



Streetwise

When did you move to this street? In 1998.

What originally attracted you to it?

Apart from being a very central location, it felt very real at the time. I was fed up with all the tourists in West London. I remember walking home from the West End, crossing the old Hungerford Bridge and there was hardly anyone walking along the South Bank. It was a forgotten spot that was still affordable. Obviously things are now very different.

How has the area changed since you've been here?

When I moved here, 'Cardboard City' [where the BFI IMAX cinema is now] was still very much in evidence. There were bonfires every night and I would often find a drunk homeless person sleeping on my doorstep. Lower Marsh has always had an interesting mix of shops. Very individual, run by eccentric owners. I'm glad it has managed to maintain its character. The market in the street has always been there but has changed in the type of things that are sold. The clientele has also changed, as more people have discovered this hidden spot.

What does the street offer the community that is unique?

There is an amazing sense of community around the area. It feels like everyone knows each other, which allows for an interesting mix of shop owners, market vendors, residents and people that work in the neighbourhood. This does not really exist in many places in London.

Tell us about some of your neighbouring hotspots.

Scooterworks (moped garage-turned-café), the Anchor and Hope (gastropub), Gramex (secondhand bookshop run by a retired architect and his wife), Radio Days (1950s vintage store), Marie's Café (a cheap Thai restaurant serving great food) and the Young Vic (theatre).

What has recently changed on neighbouring roads that has alarmed you?

I've spotted Caffe Nero and Pret A Manger appearing on The Cut, further down the road from us. This usually spells bad news, which I hope won't spread.

If you could change one thing on the street, what would it be? The multicoloured granite resurfacing that is about to be completed. They used to shoot films here all the time, but I doubt this will still be the case.

Michael Anastassiades

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With traffic roaring past it, surrounded by hideously corporate architecture, Lassco, housed in a Georgian mansion, lies like an oasis of charm in the heart of Vauxhall. This is the place to come to buy salvaged Victorian pine altars, brass door knobs and plaster pilasters, but it's also an experience to sayour - if it were a person. it would be the bewhiskered rear admiral who had had a tad too much port, speaking too loudly in a room full of accountants in Burton suits. And thank heaven for that.

Much more than an architectural salvage firm, Lassco's growing empire now stretches to a popular café at the Vauxhall site, outposts in Bermondsey and Oxfordshire, a reclaimed flooring business, and an events section that hosts everything from board meetings to ghost hunt - Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens may be gone, but this pocket of delight thankfully remains.

Gentrification might continue apace on the South Bank, but tucked behind Waterloo station lies Lower Marsh, an untouched slice of London at its most local best. Here shop owners live above their retail premises, and have done so for decades, while a street-food market feeds office workers on their lunch breaks. Designer Michael Anastassiades bought his studio-shop-living space here 15 years ago, back when crossing the Hungerford Bridge meant entering a land of cardboard cities and crumbling power stations. Since then, the area has changed as much as his house, which is now a carefully crafted living space with soaring glass walls and bespoke stairs and storage.

Downstairs is the gallery, with a display window facing the street, and a studio where Anastassiades and his team work on his own collection and recent collaborations with Svenskt Tenn and Flos, among other things. Staving independent and not thinking about work purely on a commercial basis is an important tenet of Anastassiades's production, and the symbiosis with his home is clear; his lights and mirrors were developed because he needed them in his house. The fact that other people also liked them, and wanted to buy them, turned out to be a bonus. At a visit here, guests have the opportunity to see design in real life, from the drawing board in the studio to the gallery - as real as the larger-thanlife London street outside.