

The London Magazine

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In the heart of St James's, tucked between Piccadilly and Pall Mall, London's most British shopping street has retained the style and character of its Regency past to become the perfect stomping ground for the modern gen, writes Ruth Bloomfield

If you want to see what old-fashioned British luxury really looks like, go to Jermyn Street. This historic thoroughfare, which runs between Piccadilly and Pall Mall, contains perhaps the most concentrated collection of old-school shops and restaurants anywhere in London.

Its relative quiet, compared to the more famous streets around it, make it ideal for a stroll, soaking up the atmosphere of Regency London where dandies once shopped for the perfect cravat or headed to a louche gentleman's club for an evening of insalubrious entertainments.

Jermyn Street is protected by Westminster Council, which has pledged to preserve its famous menswear shops. But above street level and in its surrounding

streets, glamorous new homes at record-breaking prices are being developed in an attempt to lure buyers over from Mayfair and Knightsbridge.

AT FIRST GLANCE

Long, slim and lined by shops with old-fashioned storefronts, Jermyn Street gives a glimpse of what London's shopping streets must have been like before the international chainstores moved in. Sales pitches are subtle, interiors are generally panelled and cosy, and staff know their clients by name and collar size.

"Jermyn Street has got a lot of charm and character," says Charles Lloyd, a director at Savills. "It is quite traditional and the Crown Estate has invested in improving the street. There are still a lot of independent shops,

you have also got some good restaurants and a beautiful church, St James's, designed by Sir Christopher Wren."

Although Jermyn Street enjoys special planning protection there is always pressure on its independent traders. Frances, a consultancy and dealership specialising in tapestries, rugs, and textiles, is currently fighting plans for the expansion of the neighbouring Cavendish hotel which would see it removed

"In its early days Jermyn Street was almost entirely residential – it has been home to Isaac Newton, Walter Scott and William Gladstone"

from the street after more than a quarter of a century.

WHY ICONIC?

The street is named for Henry Jermyn, 1st Earl of St Albans, who developed the area in around 1663. Jermyn was a somewhat scandalous figure rumoured to be inappropriately close to Henrietta Maria of France, the wife of King Charles I and mother of King Charles II.

In its early days Jermyn Street was almost entirely residential – it has been home to Sir Isaac Newton, Sir Walter Scott and William Gladstone. But over time its houses started to be converted into shops dedicated to gentlemen's apparel making it synonymous with British fashion and, of course, George Bryan "Beau" Brummell.

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THEN AND NOW Clockwise from far left: The traditional shop fronts of Jermyn Street; the exterior of the Monseigneur Grill at number 16-17, 1936; Beau Brummell; Rodin on display at the street's Sladmores Gallery



Brummell was the classic middle-class suburban boy who dreamt of bigger things'. During a stint in the 10th Royal Hussars he managed to befriend the Prince Regent (later King George IV). Brummell rapidly realised a military life was not for him and moved to Mayfair where he rented a house and reinvented himself as a man about town, confidant of the prince and style icon. He favoured elegantly cut full-length trousers and jackets, immaculate shirts, and cravats, and is

thus credited with inventing the modern suit.

ON THE MARKET

Jermyn Street – and indeed the whole of St James's – began to see a wave of shops and offices converted into homes as a result of the international scrum for prime London property in 2010.

The market may have cooled, but Alastair Nicholson, a partner at Knight Frank, says sales are holding up well – particularly because there are plenty of pied à

terres in St James's "and the market between £750,000 and £2.5m trades well these days".

Buyers of these small apartments tend to be British or European and pay upwards of £1,800 per sq ft. According to LonRes, apartments on the street currently sell for an average of £2,695 per sq ft, making it a relatively inexpensive option compared to Mayfair – a more cosmopolitan area beloved of buyers from the Middle East in particular – where prices start

at around £2,000 per sq ft and can easily top £6,000 per sq ft.

There are some buyers, Nicholson admits, who wouldn't dream of buying into St James's. "Some people do not really know it and there is a fear of the unknown," he said. "But you do get better value for money south of Piccadilly, so there are people who are happy to consider it."

Lloyd agrees that more high-rolling international buyers are beginning to consider a move to St James's, so long >>>



THE GREAT AND GOOD Left: St James's, the church from which the area got its name; a blue plaque commemorates one of the street's famous residents

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as the property is "best in class". In recent years everyone from the Crown Estate (which recently meticulously constructed apartments on Cleveland Row) to Lord Sugar, who teamed up with interior designer Kelly Hoppen to redevelop Bennett House on St James's Street (which includes a £7.25m penthouse, available through Savills), have invested in attempts to woo these buyers.

Boutique developer Dukelease is the latest into the fray. It has recently put the finishing touches

to eight luxury apartments on Jermyn Street itself. Beau House, named in honour of Brummell, occupies the upper floors of the building, while shirt-maker Charles Tyrwhitt (David Cameron is a fan) is on the ground floor. The homes went on sale at the start of the year with Knight Frank, priced from £2m for a one-bedroom flat. The penthouse is expected to have an asking price of around £15m.

For Paul Cook, managing director of Dukelease, the appeal of Jermyn Street is simple. "It is

the depth of character, and of history," he says. "I like the idea that it is Piccadilly's more intimate, junior neighbour."

Cook concedes that the market in central London has slowed considerably over the past 24 months. "We are selling more gradually than we were four or five years ago, but we are still at the same sort of levels that we were seeing in 2005 and 2006," he says.

Beau House's competition includes St James's House, a development of eight homes

around the corner on St James's Street, overlooking the gates of St James's Palace. Residents will share a private gym, pool, and spa. These properties, POA, through Strutt & Parker are at the most luxurious end of the spectrum, which is reflected in their price.

And while houses are in short supply in St James's, Wetherell is selling a five-bedroom apartment on Arlington Street which measures an impressive 4,002 sq ft. The property, which overlooks The Ritz, is priced at £17.5m.

ON THE MARKET FOR SALE IN THE AREA



ARLINGTON STREET
£17.5M

Above the famous Wolsley restaurant, this lateral four-bedroom, five-bathroom home features a 31ft drawing room, a plant room for soaking up the sun and a staff studio. **Agent: wetherell.co.uk**



ST JAMES'S STREET
£7.25M

This two-bedroom duplex in the Bennett House development features a 29ft living room, a large roof terrace and sun room, a lift and a porter. **Agent: savills.com**



JERMYN STREET
£14M

Spanning three floors of Beau House, the stunning Brummell Penthouse has three bedrooms, each with an en-suite bathroom, and a huge roof terrace. **Agent: knightfrank.co.uk**



FED AND WATERED Clockwise from left: Franco's serves upscale Italian food; platters of deliciousness at Angela Hartnett's Café Murano; David Beckham leaves Tramp; The Princes Arcade has an exquisite selection of shops and shop fronts



CHANGING VALUES

Over the past ten years there have been 35 residential properties sold on Jermyn Street. The most expensive property sold was a 1,598 sq ft two-bedroom flat which sold in November 2013 for £3.75m. The highest price per sq ft was for a 1,100 sq ft two-bedroom flat, sold in November 2016 for £2,842 per sq ft. There are currently three flats listed as on the market on Jermyn Street.

PRICE FOR A TWO-BEDROOM FLAT 2006: £950K 2016: £2.925M
Data provided by LonRes

off-West End studio venues.

And then there are the shops. Colliers International recently named Jermyn Street London's "most British" shopping street, with 93 per cent of retailers of UK origin (in Sloane Street, by comparison, only 20 per cent are British). Gentleman's outfitters dominate (Roderick Charles, Crockett & Jones, and Hackett London to name just a few). But you can also buy bespoke scent at Floris, art at the Sladmores Gallery, or a fine selection of cheeses at Paxton & Whitfield.

Jermyn Street runs parallel to Piccadilly, with Green Park station at its western end, and Piccadilly Circus station just to the east. ■

RESTAURANTS, BARS AND ATTRACTIONS

The iconic Tramp, a members-only nightclub founded back in 1969, is still going strong on Jermyn Street – down the years everyone from Keith Moon (who once frolicked naked on its dancefloor) to Liza Minnelli have partied there. These days Lara Stone, Rihanna, and young royals are more likely to squish onto one of its velvety banquettes alongside Kate Moss and David Beckham. The club won't say how much it costs to join – but you have to be proposed by two existing members and if you need to ask you probably can't afford it.

For a light lunch, The Gallery, part of Fortnum & Mason, is a fine choice. For seafood and game there is Wiltons, a bastion of traditional British cooking and reputed to be London's second oldest restaurant (after Rules in Covent Garden). Lovers of Italian food can choose between the established and rather haute Franco's, or a funkier new arrival, Angela Hartnett's Café Murano St James's, which recently opened around the corner. Its central position means that there are two pretty Royal Parks within an easy walk (Green and St James's), plus the entire West End on the doorstep. On Jermyn Street itself there is the increasingly impressive Jermyn Street Theatre, one of London's leading