

# QBUSINESS.



# Too much information?

THE POTENTIAL OF DATA TO TRANSFORM HOW WE LIVE HAS EXPLODED IN THE DIGITAL AGE. **JANE NICHOLLS** MEETS THE WIZARDS HARNESSING ITS POWER.

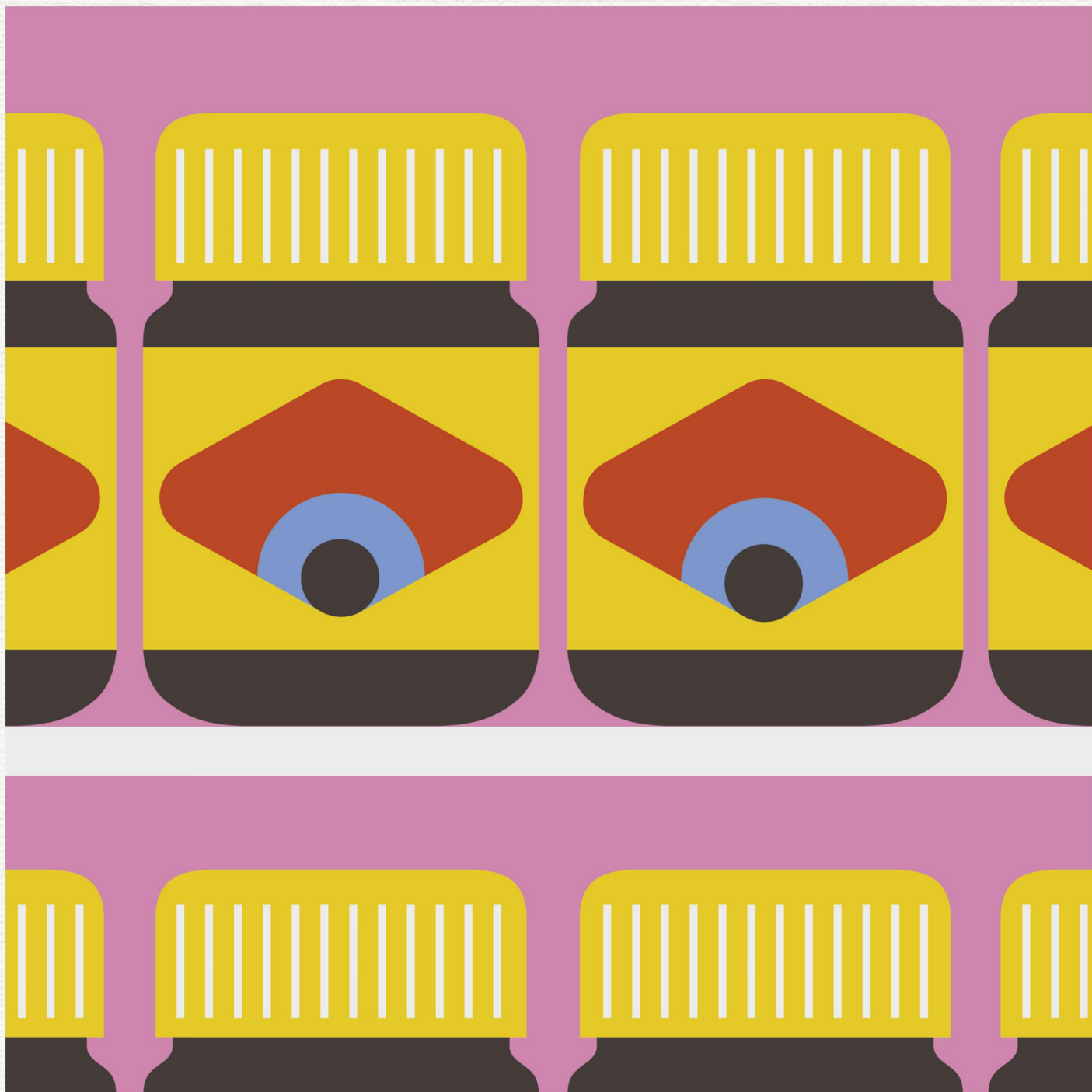
# B

BY 2020, more than 20 billion connected devices worldwide will be pumping out data, according to technology research giant Gartner. More bullish estimates push that number to 50 billion. Data is coming from everywhere: from industrial machinery, supermarket transactions, smartphone apps and car-tyre-pressure sensors. Collected, organised, analysed and processed, that mass of information is transforming how we shop, study, bank, navigate, deliberate, exercise, watch, fly, eat and sleep.

Data is in action in every conceivable industry. It can assist a rail network to optimise its timetables or a sandwich company to track trends in wrap fillings. A smartphone app helps cardiac patients on the path to recovery. Data and algorithms, the foundation of artificial intelligence, can remove the drudge work for lawyers. Image-data analysis warns grapegrowers in real time that trouble is looming in the vineyard. Consumer data and applied analytics offer businesses objective insights into what their customers want and the power to deliver it with equal precision. One Australian startup is even heading into space to facilitate connectivity for those billions of data-beaming devices.

So what can we learn from the nation's most innovative data masters? A few share their wisdom about putting data to work in brand-new ways.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY **SUE DOEKSEN**



## Analytics innovators

Quantium

QUANTUM LAUNCHED in 2002 as one of Australia's first data-analytics firms and today has customers around the globe, pioneering technology "to demystify the complex world of data" for businesses and governments.

Quantum has tackled and tested optimal pricing models, timing of snack-food promotions, shelf layouts and the return on ad platforms, from Facebook to pay TV. It also builds bespoke analytics products to help businesses and customers get the most out of loyalty programs.

One of Quantum's early-adopter clients and now part owner, Woolworths has a personalisation engine built off the back of its loyalty program. The data is so finely tuned that not only can it target offers for regularly bought products, it can also predict when an individual customer will run out of, say, Vegemite and time an offer accordingly.

"We'll score 10 million members' propensity to buy each of 10,000 products at six price points... that's 570 billion records," explains Quantum co-founder and CEO Adam Driussi.



Driussi adds that shoppers are opting in to share their data with Woolworths in return for personalised offers. The result is pinpoint-accurate, data-driven marketing that, says Driussi, businesses ignore at their peril. (If you detect a decrease in random junk mail and an uptick in offers that appeal to you, you're seeing this at work.) "I really notice when the marketing is bad," he says. "If I get emails from a brand trying to sell me something that has nothing to do with what I want, I switch off."

Personalised service, he points out, dates back to when the owner of the corner store knew your name and your favourite brands – "but that went out the window" with shopping centres. Now companies are analysing enormous tranches of data to "turn attention back to customers at scale". In 2005, Quantum had two servers and about 1.2 terabytes (TB) of storage for all its data processing. Today you can buy a 2TB portable hard drive for under \$100 and Quantum has about 1600TB of storage from a specially designed cluster of computers and software. "The computation speed we have access to today is 19,000 times faster than 10 years ago."

The advancement is "not about trying to replace gut feel", says Driussi, acknowledging that many feel threatened by the march of algorithms. "We're trying to give you more information to make your job easier and to make better decisions, because there are a hell of a lot of decisions that still need to be made by humans."

The learnings from analysing behaviours and trends for brands are also informing Quantum's work with governments and their data-analytics centres, looking at areas such as infrastructure planning, education and healthcare systems. "The challenge for governments is that they don't have a single view of citizens because their data sets are disparate and not connected," says Driussi. They need to be brought together to build a fuller picture for greater insights. On one project, for example, Quantum's data scientists are melding government data and other demographic data sets, hunting for ways to improve funding models for schools.



## Heart monitors

CardiHab

Every 10 minutes, someone in Australia has a heart attack. Surviving it is one thing but completing a rehabilitation program afterwards is their best shot at avoiding another one.

In 2015, The Heart Foundation and Ernst & Young conducted a cost-benefit analysis that estimated if cardiac-rehab completion increased from 30 to 50 per cent, the Australian health system would reap a net saving of \$191.8 million over 10 years.

But getting patients to commit to these programs is the issue. CSIRO's Brisbane-based Australian E-Health Research Centre was the cradle for CardiHab, a smartphone app that remotely monitors patients as they recover and adopt more heart-healthy habits.



Pull all your data together.  
Push your business forward.

Data Visionaries Wanted

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The project won a berth in CSIRO's competitive accelerator program, ON, and in September, Cardihab became a standalone startup, part of CSIRO's strategy to commercialise its research. "Cardihab exemplifies the combination of public good and economic outcomes that makes ON so unique," said CSIRO chief executive Larry Marshall.

The Cardihab app leads patients through their rehab program remotely, supported by clinicians over the phone. Patients manually enter data such as food, alcohol and water consumption. "We find this keeps their rehabilitation front of mind and helps them change their behaviour," says Cardihab co-founder and chief technology officer Simon McBride. If patients have Bluetooth-enabled devices to measure vitals such as blood pressure and weight, the app can collect that data. Step counts are taken off the smartphone and Cardihab is working to integrate with wearables such as Fitbit. "We want to make the acquisition of data as simple as possible for patients," says McBride.

The concept of delivering a rehab program remotely was put through a world-first randomised controlled trial, which was reported in specialist British journal *Heart* in 2014. "The trial demonstrated that we could improve uptake of cardiac rehab by 29 per cent and completion of the program by 78 per cent," says McBride. The number of patient visits to a clinic or hospital was reduced by 90 per cent and clinical outcomes were equivalent. It worked.

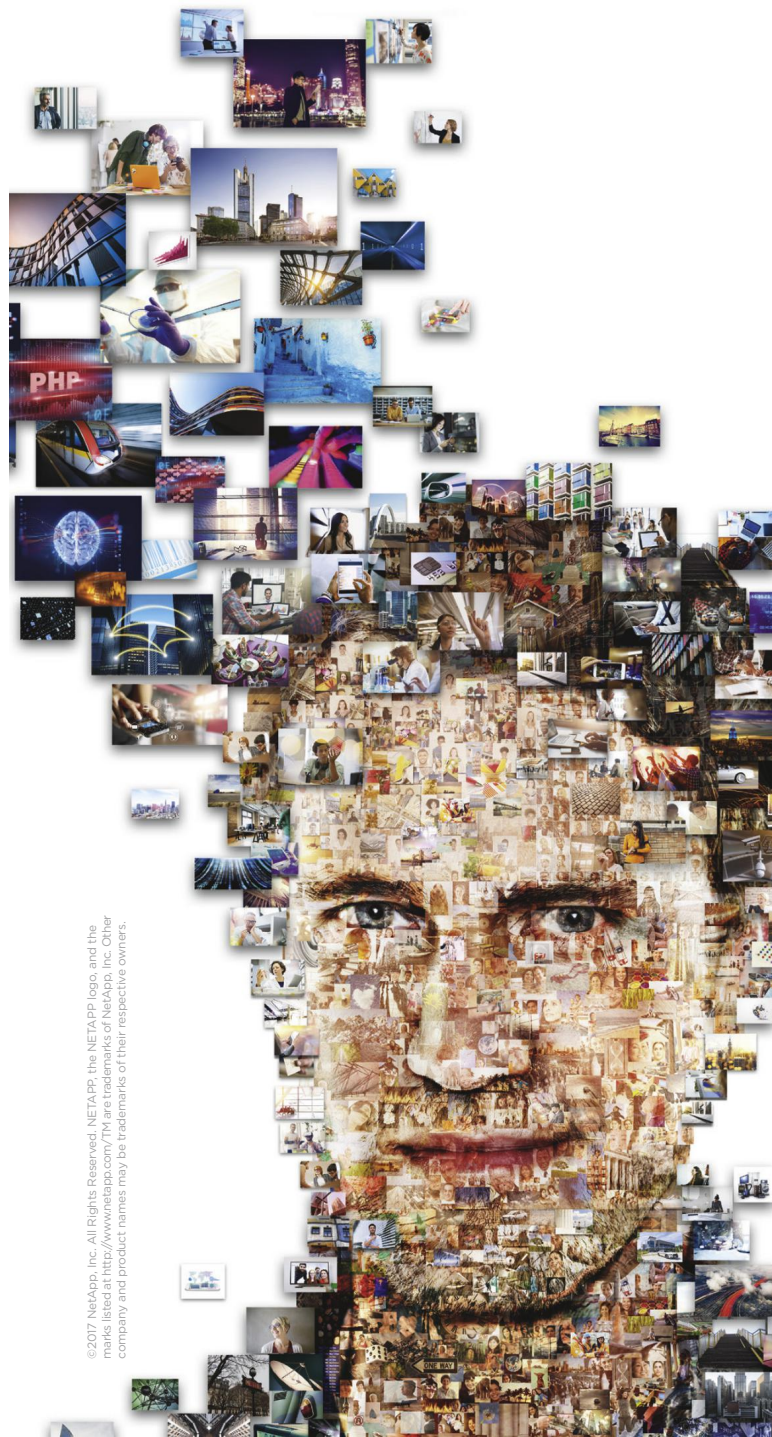
Conventional cardiac-rehab programs generally run for six to 12 weeks, monitoring physical

recovery and helping patients make lifestyle changes. But work, life and even hospital car park fees can stop patients completing (or even starting) their prescribed program. Weekly face-to-face appointments involve weight and blood pressure checks, exercise and education sessions.

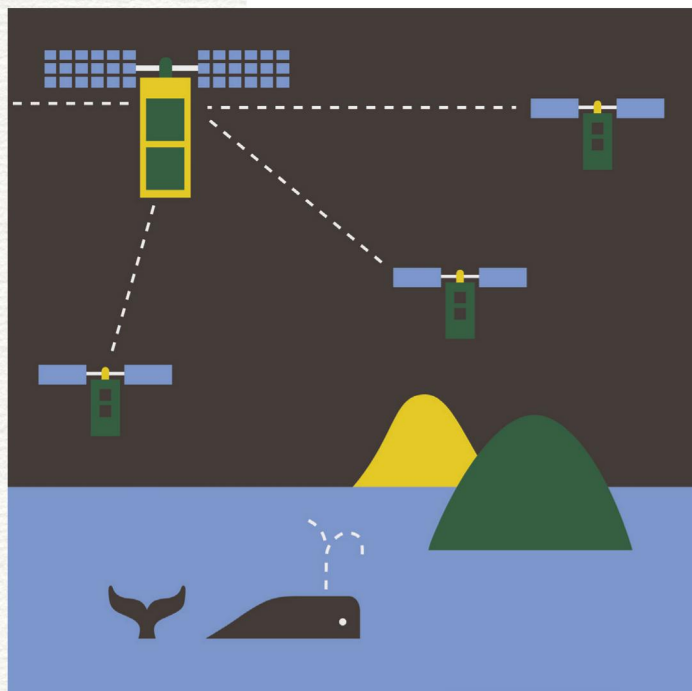
The Cardihab app collects data around all of those risk factors and includes educational videos and links, goal-setting and even relaxation audio. And, unlike a single weekly session, it's with the patient 24/7, in their phone.

"Smartphones and wearable devices are expanding the possibilities for clinical care," says McBride, who sees the potential for GPs to use a version of the app as a preventative tool for patients with red flags for cardiac risk. "The technology provides clinical-grade data and that's going to change the way care is delivered."

The key to Cardihab's success is "the combination of that high-quality data and having a human in the loop who knows how to interpret it and motivate the patient," says McBride. "We have a specific time built into the protocol for the clinician and the patient to speak on the phone and reflect on the data that's been entered over the past week. We need a human there to say, 'You've done well on this, not so well here, or you haven't put in any data here so we need to discuss how engaged you are.' So the app is facilitating conversations that wouldn't otherwise happen at all."



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## Space purveyors

Fleet Space Technologies

Fleet Space Technologies is not so much blue-sky-thinking a big-data idea as putting it into orbit. The startup, founded in 2015 in Adelaide by three space fanciers, including rocket scientist Flavia Tata Nardini, now has offices in the US and Europe. In April 2017, Fleet raised \$5 million, attracting backing from Blackbird Ventures and Atlassian's Mike Cannon-Brookes. Fleet's motto is "connect everything" and to do that it will build a network of nanosatellites providing affordable global connectivity for the Internet of Things (IoT).

The first two Fleet satellites will launch in 2018. "Our goal is to deploy 100 nanosatellites, which are about as big as a shoebox, to create a digital nervous system all around us in space for the IoT," says CEO Tata Nardini. Sensors are already collecting data from all sorts of industrial assets, from a truck rumbling through the desert to a wind turbine on a mountain range. But connecting these things, she explains, "is not a job for 3G or 4G". The goal is to connect "hundreds of millions of devices, assets, livestock... everything".

## Legal eagles

Gilbert + Tobin

Gilbert + Tobin is an independent Australian corporate law firm founded in 1988 – a relative youngster in the profession. It has its own innovation hub and recently hosted a 24-hour hackathon with Westpac and LegalVision, where more than 50 lawyers and coders collaborated on working prototypes to streamline and automate legal tasks. Already at work is the firm's Smart Counsel

app, loaded with concise answers from in-house counsel to the most commonly asked questions, such as what to do if the ACCC turns up at your office with a search warrant.

The Smart Counsel resource is available for free via email registration but G+T has applied for a patent for its verification management tool, which has transformed the painstaking process of preparing a prospectus for an initial public offering (IPO).

When a legal firm creates a prospectus for a company's IPO to list on the stock exchange, checking everything – including identifying a verification document to confirm each fact and figure – is a "hugely important but tedious job", says partner Rachael Bassil. "Believe it or not, someone sits down with a pencil and a ruler and draws a box around everything that needs to be





# Unite your data. Unify your vision.

## Data Visionaries Wanted

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Much of the planet – including developing nations, remote regions and our vast oceans – has no connectivity at all. Fleet will enable “the small-data revolution for the IoT” from the streams of data beaming from those continuously transmitting sensors. The nanosatellites will likely be launched off big satellites, piggyback-style, but there are also companies – such as New Zealand startup Rocket Lab – building rockets to deploy nanosatellites, even offering rideshare launches.

The nanosatellite concept, says Tata Nardini, was developed in 1999 in the US. The CubeSats, as they’re called, weighed just over a kilo “but with all the features of a satellite that’s as big as a car”. While old-school satellites remain large and enormously expensive, universities have been using nanosatellites for space research. “Nowadays, you can buy these satellites off the shelf, just like a computer!” says Tata Nardini.

verified in a 200-page document, numbers it, prepares a table with all the numbers and allocates it to a person. Then it’s scanned and sent to maybe 20 or 30 people, who then scan in their handwritten mark-ups. It is just a beast.”

With G+T’s verification management tool – an online portal that has taken years to build – it’s all done electronically, connecting everyone involved in the process in one place. “If something’s not right, we can easily feed it back into the prospectus; if you’re not the right person to verify something, you just reallocate it and it electronically sends it on,” explains Bassil. “Everything is automatically tracked,” she says, adding that it has dramatically reduced human errors, costs and “pain”.

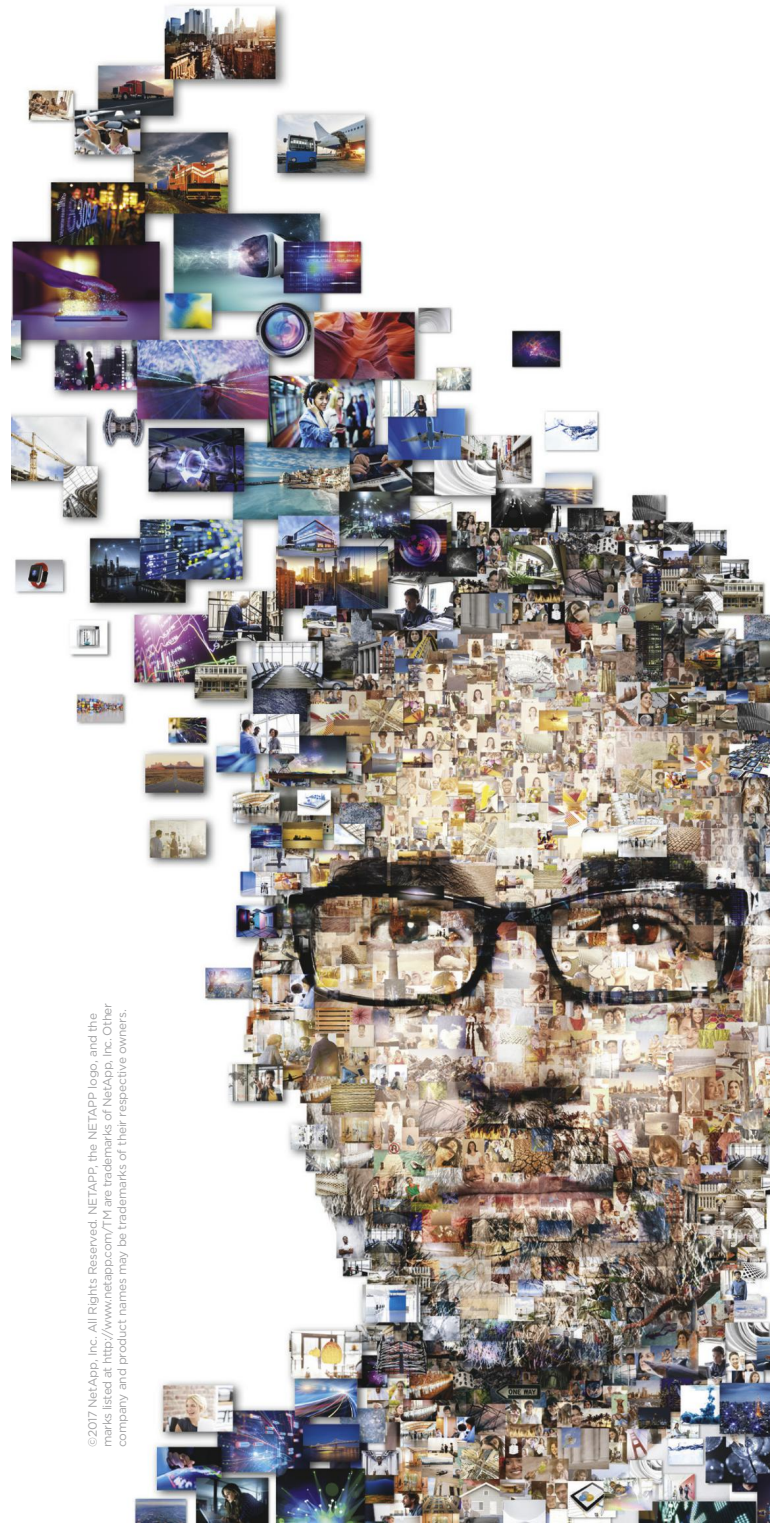
Artificial intelligence (AI) is already helping G+T lawyers review huge volumes of documents very

She believes that by giving connectivity to data from the industrial world, Fleet can help unlock unimagined efficiencies in sectors ranging from manufacturing to mining, autonomous vehicles to agriculture, logistics to electricity grids. “There’s so much waste in supply chains,” she says, “that the only way to understand what we’re doing wrong is to measure it.” It will be, she adds, a revolution in measuring everything.

Artificial intelligence, data analytics and augmented reality will all play a role in the IoT and Tata Nardini agrees that “there’s a lot of fear around the changes”. Humans, she says, are absolutely necessary “to implement the changes and help make this world a better place. I see it as opportunity, not [something to] fear. But I’m in the middle of the revolution so I’m very positive about it.”

quickly and accurately, “instead of having to rely on teams of junior lawyers to flick through hundreds of documents, looking for things”. AI tools are excellent, for example, for examining masses of similar contracts and identifying consistencies and inconsistencies.

G+T continues to automate all sorts of cut-and-paste processes around due diligence and preparing reports from ASX searches. “The human element is critical and we’re not going to be replaced by robots,” says Bassil, “but a huge amount of what needs to be done to deliver the advice to clients can be replaced by tools or enhanced by unlocking massive amounts of data. Because we work to hard deadlines, it frees us up to do more valuable things for the client.”



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## Wine boffins

The Vineyard of the Future

THE HOLY GRAIL for winemakers is fast, accurate information, from how to improve a vineyard's yield to tweaking the alcohol content of the grapes. For five years, academic institutions in Australia, Chile, Spain and Italy have collaborated on The Vineyard of the Future initiative, with China and South Africa joining more recently, collecting data on variables that winemakers are finding ever more challenging in the face of climate change. Sensors in soil, on plants, in the atmosphere and even on drones are gathering data, which is married with other big-data sets, such as historical weather records. The Vineyard of the Future team

is using it all to develop grower-friendly tools to tackle critical viticulture issues, including early detection of pests and disease, water and nutrient stress for irrigation and fertiliser management and smoke contamination from bushfires.

One tool that's already at work from The Vineyard of the Future can relieve growers of the arduous task of manual point quadrat analysis. Essentially, it's poking a rod into a grapevine to count the number of leaves, grape clusters and branches it hits then tabling the numbers and using that raw information to assess things such as irrigation scheduling. "It's really time-intensive," says international coordinator Dr Sigfredo Fuentes and it's not that accurate.

Fuentes and his team at The University of Melbourne have collaborated with The University of Adelaide to develop VitiCanopy, an app that analyses photos of the vines to perform the same task. The grower walks through the vineyard with their phone on a selfie stick, snapping photos under the vines. The app, which uses the device's GPS capabilities, instantly analyses the images for the same key indicators as manual checking. Wine Australia funded the development of the free app, which, since its release in 2015, has been downloaded more than 5000 times. "Most of the downloads are

from America and Japan," says Fuentes. "You can use it for any crop, if you change some parameters. Mostly it's being used for apple trees in America and cherry trees in Japan."

Fuentes estimates that point quadrat analysis takes 10 minutes per plant, plus another 10 minutes for the calculations. VitiCanopy does the job in seconds for each plant. Of course, development of the technology is much slower; The Vineyard of the Future team spent more than four years working on the app. "You can build an app in a day to get numbers but to see if the numbers mean something is a different story... the validation is much longer," says Fuentes. "You need to test them in different environments and countries."

Now they're working on adding features to the app, such as real-time analysis of the vine selfies to predict key facets of the ultimate harvest – for example, sugar, acid and polyphenol content – in time for growers to modify growing conditions and affect the quality of their harvest.

"We're also integrating biological sensors with the digital realm," says Fuentes. Dogs are being taught to hunt for pests and diseases in the vineyard, in much the same way as sniffer dogs are trained. The hounds – beagles, Labradors and German shepherds – are all excellent students but Fuentes says any dog can learn to wear a backpack containing a phone with an app. "They're trained to go plant by plant to find a specific pheromone or scent and they sit down when they detect their stimuli." The app registers that they're sitting and a GPS position is automatically recorded. Handlers simply follow the dogs around the vineyard. At the end, the app, which has been sending the data to the cloud in real time, generates a map of infection in the vineyard or field.

It's fast, precise and less invasive than, say, the old-style detection of the much-feared grape phylloxera. Finding the microscopic root-feeding insect requires digging a pit, excavating the roots and having them inspected by an entomologist. "It's complicated and expensive," says Fuentes, whereas dogs can detect pheromones up to 60 centimetres deep in the soil.

The only trouble is, growers can be slow to accept change. "It's a very particular culture and they don't believe much in new technologies," says Fuentes. "You need to demonstrate it in the field and it needs to be really easy to use. When they see what it can do, they're amazed." ●



PORTRAIT BY MARC NEMORIN

View from the Top

The New York-born CEO of Genworth Mortgage Insurance Australia is one of only 10 women leading an ASX 200 company – and she's determined to see that number rise, she tells **Kirsten Galliot**.

## Georgette Nicholas

**You've been in Australia for almost four years. What has been your experience of networking with other CEOs?**

That's probably been one of the biggest challenges – coming to a new country at my age and starting to re-establish that network. I tried to leverage some relationships I had through Genworth but I've also joined organisations, trying to see if they fit and, if not, finding the next opportunity to join something.

**Have you found Australia to be a boys' club?**

Whether it's here in Australia or anywhere else, it's very male-dominated from a business perspective. So many times I get invited to events or meetings and I think it's what you make of those opportunities. I try to use them as a way to promote women. Strong leadership is not gender-specific – it's about having a strong CEO.

**What reaction do you get on gender diversity?**

There's an openness to discussing it. The question is: how much support do they put behind it when they go back to their own organisations or communities? Are they really championing it? It's something I think we'll always be talking about. There are a lot of factors as to why women are not getting senior leadership roles. Certainly, if you set targets and measure against those, it gives you an opportunity to put a focus on it. But it's also about developing policies for people as they come through the workforce and have families – and that's both men and women.



**Is that the piece of the puzzle we're missing? We're setting targets but do we need to do more work on training and understanding what women need?**

Yes and some of that involves flexible working. How do we think about working flexibly? It's not just about putting a program in, it's also about educating managers and leaders about how you manage that person. It's providing broader support and leadership development around the whole topic of flexibility.

**You set a target of 30 per cent women on your senior leadership team and you're at 43 per cent. Is gender diversity an ethical issue or a business issue for you?**

I believe it's a business issue. I'm a big proponent of diversity of thought and background – it's about better business outcomes. The more you influence experience and gender in a team, the better the outcome for the business. Having come through the



CURRICULUM  
VITAE

**Age** Not disclosed

**Current role** Chief executive officer and managing director of Genworth Mortgage Insurance Australia

**Tenure** 21 months

**Previous roles** Chief financial officer of Genworth Mortgage Insurance Australia; a host of roles at Genworth Financial Inc. in the US, including senior vice-president of Investor Relations, Public Relations and Ratings Agencies and chief financial officer for US Mortgage Insurance; and, earlier in her career, a director at Deloitte

ranks and established a very successful career, I feel ethically obliged to make sure women are getting opportunities. That's why I tend to be very vocal.

**Is it sometimes hard to stick your neck out?**

It was harder when I was younger. I wasn't viewed as the most cooperative person, because I was vocal about not being on the golf course or why I didn't get invited to an event. You make a choice to stand up for yourself. Then, as you see some success, you make a choice to stand up for everyone else.

**How did you prepare your pitch for the CEO role?**

As the CFO of Genworth, I knew a lot about the business. I'd also had some pretty strong experience in the United States, being in investor relations and also being CFO during the GFC. I felt very comfortable with the technical side of things but I had to build confidence in myself that I had the leadership skills to take the business forward. I spent time focusing on how I spoke about myself; instead of using numbers, I talked about strategy, our customers and our people.

**Did you work with a coach as part of your preparation?**

I was lucky to have a board chairman [Richard Grellman, now retired] who was very supportive of me moving into the role so I had the opportunity to work with him to make that transition.

**You were acting CEO for four months. Did that feel like a four-month-long audition?**

Definitely [laughs]. You have two choices: you can either sit back and wait to be appointed – and not do anything – or you can make changes. I thought there

were some things we needed to do as a business and I went after those. The company did a global search but when you have someone who is actually in the role and making progress, that was helpful in the decision.

**Did they give you free rein while you were acting CEO?**

They did. It was "Do it and don't do it wrong" [laughs]. From day one, I was being held accountable.

**Being a former CFO must be a huge advantage when you need to rattle off numbers.**

It gave me a great base. You understand the financials of the business and the inner workings. Not many roles before CEO enable you to see the entire business but because you're reporting from a financial perspective, and even dealing with investors on your own, you become more involved in the overall business.

**How do you find the time for strategy?**

I think you have to block it in your calendar. Sometimes I do it at night, sometimes I'll do it on a Sunday morning. It's finding the time when you feel refreshed and you can spend that time thinking.

**And how do you manage stress?**

One thing I learnt, coming through the GFC, was that you could work forever and still not be done. So you have to set your own boundaries then explore things you really find interesting to make sure you're filling that bucket back up.

**What are those boundaries for you?**

I'm normally here till 6.30, 7 o'clock at night but I don't then check emails. I turn off my alerts so they don't ping. On weekends, I have one day when I don't check email.

**What about on holidays?**

I try to limit work emails to the morning and I set that expectation with everyone. I also have a really strong executive assistant; when I'm out, she can disperse emails so I can bring the stress level down.

**And how do you wind down?**

For me to rejuvenate, I need quiet time. I'm something of an introvert and I know when I need to break away and have some downtime.

**How do you deal with the pressure?**

I think I learnt that through the GFC. At the time, I had some personal challenges, too, with an ill husband [who has since passed away]. You have to keep perspective. My philosophy is that we're not perfect; we'll make mistakes. What we hope is that we're making the best decisions on the best information, views and discussion that we have at the time.

**When you started out, could you have imagined that you'd end up in the corner office?**

Not at all. I was the first person in my family to go to college. My grandmother emigrated from Ireland and had a rough life. My parents were both middle class – Dad worked in construction and Mum in a back office. I never would've thought I'd be sitting here in Sydney, Australia, as the CEO of an ASX 200 company. ●

"I WASN'T VIEWED  
AS THE MOST  
COOPERATIVE  
PERSON, BECAUSE  
I WAS VOCAL ABOUT  
NOT BEING ON  
THE GOLF COURSE  
OR WHY I DIDN'T  
GET INVITED TO  
AN EVENT."



Business Travellers' Guide

# London

STORY BY STEVE MCKENNA

LONDON HAS been a magnet for travellers since the Romans sailed up the River Thames and founded Londinium in 43 CE. Despite the political and economic uncertainty surrounding Brexit, it remains as alluring as ever – helped, in part, by sterling's post-referendum slump, which gives visitors and investors more bang for their buck in this thrilling metropolis where more than 300 languages spice the (occasionally drizzly) air.

Driven by its work-hard-play-hard ethic, London is always evolving and recently there's been a spate of five-star openings, particularly in the City, the historic financial heartbeat also known as the Square Mile. Perched beneath cloud-piercing cranes and quirkily named skyscrapers – the Cheesegrater and Walkie-Talkie – are grand Georgian-, Victorian- and Edwardian-era banks and offices, some reborn as ritzy venues where movers and shakers eat, drink, sleep and clinch deals. Work may also take you to the gleaming corporate towers of Canary Wharf, a 15-minute Tube ride east of the City.

But the coolest place to do business in London could well be Shoreditch. An artsy, gentrified district on the City's northern fringes, it's home to a hive of tech and design companies, lightened by street-food markets, boutiques and pop-up bars (one has been decorated like Donald Trump's New York penthouse apartment).

For tips on how to mix business with pleasure in England's extraordinary capital, read on...



The Ned's all-day Venetian brasserie, Cecconi's



Because of traffic, it's usually quicker to get around London on the Tube than by taxi. Five lines now operate a 24-hour service on Friday and Saturday. Stand to the right on escalators in the Tube stations.

## STAY

## Luxury

## THE NED

📍 27 Poultry, EC2R 8AJ 🌐 [thened.com](http://thened.com)

This massive 1920s Midland Bank is now London's hottest new hotel. Spread over 11 floors, with a labyrinth of buzzy public areas, it melds Jazz Age glamour with the kind of flamboyance associated with Soho House, the exclusive private club and Ned partner. The walnut-panelled counters and verdite columns have been sensitively restored and the 252 bedrooms are kitted out with Art Deco furniture. They range from cosy Crash Pads to the dapper Lutyens Suite, named after the bank's architect, Edwin "Ned" Lutyens.

**Business facilities** The six events spaces include the Grade I-listed boardroom. Catch up on emails in *Gatsby*-esque lounge bar The Vault, surrounded by safety deposit boxes.

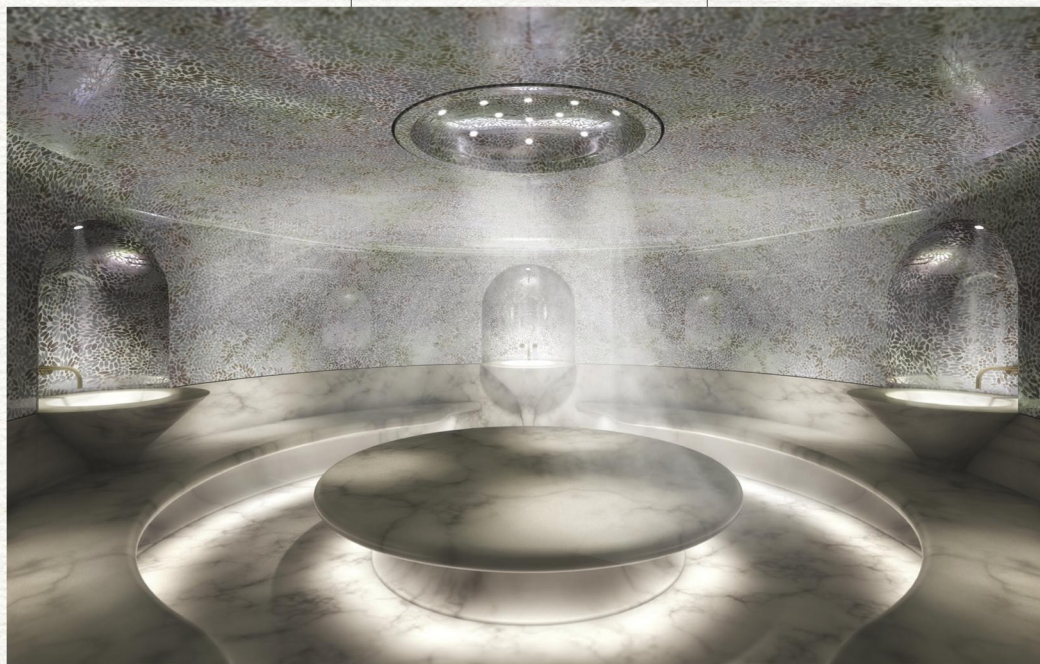
**Wi-fi** Complimentary throughout.

**Food and drink** The former banking hall has nine eateries, including Venetian brasserie Cecconi's. There's a rooftop pool bar, too.

**Fitness and wellbeing** The huge 24-hour gym has a boxing ring and cardio and strength equipment. There's a pool in the old bullion vault, plus five spa and grooming spaces.

**Run route** For an eight-kilometre riverside loop, jog to Westminster Bridge via Paul's Walk and Embankment, cross the Thames, run along Southbank and Bankside then return via Southwark Bridge.

**Coffee nearby** The Cosy Coffee Corner (King William Street, EC3V 9AN) in St Mary Woolnoth church does a topnotch flat white.



(From top) The other-worldly hammam at Four Seasons at Ten Trinity Square; The Ned hotel has breathed new life into a heritage bank



## Historic

FOUR SEASONS  
HOTEL LONDON AT  
TEN TRINITY SQUARE

📍 10 Trinity Square, EC3N 4AJ 🌐 [hotel.qantas.com.au/fourseasonstentrinity](http://hotel.qantas.com.au/fourseasonstentrinity)

Imposing Corinthian columns and a sculpture of Old Father Thames – a demigod clutching a trident, facing the river and the Tower of London – grace the façade of this white Portland-stone beauty, the former headquarters of the Port of London Authority. Converted into an elegant Four Seasons, it has 100 rooms with marble-clad bathrooms, Nespresso machines and mirrors that turn into TVs, plus bedside iPads and London-themed books (drift off while reading Peter Ackroyd's 848-page "biography" of the city). The Heritage Suites have original high ceilings, ornate plasterwork and working fireplaces.

**Business facilities** Computers, translation services and airline reservation assistance are available 24 hours. There are five

function areas, notably the wood-panelled UN Ballroom, where the inaugural United Nations General Assembly met in 1946. The ground-floor Rotunda Bar is an atmospheric workspace; from late afternoon, a pianist plays the Bösendorfer grand.

**Wi-fi** Complimentary throughout.

**Food and drink** There are three restaurants, including one helmed by French chef Anne-Sophie Pic (of Michelin-starred Pic) and Chinese and Japanese affair Mei Ume.

**Fitness and wellbeing** The well-equipped 24-hour gym has cardio machines and weights, plus there's a spa with treatment rooms, a heated pool, hammam and sauna.

**Run route** Reception has three-, five- and 10-kilometre mapped routes that skirt the Thames, taking in sights such as Tower Bridge and Shakespeare's Globe.

**Coffee nearby** Curators Coffee Studio ([curatorscoffee.com](http://curatorscoffee.com)) conjures caffeine hits near Leadenhall Market, a Victorian arcade used in the film *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*.



There's no American-style tipping culture but most restaurants routinely add a 12.5 per cent service charge to bills.

## Grande dame

### THE DORCHESTER

📍53 Park Lane, W1K 1QA 🌐hotel.  
qantas.com.au/thedorchesterlondon

The shiny Ferraris, Lotuses and Aston Martins in the forecourt hint at the decadence of this prestigious hotel that opened in 1931 and has hosted everyone from Eisenhower to Elizabeth Taylor. Radiant floral displays curated by in-house florist Philip Hammond are a sweet-scented welcome as you sashay through the marble lobby, while the 250 rooms, boosted by regular face lifts, are light and airy, with antique furniture, Bang & Olufsen electronics and bathtubs said to be the deepest of any London hotel.

**Business facilities** There's a business suite with computers and printing facilities, plus 10 events spaces, including a 1000-capacity ballroom with AV equipment and the Park Suite, where the Duke of Edinburgh held his stag night in 1947.

**Wi-fi** Complimentary throughout.

**Food and drink** The opulent orange-hued Promenade lounge serves afternoon tea, while the rear oval bar does champagne and oysters. Other fine-dining options are Alain Ducasse's three-Michelin-starred French restaurant; The Grill's Sunday roasts and sweet soufflés; and Cantonese gem China Tang.

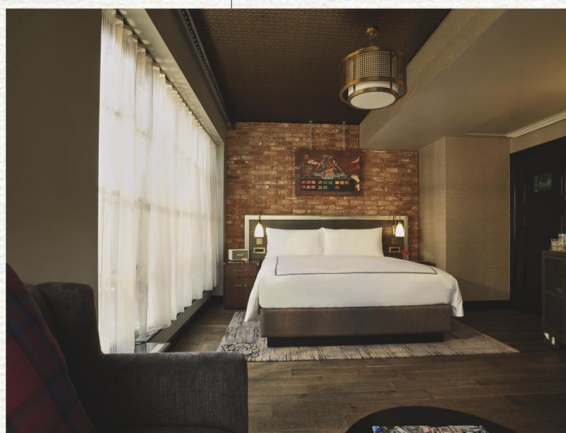
**Fitness and wellbeing** The well-equipped gym is open 24 hours. No pool but there's a spa with a hair salon, barber shop, nail bar and aromatherapy treatments.

**Run route** Take the pedestrian subway under Park Lane into Hyde Park. A circuit of the park and neighbouring Kensington Gardens is seven kilometres.

**Coffee nearby** The Dorchester has an artisanal coffee shop, Parcafé, but Élan café (elancafe.co.uk), diagonally opposite the hotel, is best for celebrity-spotting.



(From top) Salon Park Lane, Alain Ducasse at The Dorchester; one of The Curtain's Loft Terrace Rooms



## Boutique

### THE CURTAIN

📍45 Curtain Road, EC2A 3PT 🌐hotel.  
qantas.com.au/thecurtainlondon

You're just as likely to rub shoulders with creatives in jeans and sneakers as suited-and-booted types at this new Shoreditch bolthole, a trilby's throw from where the Curtain Theatre – an old haunt of William Shakespeare – stood. New York hotelier Michael Achenbaum has brought a Manhattan-warehouse vibe, with the 120 spacious rooms and suites flaunting exposed red-brick walls, Bluetooth-connected Marshall speakers and eclectic art (including depictions of toddler DJs, a gorilla playing with Rubik's cubes and David Bowie in all his pomp). The steam showers are wonderfully refreshing.

**Business facilities** You can "work" while browsing Shoreditch's fast-changing skyline from a deckchair on the terrace of Lido rooftop restaurant. The pick of the events rooms is a 42-seat retreat with a 1.5-metre, 4K screen, leather walls and sofas and a cocktail bar.

**Wi-fi** Complimentary throughout.

**Food and drink** There's a taco eatery by the lobby and an offshoot of renowned Harlem restaurant Red Rooster in the basement. Try the fried yard bird or Obama short ribs (apparently the ex-president is a fan). Live gospel music and DJs add to the uplifting atmosphere.

**Fitness and wellbeing** There's a new-smelling 24-hour gym with Life Fitness machines, plus a spa.

**Run route** The hotel's built-up environs aren't ideal for running but 1.5 kilometres north is jogger-friendly Shoreditch Park and the towpaths of Regent's Canal.

**Coffee nearby** A five-minute walk up the road, Fix 126 (fix-coffee.co.uk) has good coffee and tasty pastries.



It can rain at any time. For a bespoke brolly, head to Holborn's James Smith & Sons Umbrellas ([james-smith.co.uk](http://james-smith.co.uk)), established in 1830.

## BETWEEN MEETINGS

*A Pleasure Unknown*  
by Fin DAC on Hanbury  
Street in Shoreditch



### PARK LIFE

No other city beats London for green spaces. While tourists flock to big names such as Hyde Park and St James's Park, you'll find more peace and quiet (and leisure-seeking Londoners strolling, cycling and picnicking) in Battersea Park, south of the Thames, facing Chelsea, or in Hampstead Heath, a semi-wooded escape in north London's rolling hills.

### ART FIX

Boosted by its new 10-storey extension designed by Herzog & de Meuron, Tate Modern ([tate.org.uk](http://tate.org.uk)) continues to host acclaimed exhibitions, including a retrospective of Amedeo Modigliani's Expressionist

masterpieces (23 November to 2 April 2018). For an alternative art fix, hit the left-field galleries and graffiti-laced backstreets of Shoreditch. Guided walking tours ([shoreditchstreetarttours.co.uk](http://shoreditchstreetarttours.co.uk)) offer expert local insights.

### CRAFT TIPPLES

As well as its character-filled pubs, London has a thriving craft alcohol scene. Dubbed "mother's ruin" in Georgian England, gin has made a respectable comeback, with City of London Distillery ([cityoflondondistillery.com](http://cityoflondondistillery.com)), off Fleet Street, offering tours and tastings. Prefer beer? Many microbreweries open their doors and let you sample the hoppy goods, including Crate Brewery ([cratebrewery.com](http://cratebrewery.com)) in Hackney Wick, east London.

### STYLE FILE

Gents after a trim – or upscale aromatic oils and creams – should visit Truefitt & Hill ([truefittandhill.co.uk](http://truefittandhill.co.uk)) near Mayfair. This vintage barber shop bears a Royal Warrant issued by the Duke of Edinburgh and has, in its own words, been "grooming men for greatness since 1805" (said gents include Charles Dickens and Winston Churchill). Women may fancy an appointment at Richard Ward ([richardward.com](http://richardward.com)), a hair and beauty salon in Chelsea that has counted Kate and Pippa Middleton among its clients.

### WATER TRIPS

For perfect views of the London Eye and the Houses of Parliament, hop aboard one of the Thames Clippers catamarans ([thamesclippers.com](http://thamesclippers.com)) that ply the river, carrying as many Oyster card-clutching commuters as tourists. The Regent's Canal is another beguiling waterway. It snakes through north London for 13 kilometres and the narrowboat journey ([londonwaterbus.com](http://londonwaterbus.com)) between Little Venice, near Paddington, and Camden is idyllic.



### Local knowledge

**Tony Chambers**, editor-in-chief of *Wallpaper\**, shares five London highlights.

1. The Barbican ([barbican.org.uk](http://barbican.org.uk)), where I've lived for 22 years, is a neighbourhood worth visiting for its cinemas, theatres, galleries, gardens and Brutalist architecture.
2. One of my all-time favourite restaurants is St John ([stjohn.group.uk.com](http://stjohn.group.uk.com)), run by Fergus Henderson, a pioneer of nose-to-tail dining. Great atmosphere, consistently brilliant food and a cool bar.
3. Postman's Park, near St Paul's Cathedral, is a lovely, relaxing place with moving memorials celebrating acts of heroism by everyday people.
4. The Marksman ([marksmanpublichouse.com](http://marksmanpublichouse.com)) in Hackney is a converted old boozer that manages to accommodate a hip crowd without alienating longstanding locals. Great food by Tom Harris and interiors by Martino Gamper.
5. Bloomberg's new European headquarters ([bloomberg.com/company/london](http://bloomberg.com/company/london)) is an impressive piece of contemporary architecture by Sir Norman Foster that, along with The Ned hotel, is bringing a buzz to the City.



Buying a round (or shouting) is ingrained in London pub etiquette - good to remember when you're having drinks with British colleagues.



## WORD OF MOUTH

### Coffee pit stop

#### ALLPRESS ESPRESSO

📍 55 Dalston Lane, E8 2NG  
 🌐 [uk.allpressespresso.com](http://uk.allpressespresso.com)

You'll find New Zealand-owned Allpress across England's capital – including its original espresso bar in Shoreditch – but the capacious café-roastery in trendy Dalston is the place to head. Occupying two floors of an old joinery factory, it has a Scandi-chic wood-furnished interior and a front terrace and garden that are perfect for nursing a flat white or cold brew when the sun's shining.

### Breakfast meeting

#### DUCK & WAFFLE

📍 110 Bishopsgate, EC2N 4AY  
 🌐 [duckandwaffle.com](http://duckandwaffle.com)

Kickstart the day at London's highest 24/7 restaurant, on the 40th floor of the 230-metre-tall Heron Tower. The duck and waffle (confit duck leg, waffles, fried duck egg and maple syrup) is the signature dish but to “go local”, plump for the English-style house breakfast that includes Scottish black pudding. Reserve a table by the floor-to-ceiling windows.

### Dining alone

#### DISHOOM

📍 5 Stable Street, N1C 4AB  
 🌐 [dishoom.com](http://dishoom.com)

Set in a converted railway transit shed in King's Cross, Dishoom is a stylish modern twist on the old Irani (Iranian-style) cafés of Mumbai. Take a stool at the marble-topped bar

The elegant Céleste dining room in The Lanesborough

beneath whirring ceiling fans and a replica of the clock in Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus and tuck into fragrant dishes such as lamb biryani, masala prawns and spiced chickpea salad.

### Business dinner

#### CÉLESTE

📍 The Lanesborough London, Hyde Park Corner, SW1X 7TA  
 🌐 [oetkercollection.com](http://oetkercollection.com)

Hidden inside the lavish Lanesborough hotel is one of London's most discreet fine-dining restaurants. Expect glittering chandeliers, white tablecloths and impeccable service, with exquisite modern European and British cuisine from chefs Eric Frechon and Florian Favario, who collectively hold five Michelin stars. Paired with classic wines, Céleste's tasting menu includes native blue lobster, grilled lamb chops and halibut with Green Zebra tomato tartare.

### Drinks with clients

#### THE NIGHTJAR

📍 129 City Road, EC1V 1JB  
 🌐 [barnightjar.com](http://barnightjar.com)

Shabby from the outside (you enter through an unmarked door), The Nightjar is all basement speakeasy charm inside, with low lighting, live jazz and blues, and killer cocktails. If you haven't had dessert, try the Banoffee scotch, a creamy muddle of whisky, granola milk and banoffee curd in a chocolatey wafer cup. The Nightjar seats just 90 so book a table in advance. ●

### Flight path

## LHR

Qantas flies to London from Sydney and Melbourne, with direct flights from Perth commencing in March 2018. [qantas.com](http://qantas.com)





ILLUSTRATION BY STEVEN MOORE

The Office

## Balancing act

The dream of the shorter work week is centuries old. So how come “busy” is still code for “important”? **Evan Williams** examines the state of work-life balance.

ARE THERE three words in the English language uttered more yet followed less than “work-life balance”?

Talking to someone about their work-life balance is like speaking with them about their weight: no-one is ever satisfied and they always have an excuse. “Once this project is over, it will get better.” “Once this manager leaves, things will go back to normal.” “Once I’m in a retirement home, I won’t have to answer emails.”

But it wasn’t meant to be this way; we were all meant to have impeccable work-life balance by now.

It’s 200 years since Welsh social reformer Robert Owen announced his ideal of

“eight hours labour, eight hours recreation, eight hours rest”, which was eventually realised in the 40-hour week.

What would Owen make of our work lives in 2017? Sorry, we’d have to say, but we decided to use our eight hours of recreation to catch up on emails while catching snippets of Netflix. And those eight hours of rest? We might dip into them to update the company’s social media accounts. Lord knows what he’d think of our habit of referring to activities that aren’t work as if they are (see the phrase “life admin”).

We’d also blush in front of British economist John Maynard Keynes while talking about work-life balance.

In his 1930 essay, *Economic Possibilities for our Grandchildren*, Keynes predicted that in the future we’d work just 15 hours a week. (At this point, I should confirm that his profession was indeed economist, not stand-up comedian.)

Keynes thought advances in technology would help us work less. But technology has made it easier for us to work more.

In 2017, you can’t leave the office. It’s always with you, in your pocket. On a beach in the Bahamas? Sorry, you’ll still have to field urgent questions from Ben. “Don’t worry, it won’t take a second.” Ah, the wonders of technology.

While Keynes would be saddened to see us working more than 15 hours a week, he would find hope in some countries. In 2016, the Swedish government embarked on a bold experiment: the six-hour day. Its study of 68 retirement-home nurses who worked six-hour days on an eight-hour-day salary showed they were unhappy with extra leisure time and wished they could spend more time away from their loved ones. Just kidding.

Of course, those nurses felt less stressed and suffered fewer illnesses and their productivity improved. Best of all, working a six-hour day finally gave them time to assemble all that Ikea furniture.

Jason Fried, CEO of web-based project-management tool Basecamp, is one of a new breed of tech leaders fighting for work-life balance. He’s made headlines by working only a 40-hour week and allowing his workers a 32-hour week in summer.

“I think people use being busy as a badge of honour that they’re important,” suggested Fried in one interview.

Perhaps we can flip that badge. Let’s give a positive shout-out in meetings to Jacinta, who didn’t work when she was sick; a pat on the back for Michael, who decided not to pull an all-nighter and finish a presentation that could wait a day anyway; and a raise for Kristie, who hurled her computer into the ocean because it had too many unread emails on it. (Okay, maybe that’s going too far but you get the idea.)

So if you’re unhappy with your work-life balance, don’t wait to make changes. While Keynes was wrong about the 15-hour work week, he was definitely right when he said, “In the long run, we are all dead.” ●