

globetrotter

SEBASTIAN COX SPILLS HIS MARGATE SECRETS

british furniture designer and craftsman Sebastian Cox set up his award-winning workshop studio in London, making bespoke fine furniture and homeware with a nature-first perspective. We caught up with Sebastian, who now has a home by the coast, as he settles into life in Margate, Kent.

First things first, best time to visit?

Covid permitting, seaside towns around the UK suffer from seasonal trade, so a stay in Margate outside of summer helps the businesses here hugely. Unlike a lot of coastal towns, much of Margate is open year-round so a visit off-season can be just as rewarding, with spectacular sunsets and windy walks, followed up by a cosy meal in one of its amazing eateries.

Where to go for a drink? Kent is becoming really known for its wine. A crisp glass of North Downs white from Little Swift, a wonderful wine bar right by the main sands, is pretty unbeatable.

The buzzy table to book in advance? Angela's, on The Parade, between the Old Town and the main sands, is exceptional and was recently awarded a Michelin Green Star. Sustainable seafood with Kent's best produce and natural wines in a cosy bistro. I have frequent dreams about their turbot and bisque with roast potatoes. See if you can sit around the back for a super cosy experience. If you can't get into Angela's, it has a sister restaurant called Dory's on the seafront, serving small plates of the same impeccable quality.



Sebastian Cox



Little Swift wine bar



Turner Contemporary art gallery



Margate harbour and sea at sunset



Dory's seafood bar



Dome in the Shell Grotto

The shop you couldn't be without?

Margate has plenty of vintage shops and there's a fun architectural salvage place called Scott's, but if you want to bring home something literally made of the sea, head to Haeckels and splash out on some mind-blowingly innovative skincare products.

Where is great for the 'gram?

The painter JMW Turner visited Margate to paint, claiming 'the skies over Thanet are the loveliest in all Europe'. If you're lucky enough to be in Margate on a day that gifts a 'Turner sunset' over the sea, you'll be posting sunsets all the way home.

Best gallery?

It would be remiss not to mention the Turner Contemporary. This gallery is really the institution that set Margate on its recent gentrified trajectory. I remember spending time here around its opening in 2011 and the anticipation of the change it might bring to the town was, well, the talk of the town. A decade on and it's clear that art can revitalise a place. As well as its sea-oriented architecture and varied exhibitions, it has a brilliant gift shop, too.

App to download before we travel?

If you're curious like me, you'll want a ship tracking app like FleetMon. There can be dozens of ships anchored off the coast, and it's fascinating to know where they're from and what they carry.

Don't leave without visiting?

Shell Grotto. It's the most baffling set of underground caves, decorated with 4.6 million shells. Discovered in 1835, nobody really knows who built it, or why.

FEATURE YVETTE MURRELL PHOTOGRAPHS (TURNER CONTEMPORARY ART GALLERY) ADY KERRY/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; (MARGATE HARBOUR) KEN LLOYD/STOCKIMO/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; (DORY'S SEAFOOD BAR) AMS IMAGES/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; (DOME IN THE SHELL GROTTTO) HELENITA/STOCKIMO/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO