

local life

# 25

of the most inspirational  
people from Kensington  
to Kensal Rise



[mrandmrsmith.com](http://mrandmrsmith.com)

Juliet Kinsman, globetrotting editor-in-chief of the renowned Mr & Mrs Smith luxury hotel guides loves returning home to Kensal Green, so The Hill asked her to name 25 inspiring neighbours



**1 Alexandra Shulman**

Editor of British Vogue since April 1992 and Queen's Park dweller just as long, Shulman is credited for making the fashion magazine as intelligent as it is forward-looking. After all, her glossy did decree Chamberlayne Road 'one of London's coolest streets.' Famously nothing like her American counterpart's Devil Wears Prada characterisation (this is the mother who takes her son to QPR matches), 54-year-old Shulman is more likely to be spotted on the book festival circuit

than on front rows now that her first novel *Can We Still Be Friends* has just been published.

**2 Alice Temperley**

Her timeless rather than trendy feminine designs earned this Somerset-born angel an MBE for her contribution to the fashion industry. Temperley has won a dazzling amount of plaudits since opening Temperley London on Colville Mews in 2001 (where her HQ remains). Her Portobello tip? To go see what the

'real' traders have, head down at 6am on Saturday mornings. For quality time with her husband Lars Von Bennigsen and their young son Fox, she heads to their cider farm at Burrow Hill in the West Country. As a nod to those roots, she's launching a line through John Lewis this September called Somerset.

**3 Anna Richardson**

Chances are your diet's been influenced by this star of the small screen: Anna's helped develop Dr Gillian McKeith's *You Are What You*

*Eat*, analysed extreme dieting in *Supersize v Superskinny*, lost two stone and written a book about it. Her latest Channel 4 series is *Secret Eaters*. During the 12 years Richardson and partner Charles Martin have lived in Kensal Rise they've watched it "grow, blossom and now flourish." What are her nutrition and fitness cornerstones? "Fresh fruit and veg from Queen's Park farmers market and Portobello and advice from personal trainer Maciej Gross." She loves NW10 for being a hub of creative people "without the self-consciousness of the Shoreditch scene," counting muso Roger Pomphrey and actress Tamsin Greig among her neighbours.

#### 4 Claudio Ambruoso

Gourmet? Fairtrade? Organic? It's no problem for Claudio Ambruoso, manager of Coffee Plant on Portobello Road. At a time when everyone reckons they are a coffee connoisseur, the baristas working their magic on the 25 blends and roasts at Coffee Plant still blow your mind. If not with their perfect flat whites, it's with the booming dub or techno pumping in this rave-music-infused independent coffeeshop. "At Coffee Plant we like to feel like a big family," says Ambruoso. "We encourage everyone to be themselves and to add their personal touch – I think it is so important and makes such a big difference in people's everyday life, especially in a city dominated by big corporate mentality." [coffee.uk.com](http://coffee.uk.com)

#### 5 Gaby Roslin

The BBC London breakfast show presenter has been a smiling face around here all her life. Born a mile from her current Queen's Park home, she bought her first one-bed flat in a Victorian terrace in 1992. She loves how this area feels like a secret village and there are lots of independent businesses that everyone supports. The down-to-earth broadcaster hails the Silverlink overground as her favourite form of public transport and says: "We're doing the radio show from the Olympics so I'll be using the train then – a quick journey and no traffic jams." Breakfast Show with Gaby Roslin and Paul Ross, 6am–9am weekdays on BBC London 94.9.

#### 6 Gill FitzHugh

Founder of the Rugby Portobello Trust, this mum of two and grandmother of five, has lived in

North Kensington for over three decades, the first of which she taught history at North Westminster Community School. She set up the trust in 1986 to help young unemployed people into work and then in 1992 created Portobello Houseshare to support homeless young people. At this time she also took the helm of The Tabernacle and helped develop it into a Community Arts Centre and in 2003 merged them all as one happy family. Her overriding goal? "To break down the boundaries between the rich and the poor."

#### 7 Jamie Graham

Graham has been buying and selling for Graham & Green since he can remember: his mother, Antonia Graham, founded the original homewares shop on Elgin Crescent. After studying furniture and product design at Kingston University Graham has since cultivated the company from a W11 interiors and gift shop to a thriving mail order business. His appetite for eclectic furniture regularly takes him to India, where he has a villa in Goa – although he's happiest in his Kensal Green home with wife Louise, and son Max. He says: "I still see the same old faces here, and in a constantly transient city that familiarity is comforting." [grahamandgreen.co.uk](http://grahamandgreen.co.uk)

#### 8 Jill Shaw Ruddock

Postergirl for women over 50, Shaw Ruddock's book *Second Half of Your Life* guides women through post-menopause issues with uplifting interviews with Ruby Wax, Sheila Hancock and Dame Vivienne Westwood. Following its success, the former investment banker is now behind the Second Half Centre at St Charles Centre for Health and Wellbeing in W10. The American first moved to Notting Hill in 1983, raising her children here with husband Sir Paul Ruddock. "There is no place in London like it," she says. "The Acorn Nursery School is where we made most of our friends. The rest we made walking our dog Sammy."

#### 9 Jodie Anderson

The naturopath and wife of Suede frontman Brett Anderson first hit W10 in 1991, and so taken with the architecture, trees, the market, Golborne Road and such friendly people was Anderson that she has always drifted back. "It feels as near to a village as possible for central London," she enthuses. Based in Artesian Village, her healing herbs are a godsend to those with sleep difficulties, stress and anxiety and she treats lots of people with modern-day high-stress lifestyles. So it's no surprise this wonderfully wise woman's favourite local businesses are Neal's Yard for their wealth of natural, organic products and herbs, and also Portobello Wholefoods. [holisticherbalm.com](http://holisticherbalm.com)

#### 10 Erin and Davey Spens

This dynamic duo may not yet have directly enhanced your day, but without the founders of new biannual Boat magazine, our world would be a duller place. After meeting Jake Burger, the brains behind Portobello Star and the Ginstitute, they made a film about his dedication to London dry gin which lovers of the tippable can find on their website. "Trust me, his Portobello Road Gin is delicious," says Erin Spens. Another good friend is Notting Hill film director, Debs Paterson; one of BAFTA's Brits to Watch 2011, they urge you to look out for her projects. Jivita Ayurveda organic shop and spa on Chamberlayne Road is their top tip, meanwhile, for healthy living.



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**11 Jo Manuel**

The founder of The Special Yoga Centre's aim is to make yoga accessible to all, working with children with special needs, Mencap, Scope, local schools and the autistic society. She moved to Queen's Park 18 years ago, educated her kids at the local schools and has taught yoga around here throughout: "I feel part of the fabric of Queen's Park and Kensal Rise," she tells us. One thing she feels the area lacks is a really good health-food store. Her favourite local businesses? "Minkies for green tea and decaf coffee, Worldly Wicked and Wise ("such great supporters of our art auctions") and the Lexi ("I love seeing films there knowing it helps another community")."

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**12 Kay Montano**

It's not just models and actresses who glean top tips from this make-up artist extraordinaire – beauty lovers benefit from her experience via her @KayMontano Twitter feed. "I started life in Stamford Brook, grew up in Notting Hill and New York and have now settled in Kensal Green," she says, never having known as many neighbours as now. "It is the only true community I've ever lived in." Not just a pretty face, she reckons most of what you read in magazines promotes envy and low self-esteem, and her dictum is: "Celebrate what makes you special, express yourself in whatever style you wish. You are the age you are supposed to be and you are the right colour, whatever that is."

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**13 Kyri Kyriacos**

His Chamberlayne's Barber Shop is a breath of fresh air amid north Notting Hill's gentrification these days. After 12 years, just try and suggest Kyri Kyriacos trade up the chipped mugs and builders' tea to a fancy espresso machine. His no-frills barber shop remains a stalwart on the corner of Bolton Gardens and it's not just the first-class cuts for £10 that the chaps go for, it's the chitchat of politics, weather and football. "It's a great atmosphere," says Kyriacos. "Everybody knows everybody." Open Mondays to Saturdays except Wednesdays.

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**14 Martha Freud**

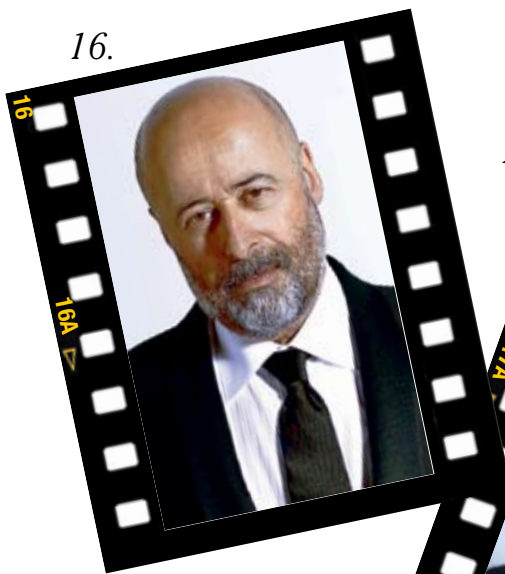
Freud designs and makes her furniture and lighting in a studio in Great Western Studios. "I work in an environment that is full of inspirational creatives: architects, graphic designers, and artists such as Kate Gibb, Liza Campbell and Olivia Musgrave," she says. Freud has always loved this area for its community of artists who moved here years ago, like her father, fresh from art school back "when it was dirt-cheap and a bit down at heel." She started working on the Portobello Road 10 years ago as a runner for her aunt and uncle (Emma Freud and Richard Curtis), and has never really left. Another champion of independent shops, she loves the likes of Lutyens & Rubinstein on Kensington Park Road and believes it's a credit to the shopkeepers and the shoppers that this manor has anything but a generic high street.

**15 Norman Jay**

The Tony Benn of the DJing world, Norman Bernard Joseph's Twitter bio 'Made in Notting Hill' says it all. Another clue to this DJ's home turf and philosophy for life was his Carnival soundsystem, the legendary Good Times doubledecker bus. The nation's authority on black music, Jay was awarded an MBE for services to music in 2002. At the vanguard of the soul and funk scene in the 70s he next helped import house music. You can catch him at glamorous venues such as the Supperclub, under the Westway, Paradise By Way of Kensal Green, or at VIP parties for veterans such as Mick Jagger and Bruce Springsteen.

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**16 Richard Young**

"I moved into the area in 1975, and have never wanted to live anywhere else," says the celebrity photographer, who has loved living in this area with his wife Susan and three children amid its tree-lined streets, beautiful squares and mix of ethnic backgrounds. Young has not only snapped Muhammad Ali to Princess Diana during his lengthy glittering career, he's helped nurture new talents. His gallery just off Kensington Church Street showcases up-and-coming photographers in a space that's free for all to enjoy. Little wonder the patron of Rough Trade, Lidgates and Ranoush Lebanese restaurant was the subject of a Sky Arts documentary directed by fellow local, Don Letts. Richard Young Gallery, 4 Holland Street W8 4LT richardyounggallery.co.uk

**17 Sally Wilton**

When this entrepreneur and Kensal Riser for over two decades sold her events business in 2008 she realised a life-long dream by opening social enterprise the Lexi Cinema. Not only has Wilton provided her local community with a quality movie theatre, she sends 100 per cent of its profits to Lynedoch Eco Village in Stellenbosch, South Africa. Having grown up in Nigeria and Belfast, she enjoys living in a community where she's raised two children and can stop and greet people on the street. Wilton particularly salutes the rallying of her street after being struck by the 2006 tornado and the subsequent street parties. 194b Chamberlayne Road NW10 3JU; thelexicinema.co.uk



**18 Shaun Keaveny**

This music-loving northerner brightens up many a morning: Keaveny presents the 6Music breakfast show. It was love that first lured the witty raconteur to NW10 in 2007 – and the delis that made him stay. "There is a general air of bonhomie about them," he says of Minkies and Kandana. "And people seem right nice." Where might you spot Keaveny? At Queen's Park sandpit with wife Lucy and sons Arthur or Wilf; having a pint with on-air sidekick, Queen's Parker Matt Everitt; in Brooks Butchers scouting for sausages; browsing Kidsen for kid's stuff or Supra for clothes. Shaun Keaveny breakfast show, 7am–10am weekdays on digital station 6Music.

**19 Sophie Merchant**

Seeking a vintage Christian Dior evening dress or an up-and-coming jewellery designer? Merchant Archive's savvy fashion edit is a welcome addition to Kensington Park Road. "There are so many great personalities in Notting Hill, and they change according to the day," says the owner. "I love Ray who sells ceramics on Golborne Road on Friday mornings, and Samir at the Grocer on Elgin has such a big cheery personality it makes him almost as addictive as the coffee." Merchant Archive has relocated from Kilburn Lane and Merchant declares the area diverse, and just like in her shop, a mix of old and new. merchantarchive.com

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**20 Richard Reed, Adam Balon and Jon Wright**

The three friends set up a fruit smoothie stall at a music festival with a sign that read: "Should we give up our jobs to make these smoothies?" Fast forward, and Innocent Drinks has become one of UK's favourite brands with 'Fruit Towers' their happy canalside home off Ladbroke Grove. Coca Cola may have a big stake now, but they've also set up the charity Innocent Foundation, which works directly with NGOs to promote sustainable farming.

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### 21 Tom Conran

Some of our most cherished local eateries come courtesy of Sir Terence's third son. When Tom's delicatessen opened in 1990 selling and serving snacks in his own quirky way it marked the start of a W11 mini-empire. Next came the Cow, his take on the perfect boozier. Two decades on many still swear it's the best spot for shellfish: he did used to run the oyster bar at Bibendum. Then came unbeatable burgers a few doors down in East Coast-style eatery Lucky Seven Diner, then taqueria tucker at his Mexican bar and restaurant Crazy Homies and via his catering service. The secret to his success? "Be generous with your time, effort and spirit. And don't forget to have fun."

### 22 Tom Hodgkinson

The Idler himself may reside with wife Victoria and three children in north Devon, but he still proselytises in these parts about finding the freedom to live the life you want. Having held a torch for Notting Hill since his mum moved to Arundel Gardens while he was at Cambridge, he hails it "a village with its own psychogeography... an independent free spirit." The bohemian entrepreneur has gone from publishing his magazine The Idler to penning bestsellers, and setting up the Idler Academy of Philosophy, Husbandry and Merriment on Westbourne Park Road. The choice of location for this salon-hosting bookseller/coffeehouse wasn't due to nostalgia, but a belief that a radical and edgy vibe still lurks among the chi chi-fying, and his academy is the thing to revive it. 81 Westbourne Park Road W2, idler.co.uk

### 23 Tony Benn

How to begin describing the teetotal, vegetarian, anti-war campaigner who was the first peer to renounce his title? Such a gent is this former Labour Party MP, he bought the bench in Oxford on which he proposed to his late wife Caroline and installed it in the garden of their Holland Park home. How has the area changed since moving here in 1952? "It has come up in the world and become more crowded – particularly since the film Notting Hill," he tells us. Also

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local are several of his grandchildren who attend Queens Park Community School, where Benn has been a speaker. No surprise the cherished west Londoner would like his epitaph to be, simply: "He encouraged us."

### 24 Vic Brotherson

After 14 years wowing us with her floral confections at Wild at Heart, Vic Brotherson moved up to Kensal Rise and got her own show on the road in spring 2006. Scarlet & Violet now colonises two chic olive-green properties populated with beautiful blooms. Brotherson is usually there conjuring creative bouquets, or finessing florals for weddings such as Kate Moss, but if you too are a fan of Bawarchi's curries or Bill Granger's restaurant, keep an eye out for her with her husband Simon and daughter Betsy. Scarlet & Violet 76 Chamberlayne Road NW10; scarletandviolet.com

### 25 Yotam Ottolenghi

The man who 'sexed up veg', Israeli-born Ottolenghi is a character we're all grateful to share our streets with. After moving to the UK in the late 90s, Ottolenghi trained at Le Cordon Bleu, progressing to head pastry chef at Chelsea's Baker & Spice and now owning four Ottolenghi outlets in Notting Hill, Kensington, Belgravia and Islington, along with restaurant NOPI in Soho. A dependency is said to have spread for his Notting Hill deli's flourless chocolate tea cakes. Pilates-obsessed and based in Ladbroke Grove, Yotam lives with partner of 10 years Karl Allen, who he believes is nearly fed up of trying all his food. Lucky him! }

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