

## Area Focus: The Serpentine, W2

By Jo Caird

**WHY?** Summer is the ideal time to take advantage of the leisure, culture and food and drink opportunities around this lake, which sits in the centre of Hyde Park.

**WHEN?** The park is open 05.00-00.00 daily, with all its attractions open seven days a week. Hire boats until sundown and swim until 18.00. See [royalparks.org.uk](http://royalparks.org.uk) for more info.



### 1 DIVE IN

A swimming area was first opened on the lake's southern bank in 1930 and the **Serpentine Lido and Paddling Pool** (left) is still a lovely place to cool off, swim some laps or sunbathe. There is a child-friendly paddling pool and modern changing facilities, so although the swimming itself will bring you close to nature, the whole experience remains a civilised one.

☎ 020 7706 3422.

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

### 3 GRAB A BITE

**The Serpentine Bar and Kitchen** serves breakfast, lunch and dinner with an Anglo-Italian feel and offers a gorgeous view of the lake. Full meals and snacks are available, as well as a good selection of beers and wines. The building was designed in 1965 by the modernist architect Patrick Gwynne; its roof resembles a bird in flight, beautifully complementing the restaurant's surroundings.

☎ 020 7706 8114.

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

LANCASTER GATE STATION



### 2 DIVINE DESIGN

Catch an exhibition of the work of German-born photographer Wolfgang Tillmans, which is running **until 29 Aug** at the **Serpentine Gallery** (p. 64).

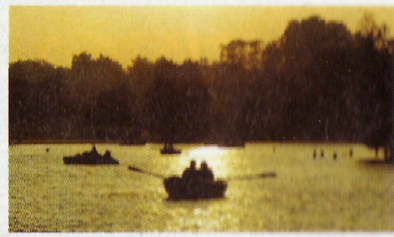
This year is the 10th anniversary of the gallery's annual Pavilion commission and Jean Nouvel's astonishing red structure (above) is suitably celebratory. Drop in for a snack in the café or for one of the *Park Nights*, a series of public talks and events running throughout the summer (dates TBC).

### 4 AHOY!

If you fancy taking to the water but prefer to stay dry, then **Bluebird Boats** provide the ideal solution. Hire a row boat or pedal boat, or take a trip on Solarshuttle, the UK's first solar-powered ship. Boats are available to hire throughout the day, and the Solarshuttle runs approximately every 30 mins.

☎ 0207 262 1989.

[solarshuttle.co.uk](http://solarshuttle.co.uk)



### 5 PLAYTIME

If the kids have still got energy to burn after all the swimming and boating, don't despair as there is a well-equipped **Playground** just east of the Lido. Bigger kids (those 60-years-old plus) might enjoy the park's new **Senior Playground**, a £40,000 facility featuring fitness equipment specially designed to help older people get the most out of exercising outdoors. This 'play area' is the first of its kind in London.



### 6 FIT FOR A PRINCESS

The **Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fountain** was opened in July 2004, following her death in a car accident in 1997. It was designed with the Princess in mind: her openness is echoed by the three bridges which allow visitors to access the heart of the fountain; the two directions of flow represent the happy and difficult aspects of her life. It cost £3.6 million to build.

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