

3 ENTER A CINEMATIC FANTASY WORLD

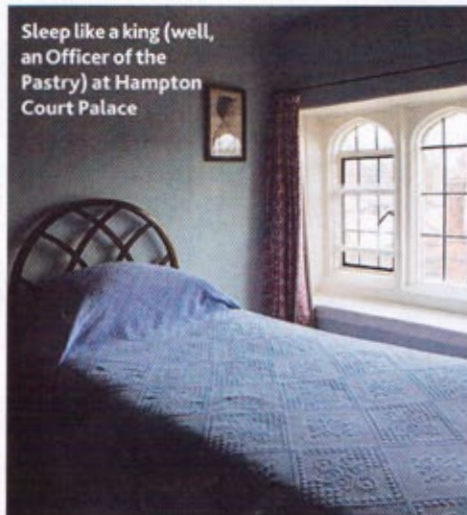
Rarely does a good night out begin with a court summons, but then Secret Cinema is no ordinary night out. Soon after turning up at a location given in a cryptic email, tonight's ticket-holders are incarcerated. In a convincing mock-up of a 1940s jail – actually a former Hackney school – a stern prison officer issues grey uniforms, and inmates begin to explore the building's dimly lit corridors. Each room offers something different, from work programmes – candle-making, cross-stitch – to an appointment with a bespectacled psychoanalyst. Beers in brown paper-bags and fat, mustard-slathered hotdogs can be bought illicitly from corruptible guards or infirmary nurses. As a feeling of comfortable institutionalisation begins to set in, someone attempts escape and prisoners are corralled into the gym. Here *The Shawshank Redemption* flickers on to the screen – a film most of the audience will have seen before, but never felt so much a part of.

● Tickets £43.50; programme changes regularly; secretcinema.org

4 STAY AT HAMPTON COURT PALACE

'The palace has a very warm atmosphere,' says housekeeper Wendy Guest as she unlocks the door to the capital's most historic accommodation. 'Its past seems to ooze out from the brickwork.' The favourite home of Henry VIII, Hampton Court Palace now houses two Landmark Trust rental properties. Fish Court, an apartment tucked beside Tudor kitchens, once accommodated the royal pie-makers. The other, The Georgian House, is grander, with a private walled garden. Guests at either get a privileged glimpse of the palace at its most peaceful, with after-hours access to the magnificent gardens and most of the courtyards. Strolling in the rose garden at dawn, where one Landmark guest proposed to his now-wife, the mind inevitably wanders to the king's own ill-fated romances.

● From £714 for a four-night stay at Fish Court, which sleeps up to six; landmarktrust.org.uk



Sleep like a king (well, an Officer of the Pastry) at Hampton Court Palace



Make like the ship's captain on your own private (and steadfastly stationary) sailboat on the Thames

5 SLEEP IN A BOAT PERCHED ON TOP OF THE SOUTHBANK CENTRE

It's as if the small vessel were left in its seemingly precarious position, teetering on the rooftop of Queen Elizabeth Hall, by a freak tsunami sweeping down the River Thames. But in fact it's there by design – a one-bedroom installation, complete with kitchenette and library, available to rent for the night. This beautifully crafted timber vessel, A Room for London, has panoramic views stretching from Big Ben to St Paul's Cathedral from its upper and lower decks, and all the amenities one might expect from a good hotel room. Inside are more surprises – a cabinet of old maps, and a logbook in which guests are invited to share their experiences of this eccentric refuge high above the hubbub. A night here really is a once-in-a-lifetime experience – despite the cost, demand for tickets is so high that they're sold only by ballot.

● £300 for an overnight stay; subscribe to the ballot at living-architecture.co.uk

6 BOARD THE TUBE IN SEARCH OF A SECRET SUPPERCLUB

As instructed by a 6pm text message, tonight's journey into the culinary unknown begins with a ride to an obscure train station in London's suburbs. A handful of conspicuously excitable passengers, clad in dress-code monochrome, are here for an evening at Gingerline – a supperclub named after the Tube map's orange-coloured London Overground, around the eastern reaches of which its ever-changing venues cluster. Tonight a nondescript residential building is the front for an alternate universe – previous themes have drawn inspiration from Vegas casinos and a mad puppeteer's workshop. At a Gingerline event, circulating waitresses are as likely to offer you an arm-wrestling match as a drink, and the theatricality extends to the food. Dishes are served around communal tables, and past highlights include a 'roulette wheel' of seasonal appetisers, and a flaming stand of brandied figs.

● Tickets £50; gingerline.co.uk