



MidtownOriginals

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BORN IN MIDTOWN

With its combination of heritage meets the contemporary, Midtown attracts an eclectic mix of workers and residents.

One of the capital's most historic areas, it is home to the legal sector with the Inns of Courts and Royal Courts of Justice as well as traditional industries such as the jewellery quarter in Hatton Garden and London Silver Vaults Association.

However, as the character of the area changes, so does the demographic of its people.

Alongside the lawyers and traditional craftsman have emerged creative types from architecture and advertising as well as an emergence of a fashionable service industry, with cutting edge restaurants, hotels and shops attracting a younger crowd.

The diversity and richness of Midtown is one of its greatest strengths, and here six of these residents, all Originals in their own right, discuss what they love about the area.

'EVERYONE IS MOVING INTO MIDTOWN NOW... THIS ATMOSPHERE IS LIKE NOWHERE ELSE IN THE CAPITAL.'



‘THE SENSE OF
ANTICIPATION AND ENERGY
IS REALLY TANGIBLE’



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NICOLA FROST

Editor

The Lantern
Chancery Lane Association

What initially drew me to Midtown when I bought a flat on High Holborn in 2000 was the location – I loved the idea of being so central. It was the start of my love affair with London – it feels like the ‘heart’ of the capital. I love the theatre and it’s just a short stroll from the Donmar or the National Theatre. Fifteen years ago places in Midtown to go out and eat were few and far between but the variety soon increased. The arrival of Gymbox was a turning point, as was the blossoming of Lamb’s Conduit Street into a pocket of exclusive shops, including Darkroom, Folk and Ben Pentreath. There’s also the amazing Cockpit Arts which has Open Studios twice a year and is something of a shopping highlight.

The beauty of Midtown is how it combines the old and the new. King’s College Maughan Library is lovely and Lincoln’s Inn really reflects the history of the area; it’s easy to see why it’s a popular film

set. Charles Dickens knew the neighbourhood well, as referenced in his work, and centuries earlier it was the haunt of the Knights Templar. Chancery Lane is particularly atmospheric, with the many lanterns that line it, which is why we chose the name The Lantern for the magazine.

Midtown is undergoing something of a renaissance and I love the fact that its heritage has been preserved as it changes with the times. People are talking about a real sea change about what it means to live and work in Midtown, and with all the development along Chancery Lane, the sense of energy and anticipation is tangible. When Hoxton Hotel and Saatchi & Saatchi move in, you know you’re on the map!

Nicola Frost, PR consultant and editor of *The Lantern*, the community magazine for the Chancery Lane Association. Nicola lived in London for 20 years, half of which was spent in Holborn.

www.mychancerylane.com

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NICHOLAS KIRBY

Solicitor
Mishcon de Reya

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‘WHAT I LOVE ABOUT IT IS THE MIX OF OLD AND NEW, TRADITIONAL AND CONTEMPORARY, INDEPENDENT AND COMMERCIAL.’

Midtown has definitely evolved, and indeed, improved since I began working here in 2007; it's much cooler and not exclusively full of workers in a suit and tie! What I love about it is the mix of old and new, traditional and contemporary, independent and commercial businesses. There are a number of traditional London pubs, where you can find a quiet corner to enjoy a drink, while increasingly there are fashionable bars cropping up, which is great for mixing with those outside the legal profession.

With cool and edgy brands such as The Hoxton, Holborn moving into the area, you know the only way is up. In terms of other amenities, there is everything on your doorstep which helps as my working day can be very long. At lunchtime I can pop to the gym, stock up on a supermarket shop, do some quick clothes shopping or get my hair cut. I can also grab a sandwich from one of the big chains or from the more trendy independents such as the Holborn Grind, if I'm in a rush.

Midtown also has the advantage that it is on the doorstep of Soho, Covent Garden and the City while not suffering the drawbacks that such popular areas have, such as long queues and crammed pavements. Over-gentrification often receives a bad press but most of the changes in Midtown have been sympathetic to the area's heritage and personality, and have only had a positive impact.

The area certainly has got busier and more diverse over the last few years, but I feel it is still the natural home of the legal sector, particularly for full service firms such as mine. Clients expect you to be based in the area and it provides gravitas. As long as the Royal Courts of Justice is around the corner, it is still the heartland of law, and with the area growing in popularity, this can only be a good thing!

Nicholas Kirby is a solicitor at international law firm, Mishcon de Reya, specialising in commercial real estate. Having joined the firm nearly eight years ago, he has moved office several times, but always within Midtown.
www.mishcon.com

'DIFFERENT WORLDS AND SECTORS COLLIDE HERE, SOMETHING WHICH MAKES THE AREA UNIQUE AND INTERESTING.'

A formerly understated neighbourhood, Holborn's definitely now on the up. Its new identity is synonymous with The Hoxton hotel brand which is already established with a young, urban audience so Midtown was an obvious next location for us.

The building itself offered a great opportunity, being part listed and part non-listed, it has a really interesting heritage.

We see a real mix of people dropping in; those from local media, advertising agencies, architects and law firms join us to host meetings, coffee catch ups, general networking or coming in after-work for a drink or a bite to eat. We've identified a vibe that we call the 'Hoxton Hustle', an attitude and atmosphere created by the diversity of the people we attract, from young tech-types to lawyers that all share a mindset regardless of their background, age or profession. It's all about inclusivity, not exclusivity.

There is never a quiet evening – Monday nights feel like a Wednesday!

All of this contributes to Midtown's distinctive buzz; it's always been home to really interesting people, as well as some very successful, inspiring companies, yet several years ago, there were few places for them to play, and now with a number of cool, interesting places popping up, I think people are generally grateful for that.

The nature of our business means that we constantly see people integrating with each other, you could have an investor sat next to a young emerging fashion designer. Different worlds and sectors collide here, something which makes the area unique and interesting.

Hannah Cheston is head of Hoxtown events at The Hoxton, Holborn, which opened in September 2014 on High Holborn, and is responsible for programming the schedule for 'Hoxtown', a platform of events and information in the local area.

www.thehoxton.com/london/holborn

HANNAH CHESTON

Head of Hoxtown events
The Hoxton, Holborn



STEVEN LINDEN

Chairman

London Silver Vaults Association



'MIDTOWN OFFERS A
TOUCH OF CLASS.'



I absolutely love the area, in particular its heritage, history and its distinctive character – it's like nowhere else. Midtown was fortunate to be untouched by the Great Fire of London in 1666 and as a result has some of the oldest streets in the capital. I've seen a lot of change over the years; buildings go up, and come down but much of the renovation has been done extremely tastefully.

What Midtown offers is a 'touch of class'. It is a world away from the business of the West End, and is a really refined place to work and play. There are a number of high quality restaurants and interesting shops but without the hoards that these attract in more well-known parts of the city.

What I love is the real mix of people – from those working in the legal sector to the creative types that are moving in. A few years ago, we saw a lot of businesses move out of London, worried about rising costs, but a lot of these people are now returning; they realise that Midtown is the heart of the capital, and an ideal spot for reaching the discerning customer.

Steven Linden, London Silver Vaults Association, Linden & Co (Antiques) Ltd Steven Linden is the third generation of his family to run Chancery Lane based silverware specialists, Linden & Co. He joined the business 45 years ago straight from school and is also Chairman of London Silver Vaults Association, home to the largest single collection of fine antique silver for sale in the world.
www.silverbvaultslondon.com

When considering sites for the new restaurant, I immediately fell in love with the building we chose on Chancery Lane. Like much of the architecture in the area, it is spectacular, with its greenhouse glass ceiling and double height dining room it was ideal for our vision. There are numerous beautiful buildings in the area, and it is important to always remember to look up to take it all in!

When looking for the site, we wanted a location that we felt had future potential, in order to grow the business. The location of Midtown is a real asset, not too far from the City or the West End, but with its own individual personality and ambience.

I've worked in a number of restaurants in London, including in some of the most luxurious area,

such as Mayfair, but Midtown offers the perfect blend of heritage and cutting edge.

We mainly serve the lunchtime working crowd – primarily lawyers, but this is definitely changing, as the more media types and architects move into Holborn and look for somewhere to hold client lunches, or drop in for an after-work drink at our bar. Many of these new workers in Midtown are looking for an alternative to the area's traditional pubs for a drink, and we're certainly seeing more of these people drop in in the early evening.

Originally from Marseille, Julien Carlon chose Midtown five years' ago as the spot for his Provencal restaurant, Cigalon, where he is Head Chef. Having trained in France, he has worked in restaurants in London including Le Gavroche and Club Gascon.

www.cigalon.co.uk

'THE LOCATION OF MIDTOWN IS ALSO A REAL ASSET... (IT HAS) ITS OWN INDIVIDUAL PERSONALITY AND AMBIENCE.'

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JULIEN CARLON

Chef
Cigalon



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'THE GENTRIFICATION...
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MARK MACKELVIE & VICKY BROWN

Co-Owner

Kelvie & Brown

We opened our first salon in Midtown around 20 years ago and have witnessed massive change to the area in this time. In those days there was only a Woolworths and a cafe, now there are dozens of stylish restaurants, glamorous bars, coffee shops and retailers. The gentrification of the area has been immense, yet there is still a feeling of heritage and history. Workers and residents have a choice of the new cocktail bars, whilst they can still enjoy a traditional Fleet Street boozer with a log fire. And despite the hustle and bustle of the main thoroughfares, you can still go and enjoy a sandwich at lunch in the peace of the beautiful, landscaped squares around the legal chambers.

Everyone is moving into Midtown now and the influx of creatives has increased greatly in the past few years. We still get the bankers and lawyers and a mix of clientele during

the week but, as we are open on Saturday we also get a different type of individual – those living in the area. There have been a number of office to residential conversions and couples old and young are settling here; the extra they pay on rent they make up for with commuting-costs savings, and easy access to the nightlife of Covent Garden or Soho.

I love this area, it's a great place to run a business and I'm thrilled that it is evolving and receiving more investment. There is definitely more of a community now, with the balance between the suited city types and the more laid back creative in jeans and this atmosphere is like nowhere else in the capital.

Mark Mackelvie lives and breathes Midtown. Co-owner of Kelvie & Brown hairdressing on Chancery Lane, he has worked and lived in the area for 20 years.
www.kelvie-brown-hairdressers.co.uk

Chancery Lane Association

chancerylaneassociation.co.uk

Midtown Business Club

londonmidtown.org

The Lantern magazine

mychancerylane.com

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