

In and around...  
Little Venice  
Picturesque  
location is an  
inspiration

After attracting and inspiring artist and poets alike over the centuries this fashionable area has become ever more desirable. Natasha Higgins takes a boat trip to see why.

“There would be nothing to make the canal of Venice more poetical than that of Paddington, were it not for its artificial adjuncts” wrote Lord Byron, the English poet, in the early 1800s. And so began the first comparisons between the southern Italianate part of Maida Vale and Venice itself.

The point at which the Grand Union Canal and the Regent’s Canal meet at Blomfield Road became officially known as ‘Little Venice’ in the 1950s. Around this time, the area grew increasingly fashionable with its large detached and semi-detached stucco fronted villas and literary figures such as Christopher Fry, the playwright, and Elizabeth Jane Howard, the novelist, made it their home.

The canal, woodland and greenery in this picturesque location has indeed attracted and inspired artists for centuries – Paul Verlaine’s 1874 poem ‘La rivi re dans la rue’ or ‘The river in the street’ describes the canal. Robert Browning, the Victorian poet, famously lived at 19 Warwick Crescent from 1862 until 1887 and Katherine Mansfield, the celebrated writer, stayed at Beauchamp Lodge (now 2 Warwick Crescent) from 1908 till 1909.

Over the years Little Venice has become ever more desirable and in the early 1970s, from a barge on the canal at Blomfield Road, entrepreneur Richard Branson started his Virgin empire.



Beauty in motion: The Regent’s Canal

“Today Little Venice attracts European buyers, young professionals working in the City, musicians and actors,” explains Philip Green, director of Goldschmidt & Howland.

Peter Brown, Director of Vickers, asserts: “Apartments in the prime locations are achieving in excess of £1,000 per square foot and some up to £1,300. Family houses are more”.

Green adds that price per square foot in the area can be anything up to £2,000.

The most desirable roads in Little Venice are “Randolph Road, Randolph Crescent and Randolph Avenue, Warrington Crescent, Clifton Gardens, Sutherland Avenue and Blomfield Road. Most of these have communal gardens which are highly sought after,” says Tony Gambrill, Area Director at Chesterton Humberts.

Brown says the Crescent gardens – Randolph Crescent and Warrington Crescent – are probably the best known and especially sought after by families. “All the other communal gardens are equally impressive with their own identities. The properties with access to them carry a premium.”

Nearby up and coming areas? “Maida Hill (just north west of Maida Vale) or Queen’s Park,” says Gambill.

“Maida Vale is more reasonably priced providing more accommodation



Raoul’s Cafe: Has gained a longstanding reputation with local residents

for the money,” states Green.

Brown believes that properties off the communal gardens are worth considering as are in some of the better streets close to Maida Vale tube. The Maida Vale mansion blocks are increasingly popular.”

In rental terms, Sarah Nathan, Lettings Director at The Estate Office Lettings says that tenants in the area are mainly working professionals and families who are drawn to the communal gardens that some of the buildings enjoy.

Nathan adds that in terms of architecture: “Little Venice is characterised by long streets lined with mature trees and beautiful old white stucco houses and terraces. Most of the period buildings are multi-storey with large windows and many have well maintained front gardens, adding an air of elegance and exclusivity to this little corner of London.

And of course, who can forget the house boats that line the canals!”



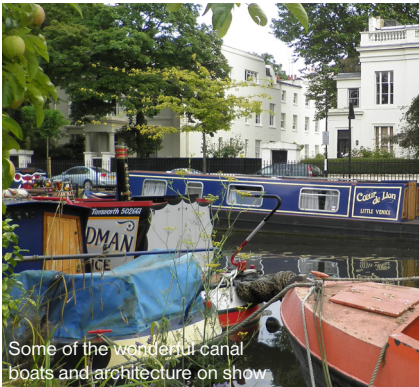
Cafe Laville: Sit back, relax and enjoy unique views of the canal



Baker & Spice: Great for morning pastries and lattes



Stunning local architecture: Randolph Avenue and Randolph Road (left)



Some of the wonderful canal boats and architecture on show

together to enjoy a catch up at any of the popular establishments in this small enclave.

There’s a surprising number of cafes and restaurants to choose from. **Raoul’s Cafe** on the corner of Clifton Hill and Lanark Place has gained a longstanding reputation with local residents. Food ranges from a Smoked Salmon Blini starter to a main of Chargrilled Baby Chicken and a Caramelised Lemon Tart for dessert.

Further down the road are **Baker & Spice** – great for morning pastries and lattes, and **Vicki’s** – the ultimate all-day cafe where the odd celebrity might be spotted enjoying a plate of delicious Fishcakes with Salad.

Last but not least, a final gem in the area are **Rembrandt’s Gardens**. This picturesque spot overlooks the canal and is a relaxing green space in which to spend an afternoon reading or resting while basking in the sunshine.



Warrington Crescent, W9 £699,950  
Goldschmidt & Howland 020 7289 6666  
An exquisite apartment on the first floor of a Stucco fronted period building. Interior designed to the highest specification, it offers stylish living accommodation, a fabulous reception room/ kitchen and a spacious private balcony.



Clifton Gardens, W9 £1,795,000  
Chesterton Humberts 020 7286 4632  
A stunning three bedroom apartment set on the top two floors of this imposing period conversion. Finished to a very high standard, it comprises a fantastic reception room, master bedroom, an en suite bathroom and a kitchen.



Warrington Crescent, W9 £565,000  
Vickers Estate Agents 020 7289 1692  
A well proportioned, two bedroom, top floor apartment in a converted, stucco fronted Victorian terraced house. Retaining many attractive features and with access to a roof terrace with views over communal gardens.

Keen to explore the area? Here are some ideas...

Little Venice is one of the most relaxing spots on London and the ideal place to spend a sunny day. A good starting point is **Cafe Laville** on Edgware Road at the north end of Blomfield Road. This little restaurant will get you in the right mind set with its unique views overlooking the canal and its colourful narrow boats. The cafe itself serves a wide range of dishes from an English breakfast for £6.90 to Linguine with Crab Meat, Rocket and Fresh Tomatoes.

Next up should be a walk along Little Venice’s celebrated **Blomfield Road** where you’ll catch a glimpse of the area’s lovely Italianate white villas. **Randolph Road**, just off Blomfield, also has some stunning detached properties which are well worth having a peak at.

Further down Blomfield Road is **The Summerhouse** – an open air restaurant on the Grand Union Canal that has a holiday-like feel. Enjoy a glass of rose, a snack or one of the exquisite fish dishes while overlooking the water before hopping on to **Jason’s Canal Boat** which comes directly to the restaurant to pick people up. This memorable journey will take you on a 1 hour and 30 minutes round trip along the Regent’s Canal. There is a live commentary and the views of the London Zoo are some of the best!

Once back in Little Venice, head back down Blomfield Road and take a left into Clifton Gardens until you get to **Clifton Hill** at the junction of **Randolph Avenue**. This hot spot is full on ‘chi chi’ and if weather allows, designer sunglasses and bags will be all the rage as the trendy W9 crowd get

GET BOOKING

Cafe Laville

020 7706 2620 [cafelaville.co.uk](http://cafelaville.co.uk)

The Summerhouse

020 7286 6752 [thesummerhouse.co](http://thesummerhouse.co)

Jason’s Canal Boat

020 7286 3528 [jasons.co.uk](http://jasons.co.uk)

Raoul’s Cafe

020 7289 7313 [raoulsgourmet.com](http://raoulsgourmet.com)

Baker & Spice

020 7289 2499 [bakerandspice.uk.com](http://bakerandspice.uk.com)

Vicki’s

020 7289 6399

Rembrandt Gardens

[westminster.gov.uk/my parks/parks/rembrandt-gardens](http://westminster.gov.uk/my parks/parks/rembrandt-gardens)

LOCAL AGENTS

Goldschmidt & Howland:

[g-h.co.uk](mailto:g-h.co.uk) 020 7289 6666

Chesterton Humberts:

[chestertonhumberts.com](http://chestertonhumberts.com) 020 7286 4632

Vickers:

[vickersestateagents.com](http://vickersestateagents.com) 020 7289 1692

The Estate Office:

[estate-office.com](http://estate-office.com) 020 7266 8500

Marsh and Parsons:

[marshandparsons.co.uk](http://marshandparsons.co.uk) 020 7993 3050