

HILARY KAY'S LONDON

How do you relax?
Occasionally, on Sundays, I visit the Serpentine Gallery, walk in Hyde park and just soak in the London atmosphere – especially in the spring and summer. When I lived in Covent Garden, we used to walk a lot. We had a car but rarely used it. In the evening we would sit in the piazza and watch the entertainers, enjoying the vibe. Sometimes, on a summer evening, we would be able to hear the opera singers rehearsing from our flat. They were very special days.

What do you miss about London?
Usually, I live in Oxfordshire. I lived in Covent Garden for many years, and I loved it. Oxford is a bit like Covent Garden used to be – it is vibrant and full of kids and interesting shops. I now spend very little time in London. My clients are all over the country, as is the BBC work. I mainly come to London now for culture and to see friends.

Do you have a favourite London restaurant or cafe?
I worked at Sotheby's for almost 25 years, and I love the cafe there. It's very small and intimate and I often run into people I know. The food is good and there is always something wonderful to look at on the walls.

What are your extravagances?
My husband and I are addicted to travel. And I love modern, unusual jewellery, using different materials – pebbles, silver, glass. I inherited quite a lot of pieces from my mother and then continued to collect them.

SOTHEBY'S CAFE: Kay's favourite



What's your favourite view?
From a helicopter hovering not very high up above the Houses of Parliament. That is truly spectacular. You can get a similar view from the top of the London Eye, but the wonderful thing about the helicopter is that you can move very slowly and look at things in depth. And it's surprising to see how big areas such as Whitehall and Downing Street are!

What would be your ideal evening out in London?
A rock concert with a group of friends – Led Zeppelin, Eric Clapton or the Stones – followed by a cheap and cheerful meal in China Town.

Why has the *Antiques Roadshow* remained so popular?
All the experts have made strides to keep it current. Also, the way the programme is made has changed: it is now an hour rather than 40 minutes, and the editing is sharper and slicker. There is a variety of pace – often a longer interview followed by several shorter ones. It is shot on HD, which almost gives the objects a fourth dimension, and the lighting really makes the objects sparkle. We film at beautiful locations too, usually stately homes.

A previous presenter, Hugh Scully, once said of it that the show is "a private conversation which is overheard by 11 million people". There is drama: the lottery-win element; the I-could-have-had-one. It appeals to lots of different sorts of viewer, including a big international following. In Australia the show is screened every night. They love the 'tea and cucumber sandwich' feeling. It's very cosy and very British.

What advice would you give to an aspiring collector?
Never collect for investment; only collect things that you are passionate about.

Member Hilary Kay joined the *Antiques Roadshow* aged 21. She worked as an auctioneer at Sotheby's for over 20 years and is now a consultant, lecturer, writer and broadcaster. She also founded a company that organises antiques-related corporate evenings. Interview by Samantha Whitaker

LONDON

What's on...

Turner and the Masters

Tate Britain
23 September 2009-31 January 2010
This exhibition reveals how Turner imitated, challenged and rivalled the works of masters including Canaletto, Claude, Poussin and Rembrandt to establish his own reputation as one of the greatest European landscape painters.
Tickets: £10.50-£12.50. Contact: 020 7887 8888 or www.tate.org.uk

The Black Album

The National Theatre
Until 7 October 2009
Hanif Kureishi's witty stage adaptation of his acclaimed novel, *The Black Album*, considers how the events of 1989 shaped a world where fundamentalism battles liberalism.
Tickets: £10-£31. Contact: 020 7452 3000 or www.nationaltheatre.org.uk

Inside Out

Sadler's Wells (Peacock Theatre)
14-31 October 2009
The Swedish Cirkus Cirkör offers acrobatics laced with style and humour. *Inside Out* tells the story of two characters whose worlds are twisted upside down when they come into contact with a company of bizarre, magical oddballs.
Tickets: £10-£36. Contact: 0844 412 4322 or www.sadlerswells.com



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