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## Visit London What's New Press Briefing

22 February 2008

[Hotels](#) | [Attractions](#) | [Exhibitions](#) | [Events](#)  
[Bars & Restaurants](#) | [Theatre & Film](#)

March highlights include the launch of East, a 6-day festival celebrating cultural life in East London, and the opening of China Design Now at the V&A. Mother's Day, St Patrick's Day and Easter also fall in March. Look out for more information and press releases on each of these occasions at [www.visitlondon.com](http://www.visitlondon.com) soon.



### Hotels

#### YHA London Central opens

The new **YHA** youth hostel in Soho is now open. The brand new £4.3 million hostel has 294 beds spread across 59 rooms, almost all of which are en-suite. The hostel also boasts a modern open-plan café bar as well as facilities for backpackers, including self-catering kitchen, internet access, luggage store and laundry. Prices start at £18.95 for adults or £40.95 for a family of four. For press information contact [Paul Fearn](#).

#### Marriott London Regents Park refurbishment

March sees the opening of the new restaurant and bar at the Regents Park, part of the hotel's £10 million refurbishment. By the end of the year, the leisure club, balconies, pavement and gardens will also have been refurbished. For press information contact [Alison Hull](#).

### Attractions

#### Spring and Summer private guided tours of Buckingham Palace

Private guided tours of Buckingham Palace are available for the first time in January, March and April, when the Palace is closed to the general public. With an expert guide, explore the State Rooms regularly used by The Queen for State ceremonies and official entertaining. The tour ends with a glass of Buckingham Palace champagne in the Grand Entrance, where the Royal Family's guests arrive. For press information contact [Anne Marie Todaro](#) on +44 (0)20 7839 1377.

#### New clothing stores open in West End

This month sees the much anticipated opening of Europe's first Banana Republic in Regent Street. The exciting new store will be launching women's and men's ready to wear collections, accessories and personal care products. H&M will also be launching a new flagship store on Regent Street. For press information contact [Jace Tyrell](#) on +44 (0)20 7462 0687.

### Exhibitions

#### Amazing Rare Things at Buckingham Palace

Visit the highly acclaimed exhibition [Amazing Rare Things](#), co-curated by Sir David Attenborough, which comes to The Queen's Gallery, Buckingham Palace in March. The exhibition brings together the works of four artists and a collector who have shaped our knowledge of the world around us: Leonardo da Vinci, Cassiano dal Pozzo, Alexander Marshal, Maria Sibylla Merian and Mark Catesby. For press information, contact [Public Relations and Marketing](#) on +44 (0)20 7839 1377.

#### China Design Now at the V&A

[China Design Now](#) will explore the recent explosion of new design in China and attempt to

understand the impact of rapid economic development on architecture and design in China's major cities. From the 2008 Olympic stadium, and other significant architectural projects, to the latest in fashion and graphics, China Design Now captures a dynamic phase as China opens up to global influences and responds to the hopes and dreams of its new urban middle class. From 15 March-13 July. For press information contact [Meera Hindocha](#) on +44 (0)20 7942 2500.

#### **Martian Museum of Terrestrial Art**

Martian Museum of Terrestrial Art presents contemporary art as if shown in a fictional museum conceived by and designed for extraterrestrials. This ambitious, playful and irreverent exhibition transforms the [Barbican Art Gallery](#) into an imaginary museum, with a mission to interpret and understand contemporary art. It features around 150 works - primarily sculpture as well as mixed media, video, photography and works on paper - by over 80 established and emerging artists, from the 1960s until now. From 6 March-18 May. For press information contact [Ann Berni](#) on +44 (0)20 7382 7169.

#### **Twickenham Tenants: Harlequins at HQ**

A new exhibition at the [Museum of Rugby at Twickenham](#) explores the period 1909-1990 in which the Harlequins played many of their home matches at Twickenham Stadium. The exhibition also looks at why the club eventually left the ground and moved to the Twickenham Stoop. A variety of memorabilia will also be on display. For more information contact [Sally Price](#)

#### **Cranach at the Royal Academy of Arts**

The [Royal Academy of Arts](#) will present the first major exhibition in Britain devoted to Lucas Cranach the Elder (c. 1472-1553). A collaboration between the Städel Museum, Frankfurt am Main and the Royal Academy, the exhibition will bring together some 70 works chosen to represent the quality and range of this important master of the German Renaissance. From 8 March-8 June. For press information contact [Johanna Bennett](#) on +44 (0)20 7300 5615.

#### **Doctor Who comes to London**

Get up close and personal with some of Doctor Who's most famous and feared enemies at Earl's Court. Opening on 20 March, The Doctor Who Exhibition features Kylie Minogue's waitress costume from her recent appearance in the BBC series, as well as many other props, costumes and monsters from the show. For press information, please contact [Lynne Marie Cox](#) on +44 (0)20 7370 8838.

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## **Events**

#### **East Festival**

[East](#) will run for six days from 6-11 March encouraging Londoners and visitors to the capital to explore the vibrant cultural life of east London. The Festival will focus on four 'Hot Spots': 'Central East (Spitalfields, Barbican, Whitechapel), Hackney, Canary Wharf, and Stratford. It includes art, drama, food and music events. For press information please contact [Victoria Enderby](#) on +44 (0)20 7221 5000.

#### **The Eagles launch world tour at The O2**

One of the biggest bands of all time, The Eagles, will debut their world tour at The O2 this March. The band will be performing current hits from the #1 Long Road Out of Eden album including 'How Long' and 'Busy Being Fabulous' as well as classic songs such as 'Hotel California', 'Desperado', 'Take It To The Limit', 'Life In The Fast Lane', and 'Take It Easy'. The Eagles have sold more than 120 million albums worldwide, earning five #1 US singles and four Grammy Awards. They will be playing at [The O2](#) on 20, 22, 23 and 26 March. Tickets £70, £80 and £110. For press information contact [Lucy Ellison](#) on +44 (0)20 7536 1625.

#### **Heathrow Terminal 5 opening**

Heathrow Terminal 5 will open on 27 March. The £4.3billion high-tech terminal promises British Airways customers unparalleled standards of passenger comfort and convenience with smoother check-in processes, a state-of-the-art baggage management system and the largest lounge complex in the world. There will also be a range of luxury and high street shops in the shopping complex. For press information contact [BA's press office](#)

#### **Flamenco Festival returns for fifth year at Sadler's Wells**

Brimming with the emotion and passion of Andalusian dance and music, the Flamenco Festival London sees some of the world's finest flamenco dancers and musicians unite on one very colourful stage. This year's two-week festival is set to be as flamboyant as ever, with nearly 100 flamenco artists performing across six different dance productions and two flamenco concerts. Runs from 3-16 March, tickets £10-£38. For more information contact [Erin Crivelli](#) on +44 (0)20 7863 8125.

**Gypsy jaunt at St Martin-in-the-fields**

Gypsy fiddlers Adam Summerhayes and Emil Chakalov slide into St Martin's in virtuosic style on 6 March with an explosive performance of London Concertante's new project 'Gypsy Strings'. The heart of London will be racing as these violin virtuosi present a reanimation of everything they love best from their Eastern-European musical heritage to bring gypsy style to the St Martin's field. Tickets from £6-20. For further information, contact Assistant Concerts Manager [Jennifer Lang](#) on +44 (0)20 7766 1130.

**Taste East 2008**

As part of [East](#) a free two day food festival is taking place at Spitalfields. Over 40 carefully selected food stalls will feature alongside free entertainment such as food demonstrations, stilt walkers and music. Visitors will have an abundance of amazing produce to sample, eat and buy. Participants include Quaffs Beer, ChocStar Mobile Chocolate Van, Wild Beef and The Big Draw. For press information contact [Jane Quinn](#) on 020 7221 5000.

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**Bars & Restaurants****Gordon Ramsay's Plane Food Terminal 5**

March will see the launch of Gordon Ramsay's Plane Food at the newly built Terminal 5 at Heathrow Airport. Plane Food will be a 180-cover fine dining restaurant housed in the Richard Rogers designed building of the world's busiest international airport. Stuart Gillies (Boxwood Cafe) will oversee the menu together with Nathan Johnson. For press information contact [Sauce Communications](#) on +44 (0)20 8600 3600.

**The Garage reopens - live music on a new scale for London**

The Garage in Highbury and Islington will reopen in March following a £1 million refurbishment. Opened in 1993, The Garage quickly established itself as one of the capital's finest indie and rock venues, playing host to many bands early on in their careers including Spiritualized, Catatonia, Supergrass, Placebo, Elastica, Radiohead, Pete Doherty, the Arctic Monkeys and Oasis. The new building capacity will be 620 in the main auditorium, 150 in the 'Upstairs at the Garage' room and a further 50 in the 'Mini Bar'. For press information contact [Clair Chamberlain](#) on +44 (0)20 7494 3665.

**A greener way to drink wine at Moti Mahal**

Throughout March, Moti Mahal, the Indian restaurant will offer a four-course menu with each course being accompanied by a different bio-dynamic Alsace wine. These bio-dynamic wines, available exclusively in Moti Mahal, take organic one step further by encompassing the whole farming method. The menu will also include a palette cleansing sorbet, petit fours and coffee for only £49 per person. For press information contact [Alison Hull](#) on +44 (0) 20 7288 0800.

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**Theatre & Film****The Harder They Come**

As part of the East festival, the [Barbican](#) gives London audiences another chance to catch the musical magic of The Harder They Come following two sell-out runs at [Theatre Royal Stratford East](#) last year and in 2006. Young singer Ivan Martin heads to Kingston with dreams of becoming a reggae star, but the harsh reality of the Jamaican music scene drives him to a fast and furious life as an outlaw. The Harder They Come is a high-energy production that marks a defining moment in Jamaican culture. For press information contact [Angela Dias](#) on +44 (0)20 7382 7168.

**Greenwich Children's Theatre Festival**

[Greenwich Theatre](#) will be hosting a children's theatre festival from 18-29 March to encourage the theatre-goers of the future. The festival opens on 18 March with Clouduckkooland, a new children's musical by Stephen Sharkey, and continues with Clownderella, a clown version of Cinderella, on 22 March, among others. For more information contact the [Greenwich Theatre press office](#) on +44 (0)20 8858 4447.

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