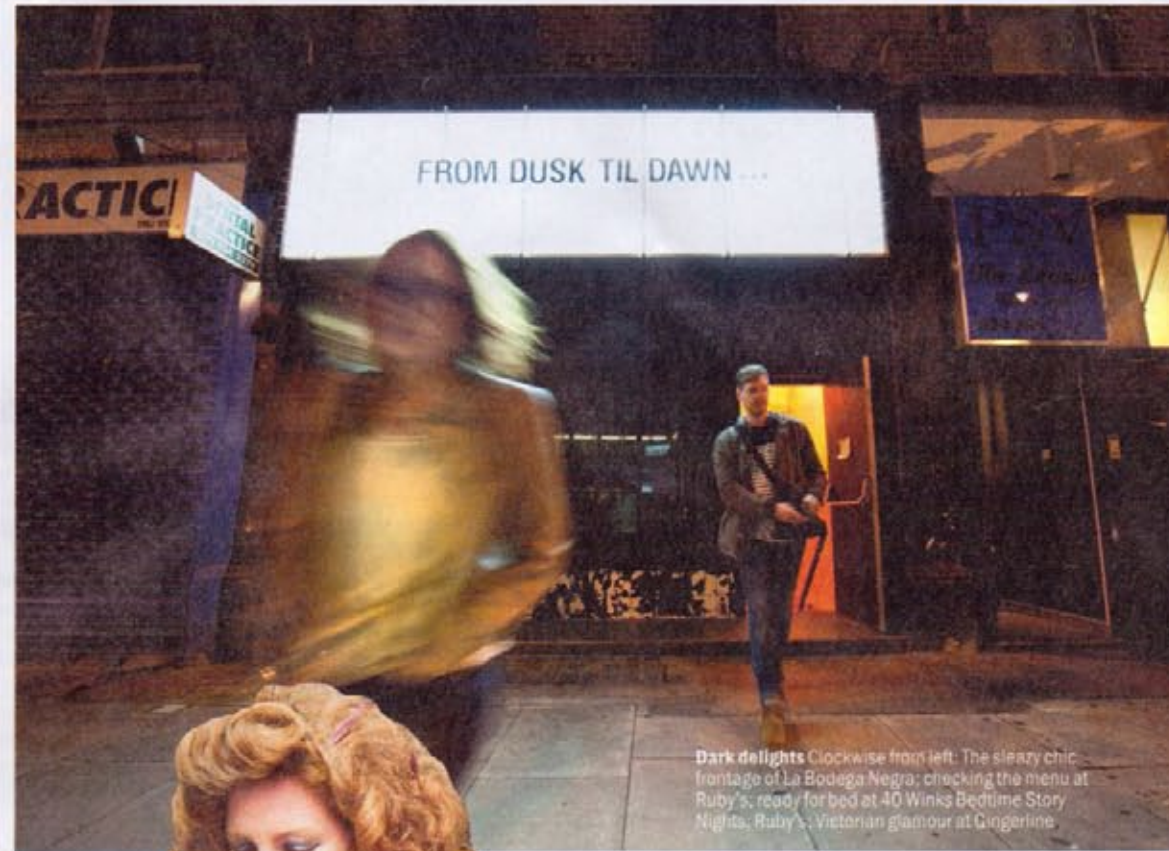


SECRETS OF THE GHT*



Dark delights Clockwise from left: The sleazy chic frontage of La Bodega Negra; checking the menu at Ruby's; ready for bed at 40 Winks Bedtime Story Nights; Ruby's; Victorian glamour at Gingerline

* It's not what you think!

As the sun sets on the city, the capital's shadowy side comes to life... So slip out of the house, turn up your collar and sample the hidden delights of autumnal London by lamplight

DRINK LIKE AN OUTLAW

The original speakeasies were illegal underground bars selling bootlegged liquor to thirsty Americans during the Prohibition years, 1920-33. Today's versions in London are retro hipster nostalgia joints with a 'secret' concept – you have to climb through a fridge door to find Shoreditch's **Mayor of Scaredy Cat Town**, book an appointment with a detective to gain entry to **Evans & Peel** (a basement bar pretending to be a private dick's office in Earl's Court) and follow signs to 'Flat P' to get into Hampstead's swish new **Dach & Sons**, run by the people behind **Purl** (the Prohibition-style cocktail



bar on Blandford St) and EC2's **Worship Street Whistling Shop**.

These bars' success isn't just down to the cocktails – it's the thrill of discovering them. And they're all great fun, though swanky joints like **Nightjar**, where drinks are topped with seashells or smoking pinecones, are more fitting if you're trying to impress someone. For a relaxed, cheaper option, try **Ruby's** in Stoke Newington, with five house cocktails served in enamel mugs or milk bottles. For more details of all these bars go to www.timeout.com/speakeasies.

DINE LIKE A VICTORIAN

Don't settle for a box of Tennessee Fried Chicken and a filthy doorway, if you want an immersive urban eating experience, get on to those creative guerrillas of gourmet, **Gingerline**. You book a date via their website, and on the night, you're given an hour to get to an assigned station somewhere along the orange-coloured East London Line. From there, a text message

THE DINER WITH MULTIPLE PERSONALITIES

La Bodega Negra in Soho (above) might look like a sex shop, but it was founded by the team behind a New York Mexican restaurant and it offers a very now, London take on a US diner. Amazingly, it's brilliant. Its two entrances just add to its louche appeal. **La Bodega Negra**, 9 Old Compton St, W1D 5NF (restaurant), 16 Moor St, W1D 5NH (café). www.timeout.com/bodeganegra

guides you to a location (perhaps a tunnel shaft, a church or an old shop), where costumed hosts produce an unpredictable dining experience. Previous sessions have included an evening themed around Angela Carter's novel 'Nights at the Circus' (complete with trapeze artist, accordion music and venison goulash), and a taste of what a nineteenth-century Christmas dinner might have been like,

hosted by Lord Ginger and Lady Line.

Dates are booked up until November 17, but sign up now for furtive festive feeding around Christmas. Various locations. www.gingerline.co.uk. **Winter Gingerline** £40-50.

GET READY FOR BED...

...with 20 other people. Tucked away near Stepney Green tube station is the tiny boutique hotel 40 Winks. It has only two bedrooms, but owner and interior designer David Carter has created a monthly nighttime arts session so that even those of us with homes to go to can enjoy the **40 Winks Bedtime Story Nights**. Storytellers, actors, musicians and singers gather, while the assembled throng in their nighties and jimjams snuggle up for a cocktail, nibbles and a show. Upcoming nights include 'Beauty and the Beast' and 'Tales to Make You Cry'. **40 Winks**, 109 Mile End Rd, E1 4UJ. www.timeout.com/40winks. Nov 14, 15; Dec 12, 13. £30 with a cocktail.



SIGN UP FOR SURPRISES

Register online with the best clandestine clubs in town for below-the-radar activities.

Secret Cinema's nights in odd locations are the worst-kept 'secret' in town, but they still delight, with live events inspired by classic films. They've got something big coming up (Oct 31-Dec 2, £45), though even we don't know what it is yet!

With the WWII-themed **Blitz Party** enjoy the pleasures of clubbing after dark, without the downsides of a real blackout (or air raid).

HIDDEN DINNERS

A collaboration between two of the city's best pop-up restaurant teams (The Clove Club and Young Turks) dishes out the goods upstairs at the Ten Bells, E1. This East End pub is notoriously linked to Jack the Ripper, but don't let that put you off your offal... **Upstairs at the Ten Bells**, 84 Commercial St, E1 6LY. www.timeout.com/tenbells