



MOVIE NIGHT
 PLUSH CINEMA ROOMS WILL
 BE PART OF RIVERSTONE'S
 NEW SCHEMES IN LONDON

CULTURE CAPITAL

For lovers of books, art, cinema and music, there's a London home that's perfect for you, writes **Jane Slade**

The revival of London's cultural sector post pandemic is looking for support, and it is the capital's senior residents who could well be at the forefront. With a lifelong passion for the arts, they are the generation that will revive cultural hot spots, according to Mark Dickinson, CEO of Lifestory and the later-living brand Pegasus. "People want to live in London because that is their community, where their friends live," explains Dickinson. "The capital needs retirement communities. It's older people who have the money to spend in the bars and restaurants, theatres, art galleries and concert halls." Pegasus has three developments in London; Chimes at Westminster and Belle Vue and Fitzjohn's in Hampstead. Designed for culture vultures, these properties exude the character of a top London hotel with well-stocked library lounges, club rooms and in the case of Belle Vue and Fitzjohn's, a design evoking the heritage and style of such celebrated local artists as Dame Barbara Hepworth. A similar ambience is captured further south in Clapham at newly-opened Audley Nightingale Place. Communal areas are furnished with antiques and walls adorned by pictures loaned from art galleries. Tapping into the cultural passions of its owners is Audley's USP. It went the extra mile during lockdown

to nourish its live-music-starved residents by hosting bespoke viola recitals over Zoom. The recitals were performed by Caroline Harrison and Carolyn Scott from the BBC Symphony Orchestra who played each Friday free of charge to Audley's shielding homeowners. Innovation has been key to enticing lovers of art, music and literature to the capital's prime retirement villages. Last year Elysian Residences opened a library curated by Foyles at its Art Deco development The Landsby in Stanmore. This was the first time the celebrated bookseller had partnered a residential developer. They have plans to curate libraries at its future schemes establishing Elysian as a haven for book lovers. "Libraries are an important cornerstone of a vibrant community, offering visitors a place of relaxation, learning and discovery," said Elysian's CEO Gavin Stein at the library's opening by the broadcaster Sir Trevor McDonald. Culture is at the heart of LifeCare Residence's Battersea Place too. Owners have not only established an Opera Supper Club but recently staged a 'Friends with Shakespeare' event starting with a read through of *Julius Caesar* followed by watching the film at their private cinema. Art lectures are hosted by The Royal Collection, and regular outings arranged to historical houses, art ►



CHESS AND BOOKS
CHESS TABLES IN THE LIBRARY
AT AURIENS IN CHELSEA
(SEE P44) AND BELOW,
THE FOYLES CURATED
LIBRARY AT ELYSIAN'S
ART DECO LANDSCAPE
SCHEME IN STANMORE

galleries and museums (when restrictions allow).

Bibliophile resident Sarah Anderson curates the Battersea Place village library. She is the former owner of the famous bookshop featured in Richard Curtis's beloved romcom *Notting Hill*. "Every time I stepped out of the front door, there were tourists taking photographs," she recalls. "I sold the business in the 90s, but continued to run it for the new owners until 2006."

Some of the capital's retirement communities are becoming cultural hotspots in their own right. Riverstone's two schemes in Fulham (one-beds from £860,000) and Kensington (one-beds from £1.115m) have ambitions to stage live music and entertainment events and live-stream them across their developments. "These are large developments," explains Riverstone CEO Jason Leek. "Fulham will have 161 apartments and Kensington 190, so there will be between 250 and 300 people which will create a significant community that will bring it alive."

There are plans for a cinema at each village and a multi-activity space for an audience of 50-100 people. Leek also wants to build partnerships with the National Theatre and other cultural institutions.

Cinemas and grand pianos are becoming standard too. Cinnamon Retirement's Eden Court village in Battersea, comprising one and two-bedroom

apartments, is within striking distance of the bright lights of London's theatreland, Battersea Arts Centre and Royal Festival Hall. But when residents return they can enjoy live music in the piano bar or watch a film in the cinema room.

All Signature Senior Lifestyle's homes have pianos and the new ones in Beckenham, Barnet and Hendon will have a cinema and library. There are also plans to launch a Signature TV channel to broadcast performances and activities from different sites. ▶



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