



- **Hope for the hard-working donkeys in Egypt**

- A focus on the work of animal charity, Safe Haven for Donkeys

- **Go wild for nature**

- Butterfly conservation is on a mission to transform wild spaces in the UK

- **Valentine's Day recipes**

- Stunning vegan recipes to impress the one you love

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FOOD

"We are losing the art of baking", says Danielle Maupertuis, the UK's leading executive vegan pastry chef

ENVIRONMENT

Over a third of the UK can't afford the tech to reach net zero

MOTORING

Don't compromise on coverage - try these money-saving tips when insuring your electric vehicle

A word from the Editor

The COP28 UN Climate Change Conference in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates, was the biggest of its kind. Some 85,000 participants, including more than 150 Heads of State and Government, were among the representatives of national delegations, civil society, business, Indigenous Peoples, youth, philanthropy, and international organizations in attendance at the Conference from 30 November to 13 December 2023.

The conference was particularly momentous as it marked the conclusion of the first global stocktake of the world's efforts to address climate change under the Paris Agreement. Having shown that progress was too slow across all areas of climate action – from reducing greenhouse gas emissions, to strengthening resilience to a changing climate, to getting the financial and technological support to vulnerable nations – countries responded with a decision on how to accelerate action across all areas by 2030. This includes a call on governments to speed up the transition away from fossil fuels to renewables such as wind and solar power in their next round of climate commitments.

Our planet's diversity of life is at risk from the changing climate!

Oceans are becoming warmer, sea levels are rising, intense droughts threaten crops, wildlife and freshwater supplies. There is a threat to people's livelihoods, which include places and species. To address this crisis we must urgently reduce carbon pollution and prepare for the consequences of global warming.

In this issue we have covered an array of articles and features that we hope you enjoy reading, from recipes, fashion, Butterfly Conservation, BBC Earth Experience Review, as well as our favourite beauty and wellness buys, Valentine's gifts and not forgetting our pampered pooches too.

Jo Hanby has written a heart-wrenching feature on page 4, where you can read about how life for the hard-working donkeys in Egypt's brick kilns has taken a turn for the better. UK-based charity Safe Haven for Donkeys (www.safehaven4donkeys.org/) was set up in 2000 to help the thousands of working donkeys in Israel and the Palestinian Territories (West Bank), and more recently, in Egypt.

Actor and animal activist Peter Egan recently visited the brick kilns in the El Saf region to see for himself how the charity is making a difference to these animals. Peter talks to Eco Living about his experiences during the visit and the life-changing work that the charity is doing to support the animals, as it provides them with the critical veterinary care that is so desperately needed.



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Hope for the hard-working donkeys in Egypt

UK-based charity Safe Haven for Donkeys (www.safehaven4donkeys.org/) was set up in 2000 to help the thousands of working donkeys in Israel and the Palestinian Territories (West Bank). Today, their sanctuary in Israel provides life-long care to around 180 unwanted and abused donkeys of all ages. Alongside this, each month, their three mobile clinics help many hundreds of working donkeys, mules and horses across the Palestinian Territories and there is also a permanent clinic in the Palestinian city of Nablus. The veterinary team treat common injuries such as those from poor harnessing, overgrown hooves and bad teeth that are easily treatable and go a long way to improve the lives of these hard-working animals.

In 2023, after being approached by a veterinary surgeon in Egypt, they began working with an Egyptian partner organisation in a bid to ease the pain and suffering of the donkeys in the brick kilns in the El Saf region. It was in this region where one of the charity's patrons, actor Peter Egan, a well-known animal rights activist, was recently able to see for himself how the charity is making a difference to these animals who are so desperately in need of the medical support they are given by the veterinary team.

Peter was accompanied on his trip by Andy Foxcroft, Safe Haven for Donkeys' CEO, who has worked in animal welfare for over 40 years, as well as filmmaker Andrew Telling, as they journeyed to the El Saf brick kilns, some 85km south of Cairo. Peter talks to Eco Living about his experiences during the visit...

Q) Tell us about the events upon your arrival, where the team came across a donkey who needed urgent help.

My arrival at the El Saf brick kiln was dramatic on many levels. First of all the landscape was such a brutal contrast to the congested and complex city of Cairo. The desert populated by over a hundred and fifty brick kilns with their chimneys pumping smoke into the sky made me think of an industrial development on the moon's surface.

The kilns themselves looked medieval. Huge brick coloured buildings hundred of yards in length, shaped like long sausages surround a central area creating an enclosed passage into which thousands of bricks are placed by human hand and delivered on carts by donkeys. The work is exhausting for both humans and animals. There is no automation, everything is processed by hand.

The kiln we visited in El Saf employs 30 men who work from 4am until midday, with a break of only 30 mins, these men and donkeys produce 130,000 bricks daily. The work is punishing.

On arrival I walked to the donkey compound. A small area where the donkeys are kept when not enduring their tiring work delivering bricks from the area where they have dried in the sun to the kiln where they are fired.

I saw a beautiful white donkey lying flat out on its side. The donkey was breathing irregularly, panting at times, and to my untrained eye, close to death.

Within minutes of arrival the Safe Haven team set to work led by Dr Shabaan. Dr Shabaan and his two assistants immediately got the donkey onto his feet and with a lot of support, an intravenous drip was inserted and the team started to massage the donkey's body. The team worked for about two hours reviving and assessing the overall condition of the poor animal and reaching a diagnosis that the donkey had chronic tooth decay and as a result, was finding it too painful to eat. This resulted in a seriously malnourished donkey who was close to death.

FEATURE





Q) What impressed you most about the medical care and expertise of the team?

I was deeply impressed by the speed and professional way Dr Shabaan and his team dealt with this crisis and relieved to see the donkey eating and on its feet by the time we left the kiln.

The donkey was given a complete health check. His teeth were dealt with and his hooves trimmed and made more comfortable in the expert hands of the farrier.

The whole process was inspiring and it was wonderful to see the compassionate and expert work done by the team. I was truly impressed.

Q) How do the team know their work is making a difference to the welfare of the donkeys?

What became clear to me watching the team at work was that this was not just a one-off visit but a committed routine in developing animal welfare for this kiln. Safe Haven was welcomed by the kiln owner and his workers who seemed to me to be both interested in what was happening on the spot and interested in getting the best out of their donkeys by a more dimensioned attitude to the health of the donkeys.

The kiln owner assured me that the donkey which had been revived would no longer work but would be put into retirement and live his life grazing without pressure. I said I would return next year to check him out.

Q) Did you spend much time with the kiln owner and the workers / handlers of the donkeys in the kilns? Tell us about what you discovered by talking with them.

I spent a lot of time with the kiln owner and had tea with some of his workers. They were incredibly hospitable and welcoming. What is very clear is when you see men who work to a punishing physical schedule, they are not going to be too sympathetic to the needs of an animal. Their work is exhausting so their empathy is restricted. However, I felt there was a real interest in the work Safe Haven is doing in relation to animal welfare in the workplace.

The major problem is one of perception and the fact that children are the ones who drive the donkeys to and from the kilns. They are too young to understand natural empathy. They also think that donkeys do not feel pain and so they abuse the donkey through ignorance rather than intent.

Safe Haven has a committed policy of making the owners aware of compassionate welfare which will hopefully be passed on to the children. I was interested to speak to the kiln owner about this and one of his nephews, a boy of about 10, who drives the cart led by the donkey. I was keen to impress on him that donkeys feel pain. This is an ongoing policy which Safe Haven and Dr Shabaan are pursuing with commitment and vigour. I was inspired by this.

Q) What's next for your work with Safe Haven for Donkeys?

I was deeply impressed by the great work Safe Haven is doing in the region. It's a charity which is really punching above its weight.

I made a film of my trip directed by Andrew Telling, CEO of Orange Planet Pictures, which will be finished in the next few weeks. I look forward to sharing it and raising awareness both for the charity and the donkeys. I will certainly return to Egypt and the kilns again in 2024. I want to follow up on the donkey in retirement and have tea again with the kiln owner and the workers and continue our discussion on compassion in the workplace.

For more information and to support Safe Haven for Donkeys work in Egypt visit <https://www.safehaven4donkeys.org>



Mushroom Bourguignon with White Bean Mash & Kale Crisps

A deliciously simple take on a French classic. Enjoy a medley of mushrooms and herby goodness in a rich, gravy-like red wine sauce. Serve on a bed of creamy white bean mash topped off with kale crisps and take your comfort food to the next level.

Prep time: 20 mins, cook time: 40 mins.
Serves 4 (halve ingredients for a dinner for two).

INGREDIENTS

Bourguignon

30g/1 oz dried porcini mushrooms, soaked in boiling water for 15 minutes (you can use 30g extra mixed mushrooms if you don't want to use any dried)
2 tbsp vegan butter (use oil if you prefer)
600g/17.5 oz mixture of mushrooms, big ones halved and small ones left whole
125g/4.5 oz shallots or pearl onions, halved or quartered if large
2 carrots, thickly sliced
120g/4 oz vegan lardons or 2 handfuls of pre-cooked chestnuts, roughly chopped (optional – use gluten-free if needed)
2 cloves garlic, crushed
1 tbsp plain flour (use gluten-free if needed)
1 tbsp tomato purée
375ml/1½ cups fruity vegan red wine
250ml/1 cup vegan stock (use 1 stock cube in boiling water)
6 sprigs thyme
1 bay leaf
Salt and pepper, to taste
Handful of parsley, roughly chopped

White bean mash

500g/17.5 oz floury potatoes, peeled and cut into even chunks
2 x 400g/14 oz tins butterbeans or cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
35g/2½ tbsp vegan butter
50ml/¼ cup unsweetened plant milk
1 tbsp lemon juice
1 tsp salt
¼ tsp black pepper

Kale crisps

Steam the kale if you prefer or serve with salad or other green vegetables
100g/3.5oz kale or cavolo nero leaves, hard/thick stems removed
½ tbsp olive oil
Very light sprinkling of salt

METHOD

Bourguignon

Heat 1 tablespoon of the vegan butter in a large saucepan on a medium heat. Add your mixture of mushrooms (but not the porcini mushrooms). Heat until cooked but firm, stirring frequently. Remove from the pan and set aside.

Add 1 tablespoon of vegan butter to the pan and add the shallots/onions, the carrot and the vegan lardons or chestnuts. Cook for 5-10 minutes, stirring frequently.

Stir through the garlic and cook for a further 2 minutes.

Pour in the flour and thoroughly combine with the other ingredients. Heat for 1 minute.

Drain the porcini mushrooms then add them to the pan along with the tomato purée, red wine, stock, thyme sprigs and bay leaf. Simmer on medium for around 20 minutes or until the liquid has reduced down significantly and you have your desired consistency. You can make your mash while the stew is simmering.

Stir through the cooked mixed mushrooms and heat for 2 minutes. Top with fresh parsley.

Mash

Place the potatoes in a large saucepan, cover with cold water and add a little salt.

Bring the potatoes to the boil then simmer on low – medium until tender but not overcooked.

At 5 minutes before the end of cooking time, add the butterbeans.

Drain the potatoes/beans in a colander and leave them to steam dry for a couple of minutes.

Fry the garlic on a medium heat, in a little oil for 2 minutes.

Add the potatoes/beans to a food processor along with the garlic, butter, plant milk, lemon juice, salt and pepper. Blend until really smooth (if you'd rather have more texture in your mash then use a potato masher instead of blending).

Kale crisps

Preheat the oven to 130°C/265°F/Gas Mark 1.

Lay the kale out onto a baking tray so the leaves don't touch.

Drizzle over the olive oil and salt then fully cover all the leaves (you might want to get your hands in there!)

Place in the oven for 15-20 minutes, or until crispy, turning once.

Tip: as an alternative, use the bourguignon as a delicious pie filling.

Recipe from Viva!'s stunning new cookbook *Everyone Can Cook Vegan: 100 mouth-watering recipes to use every day.* <https://www.veganrecipeclub.org.uk/>



Vegan Churros with Chocolate Orange Dipping Sauce

Light and fluffy cinnamon churros with a golden crispy coating and chocolate orange dipping sauce - perfect for sharing.

Prep time: 15 mins

Cook time: 15 mins

Makes: 10

INGREDIENTS

Sugar sprinkle
50g/¼ cup white caster sugar
1 tbsp ground cinnamon
Dough/churros
250g/2 cups plain flour
1 tsp salt
485ml/2 scant cups water
1 tsp vanilla extract
60ml/¼ cup neutral oil (eg rapeseed)

Cooking

Neutral oil (e.g. rapeseed) for deep frying

Chocolate sauce

150g/5 oz vegan dark chocolate (70% cocoa solids), broken into chunks/pieces
230ml/1 scant cup vegan double cream, whipped or use vegan single cream
1 tsp vanilla extract
¼ tsp salt
1 cinnamon stick (optional)
2 tbsp fresh orange juice or ½ tsp orange extract (optional)
Zest of 1 orange, finely grated or chopped (optional)

METHOD

Sugar sprinkle

Combine the ingredients in a small but wide bowl then set aside.

Dough/churros

Place the flour and salt in a large mixing bowl and set aside.

Pour the water, vanilla extract and oil (60ml) into a medium-sized saucepan and bring to the boil.

Once boiling, pour over the flour and thoroughly combine. Leave to cool for 15 minutes.

Assembly/cooking

Heat a medium-large saucepan just under half full of vegetable oil, on a medium heat or around 180°C.

Transfer the dough to a reusable piping bag with a large star-tip attachment. Note: don't use disposable piping bags for this dough because they're not strong enough and will easily split (even if you double them up) – you'll need to use a reusable one.

Squeeze 2-3 (max) strips of dough out at a time into the saucepan of oil (about 10-15cm long). Cut each piece off at the right length using a sharp knife or scissors.

Cook each strip/churro until fully golden, then remove from the pan and place on kitchen towel.

Dunk into the sugar bowl after about 60 seconds and then repeat the process until all the churros are made.

Chocolate sauce

Place the chocolate chunks/pieces into a large jug then set aside.

Place the vegan cream, vanilla extract, salt, cinnamon stick, orange juice/extract and orange zest in a medium-sized saucepan and bring to a simmer for around 5 minutes. Make sure the milk mixture is hot before pouring over the chocolate chunks/pieces.

Pour the hot milk mixture straight over the chocolate chunks and stir until the chocolate is fully melted and you have a smooth sauce.

If the sauce is too thick, stir through some plant milk or extra vegan cream little by little until you have your desired consistency.





Focus On Veganuary

Karin Ridgers is the Founder of Essex-based MAD Promotions (www.mad-promotions.com and @madpromotionspr) and is the go-to PR expert for vegan brands. She has worked with countless vegan brands, sector experts, charities and more than the odd celebrity, during the 19 years since launching her business. We therefore weren't surprised to hear that she was involved during the start of the Veganuary concept. Veganuary has grown from a small gem of an idea, to the ever-increasing, worldwide movement that it is today. Veganuary is celebrating its 10th anniversary in 2024 and is prepared for another busy January helping people turn to a vegan and plant-based lifestyle.

Karin recalls, "It was one of those phone calls you just know is going to be life-changing. I specialise in working with fellow vegans for their PR and media relations and Matthew Glover, co-founder of Veganuary, was recommended to chat with me at the end of 2013 for his exciting project – there wasn't even a website! It makes me smile when I see my Facebook memories popping up at the end of each year - I remember how we were so excited that we had 1,000 participants taking part in the first Veganuary!"

How Veganuary began

Forged on a kitchen table in York by a husband-and-wife team, Veganuary has made newspaper and TV headlines around the world – from the front page of the Times to features in the Washington Post, New York Times, New Scientist and South China Morning Post as well as CNN, Sky News and BBC Breakfast. Joaquin Phoenix, Joanna Lumley, Paul McCartney and Brian May have backed the campaign which now has official chapters in eight countries and attracted participants from every country in the world except North Korea.

The non-profit organisation encourages people worldwide to try vegan for January and beyond. Millions of people have signed up to the one-month vegan pledge since 2014, and in 2023 alone more than 1,610 new vegan products and menu options were launched in their key campaign countries.

TV presenter Jasmine Harman, (A Place in the Sun), who took part in the first-ever Veganuary in 2014, said, "I think I always knew Veganuary would blow up, and it would be huge but seeing just how big it got and how quickly, has been just phenomenal." She added, "I feel very proud and very privileged to have been with Veganuary from the start and to be one of their Ambassadors."

Did you know? More than 700,000 people from 228 countries and territories signed up to take part in Veganuary 2023, breaking all previous records. (This does not include the many people who took part in Veganuary without signing up on the Veganuary website. For instance, a YouGov poll found that 4% of the UK population had taken part in Veganuary during January 2023). To find out more or to get involved with Veganuary in 2024, visit: <https://veganuary.com/>

FOOD & RECIPES



Jasmine Harman, (A Place in the Sun)

Want to go vegan?

Of course, Veganuary is a great time to begin your transition to being vegan, or even vegetarian, as you will be in the company of many thousands of others! If you're inspired to move towards a vegan or plant-based diet, Karin has some tips and advice for you:

She says, "My initial tip for going vegan is always to know your reasons why."

"Is it because you want to avoid animal cruelty? Do you want to enjoy healthier foods? Do you need to reduce the amount of cholesterol you are eating? Perhaps you care about the environment and the planet. Whatever your reasons, write them down – this will help you stand strong in the early days as you may feel like caving in and going back to your old ways!

Check out Viva!, The Vegan Society and www.veggievision.tv for information and recipes, it's very helpful to get prepared in advance and make sure your fridge, freezer and cupboards are stocked with vegan-friendly products.

You may want to reduce the amount of animal products you are buying gradually, you may give non-vegan food away to friends, family or to food banks – it depends on your budget and what works best for you. I know people who have simply eaten their non-vegan food and not bought any more – to people who have had to give their non-vegan food away as they no longer wanted it in their home.

- Easy swaps initially work well; we are all busy and you don't want to feel overwhelmed.
- Replace dairy milk with oat milk, soya milk and other plant-based milks – find the ones you like!
- Try dairy-free cheeses and try out plant-based meats too - all are available online and in supermarkets.
- Do support your local health food store - you can also chat with them and see what they suggest.

It is an exciting journey with so much around to support you.

You may, like me, jump in at the deep end – or decide to make the change gradually. There is no right or wrong way ... and if you do fall off of the vegan wagon... then pick yourself up, dust yourself off and get back on! Every vegan I have ever met has said it is hands down the best decision they have ever made!"

VegfestUK returns

Want to fully immerse yourself in all things vegan? Find new products and suppliers, make new friends and try out lots of vegan produce? Then take note of VegfestUK - the UK's biggest indoor vegan festival - which has lots of attractions for vegans and those interested in a plant-based lifestyle. The recent two day event at Olympia in November was another great success for founder Tim Barford, who celebrated 20 years of vegan festivals in 2023.

Karin Ridgers of MAD Promotions has been hosting the events for ten years and says, "With over 70 talks and panels talking about health, wellbeing, vegan issues and more, VegfestUK recently celebrated 20 years of these brilliant events. The festival is ideal for anyone thinking about going vegan or plant-based, who already is vegetarian or vegan, or simply for those who are curious.

In the last two years, we even had an area (the Vegan Business Tribe) for people thinking of setting up their own business or who already run a vegan business. From accountants to leaders who now have household-name products - the Vegan Business Tribe area was packed out!

At the recent festival in November I got to share the stage with the inspirational Heather Mills. Heather and I go back many years and she was there with her make-up company, Be At One www.be-at-one.com/ Heather and her team have a fantastic vegan make-up business with animal-free products and are just one of the many brilliant vegan business founders that you will see at VegfestUK."

Find out more about VegfestUK festivals coming up in 2024 here: www.vegfest.co.uk/ and @vegfestuk



WE ARE LOSING THE ART OF BAKING

"We are losing the art of baking", says Danielle Maupertuis, who has been talking to attendees who visit her at demos and shows around the UK and discovering they no longer bake from scratch. To combat this, the Executive Pastry Chef from Hertfordshire has launched a vegan and gluten-free Afternoon Tea Club, at pop-ups in venues in Hertfordshire and London. Not only will attendees sample a tempting array of delicious vegan savouries and sweet treats, Danielle also provides a demo within the experience, so you can learn how to make goodies from the afternoon tea yourself. The talented cookbook author is the UK's only vegan pastry chef. Follow Danielle @ <https://www.instagram.com/dmaupertuis/>

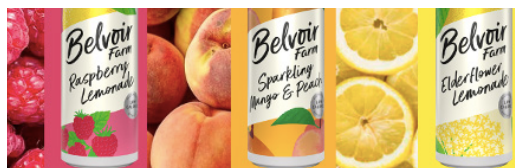


NEW HEALTHY SNACKS

Kallø Veggie Thins are deliciously crunchy snacking flatbreads made from chickpea flour rather than traditional wheat. They're perfect for being munched both at the dinner table, as part of the ultimate sharing board - or dipped into hummus as a delicious snack.

Free from artificial colours, flavours, or preservatives
Gluten-free and vegan
High in fibre, and a source of protein

Available in three flavours, from Waitrose.



FRUIT QUENCHERS WITHOUT ADDED SUGAR

If you're looking for a deliciously healthy kickstart to the new year that's naturally low in sugar and calories, and contains absolutely nothing artificial, fill up on Belvoir Farm's two new fruit-packed thirst quenchers: Delicious & Light reduced sugar, low-calorie cans for on-the-go refreshment and the UK's first No Added Sugar Pure Fruit Cordials, to elevate at home hydration, cocktails and brilliant bakes. Enjoy masses of pressed fresh fruits and freshly picked flowers for natural sweetness, blended with spring water for intense taste and flavour. Dilute with water and add ice for a refreshing long drink or add a splash to sparkling wine or cocktails. 100% free from artificial colours, flavours, preservatives and sweeteners. All but the Sicilian Lemon & Lime Cordial are vegan friendly. Available in Waitrose, from January.



EVERYONE CAN COOK VEGAN

The UK's leading vegan charity Viva! has launched this pioneering cookbook with over 100 recipes that can be created by anyone – no matter their culinary skillset. Crafted by Vegan Recipe Club's Maryanne Hall, a plant-based chef with a rich culinary background including experience in vegan restaurants, you'll find protein-rich dishes such as Spinach & Vegan Ricotta Cannelloni, Tofu Katsu Curry and Spicy Protein Burritos, to tried-and-tested classics such as Mac & Cheese, Moussaka, Broccoli & Tomato Quiche and Vegan Chicken Tikka Masala. As well as an abundance of dinnertime delights, the book also includes healthy and indulgent breakfast options like Vanilla & Almond Chia Pudding and a very unique Easy Vegan Fried Eggs recipe! The recipes are designed for everyone, encouraging people to get into the kitchen and start cooking. It's the perfect gift for vegans, vegetarians, flexitarians or anyone looking to develop their plant-based culinary skills. £12, www.vivashop.org.uk/



FOOD NEWS



HOW HEMP HELPS

These new vegan milks in chocolate or vanilla flavours are a carefully curated blend of water, hemp seeds (6%), rice syrup, sugar cane, flavours, and sea salt. Despite popular beliefs, hemp seeds don't contain THC or CBD, but they are a natural source of plant protein, Omega 3, 6, and 9s and many vitamins like vitamin K, E, A. Say goodbye to artificial additives and embrace the pure goodness of natural ingredients. Meanwhile, every tonne of produced hemp removes 1.63 tonnes of CO2 from the air whilst also adding nutrients to the soil.

£1.99, www.store.goewellness.co.uk/



VEGAN PIZZA AT PIZZA HUT

We're a nation of pepperoni-loving Brits, and Gen Z are keen to try a plant-based version! Luckily, Pizza Hut has unveiled a new pizza for the festive season and Veganuary, that features Beyond Meat's plant-based pepperoni for the first time.

The new Beyond Pepperoni menu items include:

Big New Yorker: Pizza Hut's biggest-ever pizza topped with plant-based Beyond Pepperoni and oozing cheese, this 16" masterpiece is cut into six extra-large foldable slices.

Beyond Pepperoni Feast: Topped with plant-based Beyond Pepperoni, a burst of mixed peppers and mozzarella, this too-good-to-be-true pizza is available in all sizes and crusts.

Beyond Pepperoni Melt: Loaded with plant-based Beyond Pepperoni, a medley of mixed peppers & mozzarella cheese, this mouth-watering Melt is served alongside a marinara sauce for the ultimate dipping experience. Take lunch to a new level for just £6.99.

Championed with dairy based cheese, the pizzas are available with a plant-based cheese topping at no additional cost.

Available at all Pizza Hut Delivery locations across the country, and arriving at Pizza Hut dine-in restaurants from January 2024, for a limited time



SONI London (<https://sonilondon.com/>) is the trailblazing fashion platform celebrating, supporting and empowering independent Ukrainian fashion brands in the UK.

Founded by two passionate and proudly Ukrainian women, Sonia and Eugenia, in October 2022, SONI London officially launched in January 2023 and has quickly become the go-to destination for fashion lovers looking to shop sustainably and ethically. Using the female-founders' experience of working in the fashion and creative industries, the first-of-its-kind online platform now features 18 incredible Ukrainian designers and brands.

The inspiration behind the platform comes from the founders' Ukrainian heritage and their careers in the fashion industry. Motivated by the impact of the war in Ukraine, Sonia and Eugenia were motivated to lend their support to independent Ukrainian fashion brands by providing them with a platform to showcase their exceptional talent and resilience during such challenging times.

Timeless designs with minimal environmental impact Sustainability runs through SONI London, with the platform placing huge importance on championing materials and production processes that have a minimal impact on the environment. The antithesis of fast fashion, SONI London prioritise quality and timeless design, while celebrating diversity in fashion. The brand is dedicated to its social responsibility efforts, supporting ethical practices within the fashion industry and working towards a more environmentally friendly and socially conscious future.

"SONI London is ready to make a difference – not only promoting creativity but also contributing to a better world through its actions and initiatives. This is fashion with heart."

Whatever your aesthetic or style vibe, SONI London has a 'buy now, wear forever' fashion piece for you. Everything from Nataliya Novitska's chic tailoring and J'amemme's high-fashion, show-stopping occasion wear to Brua's sculptural jewellery pieces are exclusive, enduring, covetable and utterly wearable.

We talked to Sonia Lobodiuk, Co-Founder at SONI London about their first year in business and what is next for this exciting concept.

In our first year, SONI London has surpassed our expectations. We've successfully launched our platform, collaborated with incredible designers, and built a supportive community for independent fashion enthusiasts. Moving into 2024, we're committed to enhancing our sustainability efforts. Our plans include:

1. Expansion of sustainable collections: we're focusing on curating and promoting more sustainable collections, featuring eco-friendly materials and ethical production practices.
2. Collaborations with designers: we will continue collaborating with designers who share our commitment to sustainable fashion. Look out for unique pieces that showcase innovation and environmental consciousness.
3. Educational initiatives: we're planning to launch educational initiatives to raise awareness about sustainable fashion, providing insights into the environmental impact of clothing choices.



SONI London is a celebration of exclusive style, sustainability, self-expression and ethical production practices. <https://sonilondon.com/>

sonilondon

What trends do you think will be important in 2024?

For S/S 24 trends, sustainability remains a key focus. Our designers emphasise:

- natural fabrics: expect a surge in designs using organic cotton, linen, and other natural fibres, minimising the environmental footprint.
- timeless pieces: designs that transcend trends, encouraging consumers to invest in quality, long-lasting items rather than fast fashion.
- circular fashion: more designers are embracing circular fashion principles, promoting recycling, upcycling, and closed-loop systems.

Our commitment to sustainability is further reflected in partnerships with brands like Postushna, renowned for its fully upcycled collection. IrAro stands out with its emphasis on natural fabrics and timeless designs, while Selera prioritises naturally sourced materials. These collaborations amplify our dedication to eco-conscious fashion, offering consumers choices that align with ethical and environmental values.



“BUDDU” emerged in 2018 as a Ukrainian brand with a mission to redefine beauty beyond societal norms. Offering a diverse range of clothing, they believe in inclusivity and cater to individuals of all sizes, heights, and backgrounds. By taking full control of quality and production, “BUDDU” breaks free from limitations and stereotypes, empowering everyone to find their perfect outfit.

White T shirt, £46, and white cargo trousers, £90

Embracing freedom and self-love, Selera celebrates women exactly as they are. Designer and stylist Valeriia Semchuk’s vision is centered on the belief that every young lady possesses natural beauty in her own unique way. With a focus on exceptional fabrics and exquisite fits, Selera offers one-of-a-kind pieces that exude confidence, strength, elegance, and tenderness.

Selera blue trousers, £120, and blue blazer, £170

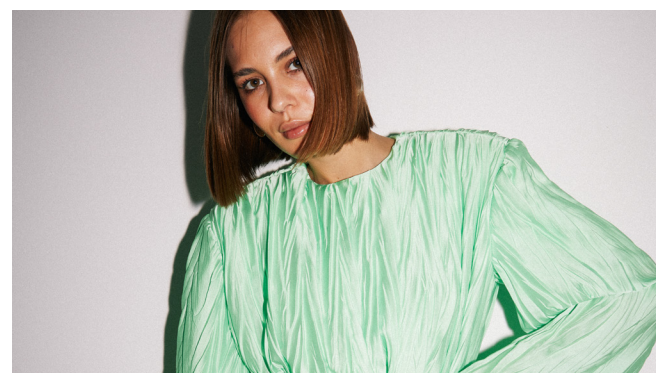


FIORO BIANCO, a Ukrainian brand, draws inspiration from the beauty of nature. With a focus on minimalism and comfort, their collections feature natural materials and a palette of serene colours. “Our latest collection, named “Blossom,” symbolises our unwavering belief in the blooming potential of Ukraine. Combining elements inspired by the Carpathian Mountains, lakes, and flowers, our pieces seamlessly blend style and comfort.

Knitted set in milky colourway, £140

J’amemme is a wearable couture brand known best for its architectural silhouettes and signature pleats. Born in 2018 out of a passion for art and design, the brand redefines couture through its approach to colour and form.

Pleated mint dress, £470



Founded by yarn expert Maryna Gershovych, 02.02 redefines knitwear with a deep passion for quality craftsmanship. Each piece is a masterpiece, crafted from premium Italian yarn, showcasing the exquisite artistry of handmade knitwear. At 02.02, knitwear isn’t just a business; it’s an art form that is cherished with immense love. A specialised focus on knitted products from premium Italian yarn sets this brand apart in the fashion industry, offering a unique experience with every piece.

White ribbed crop top, £50



VIVIENNE WESTWOOD REDEFINES LUXURY WITH REPURPOSED TARTAN LEATHER

The highly anticipated launch of an Exclusive Vivienne Westwood Capsule Handbag Collection, a testament to the brand's commitment to both luxury and sustainability is now available at MyBag.

This exquisite limited edition collection, meticulously crafted by Vivienne Westwood's expert artisans, showcases a harmonious fusion of vivacity and avant-garde elegance. The vibrant capsule captures the essence of dynamic style through a kaleidoscope of bold colours, classic patterns, and the iconic orb emblem, delivering a collection that is both a celebration of individuality and highlighting the brand's unwavering commitment to pushing the boundaries of fashion.

Key features of the MyBag x Vivienne Westwood Exclusive Capsule Collection include:

Repurposed fabrics: MyBag has carefully curated the selection of the high-spirited repurposed leather from the AW1998 'Time Machine' collection which combined styles and details from wildly different periods to create a hybrid that felt new, with the use of retro pinks and purples to stir emotions of romantic summers gone by.

Timeless design: each piece is not only a fashion statement today but remains relevant and stylish for years to come. The collection seamlessly blends classic elements with modern aesthetics, appealing to a diverse range of fashion enthusiasts.

Artisan craftsmanship: crafted with detailed precision and boundless passion, each handbag in the collection reflects Vivienne Westwood's unwavering dedication to craftsmanship. Every stitch becomes a unique work of art, ensuring that these handbags stand the test of time and remain resilient against the ever-shifting landscape of fashion trends.

The collection of five bags and purses are available exclusively at MyBag at mybag.com



TREAT YOUR FEET WITH COMFORT AND STYLE

Walking around barefoot feels incredible. But for daily walking, your feet need a little more, so the new KNX collection from KEEN took the protection you need for everyday life, and added a environmentally preferred leather upper that's so minimal, you can fold it flat (so ideal for packing even when travelling light or hand luggage only too). Ideal for travel and city wanderings, amplify every experience in planet-conscious footwear that can feel it all. The KNX is the barefoot-inspired sneaker that's made to ground us in the moment. Paired with a flexible outsole and lightweight cushioning, it feels like you're wearing nothing. Consciously constructed using KEEN.FUSION, an innovative glue free bonding system, the KNX has been designed to keep your environmental footprint to a minimum wherever you roam this season.

Choose from a Lace or an Unlined edition (RRP £110) with a variety of colours/ styles for men and women. KEEN's KNX Collection can be found at keenfootwear.de and selected lifestyle and sporting goods retailers.



Sonia V Neck
Wrap Dress -
Floral, £59

LONDON FASHION BRAND'S NEW RETURN AND REPAIR SCHEME

For 2024, womenswear brand Chapter. London are launching their new return and repair scheme, allowing customers to send products back to them beyond the usual returns period. For just the price of postage, repairs to things like hems, linings, and buttons will all be repaired in order to extend the longevity of the garment. Based in London, the brand was founded by Tanya Patel, and their clothes are all made in the UK, with sustainable practices, in sizes 8-20.

<https://chapter.london/>

Photo Credit:
Ryan Skelton



TEXTILE ACTIVISM AND FASHION UPCYCLING WORKSHOP

Young eco fashion enthusiasts are invited to spend Saturday 23rd March at the V&A taking inspiration from the DIVA exhibition, a celebration of the power, creativity and agency of iconic performers. During this workshop you will explore your identity and values and find creative ways to express your unique message to the world through an upcycled garment.

Environmentally and socially-engaged artist and designer Alisa Ruzavina will guide you through applique, embroidery, printmaking and beadwork techniques to revitalise an item from your wardrobe. Alisa will also share her experience of creating a value-driven and sustainable career in the world of fashion, textiles and art. Please bring along a selection of preloved items of clothing to customise during the workshop.

Cost £20. This workshop is for 18 to 26-year-olds and includes a complimentary ticket to the DIVA exhibition. Please arrive for 10am to visit DIVA before the workshop begins at 11am. Location: V&A South Kensington, Cromwell Road, London, SW7 2RL. More info:

<https://www.vam.ac.uk/>



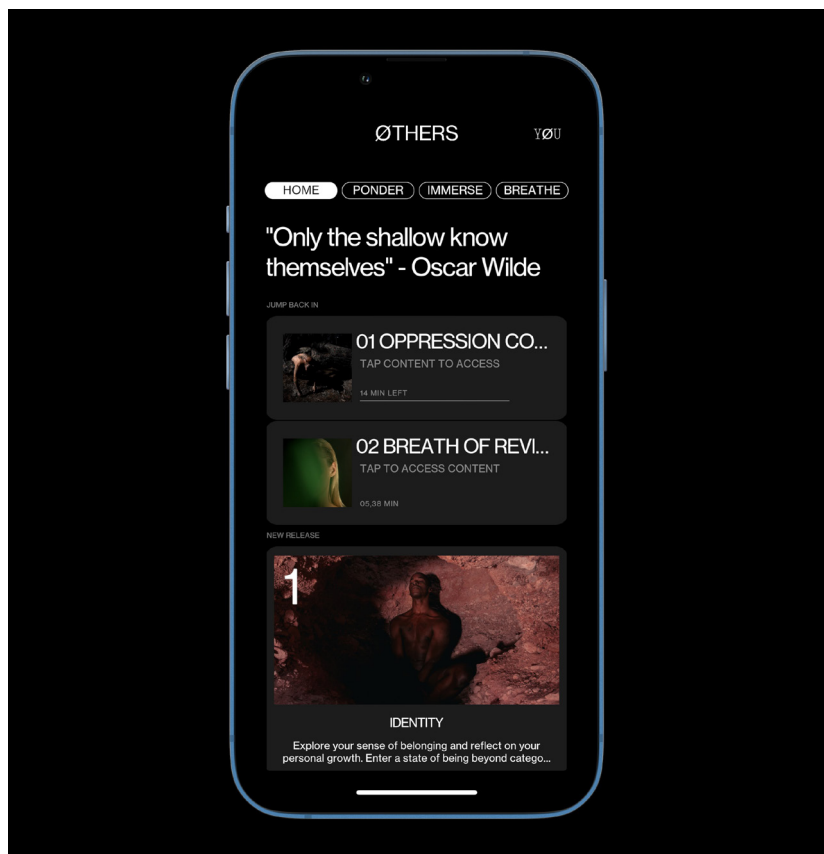
Sound, scent and science

It's no secret that the sense of smell is an important part of our everyday lives so we were intrigued to hear how one company is shaping the way we use olfaction. Crafting a unique experience to align with sound and wellbeing as part of a daily ritual, you'll also benefit from deeper insight and self-awareness, as well as improved mood and mindset, when you use the ØTHERS app.

ØTHERS is a multi-sensory digital wellness experience with a 360° fusion of scent, sound, technology, and science to biomechanically re-tune, bringing you back to centre. Built from the insight and expertise of a radical group of olfactory experts, neuroscientists, breath-work revolutionaries, music, producers, and philosophers; ØTHERS curates deeply empathetic therapy in a hub for free thinking individuals, driven from the mainstream. ØTHERS incorporates a fusion of scent, sound technology and science to deal with everyday challenges and bring you back to centre.

With collaboration, exploration, and partnership, ØTHERS is a pulsating hub of audio-journeys, olfactory alchemy, and candid reflection. A space, a scent, a sound.

**We don't just want to change your mood.
We want to change your mindset.**



The concept is simple - spray the scent on pulse points, or around you, then choose your meditation from the app and let the wellbeing journey begin.

ØTHERS launched initially with two mood altering functional fragrances, using science-backed olfactory technology to positively influence your state of mind.

Red Skies

Designed to improve focus and influence you into a flow state. Enlivening pink peppercorn, red mandarin zest and neroli diffuse into a heart of fresh spice and green jasmine, grounded by a base of patchouli, cedar leaf and red resin; helping achieve mental clarity.



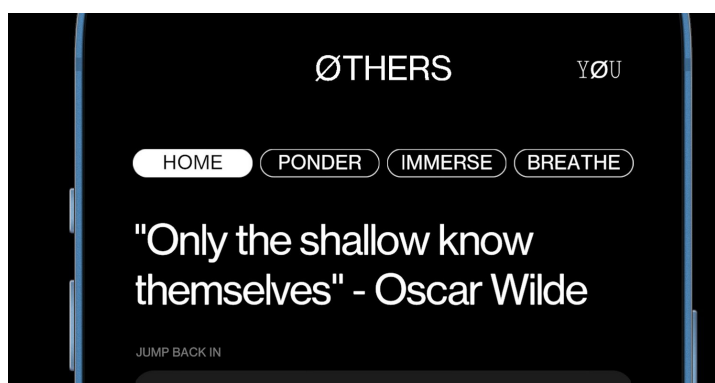
Mystic Zingaro

Designed for consumers to achieve a deeper sense of relaxation with a base of warm resin, smoked amber and Palo Santo. Combined with comforting notes of worn leather, nutmeg, toasted woods, frankincense and palmarosa, you'll be transported to a grounded place.



The App

The ØTHERS App gives you access to sound meditations for a variety of functions i.e. creative block, burnout avoidance and deep thought, along with narrative led meditation episodes to help unravel the pain points of today's chaotic world and proactive breathwork to help ease anxiety, leaving you primed for every day. You can unlock access to micro-moments of relatable storytelling, insightful exercises, meditation rituals, breathwork and scientifically proven priming tools to help navigate yourself through the noise of everyday life.



The **Deep Dive Portal** offers thought-provoking insights to prevailing issues, exploring the challenges of our modern world with enlightened perspectives and a new light of reflection. In alliance with Max Cooper, International DJ & Music Producer and Alex Ebert, a renowned musician and philosopher with a raw and honest perspective of the foundations of why we let feelings dictate our day; this section is heavily focused on the real-time events around us, in context to today's constantly evolving world. It's a voice, a tool, to help users to learn and understand they are not alone. With expert guidance, the series of daily hacks are grounded in a progressive understanding of the profound bio-chemical effects on the brain and body, through focusing on CO2 controlled breathwork, helping manage anxiety, navigate stress, and fear responses and take back control.

The app content

There are three main sections, Ponder, Immerse and Breathe, all with meditations carefully selected and grouped together.

Ponder is a philosophical narrative series, bringing together deep thought delivered in a gripping fashion. Each season sees a theme change, including Spiritual Materialism, Social Mimicry and Meaning Crises.

Within Immerse, seasonal updates see newly released playlists that are based on specific emotional states, such as Imposter Syndrome, for example. Tap into your emotions and cultivate a deeper sense of self-awareness, so that you can better understand and regulate those feelings. In Breathe, you'll find a range of breathwork exercises from breathwork experts that challenge you to explore the limits of your mind and body.

The story behind ØTHERS

Founder Keelan Doyle, a music producer and sonic branding specialist along with his team of underground thinkers, creatives, and artists, are a group of experts in their field. They have come together to bring you an app, with the sensory guidance of perfume to help you self-optimize. The dual combination of sound and scent allows an empowering sensory experience to help prime your mood, your body and re-align your mindset in readiness for your day. Keelan says, "When we first started this project, we wanted to design bespoke self-improvement tools to help our tribe better connect with themselves. And amidst busy schedules and complex worlds we navigate daily, we decided to start with scent as our first hack.

"Scent triggers reactions in the body's limbic system, the part of the brain involved in our behavioural and emotional responses. In the limbic system we process feelings, moods, emotions and memory."

Partnering with world leading aromacology lab, Givaudan, the team designed two functional fragrances - Mystic Zingaro and Red Skies - to serve as the olfactory part of our dual sensory rituals. Some of the cutting-edge methods used include functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI), Electroencephalography (EEG) and physiological monitoring, in which patterns of brain activity, heart rate or skin conductance responses are measured while participants smell fragrances.



How you can benefit

The two neuroscents help prime your mental and emotional readiness for meditation in alignment with ambient, functional soundtracks to counteract the block in your mindset, helping you improve focus, enter flow state, and reduce stress levels. The soundtracks are designed specifically to regulate emotional states, such as Imposter Syndrome and Creative Block. These playlists are designed to help you tap into your emotions and cultivate a deeper sense of self-awareness, allowing you to better understand and regulate those feelings.

Our verdict

No stranger to meditation, the sound, scent and science concept was intriguing. As a big fan of binaural beats, the meditation tracks really resonated with me. I tried the Red Skies scent (which I honestly like even though I usually steer away from uplifting type scents). I did the scent spray and meditation after waking one morning. I prefer to meditate anytime except when I wake up so I was a bit sceptical beforehand but I did feel more alert.

I also "tested" again, using the scent with an "Immerse" meditation. At that time I felt a need to improve my mental focus and motivation on a grey, very cold Friday afternoon in January, when an early sign-off for the weekend was tempting. However, I returned to my desk half an hour later with renewed enthusiasm, an uplift in mood and a new focus on getting on with my "TO DO" list.

For more info see www.others.co Each of the scents is available in a 2ml sample size (£4 each) with a free trial of the app. Full size scents (50ml) with 6 months' access to the app are £90*.

*An introductory launch offer of 50% discount to full size scents, (a saving of £45), was applicable at the time of writing.

SOOTHE SORE LIPS



Cold winds causing dry and chapped lips? Try the new UpCircle Lip Balm; Upcycled Hemp Seed Oil paired with Cannabidiol for the ultimate zen and powerful anti-inflammatories in a lip balm that instantly take lips from chapped to calm. £9.99, www.upcirclebeauty.com



NAVIGATING A SQUIGGLY LIFE

A fabulously creative brand new toolkit that aims to help you deal with challenging times as well as guide you towards positive habits that will enhance your wellbeing. There are 60 cards, and each provides a mindfulness prompt. Making mindfulness fun and engaging, the idea is to pick a card a day and spend 10 minutes focusing on one activity which will have a positive effect on your mental wellbeing. The toolkit is designed for the user to feel happier, more connected to others, live a life of meaning and accomplish the goals that truly matter to you the most.

We love that the "Navigating a Squiggly Life Toolkit" is an interactive resource, stimulating your senses: from beautiful, friendly illustrations, to listening to the audio of calming guided meditations, amplified further by the background of nature sounds.

Bursting with science-backed activities from Positive Psychology, this interactive pack takes you through, card by card, the steps to create a happy, resilient and meaningful life. Thoughtful extra touches include the QR codes on the beautifully illustrated cards, encouraging you to scan and listen to guided meditations. Complete the online worksheets and help to build positive habits that stick – topics covered include growing mindset, optimism, goal setting, clarifying values and more.

£39.99, <https://www.mind-ninja.co.uk/>



NATURAL FOUNDATIONS FOR SENSITIVE SKIN

Odylique's latest launches are bridging the gap between skincare and makeup by launching two new foundations designed specifically for sensitive skin. Both foundation formulations are genuinely comprised of both skincare and makeup and offer a far higher content of nourishing skincare ingredients than most competitors on the market. The Cream Foundation boasts 80% active botanical skincare ingredients and the Natural Foundation 66%.

Both products are made from 100% natural ingredients and are certified organic by the Soil Association. Each range features 12 shades and while both are light-medium, they can be layered to provide more coverage and can also be easily mixed to create bespoke tones.

The Cream and Natural foundations are both priced at £31, www.odylique.co.uk



NEW 100% NATURAL BEARD BALM

The effortless solution to styling your beard with a natural hold. It is ideal for short, medium and long beards, helping to keep them soft, groomed and manageable.

Kear's new balm is a 100% natural blend of beeswax, olive oil, propolis and potent herbs. It soothes irritations, moisturises dry skin, and supports the skin with powerful antioxidants. It also absorbs quickly, making it the perfect daily addition to your skincare routine, taming your beard as well as keeping it glossy and healthy. The Beard Balm is housed in a 60ml aluminium tin which can be recycled.

All Kear products are suitable for all skin types and are free from synthetic chemicals, toxic preservatives, animal fats, artificial fragrances, parabens, silicon, and petroleum and are never tested on animals.

£22, www.kearlife.com



GENTLY EXFOLIATE

Based in the countryside of Great Dunmow Essex, Farmgirl by Sarah-Jane brings not only an offering of both spa treatments including facials and massages but also available is an online shop of vegan and cruelty free products that can be purchased to use at home.

The new BHA 2% liquid exfoliant (£36), has an anti-inflammatory nature making it kinder to skin than grainy scrubs. Leave on skin for it to gently lift away dead skin cells. Formulated with green tea and cucumber for instant hydration.



Over a third of UK can't afford the tech needed to reach net-zero

More than a third of people in the UK can't afford renewable energy technology such as solar panels or heat pumps to help the country meet its climate targets, a new study shows.

The research, by Nottingham Trent University (NTU), shows that a further 28 per cent say they don't have enough information to make such a significant financial investment.

This is against the backdrop of 85 per cent of the respondents believing that human activity is the cause of global warming, and nearly half of them saying electricity bills are a financial burden.

The overwhelming majority - 86 per cent - said they think that renewable energy is what's needed to save the environment from a climate catastrophe, implying that they would like to invest in renewable energy if they were able to do so. The results - which were taken from a survey of 620 adults of all ages across the UK - show that more public funding is needed to help the UK reach net-zero by 2050, the researchers say.

Professor Amin Al-Habaibeh, of the Product Innovation Centre, in the School of Architecture, Design and the Built Environment at NTU, said: "These results are significant as they indicate that financial constraints and a lack of information are the main issues preventing people from taking the action that's required to tackle climate change.

"To encourage the adoption of renewable energy, the cost must be subsidised to a greater degree, or addressed via affordable means, to enable consumers to engage with the clean technologies that are needed to reduce CO2 levels.

"Without a financial intervention of some sort, it's difficult to see how households across the country on moderate means will be able to make the switch to the renewable energy sources which are so vital for the future of the planet."

The study was presented at the Applied Energy Conference in Qatar.

Another notable finding was that 14 per cent of respondents said that they did not have adequate space to fit renewable energy technologies at their homes, which may include roof space for photovoltaics.

The study added that the recent increases in energy prices that have been experienced in the UK are likely to enhance the public interest in renewable energy going forwards, as more consumers are paying higher prices for gas and electricity usage.

The study states: "The challenges that limit public engagement in the use of domestic renewable energy include mainly financial constraints, lack of information about renewable energy sources, public acceptance and practical or technical factors such as the lack of adequate space (e.g. roof space) to install solar panels."

Researcher Dr Benjamin Nweke, who worked on the project as part of his PhD, said: "The findings from this study have shown that consumers in the UK are aware of the impact of their activities have on the environment and that they're keen to take the necessary steps to achieve net-zero.

"To improve the acceptance of renewables to consumers in the UK, better education and improved financial schemes must be made available to help subsidise the cost of renewable energy for everyday working people, so that they can afford to make this important change to their living arrangements."





Go Wild For Nature

Butterfly Conservation is on a mission to transform 100,000 Wild Spaces in the UK for people, butterflies and moths.

The evidence that connecting to nature is good for you is increasingly compelling. Many recent studies have shown the well-being benefits of spending time outdoors and with this in mind – and as the UK, and the world, faces unprecedented challenges to conserve species and address habitat loss – it is more vital than ever that everyone can access and enjoy wildlife on their doorstep.

This has sparked leading wildlife charity Butterfly Conservation's project, Wild Spaces, which has an ambitious goal to transform 100,000 spaces where butterflies and moths can thrive. At the very heart of the project is the knowledge that these habitats can have a positive impact not just for butterflies and other pollinators, but for people too.

What makes this project more special is its inclusivity; Butterfly Conservation knows that anyone, anywhere can positively impact nature, and can help beautiful butterflies and magnificent moths to thrive by creating and registering a Wild Space.

From country villages to inner cities, and anything in between, people from all walks of life and of any age, as individuals or as part of their community, can play their part.

From small planters on an urban balcony, to a few pots of herbs (such as Marjoram) on a patio, an area of grass left wild in a garden or a large outdoor community space, no area is too big or too small, as long as it can help butterflies to breed, feed or shelter, supporting them through their life cycle, all the Wild Spaces created play their part and make a huge difference.

What is a Wild Space?

A Wild Space is any space that supports butterflies and moths in completing their life cycle – one that enables them to feed, breed and shelter. Beyond this basic definition, Butterfly Conservation also recommends that the space should be free from pesticides, that any compost used must be peat-free, and it should be a permanent Wild Space, because for nature to recover and species to thrive, we need to make a lasting change.

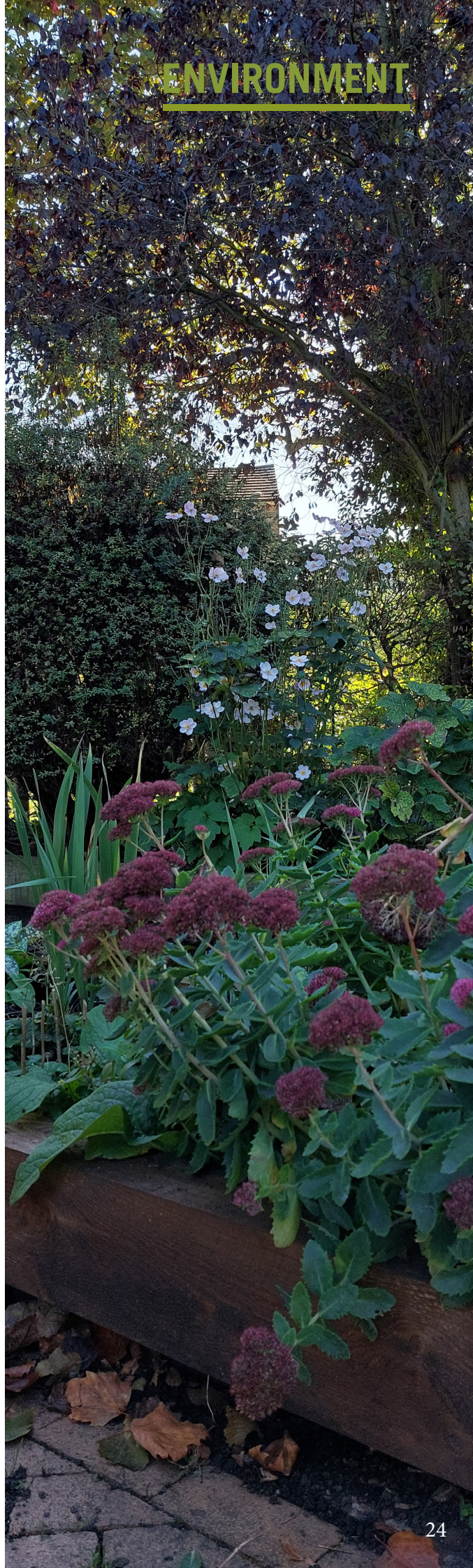
Wild Spaces can be anywhere, including right in the heart of towns and cities across the whole of the UK and there is no size criteria.

Butterfly Conservation would love to see the new Wild Spaces become even wilder over time, perhaps by neighbours clubbing together and transforming a whole street of front gardens, or by a local authority committing to having Wild Spaces in all of their recreational parks.

The right balance

Research undertaken in urban gardens in Bristol in 2019 by the RHS found that the mix of seasonal native species in a space was more important for nectar provision than the size of the plot itself. This shows that whatever space we might have available to us, we can all make a difference. What we choose to plant, weed, prune or mow matters, and small, simple steps can create a positive shift for nature.

Butterfly Conservation's ambition is to create a growing movement, with an active online community of 'Wild Spacers' that helps people share their experiences and connect to others within and beyond their own neighbourhoods to create a network of wild areas, a corridor for nature to travel safely, with plentiful food, shelter and spaces to breed.





Top tips to create a Wild Space:

Garden

Whether your garden is large or small, the best thing you can do is leave a bit of it to go wild. By dedicating a patch where the weeds can grow, the grass is allowed to get long, or parts of a hedgerow are kept untrimmed, you'll be creating a rich Wild Space for butterflies and moths to thrive.

Patio

Make a butterfly fruit feeder! Try leaving out soft fruits like bananas, berries, melon, oranges and plums in your Wild Space. Butterflies and moths feed through their straw-like tongues and so mushier, over-ripe fruit is best. Try chopping and freezing it first to make it extra-soft. When the fruit has dried out, replace it with some more.

Balcony

Plant a few pots with butterfly friendly plants such as nasturtium, lavender and heather. If you don't have a balcony, a window-basket works just as well and can have a big impact!

Herbs are another brilliant pot plant to embrace, you can brighten up your own meal and provide a feast for many different butterflies and moths, wild marjoram, mint and rosemary are all firm favourites.

School

Create a leaf pile. Lots of different butterflies and moths spend the winter nestled amongst leaf litter, usually in the form of a caterpillar or a chrysalis. The leaves give them shelter from the freezing weather as well as helping to keep them safe from predators.

Making a leaf pile is as simple as it sounds: just gather some leaves in a pile and leave them! You could make it under a tree, at the back of a border, next to a fence or behind a pot or planter. And the best thing, little ones will love getting their hands dirty gathering leaves!

Community Space

Don't trim your hedges. Shrubs and hedges are incredibly valuable for butterflies and moths. Take a break from a neat, cutting regime to embrace the wild side and help our fluttery friends to thrive. Through the warmer months, the leaves and buds of shrubs are eaten by lots of different caterpillars, and in the late autumn and through the winter, butterflies and moths that hibernate (like the Brimstone) take shelter amongst the dense vegetation. And those species that survive the winter as eggs, caterpillars or chrysalises (such as Scalloped Oak moth), can be nestled against the twigs and stems.

Registering Your Wild Space

While individual action may feel small when viewed in isolation, the reality is that it is the collective movement and momentum of many small actions and changes that creates big change. Wild Spaces is easy and free to get involved with, and truly every single space makes a huge difference to the future of the UK's butterflies, moths and other species.

Collectively, as part of the growing Wild Spaces community, connecting to others and to a network of transformed spaces, every single person can all be part of something bigger, and reap the benefits for their own wellbeing, as well as helping nature to recover and thrive.

To pledge to create or register your Wild Space, please visit www.wild-spaces.co.uk

Expert Predicts Sustainable Retail Trends for 2024 and Beyond

Shopaholics are constantly changing how they look at the products and services they spend their money on, and one thing that can massively affect whether they buy something is whether it's sustainable or not. Figures from Deloitte show how important sustainability is to modern shoppers and consumers, with 58% valuing durability, 39% focussing on repairability, and another 37% consider how biodiverse the purchase will be.

The sands are shifting towards a more sustainable future in retail but what trends could we see emerge in the coming years? Vikki Makinson, head of marketing and communications at Oceans, the leading suppliers of sustainable toilet paper, has provided expert insight into the future trends of sustainable retail.

Eco-conscious consumerism

The biggest surge in trends that 2024 and beyond will see is eco-conscious consumerism, as shoppers are already showing their concern and care for environmental issues through the products they're purchasing. The statistics show that purchasing behaviours have shifted towards those that have been made more sustainably and retailers will need to respond in kind.

Adopting transparency with the supply chains used to create the products, as well as incorporating eco-friendly packaging and promoting products that have been sourced ethically will be some of the solutions that retailers use to drive sales.

Communicating these changes will play a huge role in this, as consumers are constantly educating themselves on which products and services are the most sustainable and the best practices in shopping sustainably. Labels and certifications will be popping up more on packaging to indicate they were produced sustainably.

The future of sustainability is... technology?

Technology has filtered its way into many different facets of our lives and retail is likely to be another that sees significant technological advancement. And if there's one that'll revolutionise retail spaces it'll be virtual reality (VR). It's exploded within the realm of videogames with brands like Sony and Oculus creating and releasing headsets that can be used for a host of games, and the technology will offer a more immersive and interactive experience when shopping.

Whether it's in-store or from the comfort of your own home, VR technology could be used to try out the products virtually before making the purchase. Clothing retailers is a perfect example of where it'd be hugely beneficial as you could have a look at how the clothes that peak your interest look on you before you buy them. It'd also reduce the queues that can occur in clothes shops with people waiting for the changing rooms.

Not only does this enhance the shopping experience, but it can be used to show the lifecycle of the product and how it affects the environment. It can be impactful to shoppers and help make more informed decisions around the products they're purchasing.

Creating a circular economy

One of the key ideas within sustainable retail is recycling and repurposing products where possible, which is why circular economies are likely to become more of a talking point in the coming years. Brands will likely aim to offer products that create a closed-loop system where products are recycled or upcycled into new products. This results in reduced waste and less negative impact on the environment.

Consumer awareness will continue to increase and will mean that retailers will have to be more willing to embrace design principles that are centred around circular processes. This trend will more than likely grow to be even more encouraged by consumers and will result in more sales when adhered to.

Localism and community engagement

Driving sustainability within consumer behaviour will require brands and retailers prioritising business on a smaller scale within communities. This will translate into a resurgence of localism and community engagement with many brands focusing efforts on sourcing materials from local manufacturers, as well as supporting and contributing to local community initiatives and causes.

Fostering a sense of community and shared responsibility can help to create strong connections with local businesses and those who inhabit the area operated in. This will subsequently extend beyond the products themselves and contribute to the experience of shopping as a whole.

A more sustainable and ethical future is the aim for retailers to meet the shifting values and expectations of consumers, so it's likely that trends will evolve rapidly to the point where even the experts struggle to predict them. This is why it's crucial to keep an eye on how consumers are shopping to get a solid grip on how they're spending their money.



Savoy Stewart

According to data, one in two Brits will be on the hunt for a new job this new year, and with 880 monthly searches being made around “sustainable businesses”, according to Google Search Trend Data, Savoy Stewart has released the sectors who believe in a greener world.

A recent study has revealed that 88% of workers feel their jobs are more meaningful when they have the chance to positively influence social and environmental issues.

With this insight in mind, Savoy Stewart was keen to find out which careers in the UK prioritise sustainability the most through terms they use in their job role advertisements, working with Adzuna to find out more.

The research found that Engineering is the most sustainable industry in the UK for 2023, with 399 job advertisements using terms related to sustainability in October alone.

The role of a sustainable Engineer is to design and implement innovative solutions that focus on minimising waste, utilising renewable sources, and decreasing other environmental impacts by creating an efficient system for the future with the aim of a better world.

In second place is Accounting and Finance. The industry boasts 211 terms relating to sustainability cited in their job advertisements at the time of writing.

The goal of sustainable finance is to incorporate governance, social, and environmental factors into investment decisions. Over time, this results in increased funding for environmentally friendly initiatives and projects that can also support healthy ecosystems and a circular economy.

IT ranks as the third career offering sustainable roles in the UK, with just over 200 mentions in their job postings. Also known as Green IT, helps reduce the environmental impact through utilising energy efficient hardware, data centres, server virtualization and monitoring systems.

Ranking fourth place is Trade and Construction, with 149 vacancies mentioning terms related to sustainability, whilst coming close in fifth is Consultancy with a total of 147 open vacancies featuring terms and phrases around sustainability in the workplace.

According to the data from Adzuna, the most popular eco terms employers are using in their job ads as of October 2023 are “Sustainability” (25,774 job ads), “Corporate social responsibility” (1,386 job ads), and “Certified B” (341 job ads) in a total of 1,041,799 job ads released last month relating to the environmental factor.

Methodology:

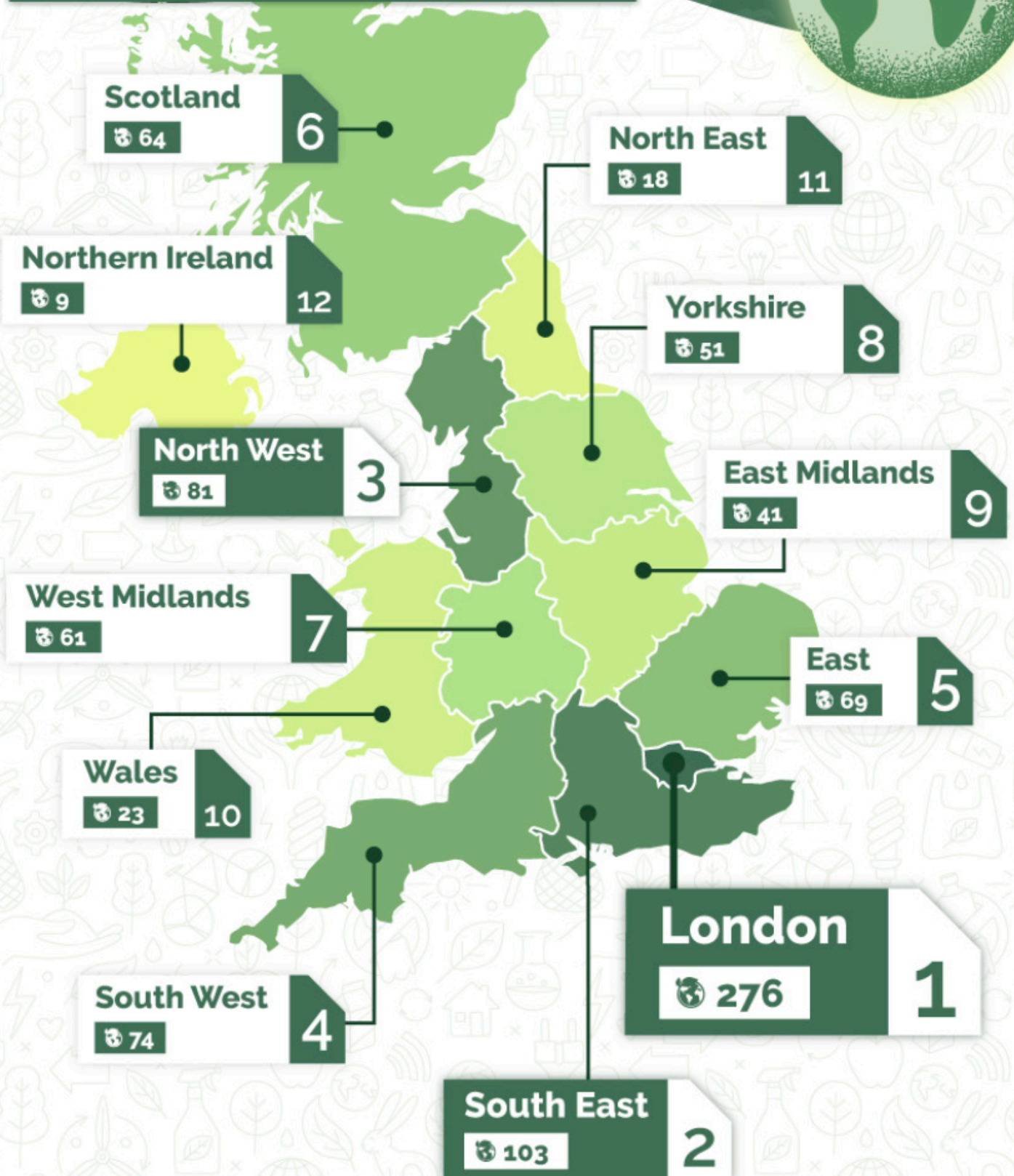
Savoy Stewart worked with Adzuna to collate and analyse the data from live Adzuna job adverts across the UK and is correct as of November 2023.

The UK's Best and Worst Regions for Sustainable Jobs

ENVIRONMENT



Total number of advertised jobs mentioning sustainability



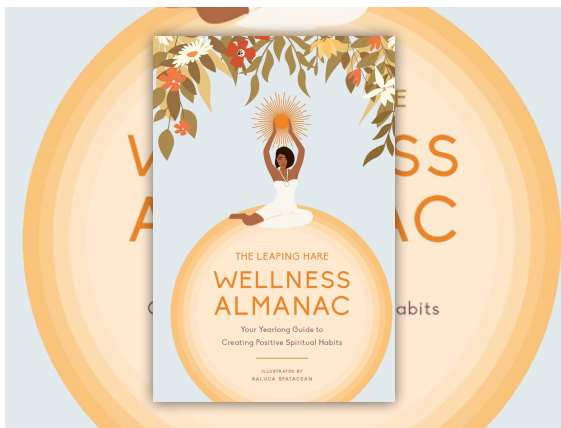
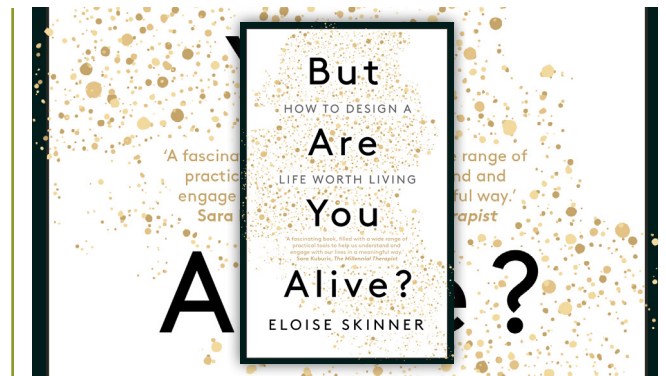
The arrival of a new year often means we decide to make plans to change ourselves, our habits, our goals and/or our lifestyle. If you're seeking change in your life, these personal development books may well bring valuable insight, resources and the aforementioned change...

But Are You Alive? - Eloise Skinner

RRP £14.99 / £2.99 Kindle, [amazon.co.uk](https://www.amazon.co.uk)

In 'But Are You Alive? How to Design a Life Worth Living', entrepreneur and teacher Eloise Skinner explores lessons learned from a decade spent pursuing depth, purpose and meaning, including from her training in a monastic community and in the field of existential therapy.

Working through practical exercises, principles and tools, Eloise shares wisdom and actionable advice from a variety of traditions and perspectives, all with the intention of helping the reader find a sense of deeper 'aliveness' in daily life.



The Wellness Almanac - Illustrated by Raluca Spatacean

£20, www.katikaia.com

Inspire your journey through the seasons and embrace mindfulness, self-love and holistic health in this stunning month-by-month wellness almanac that will lift your heart, mind, body and soul.

Beautifully designed, lovingly crafted, and filled with mindful affirmations, activities and insights, this gorgeous book will help you embrace the seasons, be empowered by rituals, and create positive spiritual habits all year long.

Each page shares a mindful insight for inner understanding, and the year-long structure means that activities are tailored for the natural seasonal rhythms which guide us through winter, spring, summer and autumn. A thoughtful and loving gift for your soulful friend, even when that's you!

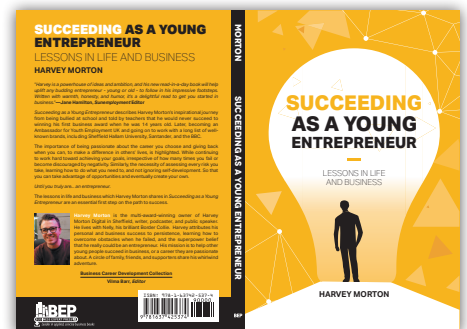
Succeeding as a Young Entrepreneur - Harvey Morton

RRP £25.97 / £10.99 Kindle, [amazon.co.uk](https://www.amazon.co.uk)

Discover Harvey Morton's inspirational journey from being bullied at school, told by teachers that he would never succeed, to winning his first business award when he was fourteen years old. Later, becoming an Ambassador for Youth Employment UK, and going on to work with a long list of well-known brands including Sheffield Hallam University, Santander, and the BBC. The importance of being passionate about the career you choose and giving back when you can, to make a difference to others' lives, is highlighted.

While continuing to work hard towards achieving your goals – irrespective of how many times you fail or become discouraged by negativity. Similarly, the necessity of assessing every risk you take, learning how to do what you need to, and not ignoring self-development. So that you can take advantage of opportunities, and eventually create your own.

Until you truly are... an entrepreneur.



Live Your Bucket List - Julia Goodfellow-Smith

RRP £10.99 / £4.99 Kindle, [amazon.co.uk](https://www.amazon.co.uk)

Whether you want to learn Chinese, run a marathon, or watch the sunrise over the Pacific, most people have a bucket list. Live Your Bucket List guides readers through a proven process, developed and honed over many years, to take them from dream to achieving.

Live Your Bucket List uses the author's personal experiences to provide insight into achieving a specific bucket list dream.

Instead of reinventing the wheel, readers can learn from Julia's mistakes and triumphs to make their own bucket list adventure the best possible success.

The Secret Life of Clutter - Helen Sanderson

Kindle £5.99, www.amazon.co.uk

Helen helps people create beautifully organised, clutter-free homes and live more mindful and meaningful lives. She works with her clients holistically, both to uncover what their homes reveal whilst supporting them to let go and move on.

A psychotherapist, interior designer and one of the UK's most well-respected clutter experts, she provides the ultimate holistic decluttering service.

Her ethos is to work with compassion, and to empower people to take positive action to support change. This leads to life-changing shifts, which leave people with a new-found clarity, and homes they love, that love them back.



How to Feel Better - Ruth Kudzi

£12.65 / Kindle £8.49, amazon.co.uk

If you're looking for a book that is practical with a step-by-step self coaching strategy, this is for you. When we feel broken we look to be fixed, we consume books, have therapy, diet, whatever it takes! BUT true self development is not about being 'fixed' it's about accepting the parts of yourself and then enhancing who we already are.

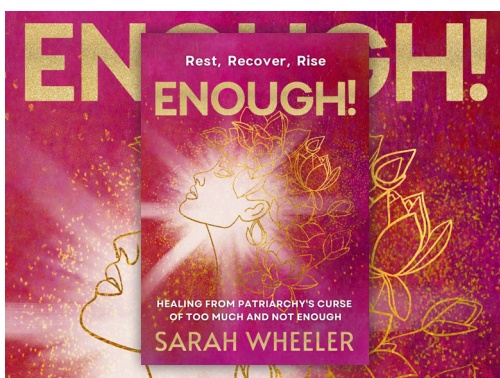
Focusing on evidence-based approaches, Ruth will teach you how to not just read about, but truly integrate personal development work. She'll take you through four key questions that encourage both self-reflection and include action-oriented tasks that will help you create sustainable results.

Good Girl Deprogramming: Unleash the rebel within - Michelle Minnikin

Kindle £6.99, amazon.co.uk

From our first days on Earth, we're taught what it means to be a Good Girl. Look good, be nice, stay quiet, and take care of everyone else... The list goes on, and at the heart of it all, one message shines through: Do as you're told or pay the price. In Good Girl Deprogramming, Michelle shines a light on the sinister nature, tactics and tricks of coercive control that not only program us to be Good Girls but keep us in that mindset for the years, decades, and generations that follow.

With ferocity, empathy, and just enough humour to prevent the idea of being brainwashed by patriarchy too depressing, Michelle shares stories, facts and actionable advice that empowers women to break free from our own programming and rediscover who we truly are. Good Girl Deprogramming isn't just a book, it's a movement.



"Enough!" - Sarah Wheeler

Healing from Patriarchy's Curse of Too Much and Not Enough

Enough! is available now from Amazon and is a book for every woman who has had enough of patriarchy. This book is for every woman who has tiptoed the invisible line between believing she is either too much or not enough, or both - you can almost see Barbie flicking through her copy at her visit to the Gynecologist. The second book by Yoga Teacher and Reiki Master, Sarah Wheeler, Enough! is a heartfelt guide for acknowledging, exploring and healing patriarchy's curse of too much and not enough.

Valentine's Gifts

Spoil yourself or someone special with a little treat this Valentine's Day...



PROMETHEUS TRAVEL YOGA MAT- Kati Kaia

This pure fire abstract yoga mat will boost energy and ignite your senses! Invigorate your practice with the balance of soft marks in this energetic stunning piece, building from the ground up. Passionate red mark-makings inject creativity to your workouts and yoga practice. Go tribal on the travel mat as you bring root chakra energy into class and feel deeply connected. Easily folds in hand or hold luggage, unfold upon arrival.

£80, www.katikaia.com

ECO DRIVING EXPERIENCE - Track Days

This unique driving experience is an ideal gift if he's a fan of supercars and sustainable driving. He'll get the chance to take the wheel of an exceptional EV supercar, experiencing the blend of luxury, speed, and sustainability that only modern EVs can offer.

One great option is the "Tesla Model S P90d Blast - 8 Laps experience," available in Hertfordshire. The Tesla Model S P90D Thrill gets you behind the wheel of one of, if not the fastest saloon car around, with the P90D capable of getting from 0-60 in just 2.6 seconds.

£79, www.trackdays.co.uk



SOY CANDLES - Where I Glow

Handmade and hand poured with Eco Soya, a natural and sustainable wax. The soy candle is made with a cotton wick and vegan premium fragrance oil. Poured into a classic whisky style glass and topped with a natural beautiful bamboo lid. Recyclable and eco-friendly packaging. 25 hours burn time.

Available in 9 different scents: Chocolate Fudge, White Chocolate and Caramel, Lily, Lychee and Peony, Raspberry and Vanilla, Lavender and Lemon, Seychelles, Baby Powder, Blueberry and Vanilla.

The personalised message card and unique "Peace, Love, Chocolate" label with a little glitter and cute slogan, adds a special touch for a Valentine's gift.

£20, www.whereiglow.com

AND FRAGRANCE - Perfume Discovery Set (Unisex)

Discover ÅND - ethically sustainable and regenerative perfumes designed to support communities and eco systems by using fairly trade cocoa absolute. This neat set has samples of all their nine stunning fragrances so you (and your partner) can enthusiastically try them out, sensibly rotate them or um and ahh over which one's your favourite. A Båre night? A Måd weekend? Or Sånd between your toes?

Includes a voucher to redeem the amount from your fave 50ml (oh, and each 50ml bottle cap is hand pressed from using problem waste plastic!)

£25, www.andfragrance.com





WOODEN BOOKSTAND - Eco Able

Perfect for gifting and pairing with your recipients favourite book. Made with beautiful oak wood, it is a product to treasure. This beautiful wooden bookstand is the perfect place for an iPad, phone, favourite novel or cookbook! Works well with recipe cards too, making it easy to follow recipes in the kitchen or for hands free reading in the lounge or bedroom. This lovely wooden bookstand comes apart and can be put together really easily, making it ideal for travel or storing neatly away when not in use. Size:20cm x 18cm.

£30, www.eco-able.co.uk

THE HIDDEN SEA - Rosé 2022

Rosé lovers don't just drink pink in the summer – a nice rosé is perfect during the season of love too. It's pale pink, packed full of strawberry and cream notes and has the most beautiful bottle. The South Aussie Hidden Sea Rosé is also a thoughtful gift for eco warriors. For every bottle sold, The Hidden Sea removes the equivalent of 10 plastic bottles from the ocean, and has already removed over 24 million. Vegan friendly.

£8.75, available from Asda



KIN KIND - Shave and Shower Gift Set



Shop KinKind's Shower & Shave gift set is the ideal plastic-free grooming gift set for men who like to start the day looking and feeling fresh, and who can feel great doing their bit to stop plastic pollution. Featuring ENERGISE me! 2-in-1 shampoo and bodywash bar, Feel FRESH! 2-in-1 shampoo and bodywash bar, START my day! West Indian lime and black pepper body wash bar, and CLOSE shave! shaving bar. All of KinKind's bars are plastic-free, paraben-free, vegan-friendly, cruelty-free and hand-made in the UK.

£25.50, www.kinkind.co.uk/

VOCA - Oriental Lullaby Roller Ball

Give the gift of a good night's sleep. This aromacology-based, natural fragrance harnesses the soothing and therapeutic powers of nature to help prepare your mind and body for a good night's sleep. A unique fragrance blend is specifically designed to restore your body's natural rhythms, soothe your over-stimulated nervous system and help prepare you for sleep. This deep, sumptuous fragrance fills your senses with rich, meditative and soothing aromas from the East to instil an enhanced state of spiritual tranquillity and profound inner peace. Plant-based, 100% natural origin and cruelty free ingredients and 100% recyclable packaging.

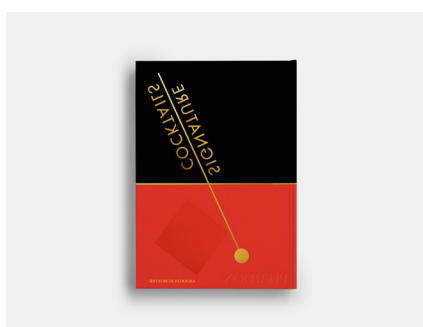
£36, www.voca.london



SIGNATURE COCKTAILS - by Amanda Schuster

Curated by New York-based cocktail connoisseur Amanda Schuster - in consultation with regional experts across the globe - Signature Cocktails is a satisfying collection of drinks, all of which are remarkable in their breadth and character. Each entry is accompanied by the name of the creator, place and date of invention, and spirit type, alongside the original recipe and a specially commissioned contemporary image of the drink.

£29.95, www.Phaidon.com



Canine's Choice

The canine's choice - a round-up of purchases for your pet that caught our eye...



FAIR TRADE HANDMADE FELT DOG BASKET

This beautiful Fair Trade felt dog basket in grey has been lovingly handmade by skilled artisans in Nepal. A stylish way to keep your pet friends comfortable and warm. Everything from the Sourced by Oxfam collection donates money from Oxfam while supporting the livelihoods of artisans from across the globe.

Colour: Multicolour. Dimensions: H 165 mm x W 500 mm x D 500 mm.
Material: 100% Sheeps Wool. Made in Nepal.

£54.99, <https://onlineshop.oxfam.org.uk/>

BAMBOO GROOMING AIDS

Made from sustainable bamboo and supplied in 100% recyclable packaging, each of the new grooming products within the range has been created by ten people powered processes which increases ethically paid labour whilst reducing machine driven production and emissions.

Designed to suit all coat types and featuring the air cushioning, pin geometry and rotating teeth qualities associated with Mikki's thirty years of grooming expertise, the range comprises a selection of brushes, slickers, combs, rakes, and massagers. If your pet doesn't like being groomed, try the Gentle Grooming Palm Brushes – available with bristles, pins or massage nodules, they are perfect for pets that are anxious about being touched or groomed.

Prices start at £5.99, www.mikkipet.com



TOUGH TOYS ARE KIND TO THE PLANET

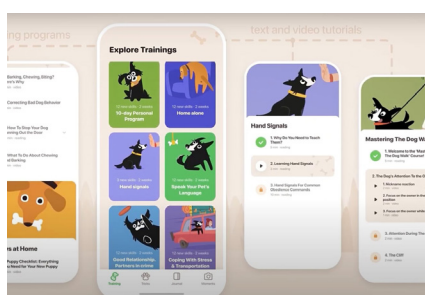
The Wonkie Woolies range caters for dogs of all types with tough Tuggerz toys for those who like to play rough, and Skinz for those with a more gentle approach. Made from upcycled wool felt, recycled polyfibre, fur, and r-PET rope the Wonky Woolies Tuggerz collection comprises a choice of sheep, goat, donkey, pig, and bull toys. Each features double stitched multi-layered fabric, with a rope handle for extra tugability, and a bio-degradable rubber squeaker for added enjoyment.

£12.99 each, www.petlove-europe.com

SAFER, TASTY CHEWS

Earth Animal's award-winning No-Hide® Chews, adored by dogs and health-conscious pet parents alike, are a nutritious, hand-rolled substitute for rawhide, comprising six simple, natural ingredients and featuring one protein source. Free from animal hide, bleaches, and chemicals, they offer easily digestible, long-lasting enjoyment for pets.

Available from <https://justforpets.co.uk/earth-animal/>



DOG TRAINING APP

Woofz is the dog training app for new and seasoned dog owners! It is suitable for experienced dog owners who want to revitalise their relations with a pooch as well as those who have adopted a puppy or shelter dog recently. The app consists of handy education modules from funny things like giving a paw, to more useful things like training a shelter dog, preparing for travel, playing dead, etc.

£26.99 for 6 weeks, <https://www.woofz.com>

JAMAICA WINS CULINARY AWARDS

Jamaica's culinary excellence has recently been honoured with not one, but two prestigious World Culinary Awards, celebrating multi-category success. Achieving global recognition of the rich and diverse origins of Jamaican cuisine, the island has received the prestigious World Culinary Awards' Top Caribbean Culinary Destination, while the gastronomic scene of Montego Bay has earned the coveted title of Caribbean's Best Culinary City Destination.

Testament to the vast range of gold standard eateries on the island, Summerhouse at Harmony Hall, and Oleander at Sandals Montego Bay won Best Restaurant and Best Hotel Restaurant of the year in Jamaica, respectively. The island also boasts the World's Best All-Inclusive Culinary Resort 2023, with Sandals Dunn's River securing the top spot.

From breathtaking natural beauty to a booming nightlife, Jamaica makes for a perfect getaway. However, this island's rich offering extends far beyond this to its vibrant culinary landscape. Providing an additional layer of allure to an already captivating destination, Jamaica's award-winning array of restaurants and dishes are set to satisfy every hungry traveller's craving.

To book a trip and immerse yourself in Jamaican culture see www.visitjamaica.com



TRAVEL TRENDS FOR 2024

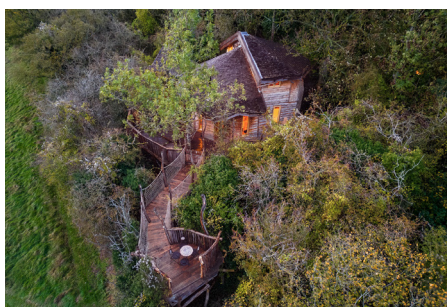
We're not surprised to see that digital detox breaks are still high on the popularity list. Go internet-free and, if you dare, remove temptation entirely, by locking your phone away during your stay. Here, Coolstays.com share some of their research and trends to look out for in 2024.

Saunas are the new hot tubs

Pop-up saunas in trailers and converted horse-boxes are pulling up on beaches around the country, while a growing number of holiday stays in the UK are adding one to their property - and it's a sensible addition. Research has shown that saunas help lower the risk of heart-related disease. Often hidden among woodland or garden greenery, saunas are a fantastic way to destress and detox.

Europe by Sleeper Train

Although it may not seem like it here in the UK, train travel in Europe is having a boom. A few years back sleeper trains were generally pretty uncomfortable and out of date, but now thanks to increased awareness of flying's carbon footprint, more people are choosing to make the journey part of the holiday and take the train. A new generation of sleeper trains is criss-crossing Europe, with new and extended routes opening including Paris to Berlin, and luxurious Orient Express routes around Italy.



A MAGICAL TREEHOUSE STAY FOR ALL AGES

A new world of adventure has opened its bespoke wooden doors at One Acre Wood, in Herefordshire. Two fabulously unique treehouses are welcoming guests to enjoy a comfortable and luxurious stay with a focus on family fun. Surrounded by beautiful countryside and the sights and sounds of the creatures and nature that live amongst the wood, there's a magical experience waiting for guests of all ages. Co-owner Sean Ronan comments, "The design brief was simple; to feel like a treehouse inside and out, to be magical for both adults and children with a focus on families, and to include little touches to make any stay luxurious. The build was to take an eco-sensitive approach whilst maintaining the convenience of mains electricity, running water at mains pressure and flushing toilets."

Kids of all ages can safely roam the woods to discover wildlife and enjoy being "outdoor kids". There's plenty to do and explore; bug houses, fairy dens, hide and seek, table tennis, cycling, nature trails, kite flying, fishing, local crafts, go-karting, water sports, riding - the list of activities on and offsite is endless. Make everlasting memories in a unique experience where the "wow" factor lasts throughout your stay.

Treehouse stays start at £313 per night, (sleeps 4 adults and 2 children), with a minimum two-night booking. Visit www.oneacrewood.co.uk and follow on Instagram @oneacrewood_uk

Money-saving EV insurance tips

As the EV market develops in the UK, an increasing number of motorists are making the switch from traditional petrol cars to cleaner, electric alternatives.

While the benefits of EVs, including reduced emissions and lower running costs, are widely acknowledged, navigating the ins and outs of EV insurance can be a less straightforward affair.

Many EV owners find themselves facing unique challenges and often higher premiums when it comes to insuring their environmentally friendly vehicles. With that in mind, let's run through some tips to save money on your EV insurance without compromising on coverage.

Can I use a normal insurance company for an EV?

Yes, you can definitely use a normal insurance company for an EV. The landscape of car insurance has evolved significantly with the increasing popularity of electric cars.

Now, the majority of mainstream insurance companies, including Aviva, LV, Direct Line, and Admiral, have integrated electric vehicles into their quote systems. Additionally, some vehicle manufacturers offer their own insurance packages for electric cars.

7 tips to save money on electric car insurance

1 Driver training course discounts

Insurance companies often provide incentives for electric car drivers who proactively seek to improve their driving skills. One such incentive is offering discounts on car insurance premiums for those who complete approved driver training courses.

2 Consider a Telematics (Black Box) Policy

Telematics-based policies, commonly referred to as 'black box' insurance, are increasingly becoming a popular and cost-effective insurance option, especially for young drivers of electric cars. Given that EV insurance premiums can be particularly high for younger drivers due to their perceived higher risk (i.e. quick and high-tech electric cars).

Telematics policies offer a unique solution that bases premiums on actual driving behaviour rather than statistical risk.

A small telematics device is installed in your EV. This device monitors various aspects of driving behaviour, including speed, acceleration, braking, cornering, and time of day when the vehicle is used. The data collected by the device is used by insurers to assess your driving habits. Safe driving behaviour can lead to lower insurance premiums, as it directly demonstrates a lower risk.

3 Low mileage discounts

Low mileage discounts are a way for insurance companies to offer reduced premiums to drivers who use their electric vehicles less frequently. The logic behind this is straightforward: the less you drive, the lower your risk of being involved in an accident. For EV owners who primarily use their cars for short commutes this can be an excellent avenue for insurance savings.

4 Higher excess

Opting for a higher voluntary excess can lower your premium. Excess is the amount you agree to pay out of pocket towards a claim before your insurance coverage kicks in. Be aware, though, that this means more out-of-pocket expenses in the event of a claim.



5 Consider multi-car policies

Multi-car policies are a convenient and often cost-effective insurance option for households with more than one vehicle. This approach involves insuring multiple vehicles under a single policy.

Insurers often provide discounts when you insure more than one vehicle with them, and having all vehicles under one policy makes it easier to manage. It's easier to keep track of renewal dates and policy details when everything is consolidated.

6 Shop around

Don't just settle for the first quote, compare EV insurance offers from various providers to find the best deal. Insurance premiums can vary significantly from one provider to another. Each insurance company uses its own method for assessing risk and determining premiums, which means you could find substantial differences in the costs and coverage offered for essentially the same policy.

7 Pay annually instead of monthly

Monthly payments are essentially an informal credit arrangement, and insurers may charge administrative costs, processing fees and even interest.

Opting to pay your insurance premium annually rather than in monthly instalments, eliminates these charges. While paying monthly might seem more manageable in the short term, it often ends up being more expensive over the course of a year.

The final word

As electric cars are extremely expensive to insure, it is crucial for every EV owner to work as hard as they can to get these costs down! The tips discussed in this article provide some ideas for doing so.

From shopping around for the best rates and considering higher excesses to exploring low mileage discounts and taking advantage of telematics policies. Furthermore, options like driver training courses, multi-car policies, and choosing to pay annually instead of monthly can make a significant difference in your insurance premiums.

The key takeaway is that with the right approach and a bit of research, you can ideally find a policy that also aligns with your budget. As the EV market evolves, so too will the insurance industry and EV insurance costs will reduce.

Source: John Ellmore. John is the Editor of Electric Car Guide, an EV information site dedicated to supporting new EV owners with guidance, research and information. <https://electriccarguide.co.uk/>

BBC Earth Experience Review

You will find the BBC Earth Experience a short walk away from the Earl's Court and West Brompton London underground stations. It is located in the recently built Daikin Centre. The BBC Earth Experience was a thoroughly enjoyable event. As you arrive at the entrance, the staff are friendly and welcoming, to guide you through to the main part of the building where the event takes place. You enter into a darkened room with plenty of comfortable seats including beanbags are laid out to sit on. We chose a beanbag and laid down for extra comfort. Sir David Attenborough narrates the scenes depicting various habitats on Earth with their associated flora and fauna. He highlights the importance of conserving these animals and their habitats. He particularly emphasizes the importance of people being stewards and stewardesses of the Earth, saying we are running out of time to take action against climate change.

His message is clear: we must act now to preserve Earth for future generations to live successfully on, and enjoy its natural resources. The scenery is wonderfully displayed with surround sound systems to hear the narration. The graphics on the large surrounding screens displayed the pictures and videos beautifully. Laying down on the beanbags made for a fully immersive experience as we forgot about the rest of the people in the room to concentrate on the pictures, videos and narration being presented to us. The quality of the photography and videography themselves was stunning; an epic show of colour and detail was put together for this experience. The camera angles were brilliant; they showed the animals up close and personal and I believe some of the footage was captured using drones for aerial view shots.

The screens went through the 7 continents of the planet, from Asia to Antarctica. They show the animals in their natural habitats and in various situations, for example relaxing in groups, solo acts and in flight and / or running motion. It also shows the animals feeding and drinking, and their other daily habits such as preening each other and hunting. My personal favourites were the flocks of toucan birds in vivid motion and the penguins being shown in their natural states. I also loved seeing the aerial views of Earth from outer space up close, reinforcing the sheer scale of it as the Blue Planet. The film then goes on to show how some of the images were captured including hiding cameras inside realistic-looking animals, such as the spy penguin. Attenborough describes the richness of biodiversity which can be found in each continent and why the uniqueness of species is vital to the ecosystems found on Earth- and how we benefit from ecosystem goods and services. Some examples of these goods and services are trees for paper, palm oil, used in many products globally, and fertile soil for crop production. The footage itself is played on repeat so there is no need to worry about missing anything.

Sir Attenborough's message of conservation of the planet is reinforced throughout this experience and why global leaders must come together at the upcoming climate summit in Dubai, COP28, must correct the course and ensure the 2015 Paris agreement climate pledges are met. The UK is on a journey to net zero by 2050, with much of the rest of the world agreeing to limit warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. However, fans of the Earth experience may be shocked to learn of the recent UK slowdown on climate policies, where UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has pushed back the ban on petrol and diesel cars to 2035 instead of 2030, as well as scrapping pledges for landlords to ensure their homes are energy efficient. It will therefore be very interesting to find out what pledges the UK makes at the COP28 summit later this year, and how the UK government plan to move forward with achieving their goal of reaching net zero emissions by 2050.

The experience then led into 3 separate areas: the Water World, Vista Stage and Micro Life zone. This is where the animals can be experienced up close in separate rooms to the main event. There were buttons to press to enhance the effects of the noises and lights, which made it even more interactive. The Water World made you feel as though you were deeply submerged underwater, surrounded by the impressive creatures of the sea, such as sharks, dolphins, whales and large shoals of fish. Moving across and upstairs to the Vista Stage, you got a panoramic view of all the screens in the centre which really showcased the images at their best.

The Micro Life room had a big red button to press which made the sounds of the insects come to life with surround sound effects and strobe flashing lights – a truly interactive experience which raised the hairs on my skin! The room really brings smaller animals like insects to life, with up-close and personal images displayed all around the room. It takes about 70 minutes to enjoy the full show presented by Attenborough. I believe the Experience could've been made slightly better by using extra features to bring the senses to life, such as experts on hand to ask questions to, and / or 4DX cinema effects like smells and things to touch to get a sense of the textures of the animals and their habitats; however, I still had a brilliant time at the event. The experience finishes with a wonderful gift shop focused entirely on sustainability, with no single-use plastic in sight. The tea towels are made from 25% recyclable cotton and a variety of the other souvenirs are made from recyclable / compostable materials. I decided on a Toucan tea towel, to enjoy the bright colours in my kitchen and for my family to get a snapshot of what the experience was about.

The toilets at the venue were very clean and disabled and changing facilities were also available. I would highly recommend this experience to anyone who is interested in nature, conservation and ecology or just wants a day out with reasonably priced tickets. The BBC Earth Experience is a fun, immersive production which is suitable for the whole family and people of all ages to enjoy.

BBC Earth Experience Review by Grace Bushell

