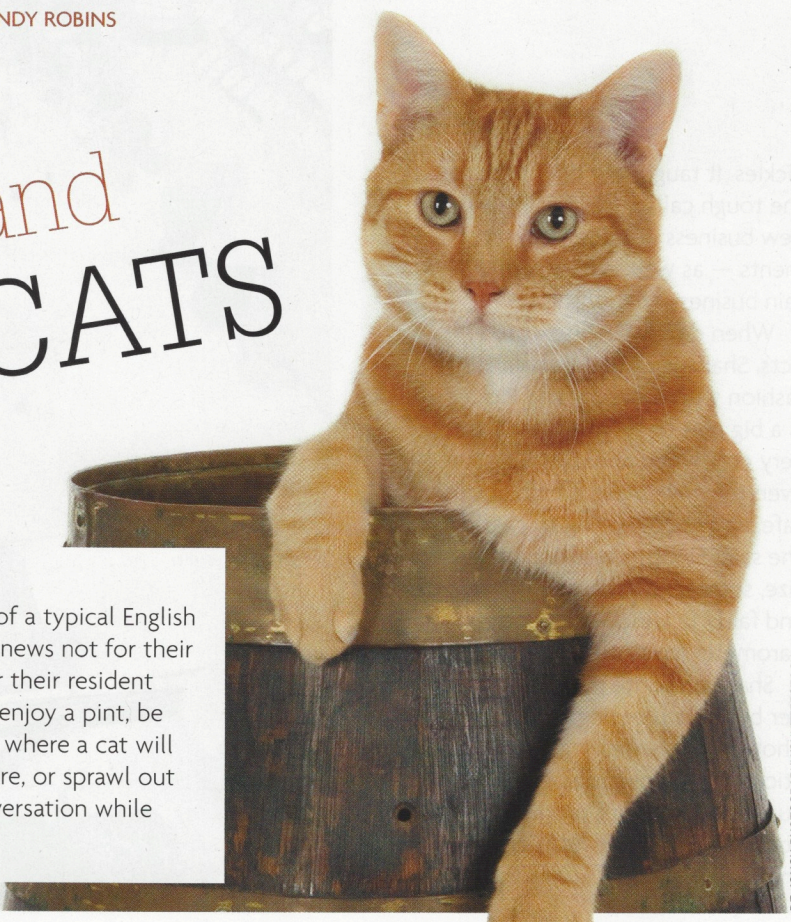




PINTS and PUSSYCATS

There's nothing quite like the atmosphere of a typical English pub. Lately, British pubs have been in the news not for their handcrafted ales or delicious grub but for their resident cats. So next time you visit Britain and want to enjoy a pint, be sure to seek out a feline-friendly establishment where a cat will greet you at the door, sit on your lap by a log fire, or sprawl out on the bar counter eavesdropping on your conversation while soliciting pats and chin scratches. Check out these furry favorites.



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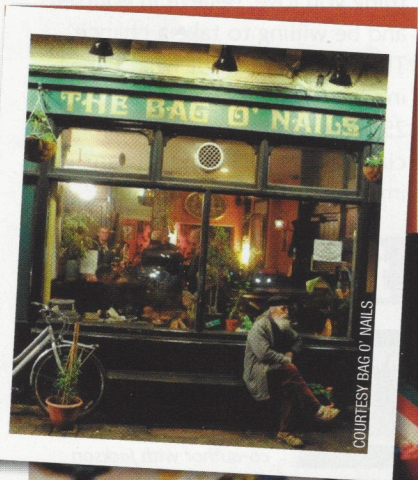
The best customer-to-cat ratio is without doubt at the **Bag O' Nails**, a tiny establishment in Bristol that seats 30 customers at any one time and has 15 cats and

kittens to keep them company. "They are very much at home everywhere, and sometimes it's hard to find a place to sit," said owner Luke Daniels. All the resident felines were born in the pub. Luke, who has owned the pub for four years, said he always wanted a cat. A friend presented him with a silver tabby with ginger flecks named Malcolm. Then a stray cat turned up and stayed. Luke named

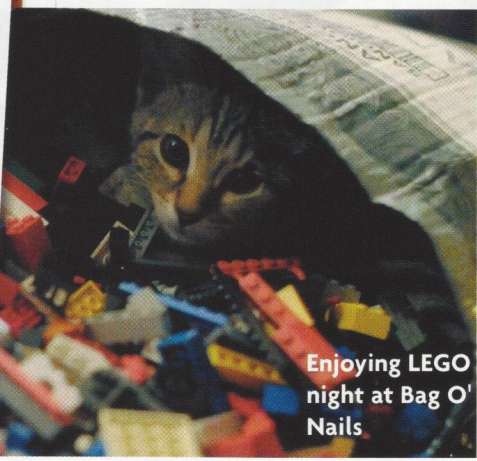
him Beresford after a former landlord of the pub. "She had a litter of five kittens," Luke said. "We adopted two of them out to pub regulars and kept the remaining three. They in turn produced litters, and the numbers grew." Luke has had fun naming them after beverages, such as Absinthe, and ancient Romans like Tiberius, Nero, and Caligula.

He is currently controlling the number of feline residents, and all his cats have been spayed and neutered. The pub is famous for its game nights, and Lego building is a favorite. "I bought a whole big box of vintage LEGOS from a charity shop, and now we hold weekly LEGO nights on Thursdays," Luke said. "For some reason, the cats love sleeping on Legos as much as they like to sleep in boxes on the bar counter."

According to Jay Macey, the manager at the **Pelton Arms** in Greenwich, one of the reasons many

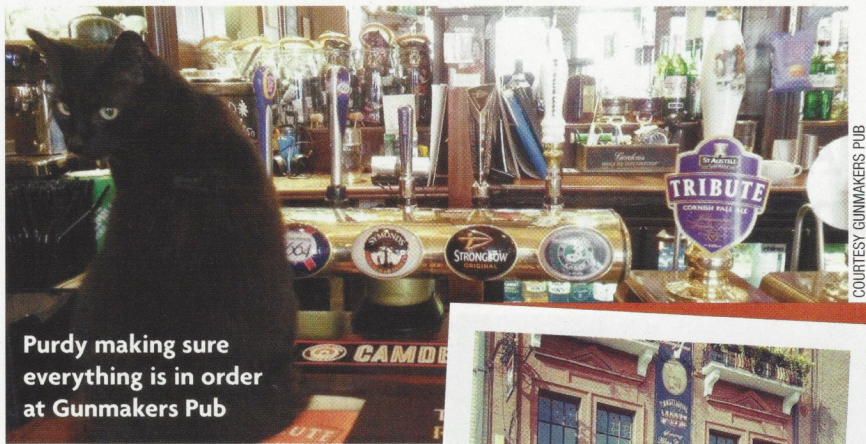


COURTESY BAG O' NAILS



Enjoying LEGO night at Bag O' Nails

COURTESY BAG O' NAILS



Purdy making sure everything is in order at Gunmakers Pub

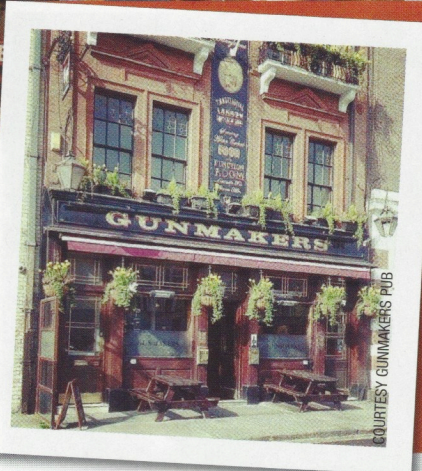
COURTESY GUNMAKERS PUB

pubs have felines is because cats are tax deductible. They are listed on a British tax return as “pest control.”

Many English pubs date back over 200 years or older. No doubt, back in the day, having a resident mouse catcher was viable pest control. These days, there is no mousing work for resident black cat Salem, but he hasn't lost his hunting skills and occasionally goes off and finds mice in the neighborhood which he brings back to the pub.

“He's definitely not bringing them to us as gifts,” Jay said. “He's very proprietary about his catches.”

While Salem



COURTESY GUNMAKERS PUB

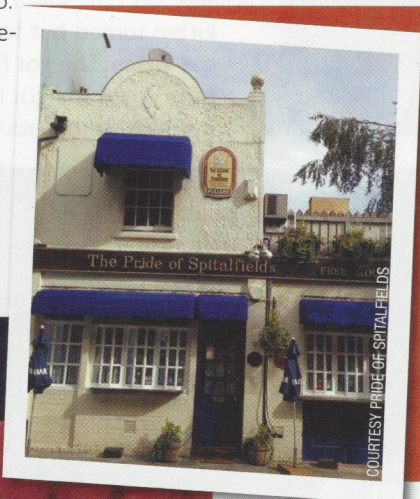
has a large fan following and loves everyone, he has his favorite customers and is the self-appointed

muse for a writer who comes in regularly. When he sees him, Salem immediately climbs on his lap and stays there while he writes.

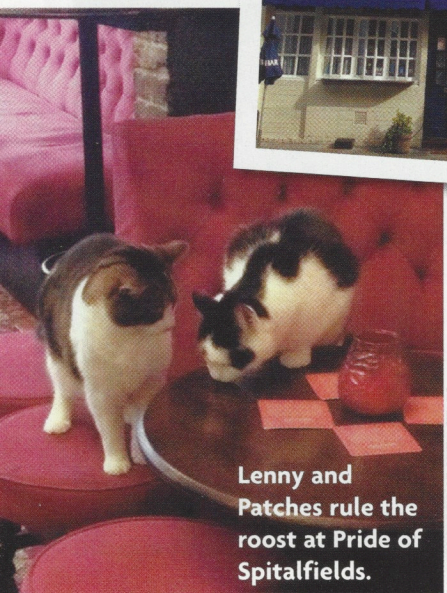
The pub is known for its Sunday roasts, and Salem gets to partake of this weekly tradition. And every Christmas, he is given his own place at the table.

The Gunmakers

Pub also has a black cat. (Black cats are considered good luck in England.) Purdy can be found snoozing on a sofa at any time of the day or night. According to the



COURTESY PRIDE OF SPITALFIELDS



Lenny and Patches rule the roost at Pride of Spitalfields.

COURTESY PRIDE OF SPITALFIELDS

staff, he considers himself a pub “decoration” and prefers to snooze rather than interact with guests.

Over at the **Pride of Spitalfields**, cats Lenny and Patches rule the roost. Both were adopted from a local animal rescue organization. Patches tends to gravitate to quiet out-of-the-way places when the pub gets busy. But Lenny has earned himself the nickname The Governor, as he likes to wander around greeting customers and supervising the staff behind the bar. It's not uncommon to find Lenny on the counter overseeing the ale taps.

The Blind Beggar in the heart of London's east end is famous for its resident felines, Edward and Henry, as well as its very colorful history. It was here that on March 9, 1966, gangster Ronnie Kray shot and murdered George Cornell, an associate of a rival gang, as he was sitting at the bar.

In 1865, William Booth preached his first open-air sermon outside the Blind Beggar, which led to the establishment of the East London Christian Mission, later to become the Salvation Army.

British pubs have wonderful handcrafted beers and ales and a reputation for wholesome food. Be sure to inquire about their specialties. Cheers!

- BAG O' NAILS**
141 St. George's Road
Hotwells, Bristol
- THE PRIDE OF SPITALFIELDS**
3 Heneage St.
Spitalfields, London
- THE GUNMAKERS PUB**
33 Aybrook St.
Marylebone, London
- THE BLIND BEGGAR**
337 Whitechapel Road, London
- THE PELTON ARMS**
23-25 Pelton Road
Greenwich, London



Ziggy (pictured) and Fudge “work” as feline muses for Sandy Robins, an award-winning multimedia pet lifestyle expert and pet industry personality. They have helped “write” three books, including *The Original CAT FANCY Cat Bible* (I-5 Press, 2014). When he is not lying on her desk blocking the computer screen, Ziggy likes to play fetch with his toys and direct food operations in the kitchen. Learn more about Sandy at sandyrobinsonline.com.