

HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM LOCALS



SPRING 2021

KEEP IT LOCAL!

After the challenges of the past year, how encouraging it is to be publishing the Spring issue of Hammersmith & Fulham Locals with a renewed sense of optimism. Commercial life seems to be returning to something like normal throughout the borough, with both new and old faces opening their doors.

As usual, we are delighted to be showcasing a wide range of local businesses. They have all worked incredibly hard to survive the pandemic, so do keep it local, use their services and help them to get back on their feet.

If you would like your shop or business to be featured in the Summer issue of the magazine, do get in touch with us.

Neil

Neil McKelvie, Editor



H&F BUSINESS SUPPORT



Nicholas Smith offers professional guidance on targeting local consumers with branding and messaging, website and social media creation and video.

Nicholas Smith

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THE SMILE SPECIALISTS

*The Dental Beautique team
provides excellent dental care
and proven aesthetic treatments
in a safe, spa-like environment*

'Our objective is to deliver the best family care in every dental discipline,' smiles Justyna Kamecka, practice owner and Clinical Director of Dental Beautique. 'Whether it's a routine filling or extraction, Invisalign teeth straightening or oral surgery, we're passionate about what we do - and we never forget that there's a human being with the teeth!'

It's almost two years since Dental Beautique opened on Fulham Road and the practice is thriving. Not that Justyna is resting on her laurels. True to her vision, she is always seeking new ways to expand the specialist dentistry work available to her patients and to develop the aesthetic medical treatments that form the complementary side of the business.

'I'm delighted that Dr Richard Goulart, an experienced orthodontist, has joined us and he is offering traditional "train track" braces for all ages. In some cases, such as people with malocclusion (the teeth not meeting properly) and children with baby and adult teeth, that approach is more effective than using Invisalign. Now we can choose which method is best suited to each patient.

'Dr Chike Emeagi, a specialist in aesthetic and cosmetic medicine, is also now on the team. He provides a full range of advanced dermal fillers, including Botox for the face and for the underarms to prevent excessive sweating, facial contouring for men and women and thread facelifts, a non-invasive procedure that uses threads to stimulate collagen.'

Throughout Dental Beautique Justyna, who studied at the prestigious UCL Eastman Dental Institute, has invested in creating a luxury spa-like environment - even the dental chairs have comfortable, cushioned memory foam. 'That atmosphere is so important for nervous patients' she says.

'Everyone here is friendly and professional and we treat patients as individuals. The initial consultations for braces, both Invisalign and traditional, and aesthetic medicine treatments are free and we currently have an excellent special offer on home teeth whitening trays. If you would like to find out more about how we can keep your teeth healthy, skin beautiful and smile confident, do pop in and see us.'



Treatments include: * Cosmetic Dentistry
* Cosmetic Medicine * Orthodontics
* Periodontics * Braces * Invisalign
* Whitening * Hygiene * Fillers
* Botox * Thread Lifts

Dental Beautique

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Louise, Saskia and Shawn



AT THE HEART OF THE COMMUNITY

With a superb selection of outdoor plants for every home, a green oasis devoted to houseplants, an award-winning Café and friendly, knowledgeable staff, W6 is much more than a Garden Centre

‘There’s no doubt that many people have turned to gardening and plants for comfort and distraction as they have struggled with confinement during the lockdowns,’ reflects Louise Alhadeff, the Manager of W6 Garden Centre. ‘Whether you have a garden, a balcony, a window box or houseplants, there’s reassurance and joy in watching nature renew itself come what may.’

Located near Ravenscourt Park (just off King Street), W6 stocks a wide range of premium quality outdoor plants for all environments, has its own floor-to-ceiling indoor jungle dedicated to houseplants (The Green Room) and is renowned for the expertise and friendly customer service of its staff.

Louise is particularly proud that, despite the inevitable problems of sourcing plants over the last year, she and her team have successfully maintained W6’s usual exceptional standard and breadth of choice ‘We’re fortunate to have excellent connections and everyone has worked so hard in difficult circumstances,’ she smiles. ‘Knowing that we’ve been able to help people, even in a small way, has been very rewarding.’

In pre-pandemic times, W6’s prize-winning Café (it won the prestigious 2019 Lux Life award for London’s Best Garden Centre Café) was one of the most popular places in W6 to catch up with friends over a drink or a meal. And the good news is, the first steps have been taken towards normal service returning.

‘I’m delighted to say that we’ve recently resumed table service,’ confirms Louise. ‘To begin with, it will be at weekends only. Our Head Chef, Shawn, has been busy devising a new menu of delicious healthy dishes with the emphasis on fresh, seasonal ingredients as well as concocting new detox smoothies and milkshakes for children. Together with Saskia, who runs the front of house, they are really looking forward to serving customers again in our tranquil green outdoor space.’

One of W6’s unique attractions is its houseplant jungle. In a previously unused railway arch on the site, Creative Director Paul Holt created an exciting indoor oasis called The Green Room. ‘I’d noticed a cheese plant abandoned in the corner,’ he recalls. ‘It had been there all winter with no heating and virtually no light, and yet was still alive. I thought, if it can survive, why don’t we remove the doors, re-model the interior and convert the arch into a space to display and sell the best houseplants. Fortunately, Louise agreed with me!’

Two years on, the neglected brick arch has been impeccably restored and The Green Room is

flourishing, with houseplants for every space and setting alongside stylish pots, containers and accessories. It has proved a huge hit with W6’s regulars, and all the more so over the last year.

‘Houseplants just lift the spirits and they’re so important in an urban environment,’ says Louise. ‘We sell a wide cross-section, from the well-known to the more exotic, and our resident experts are on hand to help you choose the most suitable plants for your home and advise on how to look after them.’

‘We’re passionate about what we do. Whether a customer comes to W6 on a plant-hunting expedition or to meet friends at the Café, our aim is to lift their spirits and deliver outstanding service. That’s what business should be about.’

W6 Garden Centre and Café

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Ravenscourt Park, W6 OSL
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www.w6gardencentre.co.uk



Babis (centre)

BOX FRESH DINING

*Don't feel like cooking tonight?
Thanks to Manuka At Home,
you can enjoy restaurant quality
meals delivered to your door...*

Sometimes the best ideas are born from adversity. Faced with repeated lockdowns, Joseph Antippa, the charming owner of Manuka Kitchen on Fulham Road, needed to think creatively. He did – and the result is Manuka At Home.

Following a successful career in catering and hotel management, Joseph opened the business nine years ago. 'It had always been my dream to own a restaurant,' he says. 'My vision was to create a relaxing informal place where you could enjoy excellent meals made from fresh, healthy ingredients – and it wouldn't break the bank.'

The concept worked and the restaurant flourished – and then Covid-19 struck. Undaunted, Joseph came up with a plan which he called Heat and Eat. 'The idea is to translate the complete experience of coming to Manuka Kitchen to your own home,' he explains. 'We deliver the chosen meal and the customer heats it up (all instructions are included);

there's no compromise on taste as the food is cooked by our Head Chef, we add extras such as bread and butter, vegetables and potatoes, and the menus are even personalised.

'Our Day Box has a choice of five starters, five mains and four desserts – we're renowned for our fish starters – the Sunday Lunch Box is a superb Beef Wellington with all the trimmings, we have recently introduced Steak & Wine Night, that's delivered hot and it's proving popular, and we're about to launch Single Meals where you don't have to commit to three courses.'

The process couldn't be more simple. Customers order the day before to receive their Box for the next evening and there's no geographic limit for deliveries. 'On Mother's Day we sent a meal to Cheshire, so Fulham and Hammersmith is no problem,' smiles Joseph. 'Also, all our food comes in degradable sugar cane containers – it's a small touch but it reflects the love and effort we put into our food.'

'If you don't feel like cooking or want to entertain friends and family, why not let us do all the work? We'll deliver our signature high quality food straight to your home!'

Manuka At Home

510 Fulham Road, SW6 5NJ / 020 7731 0864
dinner@manukaathome.co.uk
www.manukaathome.co.uk

GET FIT AND FEEL GREAT – FAST!

Get in shape in the great outdoors with small group sessions

Fitness classes in London's parks have become a familiar sight. Chances are, if you've seen enthusiastic locals working out come rain or shine in Ravenscourt Park or Farnham Gardens, they were sessions run by Babis Kanellopoulos and his Pod Fitness team.

Babis took the reins of the business last year from founder, Bianca Sainty. 'I was the Head Trainer and we shared similar ideas about the advantages of exercising in small groups (maximum five people) in stimulating surroundings. When Bianca decided to move on she offered me the opportunity to take over Pod Fitness. I knew the clients and trainers, so the transition was easy. I was really happy!'

During lockdown Babis held sessions online. 'They proved popular so we're continuing with them, even though we're fully back in action in the parks seven days a week. Making a personal connection is key to our philosophy. We welcome all ages and fitness levels, so when a new client joins we make a point of getting to know them, discussing their goals, training history or lack of it, and any past injuries. Then we adapt what we do to achieve the best results for them.'

One of the secrets of Pod Fitness' success is the flexibility and simplicity of the booking system. 'Clients can mix and match the types of training (Kickboxing, Stretching, Strength, High Intensity, Total Body and Circuits) and our trainers, who have their own styles, ensure the work-out is fresh, enjoyable and effective – and that social distancing is observed.

'Our main package (Unlimited Membership) is excellent value; if you book seven sessions per week, the cost works out at just £7 each, we also have a 10-session Pass which can be used whenever you like and a convenient 24-hour cancellation policy.

'I'm sure that there are significant mental health benefits to exercising outdoors, all the more so after the experience of the last year. If you would like to get in shape and meet new people – we're like a family – do get in touch. We make the whole process fun!'

Pod Fitness

07533 676611
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www.pod-fitness.com

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Dr Hala Mahfoud

Photograph: Annabel Moeller

BE HAPPY IN YOUR OWN BODY...

'Dr Hala has improved my skin so much. She is very receptive to individual needs, she always analyses your skin to provide the best treatment and she listens. I would thoroughly recommend.' – Lucinda Cunningham

'Over the last year many clients who have come to us for facial, body and aesthetic treatments – and, of course, Covid-19 tests – have asked for advice about how to boost their immune systems,' recalls Dr Hala Mahfoud.

'We always recommend Vitamin IV infusions, which are made up of individually tailored cocktails of minerals, amino acids, anti-oxidants, nutrients and even ozone. They have proved effective in keeping the immune response up to speed and combating fatigue and stress – I have a weekly session myself.'

Before founding her family-run clinic in 2017, Dr Hala worked as an NHS Consultant. Her initial vision was to deliver high quality care in a safe, comfortable environment and to bridge the gap between medicine and aesthetics. 'Since opening we have expanded the therapies we offer, often in response to patient requests,

and that has meant acquiring state-of-the-art medical technology,' she says.

One of the first major investments was in a Femi-Lift laser, which stimulates collagen, the protein responsible for skin strength and elasticity. 'Post-birth, many ladies leak when they exercise, sneeze or cough,' explains Dr Hala. 'The Femi-Lift has become very popular; it provides proven, non-surgical relief from stress urinary incontinence, alleviates vaginal dryness and pain during sex and enhances sensation.

'Early on, we also secured two of the latest Alma lasers: the Harmony XL Pro lifts and refreshes skin and is ideal for healing scars, acne, vascular lesions and mole and tattoo removal, while the Soprano ICE Platinum laser has revolutionised hair removal – it is fast, pain-free and suitable for all skin types.'

A recent addition to the range of treatments has been micro-needling combined with Platelet-rich Plasma (PRP) therapy, which is based on the body's natural ability to regenerate tissue. 'Micro-needling harnesses a patient's own system to rejuvenate skin, remove fine lines and blemishes, diminish scarring and stimulate hair growth,' says Dr Hala.

'That effect is complemented by PRP. Blood is centrifuged to leave a platelet-rich solution which is topically applied or injected back into targeted areas, so starting the healing response and new collagen production, and resulting in healthier, firmer skin.'

Most excitingly, last year Dr Hala launched her own Skincare Collection (available via the website and at the clinic). All of the formulations have a peak concentration of active ingredients and the Collection includes products that combat hyper-pigmentation, rosacea and acne, restore elasticity to dehydrated skin, an eye serum to reduce wrinkles and dark circles, a lip plumper and a lightweight sunscreen.'

Warm and welcoming, Dr Hala epitomises the approach of her friendly, professional team. 'No two patients are the same,' she smiles. 'We get to know each one and, with the scope of our facilities, we can devise a bespoke approach that fits their needs. We're proud of our work and we want to achieve the best outcome every time.'

Treatments include:

*** PRX Peel:** scar management and reducing wrinkles *** FibroBlast:** lift sagging skin and smooth smoking lines *** Lesion removal:** warts, moles, tags and tattoos *** LPG Endermologie:** tighten skin and target fat *** Botox and fillers** *** Herbal and chemical peels** *** HydraFacial:** skin cleansing *** Mesotherapy:** rejuvenate skin and boost hair growth *** Mesosculpt:** eliminate facial fat pockets *** Cellulite and stretch mark reduction:** a non-invasive technique using radio-frequency and ultrasound

Dr Hala Medical Aesthetics

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Samuele Alberton

Photograph: Doris Heinrich

THE PLUMBING AND HEATING PROFESSIONALS

'I've used Samuele to fix loos, replace a built-in shower and find leaks. The quality of his work is excellent – I'd recommend him to anyone.' – Alex Seaborne, a regular client

'My father and brothers were mechanics, so my earliest memories are of helping them to fix cars and vans,' recalls Samuele Alberton, aka The Italian Plumber. 'I was always just fascinated by how things worked. If a sink needed unblocking, I was there with a plunger; if a radiator wasn't heating up, I was ready to bleed it.'

Born and raised in Treviso, Samuele came to London in 2007, working as a waiter at The Langham Hotel while re-taking his plumbing qualifications to become UK compliant. Over the last decade he and his team have become a familiar sight – the vans are very distinctive – out and about in W6. In that time, he has built a successful business based largely on word-of-mouth recommendation.

Samuele takes pride in his friendly, efficient customer service. 'No job is too big or small for us,' he says. 'Whether it's preventative maintenance or an emergency with a faulty boiler (all major makes and models covered), a burst pipe, a blocked drain or just a persistent leaky tap, we will diagnose and fix the problem with minimum fuss. At this time of year, with summer on the horizon, we are often asked to

install garden taps – and we'll even put up a new bracket to hang your hose on.'

The Italian Plumber currently has a 9.91 rating on *CheckaTrade* (based on 211 reviews), is fully certified by Gas Safe and offers a 12-month warranty on all jobs. 'There's little that we haven't seen over the years and our priority is to save and repair what you have rather than buy something new,' Samuele explains. 'We're here to help and give you peace of mind. We've worked hard to win our reputation – and we work just as hard to keep it.'

Services provided include:

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The Italian Plumber

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Emma and Tom

BUILDING CONFIDENCE

'Whitehall Construction pretty much took the whole house apart and re-built it. They were a pleasure to work with – we miss them!' – Emma Bateman

Emma and Tom Bateman recently completed a major re-building project at their 1930s semi-detached house in West London. They chose Jason Wilkinson of Whitehall Construction to be the contractor. Here Emma recalls the experience of working with Jason and his team.

'Our home is 3600 sq ft and we bought it from a couple who had lived there for 50 years. It needed a lot of work: a basement re-build and reconfiguration, a rear extension re-build, a further loft extension, full re-wiring, new plumbing, new ceilings and roof, moving walls around, re-plastering and re-decorating.

'Jason came highly recommended with excellent

references. From start to finish, it was a total pleasure to work with him and his team, which was led by Bill. They were punctual, polite, calm and in constant contact about progress and any unexpected issues that came up.

'Jason was on site every day and his project management was fantastic – he is extremely organised! We gave him very little notice when, because of lockdown, we had to move back in several weeks earlier than planned. Jason understood the situation and everyone worked hard to ensure the house was ready; in fact, it was finished several weeks ahead of schedule.

'Throughout the work, we valued Jason's opinion and

he worked closely with us and our architect. He was pro-active and offered practical solutions and helpful guidance. Nothing was ever too much trouble. We love our family home and Jason's team took real pride in what they built. I wouldn't hesitate to recommend Whitehall Construction.'



Jason Wilkinson

Whitehall Construction

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Photographs: Nicholas Smith



Photograph: Annabel Moeller

Martin, John and Phil

HAMMERSMITH'S HOME FRONT

John Horton analyses recent year-on-year trends and peers into his property crystal ball...

'What's happening in the local market? It's the question that everyone asks. Having already agreed 100% more W6 home sales this year than our nearest competitor, at Horton and Garton we're perfectly placed to provide expert, accurate advice on property values in Hammersmith and Shepherd's Bush.

'So far, 2021 has been exceptionally busy, with pent-up post-lockdown buyer demand and the extended stamp duty holiday resulting in a welcome boost to sales activity. Traditionally, Spring is the best time to sell and family houses with gardens and outside space are being particularly sought after; many sellers who postponed moves in 2020 are now listing their homes and that, in turn, is encouraging buyers to enter the market.

'Looking back at our year-on-year figures, while fewer homes changed hands in 2020 as compared to 2019, the number of property transactions (144) between £1m and £2m, that's the most popular price bracket in Hammersmith, jumped by a whopping 37% – and this was in a market in which we couldn't trade for many weeks due to lockdown.

'Our experienced sales team has seen this remarkable trend continue in 2021, driven by key factors such as up-sizing local families looking for their forever homes and Ofsted Outstanding School catchment areas. As yet, there's no sign of a cooling market.

'Personally, I love looking at all this property data. The numbers, spreadsheets and land registry figures, where you can check every completed sale by postcode and price, bring out my inner geek. But, as in every successful business, really knowing your numbers and being able to interpret them is crucial in advising clients.

'If you are considering making a move in 2021, whether buying, selling or renting, do come and talk to us. We're the independent local market leaders, we can delve deeper into each micro-area and we're always happy to share our knowledge and insights. You'll be guaranteed an honest, informed opinion – even if it's not necessarily the one you want to hear!'

Horton and Garton

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Photograph: Annabel Moeller

SINGLE-MINDED SUPPORT

Helping single Dads to care for their children after divorce, separation or bereavement...

'As a divorced parent who is separated from my children, the aims of Dads House struck a chord,' says John Horton, founder of Horton and Garton. 'Based in Fulham, the charity supports single Dads, their children and families. I was delighted to offer my support after a fellow St Peter's Church parishioner, barrister Simon Bruce, reached out to me.'

Dads House was founded by Billy McGranaghan in 2008 to help single fathers with the practicalities of raising their children; it runs a breakfast club, a Monday night football session and a Foodbank, offers free family law clinics (led by Simon Bruce), provides life coaching for those suffering with depression and organises a one-on-one buddy service.

Billy himself had realised that there was little back-up for single fathers, or even an understanding of their particular needs, when he was raising his own son, Sam, after Sam's mother went abroad when the boy was one year-old. Dads House has seen a huge surge in demand during the pandemic. 'A couple of days before the first lockdown, new families started coming forward,' recalls Billy.

'From typically seeing 30 to 50 families a week at our Foodbank in Lillie Road, we began seeing 100, then 200, and at peak demand, we had a staggering 670 seeking help in a single chaotic day.

'Financially, it was horrendous. We spent our own funds sourcing food – it was just a huge task to keep going.' So far, the Foodbank has helped 18,000 families and, since March 2020, it has supplied 240,000 meals as well as hygiene and sanitary supplies. 'If it wasn't for our volunteers, who form around 95% of our team, it wouldn't have happened,' says Billy.


There are now more than 20,000 fathers in London raising their children alone and that figure is predicted to rise this year. Dads House is currently trying to raise £40,000 to support its Foodbank. If you can help, follow the Just Giving link at www.justgiving.com/campaign/dadshouse – it would be much appreciated.



Dads House

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Christopher Barrow

SAFETY IN NUMBERS

Enjoy the peace of mind that comes with knowing your valuable possessions are secure

Courtesy of countless heist movies – think *Sexy Beast* and *The Hatton Garden Job* – safe deposit boxes have become associated with the ultra-wealthy. ‘That’s a common misconception,’ smiles Christopher Barrow, Chief Executive of Metropolitan Safe Deposits on Chiswick High Road.

‘While we have 12 different sizes of box at the West London vaults, most customers initially choose one of our three smallest ones. They are ideal for storing keepsakes, such as jewellery and watches, and cost just £95, £150 and £250 p.a including £10,000 insurance (the largest deposit box is £1819 p.a.). Affordability is one of the keys to our business.

‘In the UK we are still less accustomed to using what Americans call a Bank Box. That’s why we encourage people to come and see us; simply call, email or pop in to arrange an appointment and then one of our professional team will explain how we work and the options available.’

The Chiswick vaults combine multi-layered alarm and surveillance systems with proven physical protection. ‘The security network begins

with 24/7 CCTV of the perimeter and interior,’ says Christopher. ‘The building is equipped with seismic and stress detectors and the “secure area” has bullet-resistant airlock doors with magnetic, mechanical and electronic locks.

‘In addition, we have three integrated alarm systems and client access is controlled by computer-verified ID and biometric fingerprint procedures. Each safe deposit box is individually alarmed and we are alerted if more than a given number are open at one time.’

Having invested in making the premises Covid compliant, Metropolitan Safe Deposits has been open, albeit with restricted hours, throughout lockdown. ‘Convenience is another essential element in our service,’ confirms Christopher. ‘Since 17 April we’ve been open again on Saturdays (10am-4pm), from 24 May our weekday hours will return to 8.30am-7pm and, all being well, towards the end of June we’ll re-open on Sundays.

‘At a time when banks have largely exited the safe custody market, we provide a tried and trusted alternative: a long-established independent business with a new world-class vault for your valuable possessions.’

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Joe and Clay

RED CARPET TREATMENT

'The Carpetstore transformed our house. Friendly, professional and quite simply a fantastic experience with brilliant results!' – Rick and Rachel Parfitt

'When I met Clay Miller, who runs The Carpetstore with his brother Joe, "non-essential" businesses had only just been allowed to re-open. 'We've just had the second or third busiest week ever in 31 years,' he says. 'It was non-stop, we definitely didn't anticipate such a pent-up demand for carpets!'

During lockdown Clay and Joe took the opportunity to fit a new Invictus luxury vinyl floor in their own showroom. 'Before the pandemic we noticed that customers were favouring vinyl tiles over wood and concrete flooring,' explains Clay. 'The quality of Invictus' wood, parquet and stone-look ranges is outstanding. They are waterproof, extremely hard-wearing and they come in a fantastic array of striking designs.

'We're the only Invictus stockist in West London and we wanted to showcase what it looks like *in situ*. We chose grey because that seems to be the most popular colour at the moment; people have been choosing it for the home, office, shops – everywhere!'

Inevitably, most carpet manufacturers are taking their time to recover from lockdown, hence there aren't many new products on the market. However, the Carpetstore has just taken delivery of the Diamond range from Fibre (there is also a Herringbone version).

'Diamond was actually due to be released last year but, of course, that was postponed,' says Clay. 'There's already been a lot of interest: it's suitable for heavy domestic use,

for example on stairs, it's easy to clean and the design is very contemporary.' Like all the Carpetstore's classic and contemporary carpets, made-to-measure bespoke rugs and stair runners, Diamond is also guaranteed to be moth-free.

Customers are always welcome to take away swatches and Clay and Joe use their own expert fitters on every project – they will also lay hardboard, ply and latex sub-floors and trim doors. Whether you want an Axminster or a shagpile, man-made fibres or vinyl tiles, The Carpetstore team will help you choose the best flooring for your home.

The Carpetstore

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LIFE LESSONS

The Stagecoach team teaches students aged 4-18 how to perform on and off the stage...

'We're passionate about teaching much more than acting, singing and dancing,' says Sara Catlin Brown, Principal of Stagecoach Kensington, which covers the Hammersmith area. 'We focus on building key life skills, such as communication, confidence and creativity, and we help students to blossom as individuals and realise their potential.'

Sara has been running Stagecoach schools for over 20 years and she took over the Kensington franchise in 2010; she and her team hold classes at Addison Primary School, W14, St Barnabas & St Philips School, W8 and Kensington United Reformed Church, W8.

'We were the first part-time performing arts school to offer the module of three hours of dance, drama and singing and we still follow that successful method,' she explains. 'Also, no experience is needed and everyone is welcomed into our "family" and encouraged to support one another – that's why many children stay with us through all the age groups.'

Classes are held on Fridays and Saturdays and the teaching is divided by age: Early Stages (4-6 year-olds) and Main Stages (6-18). 'Stagecoach class sizes are small to ensure quality and

inclusivity (currently, they are more restricted to ensure a safe environment) and our teachers are very experienced, often including West End performers,' says Sara.

'Some people assume that we concentrate on theatre and musicals. That's not true – we also focus on TV and film, pop and many different styles of dance. In addition, there's a full programme of holiday workshops, two-week discounted trials are available and, in "ordinary" times, we perform an annual show and organise regular theatre trips to the West End.

'Everyone is allowed to develop at their own pace and reassured that it's OK to make mistakes. While some students come to nurture a strong talent and study for LAMDA exams, for most it's because they want to learn, have fun and make friends. Nothing is more rewarding than seeing a student who has been silent suddenly find the self-confidence to stand up and speak – that's just wonderful.'



Sara Catlin Brown

Stagecoach Performing Arts Kensington

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www.stagecoach.co.uk/kensington



Ritesh

Photograph: Annabel Moeller

FULHAM'S FRIENDLY FAMILY OPTICIAN

For glasses and contact lens, repairs and screening, Aristone's experienced team is the local independent specialist

'Aristone has been here for well over five decades and I've owned the business for the last 11 years,' smiles Ritesh. 'While I've always thought of us as part of Fulham life, the pandemic has made me appreciate the sense of community all the more.'

'I've been doing food deliveries for elderly customers, giving iPad lessons and I also bought and fitted a Ring doorbell for a vulnerable lady. It's been so rewarding to make a small contribution to helping out my neighbours.'

Ritesh arrived at Aristone as a locum. 'I'd been working here for 18 months when I made the previous owner a "cheeky" offer over a cup of tea,' he recalls. 'I knew he was getting a little fed up, but I was surprised when he accepted.'

I was 22 and I didn't even know what business rates were – I learned pretty quickly!

Since then, Ritesh and his team have built on Aristone's heritage, still looking after generations of local families while attracting a new, younger clientele. 'Personal service is the key,' he says. 'No two eye tests are the same and everyone responds in different ways. We enjoy getting to know our patients: only last week someone I've known since he was at school came in just for a chat, that was lovely.'

Aristone stocks an extensive range of stylish designer (Tom Ford, Lindberg, Dolce & Gabbana and Ray-Ban) and non-designer frames and keeps a huge variety of prescription lenses. If, by chance,

a prescription is not available, new glasses can be made in the upstairs lab and delivered the same day – and that prompt service also applies to repairs.

Similar care and attention is applied to fitting contact lenses. 'Whether the issue is astigmatism or distance and reading correction, we'll find a lens that suits,' explains Ritesh. 'We take the time to sit down with customers and demonstrate how to use the lens – and we're here if there are problems. My philosophy is simple: if customers have a positive experience, they will come back and recommend us to others.'

Aristone Opticians
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Photograph: Nicholas Smith

John Stenton

SERVING THE COMMUNITY

'There are no short cuts in this business. You and your staff set the bar high and you never go below that.' – John Stenton

John Stenton, Brackenbury's popular family butcher, is reflecting on his experience of lockdown. 'It's been a proper ordeal dealing with Covid. My children asked me to shut the shop, but I wouldn't do that because people in Hammersmith needed me.

'We devised a method of Perspex-ing up the front door and we served our customers one at a time. It was tough, with queues outside in the rain. I must say thanks to everyone for being so patient – it's down to them that we're still here.'

John was taught the trade by Master Butchers. 'They were old-school professionals and I started at the bottom, that's the best way to learn. Even now, 50-odd years later, you're never too old to do something new: I call it drive, and I look for it in my guys; how can we do it nicer, how can we do it better, how can we do it quicker...'

That positive philosophy is reflected in John's decision to stock Japanese Wagyu beef. 'It's the world's greatest meat. We have Grade A5 Wagyu – that's the top grade – and we did our homework. We interviewed our

Japanese suppliers three times and I watched documentaries on how to cook it so that I knew what I was talking about. When the Wagyu arrived, and it took six weeks, I put a notice in the window. We sold the lot in a day!

'We already sell all kinds of beef – ribeye, Aberdeen Angus, sirloin – as well as 4 and 6oz burgers, so it was nice to give people the chance to try something different.

'Customers are welcome to order in advance, just call me or pop in, and we can also put them on the priority list for special items like the next batch of Wagyu.'

Even with the end of lockdown, John and his wife won't be taking a break. 'Now we talk about where we're not going on holiday,' he laughs. 'So, no France, no Germany, no America. When I've had my second jab, we might go to Chiswick. That's probably as far as we'll get!'

John Stenton Family Butchers

55 Aldensley Road, W6 0DH / 020 8748 6121
www.johnstenton.com

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Photograph: Annabel Moeller

John Collins (third from left)

FAMILY VALUES

Serving the Hammersmith community for four decades

It's fair to say Collins Motors is a W6 institution. Operating from the same Trussley Road premises since 1980, three generations of the family work with each other in the service, MOT and tyre garage. 'I started the business with my father Sean,' recalls John. 'He's still involved, my brother Brian runs our Park Royal garage, my son James works with me and Brian's son Jack is with him.'

The experienced team comprises in-house and dealership trained mechanics who can handle the servicing of all makes and models, from Minis to Rolls Royces. 'Of course, we're always investing in new kit,' says John. 'But, equally importantly, I believe in old-fashioned service. If we find that more work is needed than anticipated, we put in a courtesy call to the owner. We let the client make the final decision, then there are no surprise charges.'

John is very proud to have worked in the W6 community for so long, with the majority of customers introduced by word-of-mouth recommendation. 'We've even found that when a "regular" moves away from the area, they leave our business card for the new people!'

Collins Motors

232 Trussley Road, W6 7PS / 020 8741 9766/7
hammersmith@collinsmotors.co.uk
www.collinsmotors.co.uk

Advertorial | #collins_motors



STRIKING THE RIGHT NOTE

Discover the joy of making music...

Matt Randall, a professional composer, pianist and teacher, founded Forte Arts with a simple vision. 'I believe that everyone can play a musical instrument or learn to sing, and that being inspired by the correct teacher is key to each student reaching their full potential.'

Matt and his team provide private music lessons (online lessons are also available) for children and adults of all ages and abilities, including complete beginners, in the students' homes. 'We teach all instruments – among them, piano/keyboard, guitar, drums, violin, singing, trumpet, saxophone and flute – and our tutors, who are equally happy to coach students through grades or just for fun, are charismatic, enthusiastic and knowledgeable music professionals.'

Lessons are organised on a flexible weekly, pay-as-you-go basis (they last from 30 mins to an hour) and, in order to establish a good student/teacher rapport, all new clients have a trial session. 'We're passionate about spreading the benefits of a musical education to the next generation,' says Matt. 'We have already helped hundreds of people in Hammersmith and Fulham of every standard to achieve success – if you want to start your musical journey, do get in touch.'



Forte Arts

07557 143 891
info@forte-arts.co.uk
www.forte-arts.co.uk

Advertorial | Follow us: @ForteArts





Keith Patterson

REAL KITCHENS FOR REAL FAMILIES

Designing and delivering kitchens that reflect how people really live...

The contemporary kitchen is a mix of stylish design and functionality, with space for cooking, eating and socialising with friends and family. Whether your taste is classic wood Shaker or handle-less ceramic, West London Kitchens will design and deliver a kitchen that's perfectly suited to your lifestyle.

Keith Patterson founded the company over 10 years ago. 'We supply high quality German, Italian and traditional handmade English kitchens at family-friendly prices,' he says. 'They are all bespoke and designed for each client; they offer huge flexibility in style, finish and colour and are delivered ready-built, which cuts down dramatically on the time and mess of installation.'

'The exciting 2021 range offers dozens of colours and styles and reflects all the latest developments in kitchen design, such as reduced plinth heights and the TIP-ON touch opening system. We now also offer specialised utility room furniture which provides a myriad of clever storage solutions and clients can view all the door ranges and worktop, splashback and lighting samples at our studio showroom (easy local parking is available).'

'Much of our business comes via word-of-mouth recommendations from happy clients, and their builders, architects and interior designers. We're proud of our reputation and our customer service is second to none. Whether you are planning major building work or just looking to upgrade your old kitchen, do get in touch for a free consultation.'

'We are also delighted to announce the launch of our sister company, West London Bedrooms, catering for all your bedroom storage requirements. We provide sumptuous Italian bespoke wardrobes in a variety of styles with the space-saving and easy access extras you might require. The entire range is available to view on our website.'

West London Kitchens

020 8741 1981
info@westlondonkitchens.com
www.westlondonkitchens.com

West London Bedrooms

020 8741 1981
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Nicholas Smith

ADDING VALUE TO YOUR BUSINESS

Need to create new content, refine your branding or see a better return on a digital strategy? Nicholas Smith will help you target new markets more effectively...

'Right now, consumers are crying out for engaging content from the businesses they love, and most importantly, relevant content. That's exactly where Keep Things Local comes in; helping companies in Hammersmith and Fulham to create content that inspires their audience and then promoting it across our hyper-local West London magazines and digital channels.'

'Using targeted media buying on social media, coupled with the ability to re-target those who have engaged with your content, we can make your marketing budget work harder across all digital and social media platforms. Among the services we offer are: website and social media creation and management, media buying, campaign execution, branding, strategy and events. So, whether you are looking to be more relevant on TikTok or Instagram, create a buzz around an offer or even fly a drone through your building, do get in touch.'

'I will be happy to discuss your budget and goals and to offer friendly guidance on targeting local residents with branding and messaging. Currently, we are offering excellent rates for start-ups and small businesses, as well as loyalty discounts. I look forward to hearing from you!'

Business and Creative Services include:

- * Video * Photography * Copywriting
- * Website build/management * SEO
- * Social Media campaigns and management
- * Business stationery and marketing materials
- * Retail/Shop Window signage
- * Magazine features and advertisements

Nicholas Smith

(Sales and Marketing: Keep Things Local)
07869742822
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https://keepthingslocal.com

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“

I could not recommend the
team more highly.

Anyone looking to buy
or sell in West London
need look no further!

- Hilary, Ravenscourt Park seller, April 2021

”

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