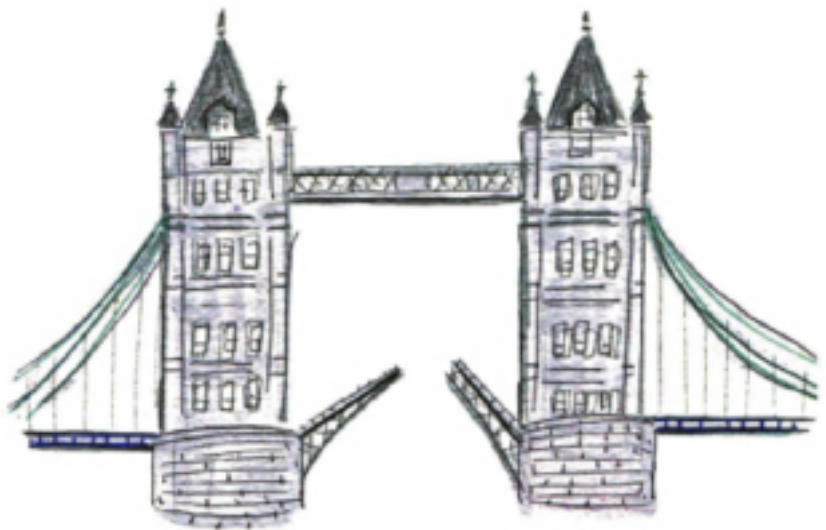
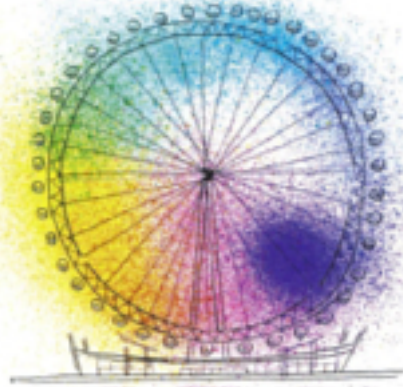


London Shopfronts



London Shopfronts

Illustrations of the
City's Best-Loved Spots

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foreword by

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of Darjeeling Express

PRESTEL

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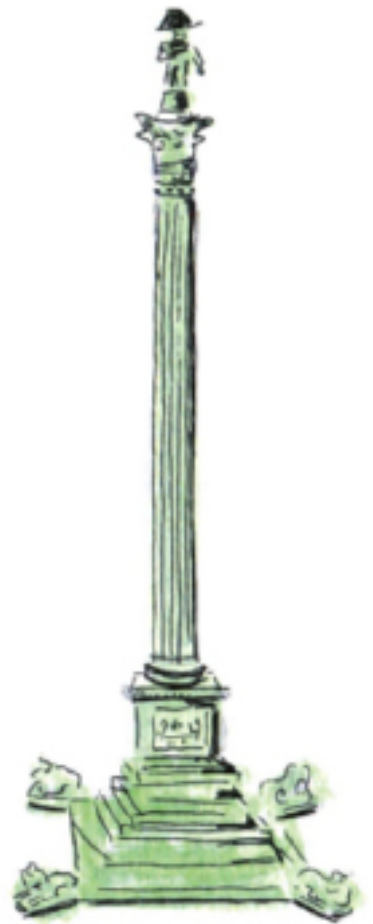
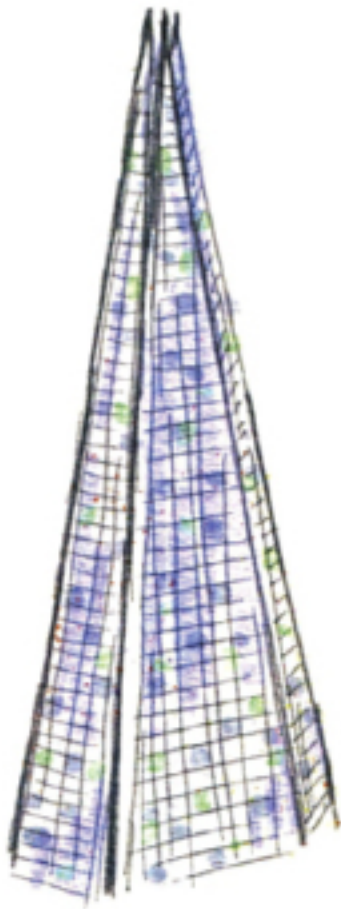


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Foreword

The phrase '*une nation de boutiquiers*' ('a nation of shopkeepers'), often inaccurately attributed to Napoleon, was used by the French in the eighteenth century to dismiss the enterprising Britons!

The transformation of Britain from a naval and commercial force to an industrial power beginning in the 1790s fuelled the growth of small businesses and shops in the capital. Fast-forward a couple of centuries and more, and present-day London is still the city of shopkeepers and fascinating shopfronts.

I feel really honoured to write the Foreword for this book, which celebrates the diversity and creativity of what is undoubtedly the greatest city in the world. From the grandeur of Fortnum & Mason to my favourite local Italian deli, Luigi's on Fulham Road, the book includes shopfronts of the great and the good, and also iconic places like Beigel Bake – the legendary bagel shop in Brick Lane which is frequented by Londoners out late at night as well as taxi drivers.

I am incredibly humbled and grateful that our restaurant Darjeeling Express is also featured. Like many of the shopfronts included in this book, we are an immigrant business celebrating the food of our homeland. Darjeeling Express pays homage to

our heritage and nostalgia, much like the vintage steam train that inspired its name. Our all-female kitchen of home cooks exemplifies the feminine energy that is inherent in South Asian cuisine. It is always women who cook at home, but it is nearly always men who cook our food in restaurants. We began our journey in 2012 with supper clubs hosted in my home, and the path to our new Soho location has been full of twists and turns!

I absolutely adore the layering in Joel Holland's illustrations featured in *London Shopfronts*. The intricate details within each drawing perfectly capture the essence of those who own, work and shop in the stores. I am left with an insatiable desire to walk through each door and experience all that they have to offer.

This book beautifully captures the essence of one of my favourite quotes about the city: 'When a man is tired of London, he is tired of life' (Samuel Johnson). Thank you, Joel Holland, for celebrating all that is vibrant and beautiful in London.

Asma Khan is a chef, restaurateur and cookbook author. She runs the acclaimed Indian restaurant Darjeeling Express and was profiled on the sixth season of Netflix's documentary series Chef's Table.

Introduction

The first time I visited London, from my home in New York City, was in 2006; I was there to prep for an exhibition of my drawings in Clerkenwell. I stayed at the posh Zetter Hotel for a few days and walked for miles (and kilometers) by myself, and with my friends Dan and Helen, checking out the city. I remember going to The Fryer's Delight, International Magic, the Columbia Road Flower Market, The Old Curiosity Shop, walking through Holland Park, and more. I loved it all: the tube rides, going to Lahore One on Commercial Road, hearing the cab drivers swear up a storm. It was so much fun seeing the parks, the signage, the food, the shoes, the energy of the history, and the people from all around the world.

One night after a drink at Bar Italia and a set at Ronnie Scott's, I ended up downstairs at Trisha's bar, aka the New Evaristo Club. Amy Winehouse's album *Back to Black* was playing. The whole album. On repeat. I felt like I was playing catch-up with the world that night, on that trip. And I loved it. London felt like this immense list of places to see and drink and dance and soak up culture.

I've been back several times since, and it's practically a different town during every visit. There are new neighborhoods to explore and old ones to check in on. There's so much on offer—like a café in an old men's room below ground, and another one that roasts their own coffee plus serves delicious wines (and also has five of my paintings on the wall!).

From world-class cheese emporia to pubs, and pie and mash shops to specialty record stores, London's shops are run by people hailing from all over the globe who work so hard every day, offering up their piece of an amazing puzzle.

My previous book, *NYC Storefronts*, came to be because I was missing all the places I couldn't visit during Covid lockdown. So I decided to draw my favorite stores, creating a love letter to walking around Manhattan. After it was published, I wanted to branch out and draw more stores in other cities that have inspired me, and the Big Smoke felt like the obvious answer. *London Shopfronts* is *NYC Storefronts*' sibling, made with the same energy but in an English accent (and is of course a little different, as it's depicting an infinite, multicultural town full of wonder). I couldn't travel there while compiling the book due to the pandemic, but luckily, journalist Rosie Hewitson and some of my friends helped me select places to include, in addition to all of my own favorites. It was so much fun "visiting" the city from afar by drawing these spots.

This book is a snapshot of London right now, showcasing cool restaurants, bars, stationers, cinemas, and so on. But the city's storied history is represented too, via illustrations of stately bookshops, umbrella stores, tailors, hatters, and more. The shops are divided by area, with separate maps for central, north, east, south, and west London. There are so many things to see—this is just a start!

Joel Holland



Note to the Reader



London is known for many things – among them, constant change. Care has been taken to provide current addresses for the shopfronts in this book, but some may have since moved or closed. Certain illustrations depict places that have permanently closed. In these cases, the old address is provided, and the text notes that the business has shuttered. Other shops changed locations after the illustration was made, during the process of creating this book. For these, the old shopfront is depicted, but the new address is provided to direct readers to the current location (to help keep it open there).

