



THE FESTIVAL SPIRIT

Who needs mud and crowd crushes, when space, community and an unobstructed view of the stage are on offer? This year, festivals have gone back to their roots, with word-of-mouth parties hosted in the gardens of some old duffer's ancestral home. Of course, big gigs have big line-ups, and Leeds, Reading, Rockness, Hifi and Oxegen are all on the muso's hit list

55 GNAOUA FESTIVAL Morocco, June 22-25. Follow the trail of bongos, dreads and chillums around the seaside town of Essaouira for Morocco's four-day Gnaouan music party. Think African drums, desert guitars and vocal melodies from descendants of sub-Saharan slaves (www.festival-gnaoua.co.ma).

56 TAPESTRY GOES WEST Wales, June 30-July 1. London's arty scene migrates to South Wales for the Tapestry Club's summer party. Alongside before-they-were-famous acts, including Field Music and Brian Jonestown Massacre, you'll find scenesters dressed up as Maid Marians, Vikings, plague victims and knights. If that's not escapist enough, there are also coach trips to the beach (£37.50; www.tapestryclub.co.uk).

57 EXIT FESTIVAL Serbia, July 6-9. Held inside the fortress at Novi Sad, next to the Danube. Expect an unjaded, hip-hungry crowd of Eastern European beauties devouring four nights of indie and techno. This year's line-up includes Franz Ferdinand, Morrissey, the Cardigans, Nick Warren, Suzanne Vega and Pet Shop Boys (£52; www.exitfest.org).

58 PORT ELIOT LIT FEST Cornwall, July 21-23. Not all festivals are about getting wasted to rock music. Port Eliot is about getting wasted to book readings, in the grounds of the Earl of St German's estate. London literati — Zadie Smith, Hanif Kureishi, Ekow Eshun, Hari Kunzru — provide middlebrow accompaniments to apple champagne and real ale (£80; www.portellotilifest.com).

59 THE BIG GREEN GATHERING Somerset, August 2-6. Those who hanker after the good life — compost toilets, mung beans — will find it here in the Mendip Hills. Music is high on the agenda, with folk, reggae and full-on tribal dance. But if you're hoping for help in trancing out, think again — "The only things taken in excess should be love, peace, joy and friendship," say the organisers (£95; www.big-green-gathering.com).

60 BURNING MAN Nevada, August 28-September 4. It's extreme audience participation at this one-week-only dreamscape in the desert. As well as flaming art installations, guerrilla music, naked weddings and group hugs, expect an endurance test in self-sufficiency — "Burners" must bring food and water, as well as a party piece (£139; www.burningman.com). NB: Hard-up hippies go to Nowhere, the European spin-off in Zaragoza, Spain.

61 CALVI ON THE ROCKS Corsica, July 13-16. This is the summer weekender for cool Parisians. Base camp is the beach, with private houses and anchored gin palaces providing the summits. The 500-strong crowd includes Favela Chic, Neneh Cherry (with new band Cirkus), Hot Chip and James Murphy. *Vraiment un festival bijou* (£25; www.calviontherocks.com).

62 THE SECRET GARDEN PARTY Cambridgeshire, August 18-20. No longer a secret, this "garden party gone mad" returns to DJ Head Gardener's family pile for more champagne- and Pimms-fuelled posh people's naughtiness, including skinny-dipping in the lake, DJs playing from tree houses and pass-outs in hammocks. Music comes courtesy of the Infadels, the Chalets, Robots In Disguise and Lily Allen, Keith Allen's daughter (£97.20; www.secretgardenparty.com).

63 THE ELECTRIC PICNIC Ireland, September 1-3. Held in the leafy estate of Stradbally Estate, just outside Dublin, with music from Yeah Yeah Yeahs, Devendra Banhart, Antony & the Johnsons and Belle and Sebastian, as well as fringy treats, including Lost Vagueness's burlesque cabaret, a silent disco and beach huts (£122; www.electricpicnic.ie).

64 BESTIVAL Isle of Wight, September 8-10. Radio 1 DJ Rob da Bank rounds off the summer with spirits running high. Silliness is encouraged — with a facial hair competition (for men) and a circus-themed fancy-dress parade. And the music? Scissor Sisters, the Mystery Jets, Hot Chip, John Martyn and Rob's DJ mates (£115; www.bestival.net).



The Secret Garden Party