suburb of Greenwich, which showcases the glories of Britain's nautical past. You can stand on the Greenwich Meridian, the zero longitude of the world at the Old Royal Observatory, the birthplace Greenwich Mean Time. If you're in Greenwich on a weekend, stop by at the arts, crafts and antiques market and pick up a bargain or just watch the gay couples browsing.

You might want to check out Oscar Wilde's house at 34 Tite Street in the West London borough of Chelsea or visit 25 Noel Road, where Joe Orton lived and died, in Islington, North London. "London in the Pink" (Tel: 081-767-6583) conducts tour guides through gay London. The *Pink Plaque Guide* is invaluable for seeking out historic gay addresses.

One of the great pleasures of London is its "green belt." The English do love

their gardens. The royal parklands — Hyde Park, Kensington Gardens, Regent's Park, Green Park and St. James Park — along with Holland Park and the Chelsea Physic Garden, afford the most wonderful respite to the locals and visitors alike. From Parliament Hill in Hampstead Heath, the huge public wilderness in the north, you get a fantastic view of the city below you. The Heath is also popular cruising grounds for gay men. When weather permits, it is the only place in London where the law seems to turn a blind eye to public sex. Unlike Central Park, the Heath is relatively safe after dark. Still, as the guidebooks say, engage in this activity at your own risk. In the true spirit of British entrepreneurship, someone operates a hot dog stand after hours catering to the men who enjoy moonlit strolls.


**Art & Culture**

Find the time to visit London's great cultural institutions and you will not be

disappointed. The highlights include: the National Gallery (WC2), on the north side of Trafalgar Square, for classical paintings; the Tate Gallery, in Millbank, beside the Thames (SW1), for England's finest modern art collection; and the incomparable British Museum at Great Russell Street (WC1) for a world-class collection of the art and artifacts of ancient and modern civilizations. Any gay designer worth his salt will want to make the pilgrimage to the Victoria & Albert Museum, in South Kensington (SW7), which houses the greatest collection of decorative arts in the world.

London is a theater queen's heaven. Shows in the West End are not necessarily any better than those on Broadway, but they are slightly less expensive and you'll be able to brag about seeing the likes of Patti Lupone in *Sunset Boulevard* before everyone else. But what is really amazing is the wide range of theater available: The Royal Shakespeare Company presents the works of Shakespeare and his contemporaries at

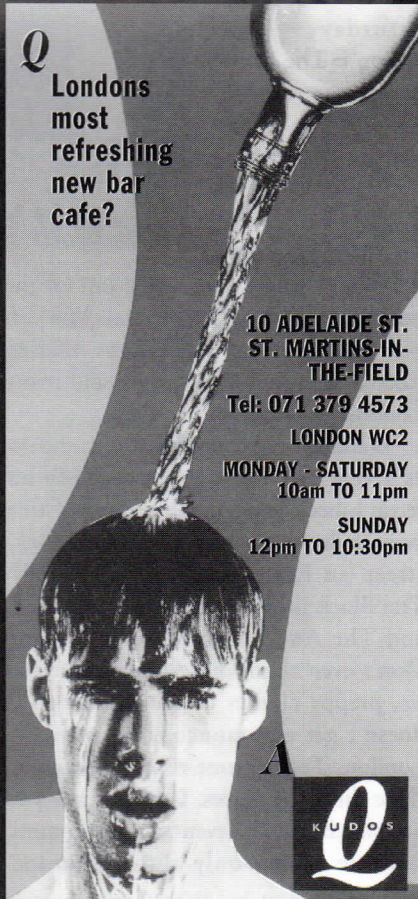
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SUNDAY  
12pm TO 10:30pm

A  
Q  
KUDOS

# Gay Old London

## ←GETTING THERE

Virgin Atlantic, United Airlines and British Airways have flights daily to London Heathrow from the New York area.

## ☑ ACCOMMODATIONS

(The nearest tube station is indicated alongside listing.)

### Number 7 Guest House

7 Josephine Avenue  
☎ 081-674-1880 **☞ Brixton**  
Four rooms with private bathroom facilities in cozy Victorian house located in Brixton. 20 minutes from central London. The Fridge is a five-minute walk from here. Full English breakfast served. Rates: **£33** (single); **£48** (double).

### The New York Hotel

32 Philbeach Gardens  
☎ 071-244-6884 **☞ Earl's Court**  
Your best bet among the gay bed & breakfasts in London, The New York offers a charming setting and a backyard garden. 17 rooms ranging from **£45** to **£75**. The outdoor jacuzzi is an added attraction.

### The Philbeach Hotel

30-31 Philbeach Gardens  
☎ 071-373-1244 **☞ Earl's Court**  
The best-known, though not necessarily the best-maintained, gay guest house in London. 41 rooms ranging from **£25** to **£85** per night.

### Russell Lodge Guest House

20 Little Russell Street  
☎ 071-430-2489 **☞ Holborn or Tottenham Court Road**  
Relaxed and comfortable accommodations in the heart of Bloomsbury. 4 rooms from **£35** to **£55** per night.

## ☪ BARS & PUBS

### The Angel

65 Graham Street, N1 **☞ Angel**  
Attracts a serious, as they say, a "right on" (p.c.) gay and lesbian set.

### The Base

167 Drury Lane, WC2 **☞ Holborn**  
Mon-Sat 3 pm-11 pm  
(Thurs-Sat: men only)  
Brand new, stylish cruise bar (situated next door to the New London Theater, which houses Cats), billed as the biggest in Europe, is attracting London's trendy set, pushing the perimeters of the gay district into Covent Garden.

### Box

**☞ Leicester Square**  
Seven Dials, Monmouth Street, WC2  
Decorated in pastel shades, this latest addition to the cafe/bar scene promises American-style bartending and service. Food is served on the top floor, the bar is in the basement.

### Comptons of Soho

53 Old Compton Street, W1 **☞ Leicester Square or Piccadilly**  
Old-fashioned English pub, an institution on London's gay street. Attracts a friendly crowd.

### CREWS BAR

**☞ Leicester Square**  
14 Upper St. Martin's Lane, WC2  
Where the young clubbers go in the early evening. One of the trendiest

bars in town, the boys will queue patiently outside to get in on the busy weekends.

### The Edge

**☞ Leicester Square**  
11 Soho Square, W1  
Literally on the edge of Soho, this is one of London's most modern, hip and trendy cafe bars. Attracts a friendly crowd of both sexes.

### Kudos

**☞ Charing Cross**  
10, Adelaide Street, WC2  
Continental-style bar serving food throughout the day. Upscale crowd. Downstairs basement bar, ARENA, is open in the evenings for a young, cruisy preclub set.

### The London Apprentice

333 Old Street **☞ Old Street**  
Way out east near the financial center of London, the "LA" is worth a visit. A gay London institution for the past decade. It's the only place open for drinks till 3 in the morning. Scenes for *The Lost Language of Cranes* and *The Crying Game* were filmed here.

### Village Soho

81 Wardour Street, W1, **☞ Leicester Square or Piccadilly Circus**  
One of London's first continental cafe bars, Village Soho spearheaded the rejuvenation of Soho in 1991. Three separate bars draw a clean-cut, Splash-like crowd. A definite stop.

### Substation

**☞ Tottenham Court Road**  
Falconberg Court, W1,  
This small Soho basement with an industrial, chain-link fence decor draws a Spike-like crowd. Saturday night dancing is all male, hot and cruisy.

## 🕒 DANCE CLUBS

### The Fridge

Town Hall Parade, Brixton Hill, SW2,  
☎ 071-326-5100 **☞ Brixton**  
Saturdays "Love Muscle" Admission **£8** (£6 with flyer before midnight)  
Tuesdays "Ciao, Baby" Admission free before 11 pm with flyer, otherwise **£5**. Fresh, very dancable techno sounds make The Fridge one of the hottest London party spots.

### G.A.Y. (Good As You)

The Astoria 2, 157 Charing Cross Road, WC2,  
☎ 071-734-6963 **☞ Tottenham Court Road**  
Despite its clumsy name, G.A.Y. is one of the most popular Saturday-night clubs for commercial, 70's-style pop. G.A.Y. takes full advantage of the superb speaker system at the London Astoria, a prime venue for rock bands and pop concerts.

### Heaven

**☞ Charing Cross**  
Under the Arches, Villiers Street, WC2,  
Saturdays, Wednesdays, Fridays.  
Europe's oldest and best-known disco is still one of London's top night spots. You can dance till you drop on the large floor, chill out in the smaller bars upstairs, get a snack and even do a bit of gay shopping in this huge grand-daddy of discos.

### Queer Nation

**☞ Covent Garden**  
The Gardening Club, 4 The Piazza Sun 9 pm to 2 am, **£5**.  
A garage, funk and soul nightclub, not the activist group, that packs them in on Sundays.

### Res-Erection

**☞ Tottenham Court Road**  
The Astoria, 157 Charing Cross Road,  
The latest addition to the Friday-night disco scene, Res-Erection borrows its name from the New York club and is heavily inspired by Club USA.

### Trade

**☞ Farringdon**  
Turnmills, 55B Clerkenwell Road,  
After hours on Saturday night: Doors open at 3 am. Admission **£10**  
If you don't have the stamina for Trade, you'll have to induce it chemically: Boys dance shirtless in ecstasy to pounding of techno house music till 1 in the afternoon.

## 🍴 RESTAURANTS & CAFES

### Balans

**☞ Leicester Square**  
60 Old Compton Street,  
☎ 071-437-5212  
A popular restaurant on the equivalent of Soho's Christopher Street, Compton Street. The decor is an eye-opening melange of red, green and yellow. An ideal place for a quick tea or a meal.

### Brixtonian Backyard

4 Neal's Yard, Covent Garden,  
☎ 071-240-2769 **☞ Covent Garden**  
(Saturday nights, women only)  
London's only gay Caribbean restaurant, boasts 200 different kinds of rums for the discerning drinker. Jazz on some nights provides the perfect laid-back, romantic ambience.

### Bistro Carapace

**☞ Victoria**  
30 Winchester Street,  
☎ 071-828-3366  
Upscale, high-quality restaurant with French/Mediterranean cuisine. Romantic atmosphere. The management has recently introduced a "dining companion" scheme for the single gentleman who doesn't like to eat alone.

### Compton's Cafe

**☞ Leicester Square**  
34 Old Compton Street, W1,  
☎ 071-439-3309  
Balans' older sister. Take advantage of having to rub knees with friendly strangers in this intimate cafe. A good spot for sandwiches and coffee and mouth-watering desserts. When the weather permits, pretend you are in Paris, grab a table on the sidewalk and watch the boys promenade.

### First Out

**☞ Tottenham Court Road**  
52 St. Giles High Street, WC2,  
☎ 071-240-8042  
Two-level cafe, an ideal spot to meet friends for coffee and cake. Also serves vegetarian cuisine.

### Steph's

**☞ Tottenham Court Road**  
39 Dean Street Street,  
☎ 071-734-5976  
Brilliantly tacky pink flamingos adorn the walls of this happening, fun restaurant. Great food and a delightful staff make this gay restaurant a hit.

## 🛍️ STORES

### American Retro

**1** 35 Old Compton Street, W1, **☞ Leicester Sq/Piccadilly Circus**  
**2** 4 Pembridge Road, W11, **☞ Notting Hill Gate**

Trendy wear for men and women, the place to go if you are looking for a pair of silk boxer shorts or a pure-wool Scottish jumper.

### Clone Zone

**1** 64 Old Compton Street, W1, **☞ Leicester Square**  
**2** 1 Hogarth Road, SW5, **☞ Earl's Court**

At the Soho branch, four floors are devoted to needs of the homo shopper, from books, cards and magazines to underwear.

### Expectations

**☞ Old Street**  
75 Great Eastern Street, EC2,  
An emporia of delights for leather, rubber and other fetish lovers.

### Gay's the World

**☞ Russell Square**  
66 Marchmont Street, WC1,  
☎ 071-278-7654,  
London's only gay bookstore stocks the latest in British and American gay writing.

### Red Hot

**☞ Chancery Lane/Holborn**  
156 Gray Inn Road, WC1  
The English take their fetish-wear quite seriously, as you will see from Red Hot's selection of rubber, leather and chain-mail accessories.

### Studio 40

**☞ Oxford Circus**  
69 Berwick Street, W1  
☎ 071-437-0811  
Gay mags, cards and sex toys; sexy underwear and leather goods; and a bookshop — what more could a shopping queen ask for?

### ZIPPERSTORE

**☞ Camden Town**  
263 Camden High Street, NW1  
Sex toys, porno magazines, rubber and leather wear.

## MISCELLANEOUS

### Rox Men

**☞ Leicester Square**  
49 Old Compton Street, W1,  
☎ 071-287-0666,  
This swanky new hairdressing salon offers the most up-to-the-minute styles.

### Covent Garden Health Spa

29 Endell Street, WC **☞ Covent Garden**  
☎ 071-836-2236  
Daily 11am-11pm (Mon. women). Full service spa, immaculately clean and conscientiously maintained. Don't go expecting to play around: the establishment monitors assiduously.

## SPECIAL EVENTS

### Gay Pride

The next Lesbian and Gay Pride celebration will be held on Saturday, June 18, 1994.

### Winter Pride

The city's second gay-pride bash. Early December.



the Barbican Theater in The City; on the South Bank, the National Theater produces a wide-ranging repertoire selected from the entire body of western theater and cutting-edge modern work like Tony Kushner's *Angels in America*; and the Royal Court in Sloane Square is famous for new writing. London's equivalent of Off Broadway and Off-Off Broadway is known as the Fringe, and offers eclectic and stimulating theater fare.

The Drill Hall in Chancery Street (WC1) presents gay- and lesbian-themed work on a regular basis. On your visit, keep an eye out for any work by Bloopers, London's foremost drag company, headed by the inimitable Bette Bourne; Neil Bartlett and his company Gloria; the performance-art group DV8; and the public appearances of superdivas Regina Fong and Lily Savage.

I haven't even touched on the dance, opera and music events, but you can get a good update on London's numerous cultural offerings from the weekly enter-

tainment guides, *Time Out*, *City Limits* and *What's On*, which incidentally carry gay listings as well. Half-price tickets to the theater and opera may be purchased at the booth in Leicester (pronounced Lester) Square in the West End.

### Shopping & Eating


You may find it's more economical to shop in New York, unless you are interested in Doc Martens, which cost about a third less than they do in New York. Harrods, the famous department store in Knightsbridge (SW1), is worth the experience even if you don't buy anything. Refer to the travel notes for listings of some of the better-known gay shops.

In the last few years, the English have started eating out more often, and consequently the London restaurant scene has improved beyond recognition. Space prohibits listing any establishments here, but be assured that there is food to satisfy the most demanding of palettes — from traditional English bangers

(sausages) and mash and fish'n'chips to cuisine from around the world. For a touch of Old World elegance in true English style, I recommend afternoon tea at The Fountain, at the famous food store Fortunum and Mason's in Picadilly (W1). You can shop at the store, which justly boasts the finest foods in the world, for tinned and bottled delicacies that will make great gifts back home. A word on tipping: most restaurants include a service charge, so scrutinize your check (called a bill in this country) before you leave something for the wait-person.

### Out of London

Finally, if you have the time, consider a day by the seaside. Located on the south east coast, Brighton is a popular resort and reportedly has one of the largest concentrations of lesbians and gay men in England. It's about an hour away by train (from Victoria Station) or two hours by car or bus.



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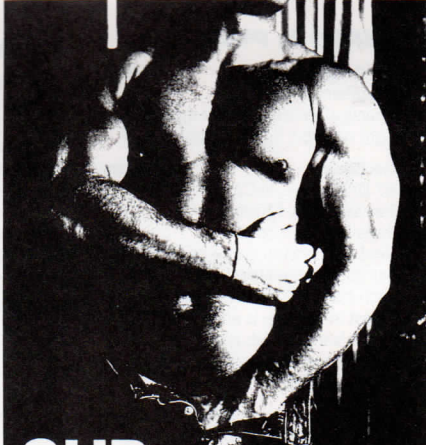
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