

EST 1865



FIRST EDITION

CAFÉ ROYAL TIMES



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See who visited Café Royal over the years ▶

LONDON LEGEND

Café Royal – the place to be seen since 1865. Just ask the countless writers, artists, aristocrats and bon viveurs who have called the legendary haunt home over the past 150 years



WHEN Daniel Nicols founded his small Café-Restaurant in an old oilcloth warehouse behind Regent Street in 1865, he could not have known that it would still be here, in all its glory, more than a century and a half later.

In the decades since Nicols – who was a French émigré – set out his vision for a Parisian-style meeting place in the heart of London, Café Royal has expanded into the surrounding buildings, hosted generations of intellectuals, artists and bon viveurs, and – most recently – been transformed into one of the capital's most luxurious hotels.

If the walls of this legendary London institution could talk, they would tell some eyebrow-raising tales: of the wit of Oscar

Wilde and of tense meetings between Lord Alfred Douglas, the playwright's lover, and his father, the pugilistic Marquess of Queensberry; of black-tie boxing matches held beneath the restaurant's crystal chandeliers; of shadowy Masonic get-togethers presided over by the Prince of Wales; and of the great writers and artists who propped up the bar.

There would be hair-raising stories, too: of an unsolved murder; of dastardly family intrigue; and of art movements born at the café's marble-topped tables.

Café Royal has provided the setting for some of the key moments in the cultural, aesthetic, culinary and social history of London. Here's to the next 150 years.



A right royal café fit for a king – or two

The two princes Edward and George, who would both go on to be King of England – as Edward VIII until his abdication in 1936 and George VI – often lunched together at Café Royal. In the head waiter's Day Book, which contained the dietary requirements of many of London's great and good, was the note: "Always plain food. No fuss. Call head waiter at once and notify manager." If it was good enough for them...



Legend in his own lunchtime

Winston Churchill and Rufus Isaacs, 1st Marquess of Reading and later Viceroy of India, dined together at Café Royal while waiting for a call from the new Liberal Prime Minister, Henry Campbell-Bannerman. Churchill became under secretary of state for the colonies in Campbell-Bannerman's new government from 1905-1908, so beginning one of the 20th century's greatest political careers. The rest is history.



The stars look very different!

David Bowie bids farewell to his alter ego Ziggy Stardust alongside Cat Stevens and other stars at Café Royal following his final Ziggy show at the Hammersmith Odeon, 3 July 1973. SEE PAGE 26

DISAPPEARING ACT REAPPEARS

Known as the Magus of Café Royal, the occultist and poet Aleister Crowley claimed to have a magic cloak that rendered him invisible.

To prove its power, Crowley – who in August 1914 unveiled the monument to Oscar Wilde in Père Lachaise graveyard in Paris – would don a conical hat and the cloak decorated with mystic inscriptions and walk slowly through Café Royal making towards the Glasshouse Street exit. No one could persuade him that he had not been invisible. "Why," he'd respond, reasonably enough, "didn't anybody speak to me then?"



Aleister Crowley

Hotel Café Royal is located at a vibrant cultural intersection where the elegance of Mayfair, energy of Soho and refinement of St. James's combine to create a unique location in the heart of London.

IN THIS ISSUE...



Oh You Pretty Things

Clockwise from top: 'The Café Royal' (1912) by Harold Gilman – just one of the many paintings inspired by Café Royal's interior; David Bowie on stage as Ziggy Stardust – the alter ego he retired in 1973 with a star-studded party at Café Royal; a black-tie boxing event held in 2015 to celebrate Café Royal's 150th anniversary and to mark its long association with the sport; Café Royal's most famous wit, the playwright Oscar Wilde; Diana, Princess of Wales meets pop star Phil Collins, Australian actress and singer Kylie Minogue and Eurythmics singers Annie Lennox and Dave Stewart at a charity luncheon at Café Royal in 1988.

A ROYAL REBIRTH

The brains behind the blueprints

The history of Regent Street

page 16 ▶

WILDE AT HEART

page 4



THE NATION'S SPORTING CLUB

▶ TURN TO PAGE 34

ROLL OF HONOUR
Café Royal's illustrious patrons

Oscar Wilde
(1854 – 1900)
Poet and playwright who regularly dined at Café Royal

William Butler Yeats
(1865 – 1939)
Founder of the Rhymers' Club for poets, which met in the Domino Room

Virginia Woolf
(1882 – 1941)
The Bloomsbury Group writer was a regular at Café Royal

George Bernard Shaw
(1856 – 1950)
A regular diner at Café Royal and confidant of Wilde's

Winston Churchill
(1874 – 1965)
The great war-time prime minister often dined at Café Royal

Elizabeth Taylor
(1932 – 2011)
Said to have been on a date with Richard Burton at Café Royal

Muhammad Ali
(1942 – 2016)
Held a press conference at Café Royal to launch his film The Greatest

Lord David Cecil
(1902 – 1986)
Historian, literary critic and biographer of Café Royal regular Max Beerbohm

David Bowie
(1947 – 2016)
Retired his alter ego Ziggy Stardust with a party at Café Royal

Mick Jagger
(b.1943)
The Rolling Stones frontman has attended numerous Café Royal parties

Lou Reed
(1942 – 2013)
Famously photographed kissing Bowie at the Ziggy Stardust party

Lulu
(b.1948)
The singer was a regular at parties and award ceremonies hosted at Café Royal

Photos: Cover and Contents- Café Royal Archive, Alamy, Getty Images, Bridgeman, PH Images, Mary Evans, Rex Features.

A WARM WELCOME

In this issue of the Café Royal Times, we explore and celebrate the rich history of this London landmark. As with any building, it is the people who inhabit it that truly bring it to life. In the case of Café Royal, those people just happen to be some of the greatest minds of the past 150 years...



The sketch shows – from left to right – Sir William Rothenstein, Charles Conder, Sir Max Beerbohm, and Oscar Wilde. It was inspired by an account of an evening at Café Royal, published in the first volume of Rothenstein's memoirs, during which Wilde said to Rothenstein: "Will, don't look so sensible."



"If you want to see English people at their most English, go to the Café Royal, where they are trying their hardest to be French"

Sir Herbert Tree, 1914

VALENTINO p25

On the back of a camel

The Café Royal story

page 14 ▶

Snow business

The ski club of Great Britain p35 ▶

SNAP SHOTS

Wall of fame

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MUSIC

ROSEY CHAN

hits the right notes p12

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P34-35 Sport	Boxing clever Café Royal's pugilistic past as the home of the National Sporting Club's black-tie boxing matches.
P36 Life Drawing	The story behind Sir William Orpen's famous 1912 painting The Café Royal.

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DIVAS ON THE DANCE-FLOOR

FOR ONE NIGHT ONLY

CAFÉ ROYAL TIMES

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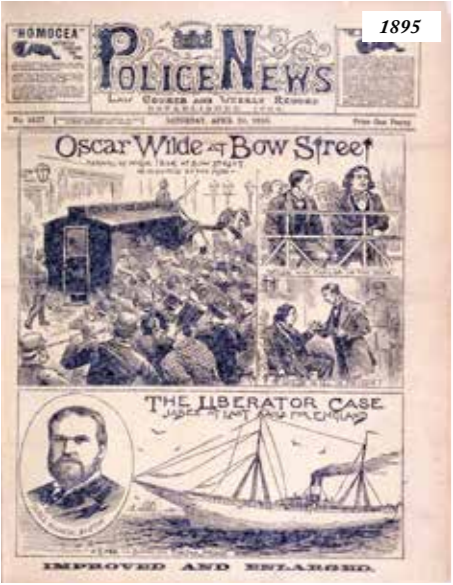
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NEWS

CAFÉ ROYAL TIMES

WILDE AT HEART

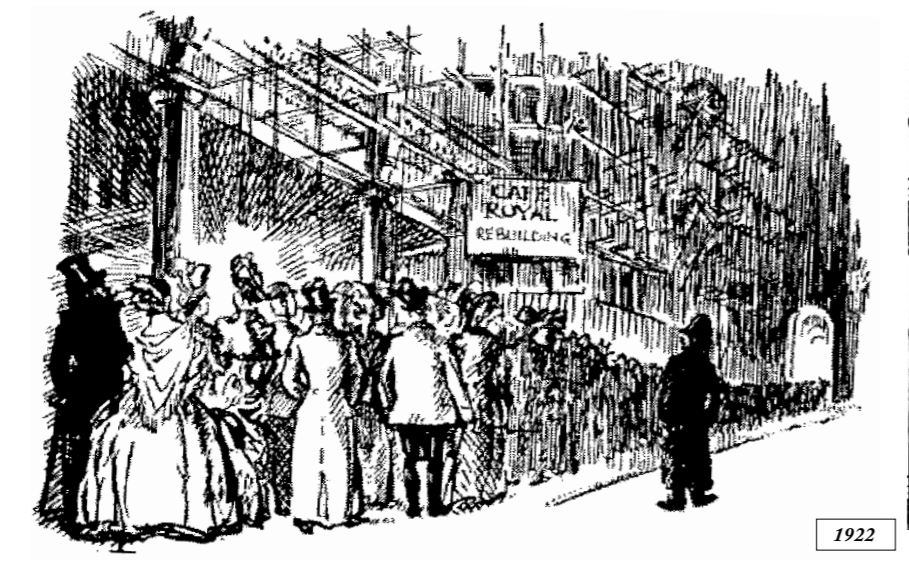
The downfall of Café Royal’s famous wit, Oscar Wilde



Of all the famous figures to have crossed the lobby at Café Royal, there is one name that stands above the rest: Oscar Wilde. The Irish poet and with held court at Café Royal during the late 1800s and in many ways embodied the spirit of the place. One night he drank so much absinthe that he began hallucinating and mistook a stack of chairs to be a field of tulips. But in 1894 the scene of his many barbed bon mots became the setting for his downfall. The poet Lord Alfred Douglas was 22 when he first caught Wilde’s eye at Café Royal. They were introduced in 1891 and over the next few years, the pair dined regularly at Café Royal both in the restaurant and the oak-panelled private rooms.

Douglas’ father, the Marquess of Queensberry, had picked up on some of the stories circulating about Wilde and felt that his son should not be associating with such a figure. Then, in November 1892, Wilde and the Marquess met for the first time. Wilde and Douglas were dining at Café Royal when they spotted Queensberry. The trio sat down to lunch together and Wilde – against the odds – charmed the violent-tempered Marquess. But the following year, a letter from Wilde to Douglas fell into the hands of the Marquess. It included the line: “My own dear boy, your sonnet is quite lovely, and it is a marvel that those red-leaf lips of yours should have been made no less for music of song than for medium of kisses. Your slim gilt soul walks between passion and poetry.” The Marquess stormed into Café Royal where he threatened the waiters that if he found Wilde and his son together he would strike Wilde and wreck the restaurant. Finally, in February 1895, the Marquess left a fateful card at Wilde’s club. It read: “To Oscar Wilde posing as a sodomite [sic].” It was more than Wilde could bear and he began ill-advised libel proceedings against the Marquess that collapsed and led instead to Wilde being found guilty of indecent behaviour with men and sentenced to two years’ hard labour. After his release, he fled to Paris; Wilde – and Café Royal – was never the same again.

“There’s always luncheon at one o’clock at the Café Royal”



REBUILD IT AND THEY WILL COME

In November 1922, it was announced that the Café Royal was to be pulled down and rebuilt as part of an attempt to make all the buildings of the Regent Street Quadrant conform to a single style.

“They might as well have told us that the British Empire is to be pulled down and redecorated,” was Café Royal stalwart TWH Crosland’s reaction. It took four years – and the café remained open throughout.

EVERYTHING MUST GO!



Café Royal’s sale of the century


On 20 January 2009, Café Royal’s loyal patrons were given a once in a lifetime opportunity to own a piece of history. As part of the work to transform the venerable old building into a luxury hotel, a host of eclectic items from Café Royal’s past were auctioned by Bonhams. The sale offered an incredible insight into the life of the noble building and its habitués. Among the items to be auctioned was a large collection of framed black and white prints of famous regulars. Included were John Mills, Noel Coward, Gertrude Laurence, Lord Balfour, Princess Marie Louise, Rudyard Kipling, Oscar Wilde and Lord Alfred Douglas all photographed especially for Café Royal by Bertie Swaebe, his daughter Betty and son Barry, whose studio AV Swaebe was nearby at 23 Grosvenor Street. Also for sale amidst the countless chandeliers, gilded mirrors and curtains being cleared out, was an electroplated carving trolley from The Grill, which featured acanthus motifs and lion paw feet with castors that had – for decades, no doubt – carried this dumb witness to history among the great and good dining at Café Royal. Another one-of-a-kind piece was the full-size boxing ring in which the boxers Barry McGuigan and Frank Bruno, among others, had fought during National Sporting Club black-tie bouts held at Café Royal for more than 50 years.

Going, going, gone!

Some of the more unusual items for sale

- ★ **Lot 35** Full-size 20th century boxing ring fought on by famous fighters including Barry McGuigan and Frank Bruno – £456
- ★ **Lot 78** A signed portrait of Patrick Hamilton by Sir William Rothenstein – £1,320
- ★ **Lot 82** A late 19th century electroplated duck press – £4,200
- ★ **Lot 87** Two late 19th century/early 20th century painted iron hand re-corking machines – £1,080
- ★ **Lot 97** A mahogany and silver plate fish-shaped serving platter – £456
- ★ **Lot 99** Silver and enamel dinner gong on ebonised base, presented by Thomas Pocklington Esq. on 30th November 1922 to The Bohemian Circle – £3,120
- ★ **Lot 103:** Portrait of Oscar Wilde signed by the artist R Cowell – £192

Photos: Café Royal Archive, British Library, Bonhams, Bridgeman.



1894

GARÇONS DE CAFÉ

by Aubrey Beardsley

It was said that the artist Aubrey Beardsley was only happy in three places: the Royal Pavilion at Brighton, the Casino at Dieppe, and Café Royal’s Domino Room. Beardsley – a leading figure in the Art Nouveau movement – lived an exaggerated, unreal sort of life (his home featured a room with orange walls and black doors) and he was drawn to places that allowed him to indulge his vivid imagination such as Café Royal with its gilded mirrors and elaborate caryatids. His distinctive black ink drawings were influenced by Japanese woodcuts and the poster style of Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec. His work won him the role of art director of The Yellow Book – an extraordinary illustrated quarterly for which he drew cover images – and placed him at the centre of the Aesthetic movement alongside other Café Royal habitués such as Oscar Wilde and the painter James McNeill Whistler, who was a huge influence on Beardsley despite his animosity towards the illustrator. Wilde described Beardsley, who would always be immaculately turned out in dove grey suits with yellow gloves, as having “a face like a silver hatchet, and grass green hair”. Beardsley died of tuberculosis at the age of just 25. This wonderful line drawing of three waiters at Café Royal – “Garçons de Café”, dating from an 1894 issue of The Yellow Book – perfectly encapsulates the fluidity and elegance of his style.

Aubrey Beardsley was always immaculately turned out in dove grey suits with yellow gloves, and had “a face like a silver hatchet, and grass green hair”

PATRONS OF CAFÉ ROYAL

IF THE WALLS COULD TALK...

Legendary faces captured on camera at Café Royal

Since 1865, the marble-topped tables of the Domino Room and the plush crimson and gold of the Grill Room (now the Oscar Wilde Lounge) have played host to the most famous – and infamous – figures of each celebrity era.

Great writers such as Virginia Woolf, Rudyard Kipling and George Bernard Shaw jostle for space in the pantheon with lumi-

nous figures from the art world including Aubrey Beardsley, James McNeill Whistler and Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec. Bon vivant poet and playwright Oscar Wilde made Café Royal his own, holding court as if it were his personal fiefdom. And royalty – including the future Edward VIII – have treated Café Royal as a home from home.

Meanwhile, musicians such as Louis Armstrong, David Bowie and Mick Jagger have all strolled and strutted through the marble entrance hall and actors such as Brigitte Bardot, Cary Grant, Mia Farrow and Elizabeth Taylor have sprinkled a little of their stardust along the way.

And in return, Café Royal has graced them all with its particular magic.

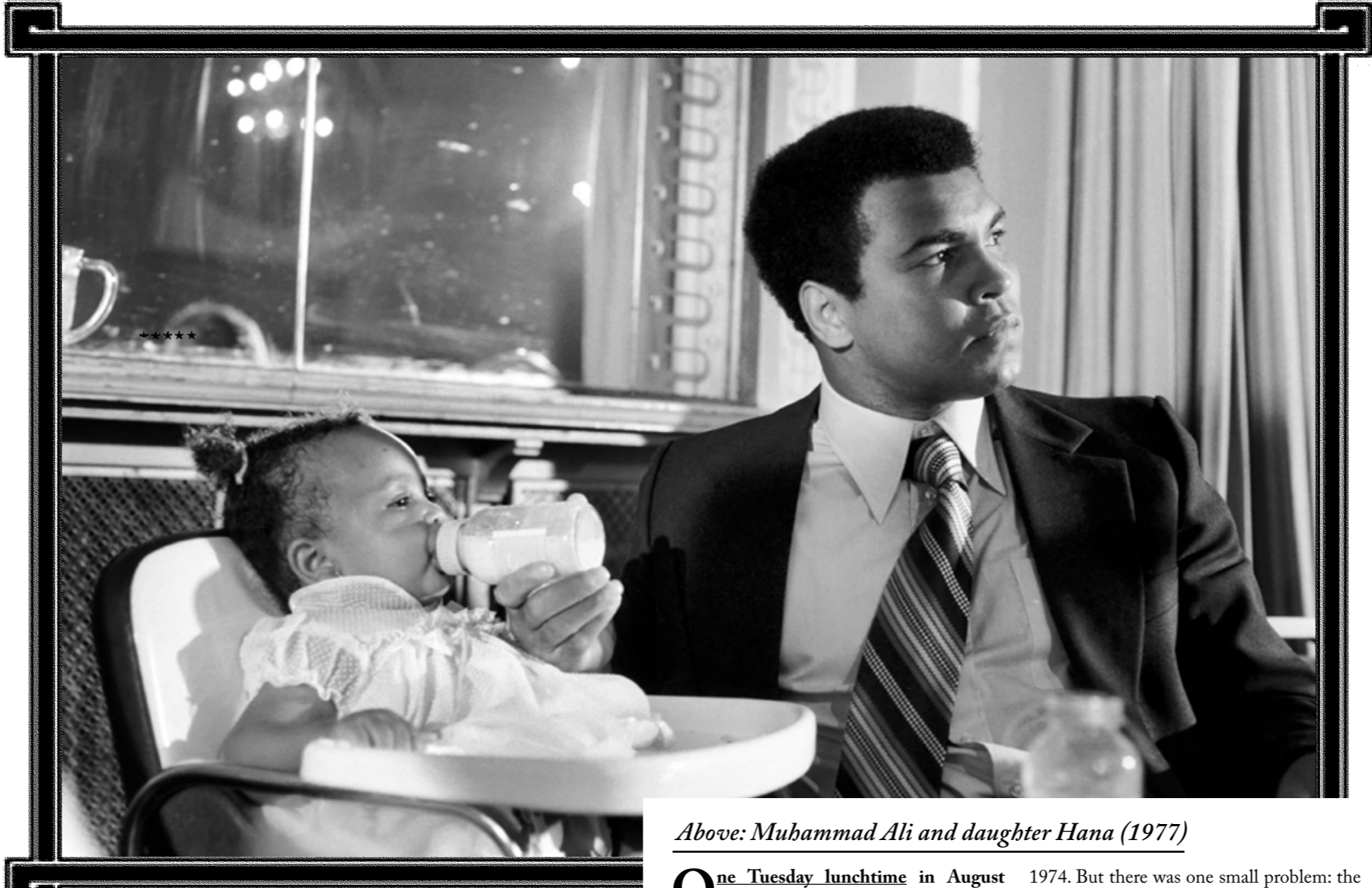


Actors Mia Farrow & Laurence Harvey, 13 April 1967



Above: Manchester United footballer, George Best (1968)

The 1967-68 season was a particularly good one for Manchester United player George Best: he became a European Cup winner after scoring in the 4-1 win over Benfica in the final and he was crowned European Footballer of the Year. But perhaps the pinnacle of his incredible season is captured here during a ceremony at Café Royal when Best became – at just 21 – the youngest ever player to receive the Football Writers’ Association Footballer of the Year award.



Above: Muhammad Ali and daughter Hana (1977)

One Tuesday lunchtime in August 1977, the World Champion boxer Muhammad Ali was due to take part in a press conference to launch his film “The Greatest”. The movie charts Ali’s life from the Rome 1960 Olympics at which he took the Gold medal to his famous Rumble in the Jungle fight against George Foreman in

1974. But there was one small problem: the babysitter was ill.

With no one else to call on, Ali was left holding the baby. The result is a series of images shot at Café Royal that show the pugilist’s softer side, feeding and entertaining his beloved 13-month old daughter Hana in front of the world’s media.



WHO'S WHO

This page, from top: (1) Actress Fenella Fielding at Café Royal’s centenary celebrations, 11 February 1965; (2) Louis Armstrong signs autographs, 3 May 1964; (3) Cat Stevens, Mick Jagger, Lulu and David Bowie at Bowie’s farewell party for Ziggy Stardust, 3 July 1973. Opposite page: (4) Princess Anne with pioneering heart surgeon Denton A Cooley, 17 September 1984; (5) Actors Alan Alda and Dame Maggie Smith enjoy a drink at Café Royal, 19 March 1979.

Photos: Bridgeman, Alamy, PA Images, Getty Images

CAFÉ ROYAL TIMES



Writers such as Virginia Woolf, Rudyard Kipling and George Bernard Shaw jostle for space in the pantheon



Brigitte Bardot 27 October 1956

Right: Pop singers Cilla Black, Cliff Richard and Lulu (1970)

The three singers show off their trophies at the “Disc and Music Echo” Valentine Awards at a ceremony at Café Royal in February 1970. Cilla Black won Top British Female Singer and Cliff Richard took Best Dressed Male Star while Lulu won the day with three gongs – Top World Female Singer, Miss Valentine and Best Dressed Female Star.



PATRONS OF CAFÉ ROYAL



SNAPSHOTS OF HISTORY

Over the course of the last century and a half, dozens of iconic figures have had their photographs taken as they've passed through Café Royal. From Muhammad Ali giving his baby daughter a bottle of milk during a press conference to the stars of today partying hard in the Oscar Wilde Lounge, moments in history have been made and captured here.



"In the Brasserie we could stare with reverence at the Great Ones of the worlds of art, music and literature."

Eric Maschwitz



WHO'S WHO

(1) Yasmin Le Bon and Kendall Jenner, 1 December 2014; (2) Singer Harry Styles; (3) Singer Rihanna, 1 December 2014; (4) Actor Sean Connery and entertainer Eric Sykes, 9 October 2003; (5) Kate Moss attends The Miu Miu London pop-up club at Café Royal, November 2012. >



Photos: Alamy, PA Images, Getty Images, Rex Features, Café Royal Archive

CAFÉ ROYAL TIMES



Musicians such as Louis Armstrong, David Bowie and Mick Jagger have strolled and strutted through the marble entrance hall



EVENTS LIST

*27-30 November 2012 Miu Miu take over the entire hotel to launch a pop-up members' club exclusively for women.

*8 January 2013 Savile Row tailor, Richard James holds its London Collections: Men show in the Pompadour Ballroom.

*17 February 2013 AnOther Magazine and Dazed and Confused host a party in celebration of London Fashion Week, with dinner in the Oscar Wilde Lounge followed by a take over of The Club.

*17 September 2013 Marie Claire throws a 25th anniversary party at the hotel alongside an exhibition by photographer Rankin featuring cover star icons in association with The Out Net.

*2 October 2014 The Club at Café Royal launches with a party to showcase the unique space and London's only private members' club inside a luxury hotel, with Amber Le Bon, Daisy Lowe and Eva Herzigova in attendance.

*1 December 2014 Kate Moss and Naomi Campbell host an A-list party in the Oscar Wilde Lounge following the British Fashion Awards in honour of Edward Enninful, fashion and style director of the W Magazine.

*24 March 2015 The British Fashion Council and Vogue present the Designer Fashion Fund prize to Mary Katrantzou with an intimate reception in the Oscar Wilde Lounge.

*10 February 2017 To celebrate its 50th issue, luxury gentleman's magazine The Rake host a party in the plush Oscar Wilde Lounge - fitting as the magazine's cover star, Sir Patrick Stewart was shot on location at the hotel.

*4 April 2017 For the fourth year running, the British Fashion Council and Vogue take over the Oscar Wilde Lounge for a champagne reception to announce the recipient of the BFC/Vogue Fashion Fund - awarded jointly this year to Mother of Pearl and palmer/harding.

*8 May 2017 Jared Brown of Sipsmith London Dry Gin helps celebrate the 80th anniversary of the publication of the Café Royal Cocktail Book (which he reissued in 2008) with a party in the Oscar Wilde Lounge.



WHO'S WHO

(6) Actor Dustin Hoffman and his wife at the BAFTA Awards after party, 9 April 2000; (7) Model Erin O'Connor attends the Vogue dinner in honour of Michael Kors, 25 April 2013; (8) singer Nicole Scherzinger, with racing driver Lewis Hamilton and model Naomi Campbell at a party in celebration of Edward Enninful, 1 December 2014.



GATHERINGS

LONDON'S LIVING ROOM

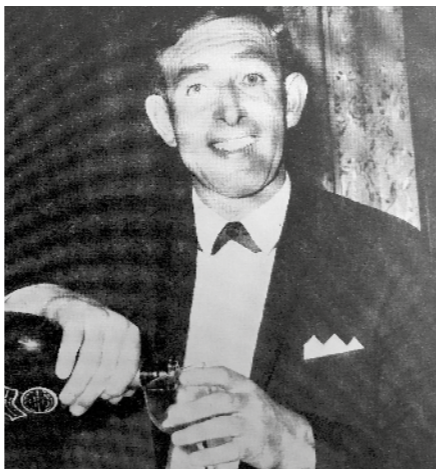
Europe's Most Famous Meeting Place of Celebrities" was how the New York Herald Tribune once described Café Royal. Yet in many ways it was so much more; it was the living room of the city.

With its 10,000 square feet of dance floor, numerous meeting rooms and banqueting halls accommodating parties from

From Freemasons to raucous rugby clubs, Café Royal has been a meeting place for city society

a cosy foursome to a raucous 750-strong crowd all spread over 11 floors, Café Royal was the premier choice when it came to hosting dinners, parties, meetings or clubs in London.

Alongside the dinners, wine and cheese-tasting evenings and royal visits, Café Royal was a magnet for clubs and associations covering every possible subject from art to sport, sailing to shark fishing. >



Clockwise from main: The Queen Mother at a dinner hosted by the 61st Highland Regiment; the Duke of Edinburgh meets recipients of the Victoria Cross, 1960; stars of Arnold Wesker's 'The Kitchen' meet the chefs; Footballer Danny Blanch flower at a dinner in his honour



1973

> The most famous – simply known as 'The Club' – was founded by Sir Joshua Reynolds in 1764 and met for dinner in a private room at Café Royal. Members included Stanley Baldwin, Rudyard Kipling and the Archbishops of Canterbury and York.

The Detection Club, a select group of Britain's finest crime writers founded in 1930 with GK Chesterton as president, regularly met there, too. The club, which counted Agatha Christie and Dorothy L Sayers among its number, would gather in a darkened room at Café Royal for an initiation ritual to induct new members (such as PD James, Patricia Highsmith, Ruth Rendell and John le Carré). It was – as you might expect – a cloak and dagger affair.

The president would enter in a crimson robe and carrying a skull – Eric the Skull, as it was known. The other members filed in behind carrying candles. Then new members – with a hand on Eric – would be sworn in. Afterwards, the club would get down to the real purpose of the meeting – a sumptuous dinner with a speech by a preeminent figure such as the philosopher Bertrand Russell.

Sporting club dinners could be considerably more raucous. From 1955, the National Sporting Club – which established boxing as a reputable sport – called Café Royal home thanks to the hotelier Charles Forte, >

Photos: The Café Royal Story Café Royal Archives

CAFÉ ROYAL TIMES



Clockwise from main: The Queen Mother arrives at Café Royal for dinner; French ambassador Jean Chauvel at a wine tasting event; a gathering of gourmets for a French cheese and wine tasting

1973



Ready, Steady, Cook!

HRH Princess Alexandra presents a Certificate of Merit to a prize winner in the Youth in the Kitchen contest held at Café Royal.



> who took over the establishment the year before, and hosted regular black-tie bouts (see page 34).

But it was meetings of the London Scottish Rugby Club that really brought the house down. The dinners would be so drunken that Daniel Pigache – the founder's grandson and manager of Café Royal in the 1920s – would lay on a "casualty clearing station" in a neighbouring room for the blind drunk to sleep it off. These dinners would invariably involve wild Highland reels, with great groups of burly rugby players spinning and stomping so hard that on one occasion they cracked the ceiling below. The architect called in to take a look ordered that the whole damaged section of the building should be reconstructed.

Masonic get-togethers were also a staple of Café Royal life. Founder Daniel Nicols was himself a mason and had a masonic temple built. It was here that the Prince of Wales (who later became the Duke of Windsor) officiated as Grand Master to initiate his brother the Duke of Kent. By the 1960s, more than 400 masonic lodges held regular functions at Café Royal in special air-conditioned masonic rooms constructed on the lower ground floor.

On any given day, Café Royal teemed with a vast array of people from every corner of the city; all human life was here.



EVENTS HELD AT CAFÉ ROYAL

CAFÉ ROYAL TIMES

QUEEN OF CLUBS

Miuccia Prada’s three-day pop-up at Café Royal

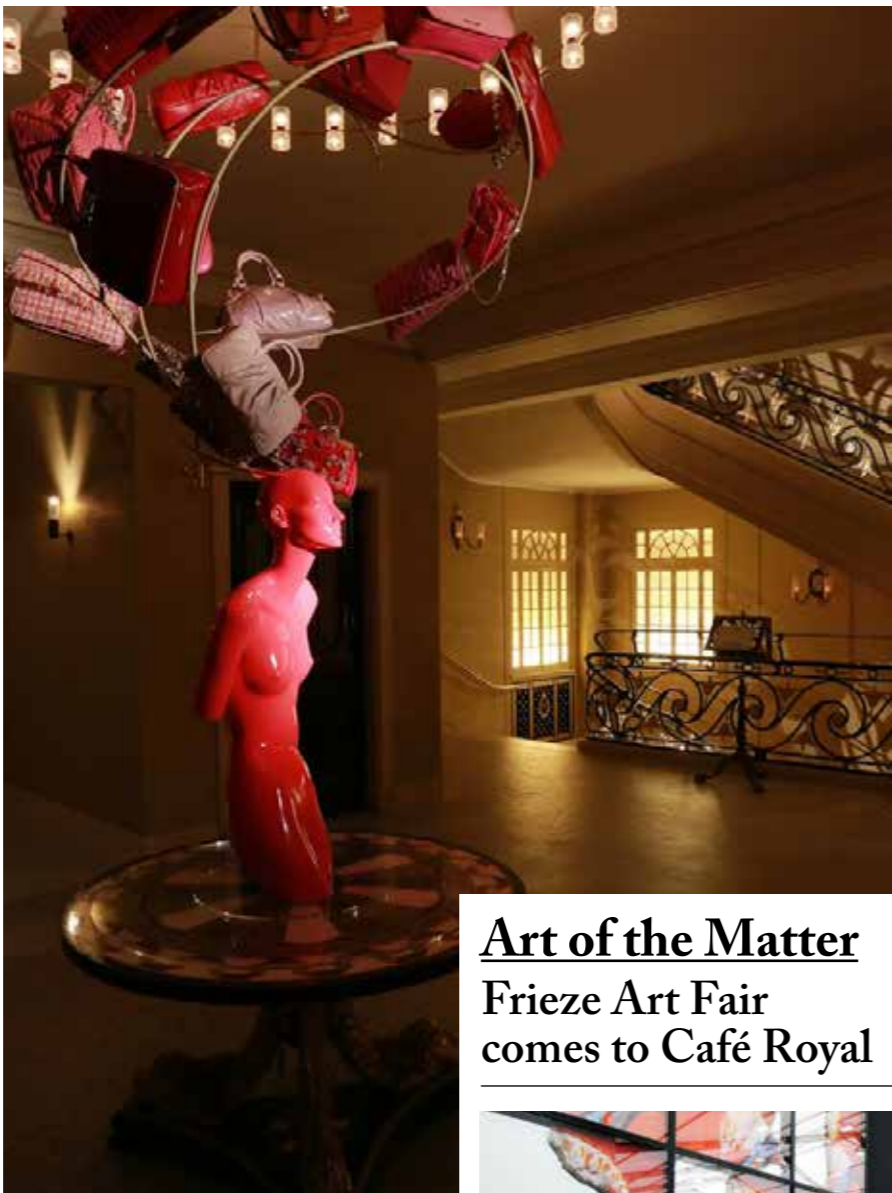
In November 2012 – shortly before Café Royal reopened as a hotel – Miuccia Prada took over the storied venue to host a pop-up, three-day private members club.

The-miumiu-london was a space in which fashion collided with food, music and culture. There was a bar serving cocktails, a restaurant run by a roster of stellar chefs such as Michelin-starred April Bloomfield, and, of course, a shop selling the brand’s Resort and S/S 2013 collections.

No detail was left to chance: the club’s decor was created by film production designer Caroline Smith (“Love, Actually”, “Notes on a Scandal”, “Brideshed Revisited”); Vivienne Westwood designed limited-edition pieces, milliner Stephen Jones put on a display of his hats and Róisín Murphy deejayed.

Members – including Kate Moss, Dita Von Teese and Alexa Chung – were given a list of 10 house rules such as “start a conversation with a stranger”, and “stay longer than you planned, then come back tomorrow”. Sound advice.

It was a space in which fashion collided with food, music and culture.



Art of the Matter Frieze Art Fair comes to Café Royal



When the popular Frieze Art Fair rolls into London each October, the art world decamps to a set of air-conditioned marquees in Regent’s Park.

Yet in 2017, away from the frenzy, Café Royal – the fair’s official hotel partner – hosted two British artists, Matthew Darbyshire and Kathy Dalwood, in considerably more refined surroundings.

Darbyshire, whose sculptures question our relationship with our environments, took over the historic lobby to showcase a piece from his CAPTCHA series in which he recreates sculptural forms using layers of multi-coloured polycarbonate. Dalwood, meanwhile, exhibited a reinterpretation of a traditional plaster bust collection entitled “Secret Society at Café Royal”.

As Oscar Wilde once wrote: “Life imitates Art far more than Art imitates Life.” What he failed to add is that Life and Art can both be found at Café Royal when Frieze rolls into town.

Play it again Chan!

Rosey Chan hits all the right notes



The pianist and composer Rosey Chan took over Café Royal’s Pompadour Ballroom in May 2017 to preview her latest album – “8 Years of My Life”.

Chan trained at the Royal Academy of Music and then at the prestigious Royal College of Music, and her debut album, ONE, was produced by Sting. She is known for performances that combine technology with virtuoso musicianship, and >



> her intimate evening of music at Café Royal – hosted in aid of ClientEarth – was no different. It saw Chan play piano and accordion and also featured spoken word as well as projected visuals courtesy of film director Mike Figgis.

Among the select crowd listening attentively were designer Thomas Heatherwick (the man behind the London 2012 Olympic torch), and actor Charles Dance (pictured).

Rosey Chan’s album ‘8 Years of My Life’ is available on iTunes and Spotify www.roseychan.com

Photos: Associated Press Images, Getty Images, Mia Min, Linda Nyfird, Victoria Grant

HAT’S ENTERTAINMENT



Milliner Victoria Grant’s creations

Victoria Grant is the go-to mad-hatter for stars in need of headwear; some of pop’s biggest princesses have sported her creations.

To mark the start of London Fashion Week in spring 2016, Café Royal hosted a display of her millinery milestones. The “Hat Hall of Fame” exhibition showcased

some of Grant’s finest and most eccentric work including a crown called “Regalis” made for Rihanna, “Midnight Rambler”, a lace-trimmed top hat, created for Lady Gaga, and “Diamond Tears”, a glittering eye piece made famous by Madonna.

Also in the show was a specially made couture piece called “Ziggy Stardust” to commemorate the late David Bowie, who hosted a famous retirement party at Café Royal (see page 26) to bid farewell to his otherworldly alter ego in 1973. Hat’s off.



“JAMES AGATE IN THE BRASSERIE”

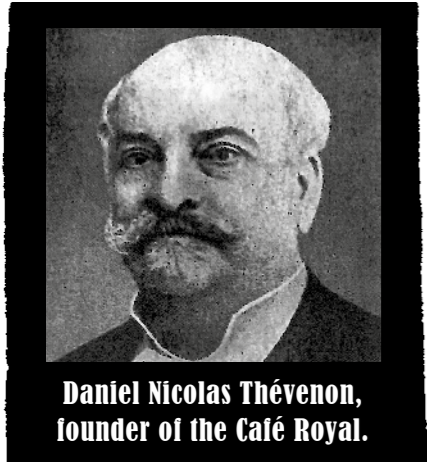
by Ralph Sallon

Ralph Sallon (1899–1999) was born in Poland but moved to England in 1904 where he would go on to be one of the leading caricaturists of his time. Here, he captures James Agate (seated) in the brasserie of Café Royal. When the sketch was made, Agate was one of the country’s leading theatre critics and a renowned diarist.

NEWS

THE CAFÉ ROYAL STORY

It began as a dream...



The Café Royal began as a dream,” wrote Iain Crawford in *The Café Royal Story*, a history of the building and its inhabitants published in 1963. In the years since it opened, he continued, “it has been a kind of dream-land for many people. Some have created their own fantasies within its plush and gilded walls, others have seen more practical dreams conjured up there come true. The man who started it all was a practical dreamer.”

It is true: Daniel Nicolas Thévenon's life reads like a dream. Born in 1833 in the small village of Champlost in Burgundy, he was initially apprenticed to a local coach-builder before he moved to Paris where he took over one of his cousin's wine shops. The business grew into a successful concern but then suddenly went bust thanks to his cousin's debts. In penury, Thévenon and his wife Célestine fled to London in October 1863.

There they settled in Soho and adopted the alias “M. et Mme Daniel Nicols”. Then, through hard work and frugal living, the pair managed to save enough money in just 15 months to take over a small oilcloth store in Glasshouse Street and transform it into a café.

Nicols and his wife had invested £400 in their little café-restaurant at 19 Glasshouse Street, letting the owner stay on the premises until they had finished paying it off in instalments. And to this small shop they added the adjoining empty shops at 15 and 17 Glasshouse Street. The Parisian-style rendezvous in the heart of London finally opened on 11 February 1865 under the name “Café-Restaurant Nicols” completing the Thévenons' transformation from French fugitives to London business owners.

Encouraged by the success of their French café-restaurant, they expanded into George Bailey's tailor shop immediately behind at 68 Regent Street and acquired the

adjoining packing-case warehouse at 8 Air Street. The enlarged premises were renamed Café Royal and 68 Regent Street remains its official address to this day. A shop shared by a laceman and a military dress maker at 10 Air Street was added in 1875.

Hanging over the couple in these early years was the threat of French justice: in his absence, Nicols had been sentenced to 10 years' hard labour in 1864 for unpaid debts by Napoleon III's officials. The harsh ruling reinforced his anti-Imperial views, and must have influenced his decision to rename the fledgling Café-Restaurant Nicols as Café Royal just two years after it opened. However, all his debts in France were settled within six years of opening his café, even though in London he was safely out of reach of the French authorities and his creditors.

What made Café Royal such a hit? It stood out thanks to a winning combination of attentive service, excellent food and Nicols' exceptional wine knowledge.

Within a decade of opening, and with the addition of a wine merchant license, he had transformed a tiny oilcloth store into one of the best-known restaurants in London. Yet he still wasn't satisfied.

• Monopoly

In 1885 further expansion became necessary – this time into 21 Glasshouse Street, previously the shop of a hatter. Then over the next two years, Nicols added the former surgery at 6 Air Street as well as the vacant buildings at numbers 12 and 14 to his burgeoning portfolio.

Meanwhile, demand continued to grow and to ease some of the pressure on the café he established the Grill Room and Domino Room, which rapidly became the most popular restaurant and private dining room in London.

Finally, in 1894, Nicols completed his work with the addition of the former Union Tavern. Within 20 years, the former coach-builder's apprentice and bankrupt wine merchant had transformed himself into a respected and prominent Mason and the proud owner of all the uneven numbers from 11 to 23 in Glasshouse Street, all the even numbers from 6 to 14 in Air Street, and, of course, 68 Regent Street.

It was a run of property acquisition worthy of the classic board game Monopoly – and all without the former fugitive, who had been wanted in France, collecting a “Go Directly to Jail...” card.

• Legacy

When he died in 1897, at his country estate (complete with deer park) in Surbiton,

Daniel Nicols was worth more than half a million pounds. Célestine, who had been the backbone of the business, then took over the reins and ruled Café Royal for another twenty years.

The “practical dreamer” had left behind something more tangible than a dream; he had created a legendary landmark that would live on for a century and a half – and counting.

Nicols' son-in-law had the “N” embellished with an Imperial crown and wreath, turning it from a sign of Nicols' prowess into a Napoleonic symbol

SIGN OF THE TIMES

The bitter feud that lies behind Café Royal's famous ‘N’ symbol

Daniel Nicols, founder of Café Royal, was keen to leave his mark on the establishment he opened on 11 February 1865. Inlaid into the floor of the lobby, worked into the lamp holders up the grand staircase, etched into the glass above the main entrance and proudly embossed on the radiator covers is his initial: “N”.

But the innocuous letter tells a story of deep-seated rivalry and a fundamental split in French politics that travelled across the English Channel. When he arrived in London, Nicols was on the run and had been sentenced to 10 years' hard labour by the Napoleonic authorities in France for unpaid debts

So, when his only surviving daughter married a French lace merchant called Georges Pigache, Nicols cannot have been happy to learn he came from a staunchly pro-Imperial, pro-Bonaparte family. But things were to get considerably worse.

• Feud

Pigache's lace business had failed thanks largely to cheaper imports and he went to work at Café Royal, helping to oversee the kitchens. Each day he would take the train from Surbiton on the outskirts of London

CAFÉ ROYAL TIMES

to Café Royal. There his love of fine food – and access to the kitchen – began to have an impact on his girth.

Eventually, Pigache became so large that he required a bigger carriage to take him to the station in Surbiton where the stationmaster arranged for three burly porters to be waiting to manhandle him into the carriage in the morning and lever him out again each evening.

Meanwhile, Pigache was plotting. He appealed to Nicols' vanity, suggesting that he ought to have his initial inscribed around Café Royal. Nicols agreed and Pigache set to work. However, without Nicols' knowledge he had the “N” embellished with an Imperial crown and laurel wreath turning it from a sign of Nicols' prowess into a clear Napoleonic symbol.

Nicols was livid – but it was too late. The initial of his nemesis was everywhere: on the cutlery and crockery, embroidered into the napkins, printed on menus and wine lists and adorning all stationery. Nicols, unsurprisingly, never forgave his son-in-law, but the “N” remains.



NAPOLEON COMPLEX

As you pass through the revolving doors of the Regent Street entrance, Nicols' famous “N” is immediately obvious. Here are five to spot...

- The stained glass window above the main Regent Street entrance.
- The ornate radiator grilles.
- On the balustrade overlooking the entrance hall.
- Lamp holders on the staircase.
- The ornate “N” surrounded by laurel wreath and crown set into the marble floor of the lobby.

Photos: Getty Images, Café Royal Archive, Estate of William Gaunt

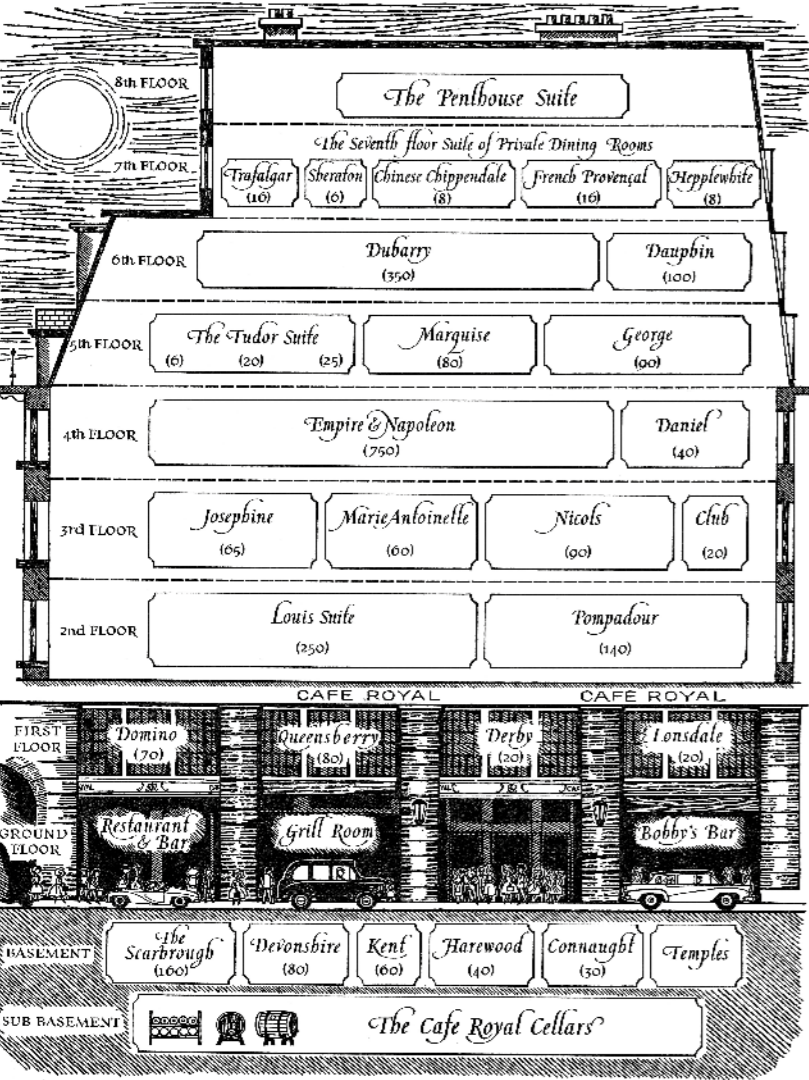


*Old Gentlemen who still are gay
Go toddling thither every day;
Invigorated by the air
They plume their crests and quiz the fair;
'Ab ah, my charmer, is that you?'
'O, go along, you old fool, do!'
'Not old, my dear; be more discreet –
I'm always young in Regent Street!'

From the 1840s ditty 'Regent Street'*

Outside Café Royal by William Gaunt
The corner of Air Street and Glasshouse Street during the rebuilding.

REFURBISHMENT



A ROYAL REBIRTH

How the illustrious **Café Royal** was transformed into a world-class hotel

CAFÉ ROYAL has undergone numerous alterations since Daniel Nicols first opened the doors to his tiny Café-Restaurant in 1865. Then, it occupied a former oilcloth warehouse at 19 Glasshouse Street and the adjoining shops at numbers 15 and 17, but as its success grew so too did Nicols' grand enterprise. Later in 1865, Nicols bought the premises of tailor George Bailey at 68 Regent Street – the official address of the hotel today. And two years later, the establishment was booming. So much so that Nicols put up a new sign over his Regent Street entrance bearing the name we know today: Café Royal. Over the next 20 years or so, Nicols slowly took over the Regent Street frontage and that along Air Street, which cuts through to Glasshouse Street behind. His tiny café had become a legendary London institution. But perhaps the most fundamental alter-

ation occurred in 2008 when the old Café Royal closed its doors and underwent an extensive refurbishment, transforming it into a modern grand hotel with 160 guestrooms, including 54 suites, by the current owners, The Set Hotels. A key part of the process was the owner's emphasis on taking care of the historic rooms that have been brought back to life through careful paint analysis, decoration and restoration of original oil paintings.

The Project

The project, overseen by David Chipperfield Architects (whose many lauded museums include the Hepworth Art Gallery in Wakefield, West Yorkshire and the Turner Contemporary Gallery in Kent), involved amalgamating Café Royal (seen in an original room plan above left) with two neighbouring buildings in the Grade II listed southern quadrant block of Regent Street to create a large, modern hotel fronted by the graceful curve of Sir Reginald Blomfield's facade.

The historic entrance at 68 Regent Street (see main plan above) remains, but the building has now been expanded into a neighbouring bank (centre with shaded roof) and, on the right of the plan, the rather

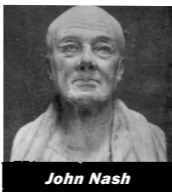
beautiful County Fire Office (once the site of legendary nightclub Chinawhite). Here, behind the building's three arches, lies an elegant six-storey helical staircase, with complex handrails and spindles, which has been brought back to life and now marks the eastern extent of the hotel. In the basement of the County Fire Office site lies an oasis of calm: the hotel's Akasha Holistic Wellbeing, featuring a large lap pool, sauna, steam room, jacuzzi and nine treatment rooms. The Café Royal of old closed its doors in 2008 and was reborn as Hotel Café Royal in 2012 after the extensive building programme was finished. Then in 2018, Italian architect Piero Lissoni added the hotel's large lobby to greet guests and the transformation was complete. The result of the expansion and consolidation is a hotel that at once honours the building's rich history and offers guests a luxurious, contemporary experience.

The Rooms

The extravagant Louis XVI grandeur of the building's historic rooms has also been carefully and painstakingly restored.

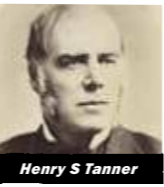
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THE BRAINS BEHIND THE BLUEPRINTS



Although Regent Street itself was laid out by John Nash (see right), it was prolific Edwardian architect Sir Reginald Blomfield who designed the Café Royal facade that now greets visitors. Blomfield's 1911 design created a unified style with the rest of the north eastern half of the Regent Street quadrant.

Following Blomfield's face-lift (completed between 1920-1923), Sir Henry Tanner rebuilt Café Royal itself from 1923-1928. Although he swapped the locations of key rooms, he retained some of Archer and Green's iconic original decoration from 1865-1872 including the gilt caryatids and mirrors of the Grill Room.



The building remained largely unchanged for the next 80 years until renowned architect Sir David Chipperfield was charged with transforming it into a world-class hotel.

Finally, in 2018 Italian architect Piero Lissoni – behind the Conservatorium hotel in Amsterdam, which, like Café Royal, is a member of The Set – put his stamp on the hotel with the new lobby and restaurant.



The result is a building suffused with history that wears its contemporary additions to stunning effect.

Photos: Café Royal Archives, Glenn Guitton, Getty Images, Mary Evans

Read about the history of Regent Street



John Nash's elegant thoroughfare cuts through the medieval heart of London's West End. One of London's first planned developments, Regent Street was finished in 1825, and stretches from Carlton House, the Regent's residence in St James's,

northwards to the formal splendour of Regent's Park. Along the way, it takes in Piccadilly Circus, Oxford Circus, All Souls Church, Langham Place and finally Portland Place. Between 1897 and 1925, all of Nash's original buildings were torn down and

replaced except for All Souls Church, which remains to this day. The street's original colonnades had already gone to deter "doubtful characters" and the radical rebuild at the turn of the 20th century created a broader, more open feel to the gentle curving buildings

producing a modern shopping experience favoured by the Edwardians. In recent years the Crown Estate, which owns much of the area, has undertaken a major redevelopment of Regent Street that has breathed new life once again into Nash's masterpiece.



REFURBISHMENT



Painstaking

Right: Restoration experts from Hare & Humphreys touch-up a ceiling painting; Above: workers from John Corley Stained Glass Studio refit a renovated window; Below: the renovated Regent Street entrance.



...continued from page 16>

Chipperfield, in collaboration with historic building architects Donald Insall Associates and aided by specialists such as Hare & Humphreys who worked on the numerous ceiling paintings, has returned the building's historic rooms to their former glory. Thanks to in-depth paint analysis, cleaning, regilding and redecoration, the Oscar Wilde Lounge (previously the Grill Room), Pompadour Ballroom, Domino restaurant and Célestine Suite (named for the wife of the original owner) now positively glow.

New additions by Chipperfield sensitively echo these hallowed spaces and the surrounding architecture. Many of the rooms feature bathrooms of Carrara marble, floors of fumed oak and faceted ashlar blocks reminiscent of the Portland Stone facades of neighbouring buildings and Cakes & Bubbles, which is open to Regent Street and serves desserts by Michelin-starred Albert Adrià, features striated yellow Giallo Siena marble, mirroring the historic lobby.

Meanwhile, the walls of the Presidential Suite's reception room feature restored gilded busts showing Napoleon over the course of his life while Hotel Café Royal's stunning Dome Penthouse sits beneath a copper rotunda overlooking Regent Street and Piccadilly Circus. An original feature of the Grade II listed County Fire Office

"The extravagant Louis XVI grandeur of the building's historic rooms have been carefully and painstakingly restored to their former glory"

building, it has allowed for the creation of an incredible suite packed with modern toys: a 98-inch HD TV, a state of the art sound system, and a light system that casts spectacular effects across the domed interior.

And step out onto the suite's private terrace — beneath a statue of Britannia perched atop a lion and gripping her shield and spear — and the views simply enhance Hotel Café Royal's sensitive combination of old and new. From here, privileged guests can spot the Shard and London Eye, along with Big Ben, the Houses of Parliament and Westminster Abbey.

Photos: Café Royal Archives, Wellcome Collection, Getty Images, Mary Evans, Alamy

CAFÉ ROYAL TIMES

THE SET HOTELS



Café Royal's place as one of three founding members

Café Royal's renovation is just part of an ambitious programme to transform three of Europe's grandest – and most storied – buildings into luxury hotels.

The first of this group, known as The Set, was the Conservatorium in Amsterdam. Built at the end of the 19th century, it was designed by renowned Dutch architect Daniel Knuttel and originally served as the Rijkspostspaar bank. Its construction sparked the revival of the city's museum quarter and later it became the site of the Sweelinck Music Conservatorium.

The renovation and transformation of Knuttel's building a century later was overseen by acclaimed Milan-based designer and architect Piero Lissoni, who has transformed the Conservatorium into Amsterdam's most well-appointed hotel.

When the hotel opened in 2012, the New York Times called it "a contemporary grand hotel in a smartly repurposed landmark 19th-century building" and praised "its old-meets-new design" as the standout factor.

While Café Royal epitomised the French influx into London in the late 19th century and became the centre of art, food and culture, in Paris, Hotel Lutetia was fulfilling a similar role.

Built in 1910, the beautiful Art Nouveau building was commissioned by the owners of Bon Marché, the world's first department store which sits opposite, and was designed by Louis-Charles Boileau. Its interiors were filled with the finest pieces: Haviland china, silver from Christofle, and Baccarat crystal.

The hotel became one of the most important cultural centres on the Left Bank. General de Gaulle and his wife Yvonne spent their wedding night there in April 1921. And – as with Café Royal – it was a regular haunt for writers including Milan Kundera, Albert Cohen (author of *Belle du Seigneur*) and James Joyce (who wrote part of *Ulysses* there); musicians such as Serge Gainsbourg; and artists including Pablo Picasso as well as a host of other famous faces such as Peggy Guggenheim and Josephine Baker.

The hotel closed its doors for renovation in 2014 and reopened summer 2018.



Clockwise from top left: The exterior of the Lutetia in Paris in 1919; John Nash's original Regent Street façade, 1828; how Hotel Café Royal looks today; an archive photograph of the Conservatorium in Amsterdam before its transformation into a hotel; the Hotel Conservatorium as it looks today; the restored Hotel Lutetia, which reopened in summer 2018, as it looks today.



The three founding members of The Set Hotels are located in the cultural hearts of their vibrant cities. They have for decades attracted people who drive change and creativity and are places where established and emerging ideas come together to shape the future. Matching the spirit and pace of contemporary life, The Set Hotels are explicitly designed to enable new discoveries and to capture the hearts and minds of guests in the process. These are places people love, want to return to and to tell others about. Simply put, they are the modern grand hotels of our time.

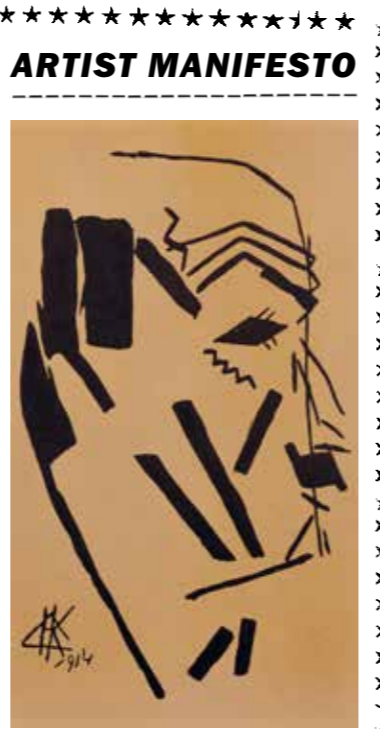
ART

CAFÉ ROYAL TIMES



Famous faces

Many of the characters captured in Sir Max Beerbohm's 1925 sketch 'Some Persons of "The Nineties" Little Imagining, Despite Their Proper Pride and Ornamental Aspect, How Much They Will Interest Mr Holbrook Jackson and Mr Osbert Burdett' (left), were famous faces often to be found at Café Royal during the 1890s and whose influence would continue well into the 20th century and beyond. Figures include: Walter Sickert, Arthur Symons, George Moore, John Davidson, Charles Conder, Oscar Wilde, Max Beerbohm, WB Yeats, and Aubrey Beardsley.



BACK TO THE FUTURISM

In 1908, the Italian poet Filippo Tommaso Marinetti and his friend the painter CRW Nevinson (see page 24) signed the Futurist Manifesto and read it out at Café Royal where they were regulars. On its first airing, the manifesto was received by a small group of intellectuals – and three pimps at a neighbouring table. But at its second reading, it got more attention. In response, artist Wyndham Lewis cooked up his own home-grown brand of Futurism that he called Vorticism, even devising a slogan: "Long Live the Vortex!" The Futurists and the Vorticists didn't see eye-to-eye and at Café Royal, the opposing artistic movements – naturally – sat at opposite ends of the restaurant. Above: Marinetti is depicted in a 1914 illustration by the Russian artist Nikolai Ivanovich Kulbin (1868-1917)

CHANGE OF ART

Café Royal's long history as a place of artistic inspiration

Café Royal's richly mirrored and gilded interiors have attracted generations of artists and bohemians looking for a convivial place in which to talk, drink – and occasionally sketch.

The London-born artist Charles Conder (who made his name as a painter in Australia and for whom the suburb of Conder in Canberra is named) introduced both Augustus John and Sir William Orpen to Café Royal's Domino Room – and its Pernod.

Thanks to Conder's introduction, Augustus John – who fellow artist and Café

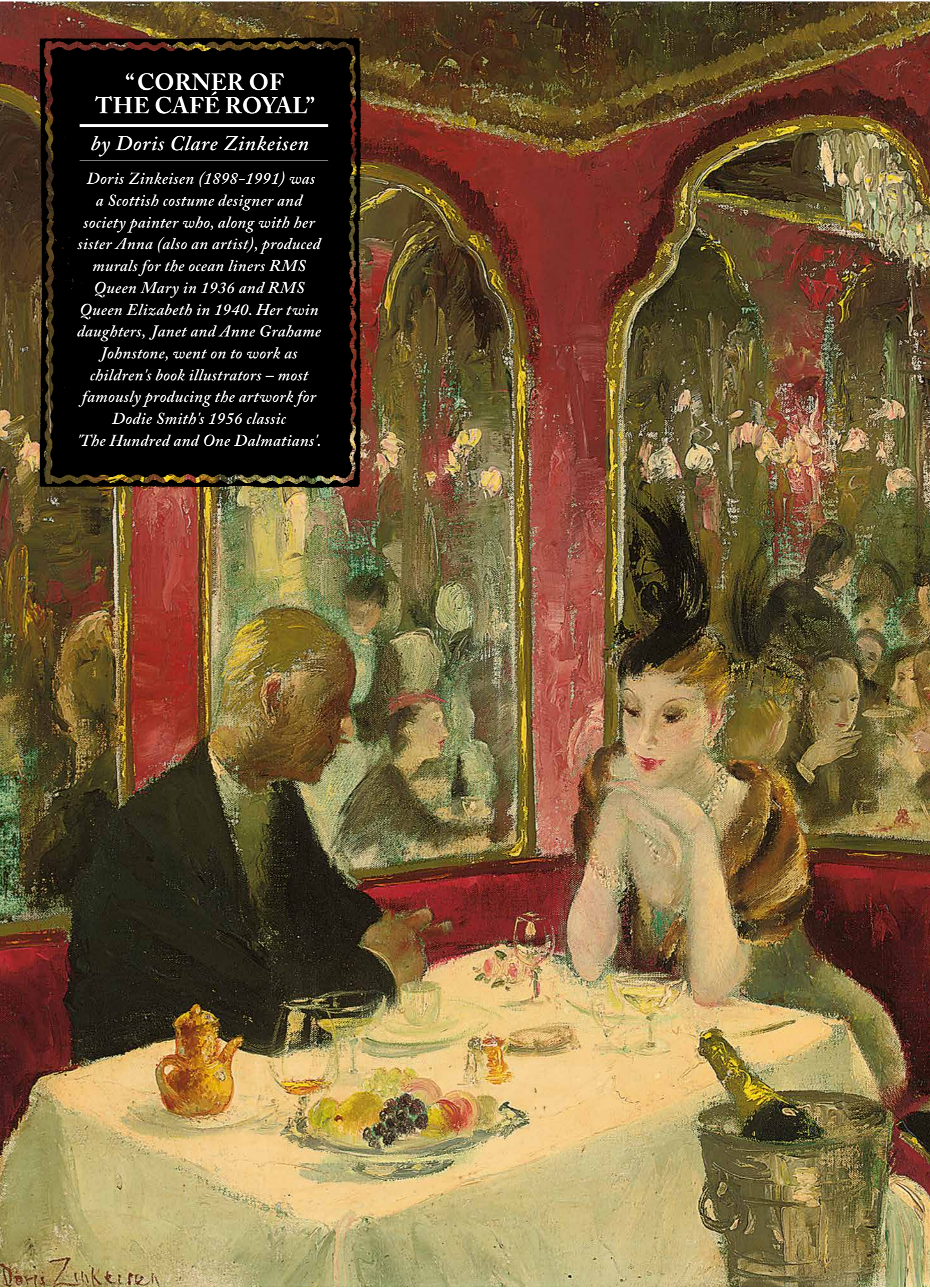
Royalite John Sargent called the greatest draughtsman since the Renaissance – went on to become a regular fixture in the Café Royal. As his fame grew, so too did the reverence with which he was received there. Students from the Slade would often stand up when he came into the café. And when John fell asleep at a table after lunch, those around him would lower their voices, talking in hushed tones so as not to disturb the sleeping master.

Café Royal was not just an artistic watering hole; it also inspired a vast collection of

"Café Royal was not just an artistic watering hole"

work. Walter Sickert sketched "The Barnacle Woman" (a woman in an elaborate hat seated at a table in the café); Charles Ginner, a leading light in the Camden Town Group, painted the Domino Room in his 1911 work "The Café Royal"; and Orpen's 1912 painting of artists in the Domino Room, also titled "The Café Royal", became one of the building's defining images (see page 36). Then there are numerous line drawings of the likes of writer George Moore and poet Lord Alfred Douglas sharing a table and, of course, Sir Max Beerbohm's peerless caricatures of the most fearsome wits and intellects of the age (see above).

The art inspired by Café Royal not only offers a valuable record of life at the great café, but also provides a rich snapshot of the work of some of the most innovative and exciting artists of their day.



"CORNER OF THE CAFÉ ROYAL"

by Doris Clare Zinkeisen

Doris Zinkeisen (1898-1991) was a Scottish costume designer and society painter who, along with her sister Anna (also an artist), produced murals for the ocean liners RMS Queen Mary in 1936 and RMS Queen Elizabeth in 1940. Her twin daughters, Janet and Anne Grabame Johnstone, went on to work as children's book illustrators – most famously producing the artwork for Dodie Smith's 1956 classic 'The Hundred and One Dalmatians'.

Photos: Alamy, Bridgeman, Ashmolean Museum.



Artist and “Queen of Bohemia”
Nina Hammett
by Roger Fry, 1917

“There, in that exuberant vista of gilding and crimson velvet set amid all those opposing mirrors and upholding caryatids, with fumes of tobacco ever rising to the painted and pagan ceiling...I drew a deep breath and, ‘This indeed,’ said I to myself, ‘is life!’”

Sir Max Beerbohm recalls the first time he saw the Domino Room



Illustrator Alan Odle
by Adrian Allison, c.1914

PUTTING THE ART BEFORE THE HORSE

Auguste Rodin’s wild night out at Café Royal

In May 1902, the French sculptor Auguste Rodin (below) was in London for the unveiling of his work “St John the Baptist”, which was being presented to the Victoria & Albert Museum in South Kensington.

To celebrate, a banquet was organised at Café Royal and 200 of Rodin’s most important and influential British admirers were invited, paying two guineas a head to dine with the great artist.

Quickly realising that Rodin would probably appreciate some art students in the audience too, the organisers arranged for a number from the Slade School and the Royal College of Art to come to listen to the after dinner speeches.

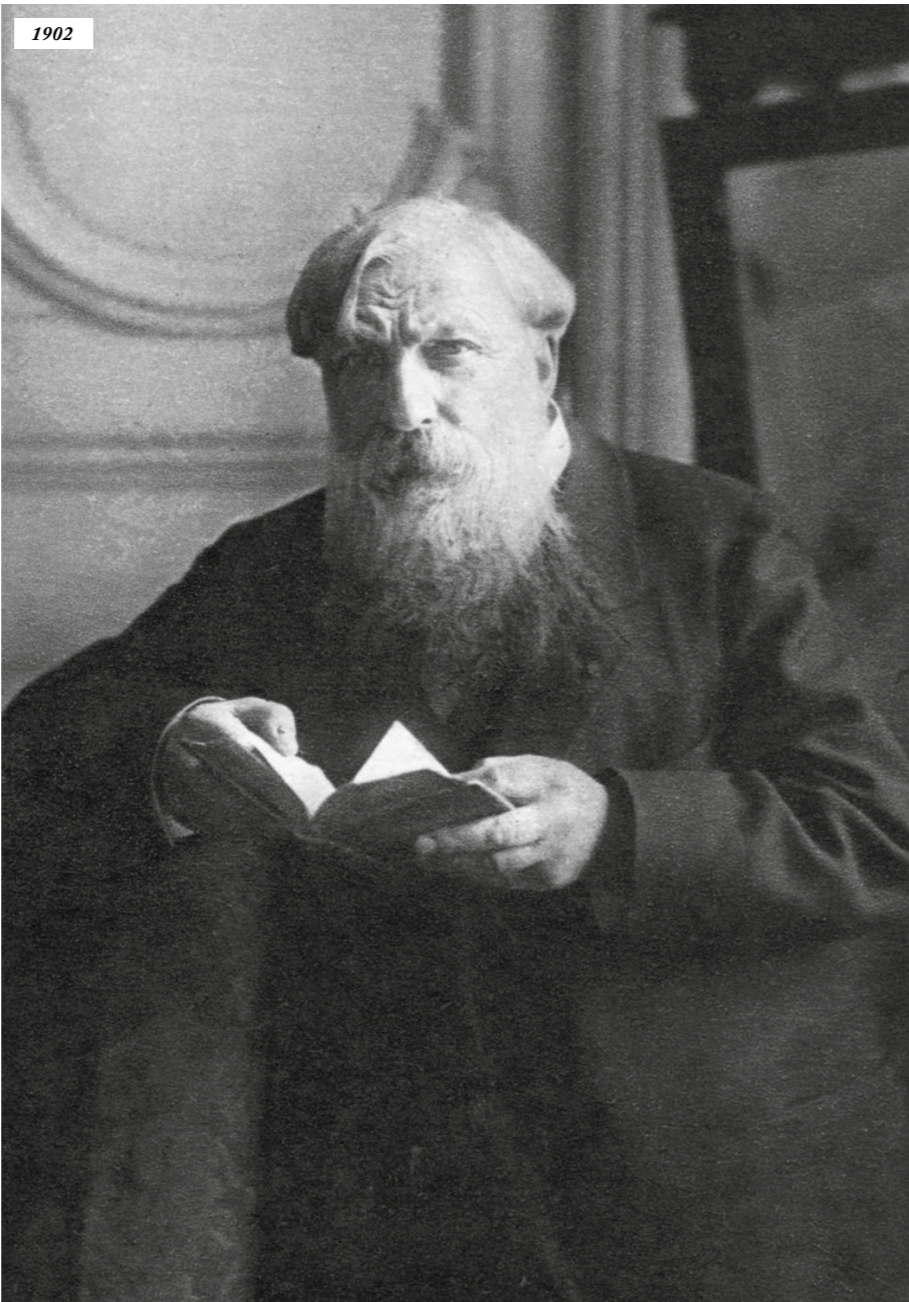
When the night arrived, the students

piled in and were given champagne by the diners. Along with other important figures, including the French ambassador, the MP George Wyndham gave a rousing speech. Then Rodin himself rose to his feet and delivered a short and rather awkward reply in French that was nonetheless cheered.

As the evening wound down and Rodin walked through the thronged lobby of Café Royal and out onto Regent Street where crowds filled the rain-slicked pavement, cheers went up and the excitable art students had an idea.

They surrounded Rodin’s four-wheel carriage waiting at the kerb and unharnessed the horse. Others helped Rodin into the carriage before a group took hold of the shafts and began to pull it away down Regent Street. As they moved off, another man leapt up into the cabbie’s seat – it was the famous painter John Singer Sargent, no less.

As the spectacle moved off along Piccadilly towards the Arts Club in Dover Street the crowd’s chant of “Rodin! Rodin! Rodin!” rang off the neighbouring buildings.



1902



c.1919

“THE BARNACLE WOMAN”

by Walter Richard Sickert

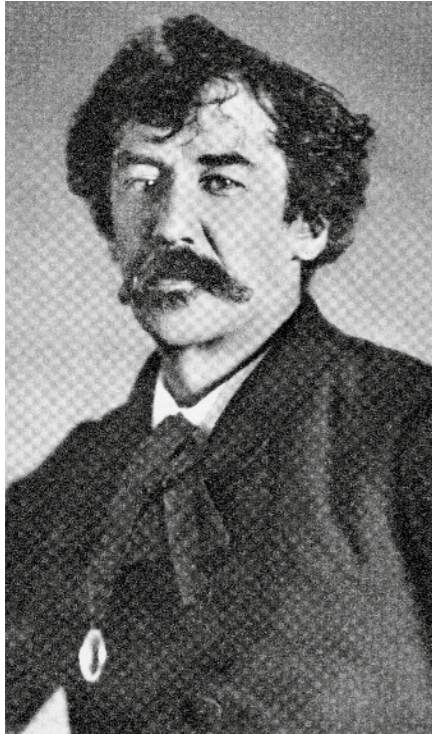
Walter Sickert (1860–1942) was a member of the Camden Town Group and is regarded as one of the most influential figures in 20th-century British art. This etching was made from one of the many pencil sketches Sickert drew in the Café Royal where he was a regular. It shows a woman seated at a table in the café sporting a particularly elaborate feathered hat that must have reminded the artist of a Barnacle goose in flight.

ART



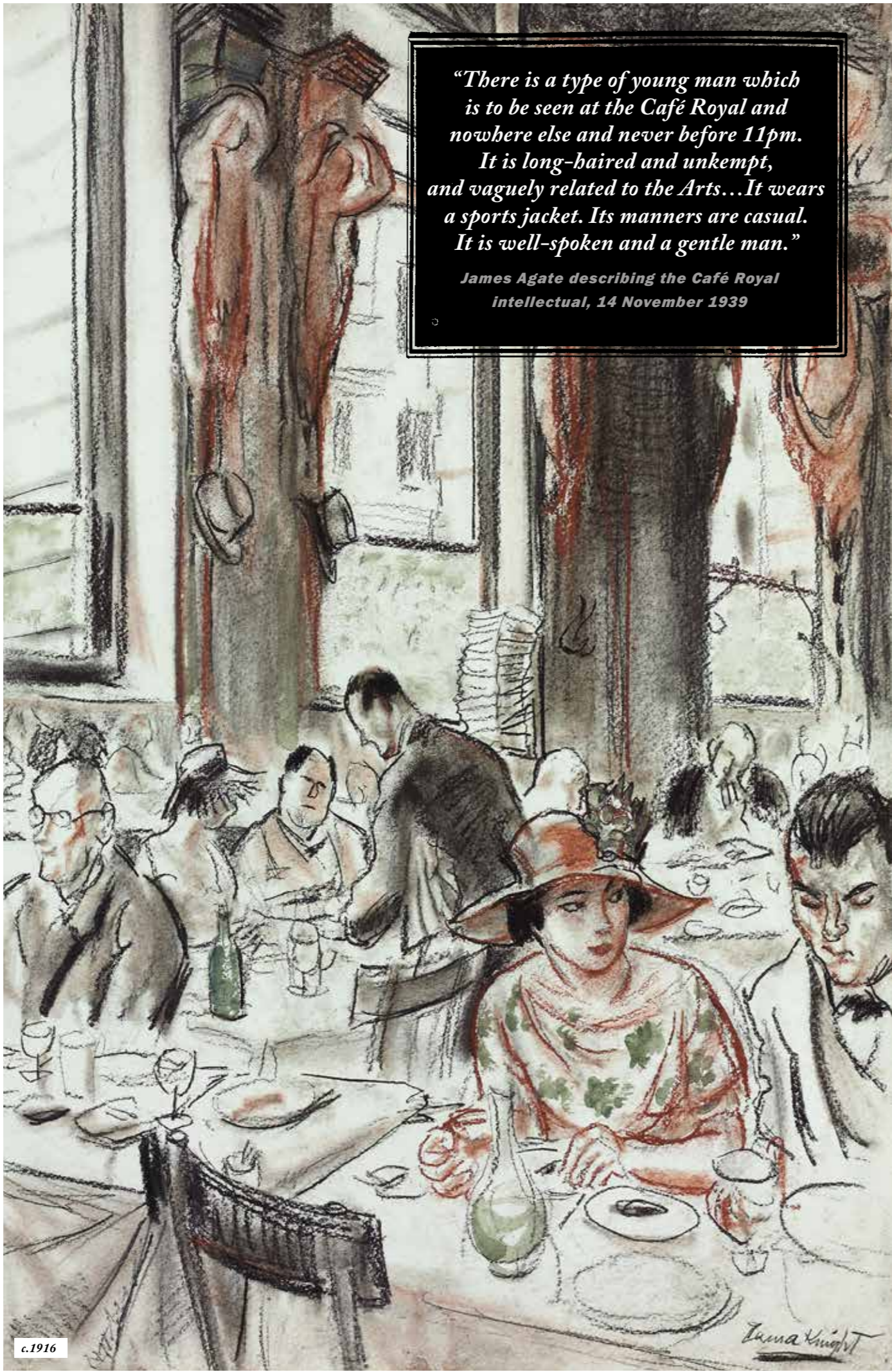
A brush with history

The artist Christopher Richard Wynne Nevinson (1889–1946) was one of the most famous artists of the first world war. CRW, as he was known, studied at the Slade alongside Stanley Spencer and was a founder member of the London Group of artists. Nevinson was also a Café Royal regular with perhaps a greater claim to that title than many of his fellow artists: he had first visited at the tender age of eight. Right: ‘Lunch at the Café Royal’ by Dame Laura Knight



ART ON A PLATE

The American-born artist James McNeill Whistler, who worked under the credo “art for art’s sake”, signed all his bills in the brasserie at Café Royal, not with anything as prosaic as his name, but with the famous butterfly mark with which he stamped his paintings. A regular, with a fondness for poulet en casserole and sweet champagne, Whistler would often host large parties in a specially screened off corner of the café. When Whistler married, his wedding feast was provided by Café Royal and eaten off packing cases (he’d recently moved and not yet unpacked) in the dining room at his house in Tite Street.



“There is a type of young man which is to be seen at the Café Royal and nowhere else and never before 11pm. It is long-haired and unkempt, and vaguely related to the Arts...It wears a sports jacket. Its manners are casual. It is well-spoken and a gentle man.” James Agate describing the Café Royal Intellectual, 14 November 1939

★ When painter Augustus John fell asleep at his table, other diners would lower their voices. ★

Photos: Getty Images, Alamy, Bridgeman, Mary Evans.

LITERATURE & MUSIC

WELL READ

Café Royal in fiction

“Murderous attack on Sherlock Holmes”, shouted the one-legged newspaper seller outside Charing Cross station. It was 1902 and the super-sleuth had been attacked at a well-known restaurant in central London. For eager readers of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s 1924 tale “The Adventure of the Illustrious Client”, the Regent Street location

of the fictional assault was so well known it needn’t even be named. After all, its telegraph address was simple and well known: “Restaurant, London.” Conan Doyle’s imagined incident may have been the most dastardly, but it was certainly not the only literary event Café Royal has witnessed over the years. Everyone from Lady Chatterley author DH Lawrence (whose cheques were often refused by the waiters) to doyenne of Bloomsbury Virginia Woolf were regulars. When Mark Twain visited Britain, the Duchess of Manchester naturally brought him to dine at Café Royal. Meanwhile, French poets Arthur Rimbaud and Paul Verlaine could often be found slumped at a marble-topped table and George Bernard Shaw and literary edi-

tor Frank Harris would regularly hold court here. Café Royal was, Charles Dickens wrote in his Dictionary of London, a place for those “who know how to order dinner”. Sir John Betjeman, poet laureate, even penned a short poem after spotting a notorious literary contemporary across the bar. “On Seeing an Old Poet at the Café Royal” begins:

I saw him in the Café Royal
Very old and very grand.
Modernistic shone the lamplight
There in London’s fairyland.

It was a fairyland illuminated not only by the “modernistic” lamplight, but by some of the brightest literary minds of the 19th and 20th centuries.

BY THE BOOK

Café Royal's autograph hunter

● During his career as Café Royal's manager from 1926-1940, William Young had to deal with the great and good who passed through. On one occasion he had to remind King Leopold of Belgium that he was not exempt from licensing laws. But it was Young's autograph book that really shows the breadth of characters who daily frequented Café Royal. The novelist Aldous Huxley jotted: “One goes to the Café to meet one’s friends and to eat good food”; Japanese poet Gonnoske Komai dashed off a poem; and Dr Edith Summer-

skill, the physician and Labour MP, inscribed the jokey note: “The only man in London who really understands my gastric juices.” But it was a sketch by Augustus John (pictured centre left in the Café Royal) of a woman’s head that held pride of place. Encouraged by the curator of the Tate Gallery, Young left the book and a new box of crayons at John’s table. The invitation proved too much to resist for the otherwise solitary artist who quickly sketched the head.

ONE HUMP OR TWO?

Valentino arrives on the music scene

One of the more unusual events at Café Royal occurred on 11 March 1969 and involved a troop of dancing girls, a 40-piece orchestra – and a camel. When the Irish pianist and accordion player Jackie Farn signed to EMI it was felt that he needed a bit more glamour and so he was renamed “Valentino”. To mark the occasion, a rather bemused camel was hired from Chessington Zoo and Valentino – accompanied by a group of exotic dancers – rode it down Regent Street to Café Royal where he played a show for music industry insiders. The stunt worked: he went on to have three gold, three silver and three platinum discs and his own show in Las Vegas.



Valentino arrives at Café Royal on the back of a camel, 11 March 1969

CAFÉ ROYAL TIMES

CAFÉ ROYAL READING LIST

OF HUMAN BONDAGE (1915) by W Somerset Maugham

Maugham, a Café Royal regular, mentions his old haunt in a passage about a vivacious old master at a boarding school attended by the protagonist of his finest novel.

WOMEN IN LOVE (1920) by DH Lawrence

Lawrence’s novel about the loves and lives of the Brangwen sisters, Gudrun and Ursula, features a thinly disguised Café Royal – renamed the Café Pompadour.

CAFÉ ROYAL COCKTAIL BOOK (1937) by WJ Tarling

Assembled by Café Royal’s then head bartender and published to celebrate the coronation of King George VI, this classic offers a snapshot of the vibrant cocktail culture of 1920s and 1930s Britain.

THE DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS (1951) by John Wyndham

A frightened mob, fleeing the giant carnivorous plants that overrun Britain in Wyndham’s classic science fiction novel, take refuge in Café Royal.

CAFÉ ROYAL: NINETY YEARS OF BOHEMIA (1955) by Guy Deghy & Keith Waterhouse

The first and the most comprehensive history of Café Royal’s beginnings sets out to examine some of the characters – “from the genius to the rogue” – that have made the place the legendary landmark it is today.

THE CAFÉ ROYAL STORY: A LIVING LEGEND (1963) by Leslie Frewin

This brief history of Café Royal, published just two years before its centenary was marked in 1965, features a foreword by the acclaimed novelist (and regular) Graham Greene.

DAVID BOWIE

THE LAST SUPPER

ZIGGY PLAYED GUITAR for the last time on the night of 3 July 1973. On stage, at a sell-out concert at London's Hammersmith Odeon, David Bowie announced that he was hanging up the sequined jumpsuit of his alter ego Ziggy Stardust for good.

The legendary night **David Bowie** retired **Ziggy Stardust** with a star-studded bash at **Café Royal**

• The final encore

Shortly before launching into his final encore – fittingly the song “Rock ‘N’ Roll Suicide” – Bowie announced: “This show will stay the longest in our memories. Not just because it is the end of the tour, but because it is the last show we’ll ever do.”

The crowd was devastated – many believing Bowie himself was retiring – and the following day’s papers plastered the news across their front pages.

Ziggy Stardust was born in 1972. An intergalactic pop star, he was created by Bowie as part of his concept album “The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars”. The arrival of Bowie’s otherworldly creation with his “snow white tan” and jagged orange hair



marked the start of glam rock and there followed a 10-month global tour that zig-zagged its way around the planet before finally coming to a close at the Odeon in July 1973 having established Bowie as a star.

• Moonage daydream

The following night, Bowie and his then wife Angie threw a hastily organised retirement party at Café Royal. They arrived – late – wearing outfits created by designer Freddie Burretti, who Angie had moved into their house to make the stage costumes >



ZIGGY'S BAR

Today, guests can enjoy a modern take on classic cocktails inspired by Bowie’s music and favourite tipples at Ziggy’s Cocktail Bar on the first floor of Hotel Café Royal.

Photos - Getty Images, PA Images, Café Royal archives.

CAFÉ ROYAL TIMES



CH-CH-CHANGES

The current site of Hotel Café Royal is no stranger to wild celebrity parties. Before its conversion into a hotel the basement of the County Fire Office was famous nightclub *Chinawhite*. A mainstay of London’s It crowd in the 1990s and early 2000s, it was considered one of the capital’s most exclusive haunts. Until it moved to Fitzrovia in 2008, the Regent Street venue was a favoured hangout for the likes of Kate Moss, Jemma Kidd, Leonardo DiCaprio, Mick Hucknall, Jude Law and Sienna Miller (pictured), Katie Price (aka Jordan) and Lily Allen. Today, what was once an oriental-inspired club with sumptuous bed-like lounging areas and a notorious VIP suite is the hotel’s altogether more refined Akasha Holistic Wellbeing.



Let's Dance!

Opposite page, clockwise from left: Bowie with his wife Angie at the Café Royal party to retire Ziggy Stardust; Lou Reed, Mick Jagger and Bowie at the Café Royal party. This page, above: Bowie with from left Ringo Starr, Lulu and Cat Stevens; Below, Angie Bowie and Bianca Jagger hit the dancefloor at Café Royal. *****



OSCAR WILDE LOUNGE

CAFÉ ROYAL TIMES



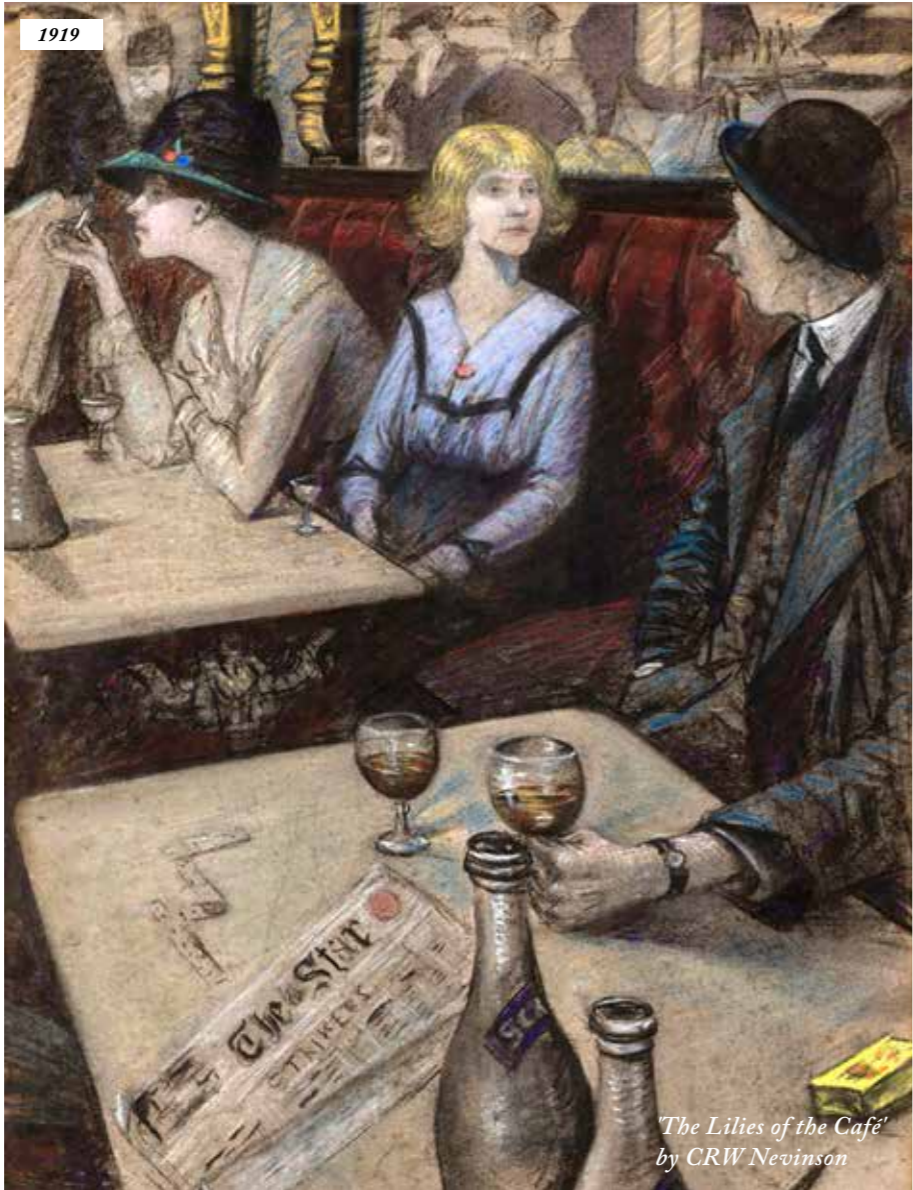
THE HAPPY PRINCE

In June 2018, the cast of Oscar Wilde biopic 'The Happy Prince' descended on the Oscar Wilde Lounge for a cocktail party to celebrate its premiere.

The film, which explores the final years of Wilde's life, stars Rupert Everett as Wilde, alongside a star-studded line-up including actors Colin Firth, Emily Watson and Tom Wilkinson.

Although Wilde embodied the life and soul of Café Royal for many years, it was his legal dispute with the Marquess of Queensberry, father of Wilde's lover Lord Alfred Douglas, that resulted in his downfall and departure from Café Royal.

Wilde's two-year imprisonment for gross indecency in Reading Gaol ended his Café Royal days and on his release he fled the country, never to return. The film – which Everett also wrote, produced and directed – tells the story of Wilde's exile in Naples and Paris, where he is buried.



'The Lilies of the Café' by CRW Nevins



BURLESQUE CAME TO CAFÉ ROYAL FOR ONE NIGHT ONLY

Café Royal is no stranger to bohemian decadence. But even the great Oscar Wilde stopped short of dancing on the tables.

Yet as part of Café Royal's 150th anniversary celebrations, the hotel held a one-off soirée featuring burlesque, opera and jazz.

"La Nuit de la Diva", held in September 2015, was a unique dining event harking back to Café Royal's louche past. Over dinner and fine wine, guests were treated to renowned showgirl Immodesty Blaize (above) and her signature show-stopping burlesque.

Blaize was joined by flamboyant supporting acts including Havana Hurricane and tap-dance queen Josephine Shaker. The new wave Soft Cell singer Marc Almond also gave an exclusive guest performance.



Wilde nights: Burlesque and cabaret in the Oscar Wilde Lounge

and its blade replaced twice, the Oscar Wilde Lounge has been through numerous incarnations and yet its essence – its spirit of decadent Bohemianism – remains intact.

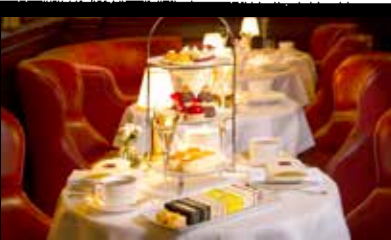
When Daniel Nicols created his famous Grill Room not long after opening his café in 1865, it was located in the old billiards room on the corner of Glasshouse Street and Air Street. However, when the building was reconstructed in the 1920s to fit with the rest of Nash's plan for Regent Street, the Domino Room went upstairs and the Grill Room moved to its current location near the historic lobby.

Were Wilde to stroll once more through the doors of the room that now bears his name, it is safe to say, he would probably feel entirely at home.

"The painters of the general Chelsea or Camden Town group sat in the part nearest Regent Street. Their models were often with them, so that there was no lack of young women"

Playwright and critic Ashley Duker recalls the artists of Café Royal

Photos: Getty Images, Café Royal Archive, Trinity House, Tye Rice, Bayoule Black Book



DONE TO A TEA

London's finest afternoon tea

"I believe that it is customary in good society to take some slight refreshment at five o'clock," wrote Oscar Wilde in his comedic play "The Importance of Being Earnest" (1895). And he was right.

What in Wilde's day was known as the Grill Room was renamed in his honour when Hotel Café Royal opened in 2012. Bedecked in gilt and mirrors, the Oscar Wilde Lounge now plays host to London's finest afternoon tea – it won no less an accolade than Best Traditional Afternoon Tea in the UK at the Afternoon Tea Awards 2017/18.

Tea is a ritual that cannot be hurried; here there are 30 different blends and infusions to savour alongside sandwiches, scones and fancies – all accompanied by a pianist to set the mood.

Although history fails to record whether Wilde was a milk or tea in first kind of guy, he'd surely have approved.

WILDE TIMES

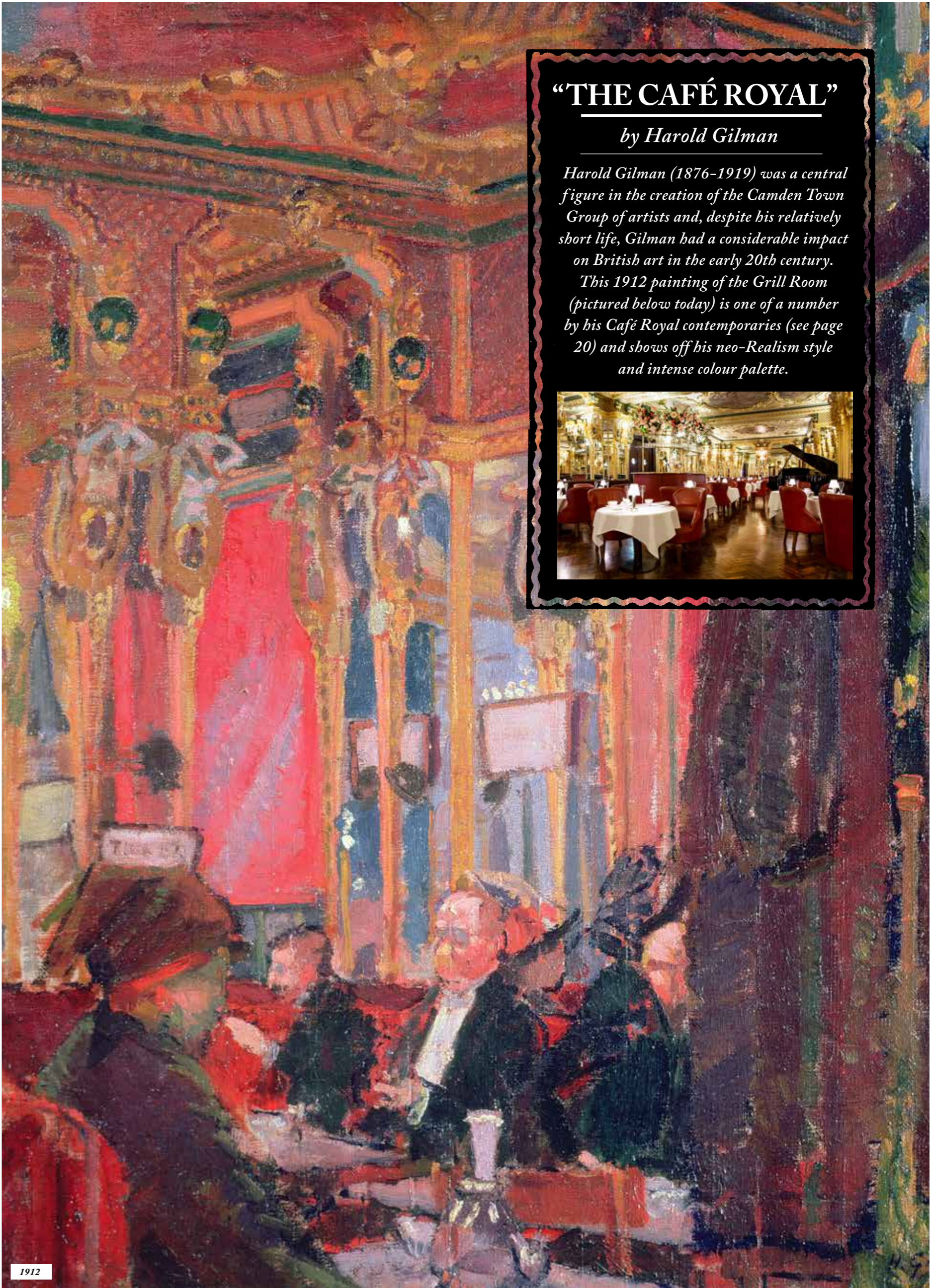
The story behind Café Royal's famous Oscar Wilde Lounge

If there is one figure who towers above all the other remarkable characters associated with Café Royal it is Oscar Wilde. And if there is one room with which Wilde is most connected it is the old Grill Room.

So it is fitting, then, that the room, with its exquisitely restored caryatids and opulent red velvet banquettes beneath what the caricaturist Max Beerbohm called the "painted and pagan ceiling", has been renamed the Oscar Wilde Lounge.

The room originally dates from 1865 and lies at the heart of the hotel. It is here that Wilde fell for Bosie, that Aubrey Beardsley debated with Whistler, and David Bowie retired Ziggy Stardust with a celebrity packed party.

Like the proverbial axe that's as old as the hills despite having had three new handles



1912

"THE CAFÉ ROYAL"

by Harold Gilman

Harold Gilman (1876–1919) was a central figure in the creation of the Camden Town Group of artists and, despite his relatively short life, Gilman had a considerable impact on British art in the early 20th century.

This 1912 painting of the Grill Room (pictured below today) is one of a number by his Café Royal contemporaries (see page 20) and shows off his neo-Realism style and intense colour palette.



RESTAURANT & BAR

FOOD, GLORIOUS FOOD

Café Royal has always enjoyed a reputation as a destination for *fine dining*

The growth of Café Royal at the end of the 1800s in many ways mirrored a shift in British attitudes towards food. From the moment founder Daniel Nicols first hung stuffed pheasants in the window of his little café in the 1860s to tempt hungry passers-by, Café Royal has attracted connoisseurs thanks to its unstinting focus on fine food. During those early years, the simple, stodgy fare for which England was known was slowly giving way – in the upper echelons at least – to the French love of gastronomy. And Café Royal was in the vanguard.



Whistler signed his bills in the brasserie with the famous butterfly mark with which he stamped his paintings

A couple dine at Café Royal, 4 July 1953

* *The Marquess of Anglesey had* *
* *Café Royal sandwiches* *
* *sent over to* *
* *him at the House of Lords* *

One of the figures who was instrumental in this change in national taste was not only a Café Royal regular – but a regular royal to boot: the Prince of Wales. He was fastidious about what he would eat – he liked eggs, fruit, poultry and lean lamb. Strawberries were a favourite and he favoured chablis and champagne over claret. At Marlborough House, his residence, he enjoyed top-notch cuisine and his travelling chef was also acclaimed on his trips abroad. However, the Prince of Wales wasn't the only Café Royal regular with individual tastes. Sir John "Bwab" Brabazon would insist on making his own sauces at his table and was known for having a rather heavy hand when it came to adding the cayenne pepper.

And it didn't end there. Other diners were particular about their vinegar or grouse. The Marquess of Anglesey even had Café Royal sandwiches sent over to him at the House of Lords.

• **Early 20th century**

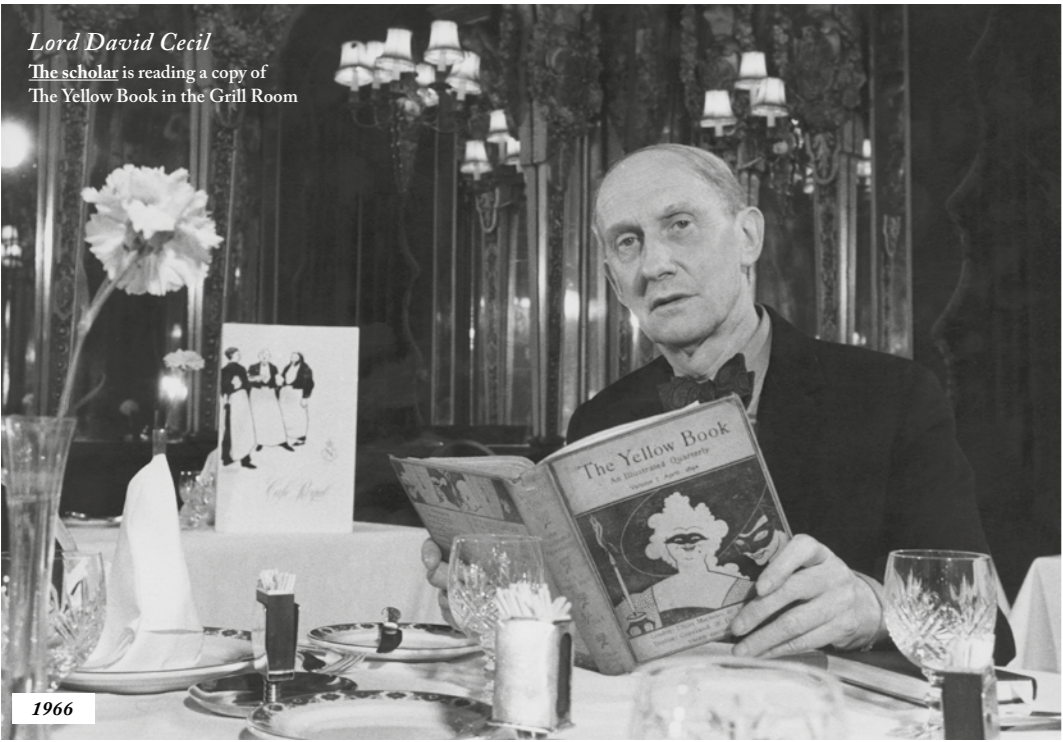
In the early 20th century, Café Royal was famed for its signature dish: Chicken Pie Café Royal. It involved a chicken, 8 rashers of bacon, an onion, 3 hard-boiled eggs, mushrooms and some parsley and was served very hot straight from the oven. The roll call of famous – and fastidious – diners is testament to the fact that for 150 years, Café Royal has been the place to be seen – and the place to eat.

A LOT OF BOTTLE
The best wine cellar in the world



In 1884-85 the Café Royal had the best cellar in the world," wrote the journalist, bon viveur and Café Royal notable Frank Harris. "Fifteen years later it was the best ever seen on earth." After he opened his café, Daniel Nicols invited his cousin, Eugène Lacoste, over from France to stock his cellar. Lacoste was a famous wine-taster with an unerring nose. When he arrived he took one look at the cellar and began buying like his life depended on it in what has been described as the greatest wine spree in history. He filled the cellars with the best of the best – future vintage wine and cognac. The spree finally came to an end when the Bank of England, alarmed at Nicols' growing debt, pointed out his cousin's profligacy. Nicols was forced to hold a sale to pay back the bank – he raised £150,000. But he still needed to dispose of more wine and so, rather than sell it off cheaply, he indulged his clientele. In those days, a carafe of *vin ordinaire* was often actually an exceptional chateau-bottled vintage claret. No wonder Nicols' café developed such a loyal following.

Photos: Mary Evans, PH Images



Lord David Cecil
The scholar is reading a copy of The Yellow Book in the Grill Room

1966



Extracting the cork

Removing the crown

Breaking the wire

CAFÉ ROYAL TIMES



Best served cold

In the small hours of Thursday 6 December, 1894, Café Royal's French-born night porter Marius Martin sat on his favourite bench surrounded by the plush and mirrors of the Domino dining room. It was after 1am and Martin was waiting to go down to the kitchens to eat his supper, which was left for him by the chefs. He never made it. Instead, an assailant crept in and shot Martin twice before making his escape undetected. The murder shocked the French community in London but no-one was ever charged. It is a mystery worthy of Sherlock Holmes himself, and it remains unsolved to this day.



WHERE THERE'S A GRILL...

In May 2018, renowned chef Laurent Tourondel opened the brand new Grill and Sushi bar, Laurent at Café Royal – his first venue in Europe. French-born Tourondel, who has restaurants across the globe, follows in the footsteps of Albert Adrià, the Roca brothers and Paco Roncero who have all cooked at Hotel Café Royal. In a new space created by Italian architect and designer Piero Lissoni on the first floor of the hotel, featuring a stunning Murano glass chandelier from Italian glassmaker Vistosi that hangs above a double-height atrium, Tourondel is now serving an internationally inspired menu for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Grilled meat and fish are available from an open kitchen and grill, sushi, sashimi and raw fish are on offer in the new sushi bar – and a stunning new bar, Ziggy's, is open late for exquisitely made cocktails.



ABSINTHE FRIENDS

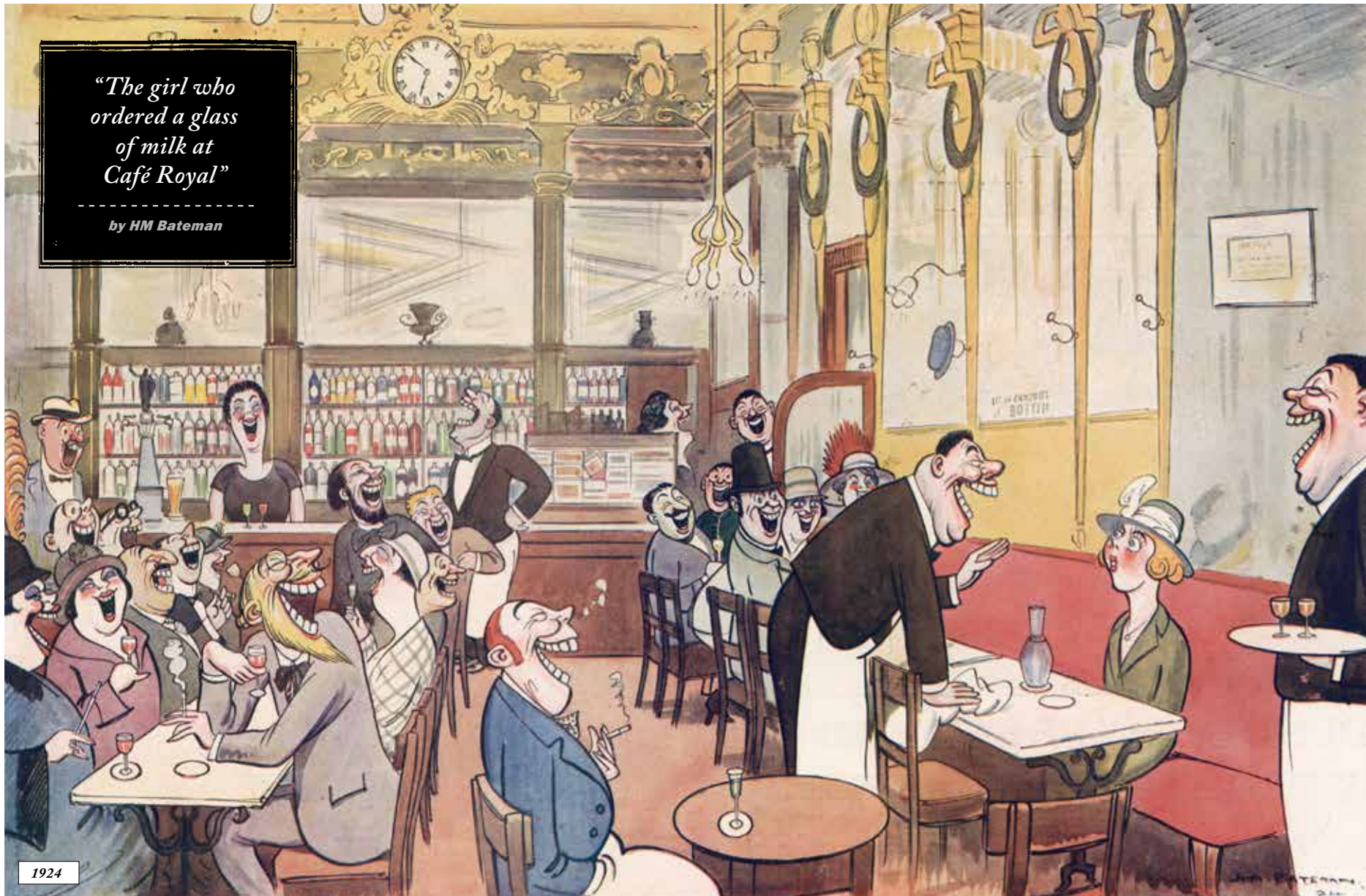
The spirit returns to the Green Bar



One experience guests can enjoy is 'Absinthe at the Bar' – a reminder of the drinks rituals of Café Royal's artistic clientele around the turn of the 20th century. But don't expect it to come from a bottle, as the hotel's Green Bar boasts its very own absinthe fountains. The experience surely is enough to convince the most hardened Bohemian intellectual to spend the night?

RESTAURANT & BAR

CAFÉ ROYAL TIMES



TO DINE FOR

Albert Adrià, the celebrated Spanish chef, opens **Cakes & Bubbles** at Café Royal

As one of the world's most influential chefs, Albert Adrià first brought his extraordinary brand of gastronomy to Café Royal at the start of 2016. For just 50 days, from February to April, Adrià took up residence at Café Royal to cook outside his native Spain for the first time in his career. Having instigated a food revolution alongside his brother, Ferran, at the legendary three Michelin star restaurant elBulli, his 50 Days residency at Café Royal took guests on a gastronomic journey that began in the opulent Oscar Wilde Lounge with cocktails and signature snacks, before moving to the refined surroundings of The Domino restaurant for dinner. "I'm not coming to

cook," he said before the residency, "but to create an experience." He wasn't wrong. Adrià holds four Michelin stars for his restaurants in Barcelona, which form a gastronomic amusement park with six concepts in the same neighbourhood: Tickets, Enigma, Hoja Santa, Pakta, Niño Viejo and Bodega. For his 50 Days residency, he created some eclectic and imaginative dishes: 50 Days Tartar, for example, was presented on an edible spoon made of corn; there was a dish of jellied eel with lobster and violet; and Adrià's take on a traditional Cornish pasty was – naturally enough, given Café Royal's history – served with absinthe. Following the success of 50 Days, Adrià – who in 2015 was named the world's best pastry chef in the annual World's 50 Best Restaurants list – once again chose Café Royal as the venue for his first permanent establishment outside of Spain: Cakes & Bubbles, a dessert and Champagne experience, which opened in November 2018. "One day I woke up and felt it was something that I owed myself," explained Adrià. "It was something that I wanted to do. London and the Hotel Café Royal are simply the best places I could think to do it."



HIS JUST DESSERTS
The poet and scholar AE Housman, famous for his collection "A Shropshire Lad", was a regular – and knowledgeable – diner at Café Royal. He had a taste for fine wine and steadily emptied the restaurant's extensive cellar of bottles of Johannisberger '74. Later, at Trinity College, Cambridge – where Housman was Kennedy Professor of Latin from 1911 until his death in 1936 – the food was obviously not up to the standard he had come to expect from his visits to Café Royal. Housman left numerous comments in the college's Kitchen Suggestions Book such as: "We have a great number of unattractive sweets at dinner: why not cheesecake sometimes for a change?" Although lacking poetry, the notes must have had an effect. When the kitchens were overhauled, Housman ensured a Café Royal chef was brought in.

Photos: Mary Evans, Alamy, Café Royal Archive.



WHAT'S YOUR PLEASURE?

Café Royal Cocktail book

★★★★★
THE 1920s and 1930s were something of a heyday for cocktail culture in Britain. With Prohibition in full swing in the United States, London became a centre for mixology.

One of the most famous bartenders of all time, Harry Craddock, published the *Savoy Cocktail Book* in 1930 – the first of its kind – and the United Kingdom Bartenders Guild was formed in 1933 with Craddock as president. One of the UKBG's seven council members was WJ Tarling – Bill to his friends.

Tarling was head bartender at Café Royal and he saw in Craddock's cocktail book an opportunity. Where the *Savoy Cocktail Book* was a collection of classic recipes from the American Bar at the Savoy, Tarling wanted to expand the introduction to cocktails Craddock's book and the UKBG's own publication *Approved Drinks* offered. So was born *The Café Royal Cocktail Book*.

The task of compilation was no mean feat; to make his selection, Tarling worked his way through 4,000 recipes. The result was published in 1937 to mark the coronation of King George VI – a Café Royal regular himself. *The Café Royal Cocktail Book* brought together classic recipes as well as original inventions by Tarling's contemporaries to provide a stunning snapshot of a moment in which cocktail culture was booming.

The book was only printed once and the original is now a sought after collectors' item. But thankfully a reprint was issued in 2008 and is still available.

WJ Tarling's five steps to make the perfect cocktail

- Follow the recipe carefully
- Make sure that you use the exact amount of each ingredient
- Put several pieces of ice in the shaker
- Shake until the outside of the shaker becomes moist with cold
- Pour out the cocktails quickly and see that they are consumed while still quite cold



Brasserie Special

Invented by WE Edwards

- Dash* of Lemon Juice
 - 1 Teaspoon Passion Fruit Syrup
 - ½ Cointreau Triple Sec
 - ½ Bourbon Whisky, Seagram's
- Shake and strain



Café Royal Appetiser

Invented by WJ Tarling

- ½ Gin
 - ½ Dubonnet
 - Juice of ½ an orange
- Shake and strain into a cocktail glass



Futurity

Invented by Anon'

- ½ Sloe Gin
 - ½ Martini Sweet Vermouth
 - 2 dashes Angostura Bitters
- Mix it



Maiden's Blush

Invented by shy Anon'

- ½ Dry Gin
- ¼ Lemon Juice
- ½ Absinthe
- Teaspoon of powdered sugar
- 3 dashes of Raspberry Syrup

Shake and strain off into coloured glass. Put slice of lemon on top



Bourbonella

Invented by W Whitfield

- ½ Walker's Bourbon Whisky
- ½ Martini Dry Vermouth
- ¼ Orange Curaçao (Garnier)
- 1 dash Grenadine (Garnier)

Mix it

Please note it only requires a small dash of Grenadine



Blue Barn Farm

Invented by JA Katner

- ½ Booth's Gin
- 3/10 Blue Curaçao, Bols.
- 1/10 Cointreau, Angers
- 1/10 Maraschino, Drioli

Mix it

SPORT



IN THE RING

Above: a fighter hits the ropes, under the chandeliers, during a black-tie boxing match at Café Royal in February 2002.

Opposite page: Royal Marines square up to each other in what is now the lobby, during a black-tie boxing event in November 2015 to mark Café Royal's 150th anniversary.

WELL READ

Café Royal in fiction

Café Royal reading list

page 25 ►

BOXING CLEVER

Café Royal has always had a knock-about reputation. For many of its early habitués it was the chosen battleground for clever verbal sparring and the occasional parry of a rapier-like wit. Yet actual punches thrown were few and far between.

In 1891, the National Sporting Club had been formed in Covent Garden and it was closely allied with Café Royal from the very beginning – the membership of the two establishments overlapped. In fact, the National Sporting Club's first president was Hugh Lowther, 5th Earl of Lonsdale, who was also a regular at Café Royal.

Boxing code

It was the Earl of Lonsdale, along with the Marquess of Queensberry (Oscar Wilde's nemesis), who helped establish a boxing code of conduct in 1867, which has been closely associated with Café Royal.

The club was known for its sportsmanship and fair play. It arranged boxing matches, which would take place after dinner and in front of up to 1,300 guests who were not allowed to talk during the bouts.

Café Royal's pugilistic past

Despite their close alliance, it wasn't until 1951 that Café Royal became the official home of the National Sporting Club and began to host black-tie dinners and boxing matches. These dinners attracted some of the best loved boxers of their day including Frank Bruno, Henry Cooper and Muhammad Ali – who once charmed onlookers by feeding his baby daughter, Hana, while giving a press conference at Café Royal.

Although Café Royal's original boxing ring was sold in 2009 as part of a clear out during its transformation into a luxury hotel, in November 2015 boxing returned to Regent Street.

Over four bouts, boxers from the Royal Marines went toe-to-toe as part of a commemorative Royal Marines Boxing Association black-tie dinner to mark Café Royal's 150th anniversary.

It was fitting that once again, fighters were trading jabs and uppercuts in the place where Oscar Wilde once unleashed his famous verbal assaults.



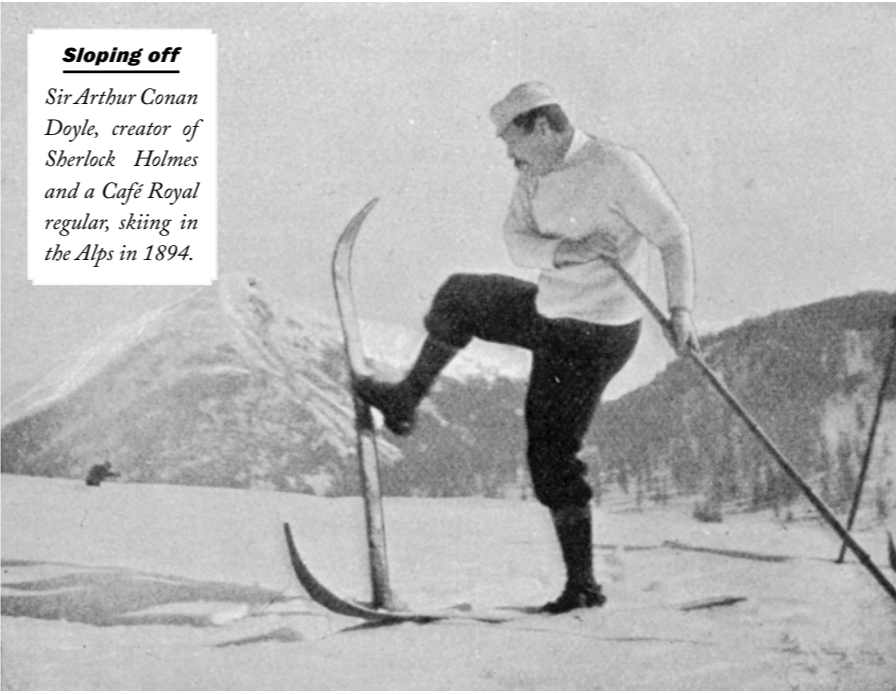
Good sports

A National Sporting Club event at Café Royal in September 1956 to pay tribute to footballer Stanley Matthews (centre). Toasting him are from left: English cricketer Jim Laker, who took 19 wickets in

a famous victory against Australia in this year; goalkeeper Sam Bartram; Matthews; footballers John Charles and Trevor Ford; and racing driver Mike Hawthorn, 1955 winner of the 24 Hours of Le Mans race.

Café Royal's black-tie dinners attracted some of the best loved boxers of their day including Frank Bruno, Henry Cooper and Muhammad Ali

CAFÉ ROYAL TIMES



Sloping off

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, creator of Sherlock Holmes and a Café Royal regular, skiing in the Alps in 1894.



How the rules of boxing were made at Café Royal

Boxing has had a long association with Café Royal. In the early days of the sport, there were few coherent rules – boxers could even wear spikes on their feet. Slowly, unified codes were introduced, but it wasn't until the famous Queensberry Rules were introduced in 1867 that the sport took on its modern day appearance.

Written by the sportsman and journalist John Graham Chambers under the sponsorship of the Marquess of Queensberry, the rules came to embody the spirit of fair play, honour and decency.

The Queensberry Rules for the Sport of Boxing, 1867

- ★ To be a fair stand-up boxing match in a 24-foot ring, or as near that size as practicable.
- ★ No wrestling or hugging allowed.
- ★ The rounds to be of three minutes' duration, and one minute's time between rounds.
- ★ If either man falls through weakness or otherwise, he must get up unassisted, 10 seconds to be allowed him to do so, the other man meanwhile to return to his corner, and when the fallen man is on his legs the round is to be resumed and continued until the three minutes have expired. If one man fails to come to the scratch in the 10 seconds allowed, it shall be in the power of the referee to give his award in favour of the other man.
- ★ A man hanging on the ropes in a helpless state, with his toes off the ground, shall be considered down.
- ★ No seconds or any other person to be allowed in the ring during the rounds.
- ★ Should the contest be stopped by any unavoidable interference, the referee to name the time and place as soon as possible for finishing the contest; so that the match must be won and lost, unless the backers of both men agree to draw the stakes.
- ★ The gloves to be fair-sized boxing gloves of the best quality and new.
- ★ Should a glove burst, or come off, it must be replaced to the referee's satisfaction.
- ★ A man on one knee is considered down and if struck is entitled to the stakes.
- ★ That no shoes or boots with spikes or sprigs be allowed.
- ★ The contest in all other respects to be governed by revised London Prize Ring Rules.



SNOW BUSINESS

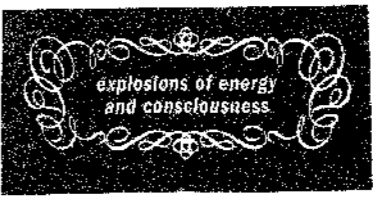
On a Wednesday evening in early May 1903, 14 young ski enthusiasts sat down to dinner at Café Royal. By the end of the evening, the Ski Club of Great Britain had been born.

The group was being hosted by EC "Teddy" Richardson, a barrister who had learnt to ski in Norway and – like many of the group – had been in Davos the previous winter where he had formed the first ski club there. With Richardson that night was his brother, a scientist, along with a poet, an accountant, a zoologist and a German mountaineer who all shared the same passion for skiing.

How British skiing was born over dinner at Café Royal

In its early years, the ski club – formed to encourage others to learn to ski – focused not so much on downhill skiing, but on cross-country skiing. Early club year books show how equipment, clothes and ski lifts were changing during this period, when it was not unusual to take a horse-drawn sleigh to the slopes. Today, the club boasts more than 29,000 members.

LORD OF THE DANCE



In March 1981, Indian guru Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh took over part of the normally calm surroundings of Café Royal. Described as "an explosion of energy and consciousness", the event saw followers – clad in red and orange – sing, chant, dance, hug and kiss in a mass display of love – and rhythm.



Photos: Rex Features/Getty, Café Royal Archive, PA Images, Mary Evans, Alamy

"The Café Royal"
by Sir William Orpen, 1912

LIFE DRAWING

The story behind "The Café Royal" by Sir William Orpen

Major Sir William Newenham Montague Orpen, to give him his full name, was an Irish painter who specialised in London society portraits.

In his 1912 painting "The Café Royal" now in the Musée d'Orsay, Paris, he produced a stunning snapshot of life in the famous artistic hangout.

In the painting, Orpen captured some of the café's most notable creatives in their regular seats in the gilded and elaborately mirrored Domino Room.

Orpen himself appears alongside artist Sir William Nicholson and writer George Moore.

In the foreground, artist James Pryde – in his bowler hat – is shown in conversation with Augustus John sporting his famous beard.

Yet despite the picture's apparent buzz, Orpen actually painted the scene on a quiet Sunday morning, with waiters filling in for his famous characters. He then painted them in afterwards, much to the irritation of Nicholson who asked: "Why on earth didn't you ask me to sit for you?"

