

CLASSIC DRIVER

Wilderness Festival 2012: Way Out West of England

Lead

Head west out of central London on the old A40 and you travel through Notting Hill and Holland Park. Imagine that journey time-twisted in a psychedelic blur and you soon arrive at Cornbury Park in the Cotswolds. Exhibiting the same No-Hi hipster vibe, it's the 2012 Wilderness festival.

Now including designer Wayne Hemingway's 'Vintage', Wilderness is described as "the banquet for all senses". And it does, literally, have 'banquets' (by top chefs Valentine Warner, Fergus Henderson and Yotam Ottolenghi) for pre-booking only, soon sold out and worthy of the day admission ticket alone.

Visually, the festival indulges and sears the eyes in equal measure. The 'Bad Art Salon' exhibition invited festival-goers to judge the exhibits as 'good' or 'bad'. A fluorescent dot is the mark of shame or fame; in the end the honours were probably even.





There was a 'Cinematic Spectacular', too – from the creators of 'Secret Cinema', Future Cinema presented the “biggest splurge fight ever” when it showed *Bugsy Malone* in the open-air cinema.

The festival stage – and let us say right now that this is not primarily a *music* festival – showcased bands such as Rodrigo y Gabriela, Wilco and Cloud Control. Elsewhere in the quintessentially English country house venue, music was everywhere: from the 'bandstand' to the main stage, to the vintage American station wagon dragooned into vinyl DJ duties at Vintage ('I'm Not Your Steppin' Stone' by the Sex Pistols, surely a Hemingway favourite?), music was in the air.







Unobtrusive yet well-chosen, the vibes at Wilderness proved a fitting backdrop to summery revels in the countryside.

A Midnight Masked Ball, presented by The Old Vic, was a “clandestine cavalcade into the Wychwood Forest”, while younger visitors could enjoy cricket organised by Bearded Kitten, fun from the Roald Dahl Museum and the Bushcraft Company’s Overnight Camp.





Ah, yes, camping. Set among 100s of ancient oak trees, the campsite (with its own 'family area' for those seeking peace and calm) catered both for campers bringing their own equipment, and for less hardy types choosing to go the 'boutique camping route', renting a tent from the organisers.

Either way, for one day or the whole long weekend, Wilderness 2012 was, like, totally amazing. And one for the Classic Driver calendar in 2013? Right on. Totally.



Photos: Classic Driver / Benjamin Eagle

Gallery

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