

# London

## SPRINGTIME IN

WITH A ROYAL WEDDING AND THE OLYMPICS ON THE HORIZON, LONDON IS ONE OF THE WORLD'S HOTTEST TRAVEL DESTINATIONS. HERE IS WHAT'S MAKING NEWS IN THE CITY THIS SPRING.

BY LAURIE KAHLE

"When a man is tired of London, he is tired of life; for there is in London all that life can afford." When Samuel Johnson penned this line in the 18th century, London was a glorious world capital, a sprawling hive of activity, and so it remains today. With its luxury shops, burgeoning culinary scene, world-renowned museums, and vibrant art galleries, not to mention the remarkable historic sites and enormous parks, London still lives up to Johnson's words today. As the city prepares for the royal wedding of Prince William and Kate Middleton at Westminster Abbey on April 29 and the 2012 Olympic Summer Games, London is more energized than ever.

"The royal wedding will create a fantastic vibe in the city this spring," says Roland Fasel, general manager of The Dorchester and the U.K. Regional Director for Dorchester Collection, which will open the contemporary 45 Park Lane hotel this summer following the group's fall 2010 opening of Coworth Park, a country estate property just outside the city in Ascot. "I expect an incredible energy to emerge this spring, and then the Olympic momentum will build."





This year marks the 80th birthday of The Dorchester hotel, one of London's most famous grande dames. Though she remains a classic, The Dorchester is no fusty dowager. A few years ago, the hotel renovated its rooftop suites, including the Audley Suite, where you'll feel like a movie star lounging in a glamorous art-deco-infused penthouse with a terrace overlooking the city. The hotel's new spa is another showstopper with its decadent deco flair.

While The Dorchester exudes the flamboyance of a big hotel featuring premier eateries, including Alain Ducasse at The Dorchester and China Tang, the Dorchester Collection's upcoming 45 Park Lane, located across the street, will present a different option for those who prefer the clublike intimacy of a chic boutique hotel. Food is also a highlight at 45 Park Lane, which will host CUT at 45 Park Lane, Wolfgang Puck's first restaurant in Europe. The modern American steak house will serve prime dry- and wet-aged beef, pan-roasted lobster, and sautéed and roasted fresh fish, complemented by an extensive international wine selection.

For years, London was mocked for subpar cuisine, but the city has shaken off that reputation with dozens of Michelin-starred restaurants, neighborhood gastro pubs, and a zesty array of ethnic eateries. As is evidenced by Puck's entrance onto the London scene, the city is attracting the world's most famous chefs and restaurateurs. "If you go back 10 to 15 years, there were a handful of good restaurants in London, but by no stretch was it considered a food city," says Fasel. "With the energy, creativity, and incredible talent that have come to town, London is now one of the top five food cities in the world."

The dramatic transformation of the culinary scene has also impressed Kieran MacDonald, general manager of The Savoy, a London landmark which reopened last fall after a three-year, \$385 million restoration and renovation. "London is now a food emporium, which it wasn't five years ago," confirms MacDonald, who believes the rebirth of The Savoy has recaptured the glamour and vitality of its illustrious past. "In yesteryear, The Savoy was known and acclaimed for the dynamic life and energy of its public spaces, such as the famed American Bar and River Restaurant. That waned 10 to 15 years ago, but today when you visit, you're not only met with the beautiful physical transformation of the space but also a revitalized energy."

At one point, says MacDonald, 1,000 workers were on site performing tasks ranging from upgrading systems to painstakingly restoring the intricate plaster moldings and stripping a century's worth of polish off the now-lustrous mahogany paneling in the lobby. "We treated it as a restoration — protecting the character and feel of the hotel," says MacDonald, who believes the hotel's waterfront location is one of its greatest assets. "We are on the most glorious part of the Thames,



Clockwise from top left:  
Alain Ducasse restaurant;  
The Bar at The Dorchester;  
Upper Thames foyer and  
lounge at the Savoy. Oppo-  
site page: The Dorchester  
Spa. Opening page: view  
from The Savoy





the only hotel on the river, and the views are truly spectacular.”

In nearby Covent Garden, One Aldwych puts a modern spin on British afternoon tea (pictured right) in the hotel's Indigo restaurant. Executive chef Tony Fleming (pictured below), has updated the quintessential English tradition by developing lighter versions of both sweet and savory favorites. The restaurant showcases a number of contemporary artworks that are displayed throughout the property. Located across from The Courtauld Gallery, which exhibits a number of famed masterpieces, One Aldwych can assist you with planning a memorable London art experience. The concierge can arrange private museum tours or gallery walks guided by experts who will introduce you to the city's art scene — from the avant-garde galleries of the East End to established West End venues. For a distinctly art-centric dining experience to end a day of gallery and museum hopping, venture off the beaten path to The Wapping Project, a unique restaurant and gallery space housed in the former Wapping Hydraulic Power Station, a Victorian-era power plant.

London does indeed offer, as Samuel Johnson put it, “all that life can afford.” Jacqueline French, a spokesperson for Visit London, says the hardest question to answer is: What should I do? “People can really make their own itinerary to suit their own tastes and do whatever they like doing,” she says, with one bit of advice: Do some research before you land to make the most of your time. “The worst thing would be to get here and then ask ‘What should I do?’ With so much to offer and so many choices, you’ll want to find out what’s going on and make plans before you get here.” ➤



## ESSENTIAL LONDON SITES:

**VISIT LONDON:** [visitlondon.com](http://visitlondon.com)

**THE DORCHESTER:** [thedorchester.com](http://thedorchester.com)

**COWORTH PARK:** [coworthpark.com](http://coworthpark.com)

**THE SAVOY:** [fairmont.com/savoy](http://fairmont.com/savoy)

**45 PARK LANE AND CUT AT 45 PARK LANE:**

[45parklane.com](http://45parklane.com)

**ONE ALDWYCH:** [onealdwych.com](http://onealdwych.com)

**THE COURTAULD GALLERY:**  
[courtauld.ac.uk/gallery](http://courtauld.ac.uk/gallery)

**THE WAPPING PROJECT:**  
[thewappingproject.com](http://thewappingproject.com)

**VISIT BRITAIN:** [visitbritain.com](http://visitbritain.com)





LYRIC

APOLLO

# MORE LONDON NEWS

HERE'S EVEN MORE TO LOVE ABOUT LONDON IN THE SPRINGTIME.

## EAT

**BARBECOA** Opened last fall, this joint venture between Jamie Oliver and American chef Adam Perry Lang takes inspiration from various world cuisines with an emphasis on barbecue. [barbecoa.com](http://barbecoa.com)

**ST. JOHN HOTEL** This new hotel in Leicester Square presents a menu created especially for the location by the hotel's founders Fergus Henderson and Trevor Gulliver. [stjohnhotellondon.com](http://stjohnhotellondon.com)

**DINNER BY HESTON BLUMENTHAL AT THE MANDARIN ORIENTAL HYDE PARK LONDON** Following the hotel's opening of Bar Boulud, this new restaurant focuses on modern British food inspired by the cooking styles of Heston Blumenthal. [mandarinoriental.com/london/dining/heston\\_blumenthal/](http://mandarinoriental.com/london/dining/heston_blumenthal/)

## STAY

**THE LANGHAM** New developments at Langham Hotels' historic flagship include Roux at The Landau — a culinary collaboration that has father and son Albert and Michel Roux Jr. working together for the first time in 19 years. Meanwhile, the property's new Chuan Spa is London's first hotel spa to incorporate ancient principles of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) into signature treatments. [london.langhamhotels.co.uk](http://london.langhamhotels.co.uk)

**FOUR SEASONS LONDON AT PARK LANE** After a major transformation, this reinvented five-star property will showcase a rooftop spa with treetop views of Hyde Park. [fourseasons.com/london](http://fourseasons.com/london)

**W LONDON-LEICESTER SQUARE** The sleek new W London-Leicester Square hotel promises to become one of the newest architectural attractions in the city. [wlondon.co.uk](http://wlondon.co.uk)

**ST. PANCRAS RENAISSANCE LONDON HOTEL** Scheduled to open in May following a \$235 million renovation, this red-brick, high-Victorian gothic building is one of London's great landmarks. [marriott.com](http://marriott.com)

**CORINTHIA HOTEL LONDON** Opening this spring, the luxurious Corinthia Hotel London will be steps from The National Gallery, Buckingham Palace, and The Houses of Parliament. [corinthia.com/london](http://corinthia.com/london)

## DO

**THAMES CLIPPERS** Take a ride on a Thames Clipper and watch the city's famous landmarks glide by. [thamesclippers.com](http://thamesclippers.com)

**LONDON CYCLE HIRE** Grab a bike and go for a ride. London Cycle Hire offers bicycles at numerous stations throughout the city. ([tfl.gov.uk/roadusers/cycling/14808.aspx](http://tfl.gov.uk/roadusers/cycling/14808.aspx))

**ANDREW LLOYD WEBBER'S *THE WIZARD OF OZ***

Andrew Lloyd Webber's enchanting new production of *The Wizard of Oz* opens this year at The London Palladium. ([wizardofozthemusical.com](http://wizardofozthemusical.com))

**GHOST – THE MUSICAL**

A musical version of the hit 1990 film *Ghost* premieres in London this year. [ghostthemusical.com](http://ghostthemusical.com)

**JOAN MIRÓ: THE LADDER OF ESCAPE AT TATE MODERN** April 14 through September 11, 2011

More than 150 paintings, drawings, sculptures, and prints by surrealist artist Joan Miró are showcased in the first major retrospective here in nearly 50 years. [tate.org.uk](http://tate.org.uk) ►





Clockwise from opposite page:  
Shangri-La Hotel, Paris; a  
room at Le Pavillon des Lettres;  
Rác Hotel & Thermal Spa in  
Budapest; Hotel Milano Scala;  
Asian fusion at Frankfurt's  
Zenzakan; Wagner cider pub in  
Frankfurt; figues en feuilles  
at Alain Ducasse au Plaza  
Athénée in Paris



## ALSO BLOOMING IN

THESE FAB FOUR CITIES HAVE MUCH TO BRAG ABOUT AS WELL.  
HERE'S AN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.

### PARIS

Alain Ducasse au Plaza Athénée has undergone revitalization with artistic design tweaks and a new culinary concept dubbed Essential, which concentrates on pure and simple cooking techniques that emphasize natural flavors rather than showmanship (plaza-athenee-paris.com). Shangri-La's first European property, the **Shangri-La Hotel, Paris**, opened last December in a former mansion in the 16th arrondissement, across the Seine from the Eiffel Tower (shangri-la.com). Philippe Starck transformed a historical palace into the newly refurbished **Le Royal Monceau, Raffles Paris**, which reopened last fall after an extensive makeover (raffles.com/paris). Occupying a classic Haussman town house in the 8th arrondissement, the literary-themed **Le Pavillon des Lettres** speaks to your inner bookworm with 26 rooms, each devoted to a letter of the alphabet and featuring an international writer corresponding to that letter (pavillondeslettres.com). For an enchanting stay outside of the city, visit **Domaine de Farcheville**, a beautiful sanctuary bordered by parks and forests (domainedefarcheville.com).

### BUDAPEST

With American Airlines adding direct service from New York's JFK airport to Budapest this spring, there's no better time to see this city. Also new this spring, the five-star contemporary **Rác Hotel & Thermal Spa** sits among gardens in the center of Buda, close to the famous Castle district (raczthermalbath.com). The new four-star **Hotel Continental Zara** blends art nouveau, art deco, and modern styles on the site of the former Hungária Spa and historic Continental Hotel in the city center (continentalhotelzara.com). **Nobu Budapest**, the latest addition to chef Nobu Matsuhisa's global portfolio, is located in the Corvinus Kempinski Hotel (noburestaurants.com/budapest). At **Costes**, chef Miguel Rocha Vieira pushes the creative culinary envelope with international cuisine that earned it a Michelin star (costes.hu).

### MILAN

The Moschino fashion brand puts its creative stamp on a 65-room boutique hotel, **Maison Moschino**, located in a circa-1840 neoclassical railway station in central Milan (maisonmoschino.com). **Hotel Milano Scala**, a four-star boutique property located in the heart of the city, celebrates music and culture with opera-themed suites and an eighth-floor terrace with sweeping views of the city (hotelmilanoscala.it). Giorgio Armani has restyled the **Emporio Armani Caffè** and is preparing to open its 95-room **Armani Hotel Milano** this fall (armanihotels.com). **Decanter-milano Restaurant & Brasserie** in the new Ramada Plaza Milano features the creations of chefs Marco Magri and Flavio Milton D'Ambrosio (decantermilano.it). Escape the city to nearby Lake Como, where spectacular scenery is the backdrop for **CastaDiva Resort**, the former home of 19th-century opera diva Giuditta Pasta and the first five-star hotel to open on the *lago* in a century (castadivaresort.com).

### FRANKFURT

A member of the Rocco Forte Collection and Leading Hotels of the World, **Villa Kennedy** claims the title of Frankfurt's most indulgent five-star hotel (villakennedy.com). Make yourself at home in the residential-style accommodations of the **Adina Apartment Hotel**, just a few minutes from the city center (adina.eu/adina-apartment-hotel-frankfurt/home). If design is your thing, visit **Roomers**, a former office building that has been transformed into an arty 116-room boutique hotel with 11 suites (designhotels.com/roomers). **Surf'n Turf** will satisfy your craving for steak, while its sister restaurant, **Zenzakan**, serves up Asian fusion cuisine (the-steakhouse.de). For regional specialties, head to **Wagner**, the best *apfelwein kneipe* (cider pub) in Frankfurt (apfelwein-wagner.com). 🍷