



Chef conjures up a cooking show

A chef who ran the only Scandinavian restaurant in Hong Kong for nine years rustled up some tasty dishes at the opening of a new German kitchen showroom in Hampstead Garden Suburb.



Dishing up: Chef Chan Wing Kuen

Chan Wing Kuen, the former head chef at Finds, put on a cookery demonstration for guests at Kutchenhau, which is now trading in the building previously occupied by Barclays Bank on the corner of Ossulton Way and Lyttelton Road, N2. Mayor of Barnet Councillor Nagus Narenthira officially opened the showroom and its five working display areas at the event last month.

Owner James Nicholson said: "Ultimately, what I love most about my job is meeting



Fully fitted: The new Kutchenhau showroom on its official opening night. Photo Mike Coles

new people, getting to know them and what they need, and then seeing their reaction when their dream kitchen is complete."

More than a store... Farewell to a High Road favourite

By Justine Csaky

Much-loved boutique Aliya J sadly closed its doors last month. Owner Aida Khaledi has been a chic presence on the High Road, N2, since 2014, when she originally opened a pop-up shop in Rykker Kids (also unfortunately since closed).

With a loyal customer base, it wasn't long before Aida opened her own shop near Josephine's the florist. For eight years, Aliya J sold a flattering mix of well chosen, classic pieces, suitable for everything from a walk in Cherry Tree Wood to a glamorous party.

Aida recounted some favourite memories from her time in the boutique, including reminding one customer who popped in to say goodbye in the final week that she had also been her very first customer when she opened all those years ago.

For the owner and customers alike, Aliya J wasn't just a shop. Many friendships were formed over conversations about life and families, and mutual support for those who needed it. The



Close down: Aliya J owner Aida Khaledi

community nature, the feeling of space and time to chat, as well as Aida's excellent eye as a fashion stylist, meant that exactly the right piece was purchased, whatever the occasion.

The collaborative community of East Finchley was also a pull for Aida. All the neighbouring shops support each other and came together memorably for a Macmillan coffee morning that Aida organised. It raised more than £650 for the cancer charity that had been such a support to many of her shop's customers.

Unfortunately for Aliya J's customers, due in part to the shop's lease coming to an end, it felt like the right time for Aida to move on to her next chapter. With a background in accounting and her love of styling, it remains

to be seen whether it will be fashion or finance next. If you want to follow Aida's journey and keep in touch with styling tips, follow her on Facebook and Instagram @aliyajboutique

Leonardo invented contact lenses

By David Hillel, optometrist

Amazingly, contact lenses were invented by Leonardo da Vinci. He got the science right in 1508, but his ideas could not be put into practice until 1887. Contacts were not available in the UK until around 1930, becoming more popular in the 1950s and being followed by more comfortable soft contact lenses in the 1970s.

Nowadays there are so many different types of contacts that, with specialist fitting, almost anyone can wear them all day for the best eyesight possible and in comfort. They can be worn from about age eight to over 80 and have many clear advantages over specs, but also some disadvantages, so be sure to discuss them with your optometrist.

Babies and toddlers are not too young to have a proper eye

checkup. The NHS pays for the appointment, and it's not necessary to be able to read. Children seem to love having their eyes checked; it's quick, easy and comfortable, and an enjoyable experience.

If no trouble is suspected it's good to start at two years old, and younger if there is a query. This is because some eyes can grow weak but, with early attention, such 'lazy eyes' can be helped or even

cured, for life. Find out more at davidhilleloptometrist.co.uk

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RICKY SAVAGE ...

Apex predator

Every ecosystem has something at the top of the pile that sees the rest of the world as lunch. Back when Steven Spielberg invented dinosaurs there was T Rex chomping its way through the local Jurassic fauna and what was true then is true now, except they ain't scaly reptiles anymore.

Take the plains of the Serengeti, and the life-and-death struggle between wildebeest and lions. How about tigers in India on the lookout for deer or pumas stalking any mammals they can get through the South American forests?

Yes, they are all apex predators and they are all cats. Okay, big cats, but still related to the cute furry thing that sleeps next to the radiator. And when it comes to the suburban garden, Tiddles is top of the tree.

Little psychopaths

Since humans first domesticated the little psychopaths 10,000 years ago they have established themselves as the biggest threat to the ecosystem since steam trains. Well, that's what the RSPB reckon and they should know.

They claim that our soft and purring house guests kill and eat more than 2,000 different species worldwide. Or put it another way, 981 different types of birds, 431 different mammals and several hundred assorted reptiles and amphibians. Cats are each capable of demolishing several hundred small furry animals and birds each year, including the robin he brought you for Christmas.

And cats have impact, something birds know all about. Take the New Zealand Quail; it wasn't long after cats arrived that the quail had gone. Or how about the South Atlantic seabird that discovered what happens when you share a small island with a lighthouse keeper and his cat. It's just the same for the increasingly rare dormouse, heading for extinction partly thanks to our cats' taste in snacks.

So as you stroke their ears remember that you are sharing your home with an apex killer who should be collared and belled to give the rest of the creatures in the garden a chance. And be grateful that cats aren't any bigger. If Pussykins was Labrador-sized it would probably be you he was having for lunch.

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