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TOD'S

the aesthete

Art adviser, collector and dealer **Dominique Lévy** co-founded the international Lévy Gorvy gallery, which represents the likes of Yves Klein and Frank Stella



My personal style signifier is a piece of jewellery – a wearable sculpture, really – from my grandmother, by the artist César, to whom she was very close. It's made of family heirlooms – gold and pearls – that were melted down and compressed into an amulet I wear as a necklace. It is the essence of my hero – my grandmother – and a whole life story in one accessory. I wear it to every art fair and opening.

The last thing I bought and loved was a ceramic piece, *Löffelobjekt* [pictured], by the artist Beate Kuhn. It has beautiful flux and movement and I was lucky to find it as her works are quite rare. Jason Jacques Gallery, 29 East 73rd St #1, New York, NY 10021 (jasonjacques.com).

And the thing I'm eyeing next is a thick cashmere sweater [pictured] bearing the slogan "Meditate" by California-based label The Elder Statesman. I like the story behind this maker and also that it's in the bold colours of the flag of my birthplace, Switzerland. \$1,555; elder-statesman.com.

The last meal that truly impressed me was at Sushi Noz [pictured] in New York. It's an eight-seat place with an authentic 19th-century Japanese Hinoki counter, and the entire omakase presentation was just perfection. The cedarwood finishes and subtle lighting set the stage for chef Noz's memorable yellowtail sashimi and other small, flavoursome plates. 181 East 78th St, New York, NY 10075 (sushinoz.com).

And the best souvenirs I've brought home are stones [pictured] from the beach on Antiparos in Greece. I collect stones wherever I go, but these are in shades of pink and white and subtle green. I keep them in vases in my office as well as in my Hamptons home, and I am constantly adding to and editing my collection.

The last thing I added to my wardrobe was an Etro trouser suit [pictured] in petrol-

coloured velvet. My 16-year-old son picked it out, and the bluish colour and wide-leg pants give it a very cool 1970s vibe that's perfect for a night out. etro.com.

A recent "find" is La Mercerie [pictured] in Soho in New York – a very special "eating and shopping" environment overseen by a wonderful French chef. The food is delicious and the atmosphere feels like being in someone's home. After a recent meal I bought a fabulous set of placemats. It all feels like Paris meets Amsterdam, but in New York. 53 Howard St, New York, NY 10013 (lamerцерie.cafe.com).

The best gift I've given recently was a 24ct-gold bangle by jeweller Aurora Lopez Mejia to someone special. Her bracelets are very personal, made up of significant numbers and letters, which make her pieces one of a kind and very meaningful. From \$18,000; auroralopezmejia.com.

"My amulet is a whole life story in one accessory"

The indulgences I would never forgo are very dark chocolate and Japanese whisky – but not necessarily together! Villars from Switzerland is my chocolate of choice; it's made without added sugar and I like to snack on it throughout the day. In terms of whisky, I love Hibiki, which combines subtle woody and sweet flavours. Hibiki, £64.95 for 70cl; thewhiskyexchange.com. Villars, about £2.50 for 100g; villars.com.

My favourite room in my house is my dining room. I can be *en famille* or entertaining 20 and it always feels cosy. The sculptural centrepiece is a table with bronze feet by artist Alma Allen that I commissioned for this room. And a handblown chandelier by glass artist Jeff Zimmerman just makes the whole space work.

AS TOLD TO CHRISTINA OHLY EVANS

FOR MORE OF DOMINIQUE LEVY'S PERSONAL TASTE, VISIT HOWTOSPENDIT.COM



From top: stones picked by Lévy from the beach on Antiparos in Greece. Lévy at home in New York. *Löffelobjekt* by Beate Kuhn. New York's La Mercerie, an "eating and shopping" space. Elder Statesman cashmere Meditate sweater, \$1,555. Sushi Oz, an eight-seat Japanese restaurant in New York





THE GRAPE OF THINGS TO COME

The Gamay grape is back at the vinous high table, with a new generation of winemakers creating classy beaujolais that captures the complexity and brio of the terroir. Alice Lascelles reports

I'M SITTING AT a wobbly picnic table, in a sun-baked vineyard, with Thibault Liger-Belair, ninth-generation vigneron from one of the grandest families in Burgundy. At one end of the table is a spread of pickles, cheese and charcuterie – “This is what we call a *mâchon*, or everything that is good!” says Liger-Belair (pictured bottom right), attacking it with gusto – while, at the other, nine bottles of wine cluster under a flimsy parasol. All are delicious, but not one is from the Côte de Nuits. Because today we are in Beaujolais, visiting Liger-Belair’s other passion project, *Domaine des Pierres Roses*, in the heart of Moulin-à-Vent.

You’d think a man who made wine just down the road from *Domaine de La Romanée-Conti* wouldn’t give the time of day to Beaujolais, a part of France that most people only know for strawberry-bubblegum beaujolais nouveau. But Liger-Belair is just one of a growing number of winemakers and sommeliers who are helping to create a groundswell of love for this underrated region at the southern tip of Burgundy. “When I was a student here, I never understood the difference between the beautiful view and the bad wine,” says Liger-Belair, passing me a bowl of miniature goat’s cheeses. “Then, one day, I had the chance to taste a beaujolais from the 1940s blind. I said it was Echezeaux [a burgundy grand cru], and in fact it was Fleurie from 1947. I was astonished. And ever since then, it has been my ambition to create beaujolais with that same degree of sophistication and complexity, that age-worthiness.”

Beaujolais isn’t made from Pinot Noir, like the red wines of Burgundy’s Côte d’Or. It’s made from Gamay – a grape with a gentle tannin, bright acidity and red-berry/floral perfume that can be suffocating or transcendental, depending on how you make it. Most is sold young, as cheap-and-cheerful plonk. But, as Liger-Belair discovered, in the right hands it can age very much like a Pinot Noir.

In fact, there was a time when beaujolais ranked alongside the best of burgundy and bordeaux. As recently as 1950, top crus such as Moulin-à-Vent and Fleurie were commanding prices on a par with Pommard or Gevrey-Chambertin. And when you taste Liger-Belair’s wines, it’s easy to see why. Walking the vineyards, he points out *Champs de Cour* – “my *Chambolle-Musigny*” – a plot with golden earth as silky as talc that produces soft and exotic wines, and *La Roche*, a rocky parcel up the slope whose fruit is more tart, with a nervy minerality.

Liger-Belair’s top cuvée is *Les Vignes Centenaires*, which is made from a small plot of superannuated vines on one of the best sites in Moulin-à-Vent. Some of these vines are well over 100 years old, and they look exhausted: bowed, squat and gnarly. But the fruit they produce is full of life. Over lunch we taste *Les Vignes Centenaires 2011* (£195 for six at *Berry Bros & Rudd*), a wine with a mouthwatering jumble of black and blue berries, and a whisper of smoky spice. It has the concentration and relative power that characterise wines from this cru, but it’s also, in a way that’s very Beaujolaise, sort of effortless too. Today, Liger-Belair only does this particular wine by the magnum to maximise its ageing potential: “Good for the wine and good for me!” he laughs, gesturing at his ample frame with a paw strengthened by regular bouts of arm-wrestling. Beaujolais is, as he says, beautiful – with its pink and blue granite,

ancient woodlands, steep hills, windmills and donkeys, it has a rustic charm that you don’t find so much on the glossy Côte d’Or. It’s a place where you shake a lot of rough hands. And, for the time being, it’s still a smart buy, with plots in even the best crus still costing a fraction of those on the Côte d’Or, where grand cru prices now average around €6m per hectare (not that many people are selling).

It’s perhaps no surprise to learn that more and more Burgundians, faced by spiralling land prices and growing demand for Pinot-style wines, are striking out into Beaujolais. One Burgundy heavyweight ramping up its operations in Beaujolais is the grower and négociant *Maison Louis Latour*. “I, like many Burgundians, have always been in love with beaujolais, because we were brought up drinking the crus. I think it is a great wine,” says company chairman *Louis-Fabrice Latour*. “And right now it is very much in line with what people are wanting to drink – wine that is lighter, fresher, lower-alcohol, more fruit-driven.”

Despite owning the largest grand-cru property on the Côte d’Or, *Maison Louis Latour* has seen fit to make a number of acquisitions in Beaujolais over the past few years, including *Château des Labourons*, in Fleurie, and beaujolais producer *Maison Henry Fessy*. In 2012, the company also planted 20 hectares of Pinot Noir near Lyon to make a wine called *Les Pierres Dorées* (£18.99 at *Tivoli Wines*), which launched in 2015. “There is an ongoing debate in Burgundy about whether Beaujolais should be officially recognised as part of Burgundy,” says Latour, “I’m a great believer it should. I think the future of Beaujolais is to merge with Burgundy.” This will undoubtedly be a hot topic in September when the international wine trade descends on Beaujolais for *Vinexpo Explorer*, a spin-off from one of the world’s leading wine fairs, *Vinexpo*, which focuses on up-and-coming wine regions.

In the meantime, Beaujolais’ more affordable land prices are also making it a fertile breeding ground for emerging wine talent. One of the most hotly tipped is *Julien Sunier*, a wiry, mischievous-looking surfer who makes wine in the more “natural” vein. “I arrived in 2003 in a camper van with zero money, but having



Clockwise from opposite: Gamay vineyards in the famous Beaujolais cru, Fleurie. Moulin-à-Vent Les Vignes Centenaires 2015, £95 for a magnum at Berry Bros & Rudd. Winemaker Thibault Liger-Belair



PHOTOGRAPH: ALAMY

no money forced me to create a style I liked,” he says. “It was only when I came here that that I got into natural and organic winemaking.” His methods may be low-intervention, but he doesn’t want to be seen as a poster boy for the natural movement. “We like natural wine, but not crappy wine with lots of yeast floating around and CO₂,” he says (but with more expletives). “The fun is to follow the vintage and see how it goes.”

At his winery in the hills of Avenas – a stone farmhouse called Noisetiers (“hazel trees”) that he restored himself – Sunier makes a number of cuvées from top crus including Fleurie, Morgon and Regnié. Sitting on the deck, surrounded by forests full of chattering birds, we taste Sunier’s Fleurie 2017 (£27.50 at Berry Bros & Rudd), which, with its notes of rose petals, anise and musk, captures beautifully the ethereal quality of this famous cru. It was the first vintage of this wine that gave Sunier his big break early on, with Berry Bros & Rudd. “It might not have been classic Berry Brothers, but I fell in love with it immediately,” recalls the author of *Insideburgundy.com*, Jasper Morris MW, who was BBR’s head buyer for Burgundy at the time. “What I love about Sunier’s wines is how expressive they are. From the very second you get that magical perfume, you just want to be there.”

When he started making wine in Beaujolais, Sunier was an outsider. But many of his peers have Beaujolais in the blood. Quite a few are descendants of the influential “Gang of Four” – a pioneering quartet of winemakers including Marcel Lapiere, Jean Foillard, Jean-Paul Thévenant, Guy Breton and, latterly, George Descombes, who helped make Beaujolais a crucible for the natural wine movement in the 1980s. Lapiere’s nephew, micro-négociant Philippe Pacalet, makes most of his wines from parcels on the Côte d’Or, but he also dips into Beaujolais for his stunning Moulin-à-Vent (2015, £57.80 at Tannico) that can be found on wine lists from The Clove Club to The Ritz. Formerly winemaker for Domaine Prieuré-Roch, he was named Négociant of the Year at *La Revue du Vin de France* 2017. “Moulin-à-Vent, for me, is the Beaujolais cru that is the most ‘Pinot’ of all,” he says. “It’s an exceptional terroir with great personality: elegant fruit, finesse, structure and depth.”

Over a beautifully patinated Yvon Métras Fleurie 2016 (€130.80 for a magnum at Pleasure Wine), Francis Roberts, general manager/wine buyer at north London’s Westerns Laundry, tells me that Métras’ twentysomething son Jules is also doing great things. And so too is Georges Descombes’ son Kewin, or “Kéké”. Working six hectares of organic vines in Morgon, he produces wines with flair and vivacity (and some rather cool labels too). My favourite is his top cuvée K Descombes Morgon Vieilles Vignes 2015 (a selection of his wines are available at Red Squirrel) – a soft, juicy red with earthy/liquorice tannin



“There are lots of younger producers who have the freedom to be quite radical”

and what just might be a hint of fresh blood. It’s a gripping wine with many years still ahead of it.

“The region as a whole has incredible potential, with lots of younger producers coming up making unbelievable wines and who have the freedom to be quite radical,” says Charlotte Wilde, the carmine-lipped co-founder of the award-winning Sager + Wilde wine bar/restaurants in east London. She namechecks Jean Foillard, Julien Sunier and micro-négociant Andrew Nielsen, whose company Le Grappin also pioneered the eco-friendly “bagnum” – good quality box-wine, in a bag, styled for the Apple generation. “He is a great example of someone who has used modern technology, science and design to create a new way to not just make wine, but transport and sell it too. He’s redefining the way people think about fine wine.” Wilde’s stylish new wine bar, Darling, opens in London later this summer. The list will focus on “smaller and lesser-known producers”, says Wilde, which means we can almost certainly expect some good Gamay.

For beaujolais in a more formal setting, you could head to two-Michelin-starred The Ledbury, in west London, which has an excellent selection of top-end beaujolais from the likes of Thibault Liger-Belair, Marcelle Lapiere and Château Thivin – including vintages with a bit more age. “They are some of the best-value wines in the world,” says head sommelier Seamus Williams-Sharkey. “You’ve got loads of old vine parcels planted on amazing sites, in

the hands of some seriously talented winemakers, without the demand or prices of their neighbours to the north.” Contrary to what people might think, he adds, Beaujolais can be an excellent food wine. He waxes lyrical about the time he enjoyed a posh burger with Château de Grand Pré Fleurie Cuvée Spéciale 2016 (£21 at WoodWinters), which he likes to recommend with The Ledbury’s veal tartare: “One of my favourite food and wine matches we do.”

Wine-trade favourite Noble Rot, on Lamb’s Conduit Street, has also done a lot to bang the drum for “bojo”. At its annual Fête du Beaujolais in November, it’s not unusual to find winemakers such as Jean-Louis Dutraive and Andrew Nielsen pouring the wines themselves. “While beaujolais cru is a ‘serious’ wine that expresses terroir and vintage variations, it has an accessibility and unpretentiousness that deserves celebrating,” says Noble Rot’s Dan Keeling. “It’s hedonistic yet intellectually engaging; moreish yet relatively moderate in alcohol; and, for now, it’s a fine wine that doesn’t cost a fortune.”

Last year, one of London’s top sommeliers, Xavier Rousset, launched his own beaujolais cuvée, Les Huit Ouvrées, in collaboration with Château du Moulin-à-Vent. “I love the acidity, freshness and elegance of beaujolais. It makes you want two glasses not one!” grins the former head sommelier of Le Manoir aux Quat’Saisons and co-owner of Blandford Comptoir, Comptoir Café & Wine and Cabotte, wine-focused restaurants around London. Silky and earthy, with a beetroot sweetness and fine spice, Les Huit Ouvrées 2015 is, as Rousset says, “pinoté – like a Pinot Noir”. Limited to 1,200 bottles, it’s on the list at Annabel’s and in Rousset’s own restaurants – or you can buy a bottle in the Comptoir shop for just £32. “I’ll always love burgundy,” he says, “but as prices go up, beaujolais is a wine I am buying and drinking more and more of at home. From a drinkability point of view, it is the future.”

“I love beaujolais,” agrees Ruth Spivey, award-winning sommelier and founder of Wine Car Boot, a roving wine market that’s become something of a bellwether for vinous trends. “It’s easy to drink, fun to drink and seems to impart a sense of joy around the table.” And if that’s what wine drinking looks like in 2019, count me in. ♦

Clockwise from top: Noble Rot wine bar features beaujolais producers at its annual Fête du Beaujolais in November. Julien Sunier Fleurie 2017, £27.50 at Berry Bros & Rudd. Château Thivin Côte de Brouilly, Les Sept Vignes 2017, £20.50 at Berry Bros & Rudd. Philippe Pacalet Moulin-à-Vent 2015, £57.80 at Tannico. Château du Moulin-à-Vent and Xavier Rousset Les Huits Ouvrées 2015, £32 at Comptoir Café & Wine



RAISIN D'ETRE

Berry Bros & Rudd, bbr.com. **Château de Grand Pré**, see WoodWinters. **Château du Moulin-à-Vent and Xavier Rousset**, see Stannary St Wine and Comptoir Café & Wine. **Château Thivin**, see Berry Bros & Rudd. **Comptoir Café & Wine**, 21-22 Weighhouse St, London W1 (comptoir-cafe-and-wine.co.uk). **Darling**, darling.london. **Julien Sunier**, see Berry Bros & Rudd. **Kewin Descombes**, see Red Squirrel. **Le Grappin**, see Noble Rot. **The Ledbury**, 127 Ledbury Rd, London W11 (ledbury.com). **Maison Louis Latour**, see Tivoli Wines. **Noble Rot**, 51 Lamb’s Conduit St, London WC1 (noblerot.co.uk). **Philippe Pacalet**, see Tannico. **Pleasure Wine**, pleasurewine.com. **Red Squirrel**, redsquirrelwine.agency. **Sager + Wilde**, sagerandwilde.com. **Stannary St Wine**, stannarywine.com. **Tannico**, tannico.co.uk. **Thibault Liger-Belair**, see Berry Bros & Rudd. **Tivoli Wines**, tivoliwines.co.uk. **Westerns Laundry**, 34 Drayton Park, London N5 (westernslaundry.com). **Wine Car Boot**, winecarboot.com. **WoodWinters**, woodwinters.com. **Yvon Métras**, see Pleasure Wine.



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travelista

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✈ Floating in the Gulf of Naples, **ISCHIA** is Capri's unadulterated, rough-around-the-edges big sister – about four times the size of her tiny neighbour, with many more sand beaches, a

rugged, surprisingly appealing interior and a marked dearth of designer bikini purveyors, Michelin stars and billionaire habitués. Enter Marie-Louise Sciò, she of Tuscany's Il Pellicano, to inject some glamour: she has set her focus on **Il Mezzatorre Hotel & Thermal Spa** (pellicanohotels.com; from €360), a 46-room beauty secreted away in a cove between the charming town of Lacco Ameno and the lovely Mortella Gardens, designed by William and Susana Walton in the

1950s. It reopens this month under Sciò's discerning eye, fresh off a redesign and with a host of insider-Ischia people and places lined up, through which the Mezzatore's guests can immerse themselves in life on the island.

✈ One of India's holiest places is lately in the sights of high-end hotel operators. The Ganges flows right through many of the ashrams of **RISHIKESH**, set in the foothills of the Himalayas. **Taj Hotels'** plans for an indulgent retreat are well underway – expected to open later this year. Meanwhile, the Roseate group of hotels (with intimate boutique properties across the UK and India, from Hyde Park to Delhi) has just opened **The Roseate Ganges** (roseatehotels.com; from £360), whose 16 cottages perch

above the river in pristine forest; rooms are spare and contemporary, with marble fireplaces (but simple painted-plaster walls), wide private terraces and scarce technology – guests are encouraged to stash phones and iPads out of sight. Everything from hikes and yoga to beachside spa therapies (included in the rates) are that much easier to enjoy.

✈ An old Sloane Square stalwart has emerged from an ambitious redo: the **Belmond Cadogan** (belmond.com; from £470) sees the purveyor of five-star hotels, resorts and river cruises debuting its first **LONDON** property. Having invested four years and many millions of pounds to bring the c1887 Cadogan Hotel up to five-star scratch, they've pulled off a real coup by enlisting Adam Handling – the 30-year-old Scot whose MasterChef stint and Frog E1 restaurant blew critical minds – to oversee the restaurants and bar.



Above: the redesigned **Il Mezzatorre Hotel** on Ischia reopens this month.
Below: a suite at the five-star **Belmond Cadogan**, London



Above: one of the stylishly minimalist cottage bedrooms at **The Roseate Ganges**, in Rishikesh, India





Above: Wara Nomade is a new tented camp at the edge of the Pacific in Atacama, Chile. Below: the Raffles Hotel in Singapore is just emerging from a two-year renovation

situated some 45 minutes inland. The camp's three ensuite tents, lined with Andean rugs and textiles and kitted out with enormous comfy beds, accommodate just six; days are spent kayaking or snorkelling, spotting sea lions and whales, or sipping Pisco Sours in any one of the various alfresco chilling spaces while the private chef whips up gambas or grills you a massive steak.

✈️ **LISBON**-born chef Nuno Mendes has probably done more than any of his peers to advance appreciation of Portuguese culinary traditions in the UK and beyond. Next month sees the opening in his hometown of a much-buzzed-about showcase for his talents, when the beloved **Bairro Alto Hotel** (bairroaltohotel.com; from €360) emerges from a renovation at the hands of one of Portugal's other greats, the Pritzker Prize-winning architect Eduardo Souto de Moura. Mendes' BAHR Restaurant and Terrace offer, respectively, slick interiors and a wide-open vista of red-tiled roofs and the Tagus beyond. The 87 rooms are light filled and colour saturated, with deco-inspired furniture and local textiles. And you're right in Lisbon's absolute sweet spot of style, where the Bairro Alto and Chiado quarters intersect – A Vida Portuguesa three blocks to the east, Taberna da Rua das Flores right round the corner.

✈️ From chucking peanut shells in the Long Bar to nibbling scones in the Tiffin Room, traditions have always run deep at **Raffles** (raffles.com; from £486), **SINGAPORE**'s oldest and grandest hotel. As the Lion City celebrates the 200th anniversary of Stamford Raffles' arrival, Raffles is putting the finishing touches on a two-year renovation. All the state rooms and suites, of which there are now an impressive 115, have been subtly elevated with sumptuous fabrics and furnishings (and, as usual, a faultlessly refined eye) by Alexandra Champalimaud. The Long Bar remains relatively untouched (cue thousands of nostalgists' sighs across the globe) and is joined by a full 10 new dining and drinking venues, among them restaurants manned by Michelin matriculate Anne-Sophie Pic, maestro of modern Chinese Jereme Leung and hall-of-famer Alain Ducasse. ♦

✈️ Tented camps are the stuff of legend in Rajasthan, Kenya, Morocco. But **CHILE**? Soon, if Harry Hastings, managing director of blue-chip operator Plan South America (plansouthamerica.com; from \$1,080 for two nights full board), has anything to say about it. He's plumping for **Wara Nomade**, which is flush at the edge of the Chilean Pacific in Atacama and is a new side project of architect Susanna Aránguiz, owner of ultra-cool Hotel Wara,



Above: the bar in Nuno Mendes' BAHR restaurant in the newly renovated Bairro Alto Hotel, Lisbon







OFF THE WALL

The coolest wall cabinets take their cues from art, elevating storage into spotlight-stealing showstoppers, says **Nicole Swengley**

One of the most effective ways to give an interior a new dimension is by combining architecture, sculpture and art in one focus piece," says London gallerist David Gill. But how does one achieve such a feat within the confines of the home? Gill points to a glamorous solution – by hanging a sculptural cabinet on the wall.

He cites a vibrant work by Cuban-American artist Jorge Pardo, recently installed in the living room of a Georgian London home owned by one of his art-loving clients. Meretricious Untitled 6 (price on request, pictured overleaf) is a six-drawer wall cabinet-cum-bookshelf, its façade transformed by the artist into a canvas framing a compelling image of a mother and child in acrylic paint. The overall effect is dramatic – the lines of the cabinet blur and the contemporary artwork comes to the fore. "It hangs on the wall and presents a narrative like other paintings, but it's also a piece made for the living environment and is fully functional," says Gill.

Mexico-based Pardo, whose work is included in the collections of The Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, New York's MoMA and Tate Modern in London, is renowned for fusing fine art, architecture and design – even treating entire buildings as artworks. His cabinet is part of a series, crafted in tzalam wood and coloured steel and featuring portraiture and landscapes, which is intended to be viewed as art. "I began with the idea of creating a very eccentric 'support' for a picture. A piece

can have multiple meanings if it seems to jar in its aspiration to be a painting," he says.

Pardo's ethos is shared by many boundary-pushing furniture designers. In Ireland, Zelouf & Bell is working on a commission to create a large wall cabinet for a Los Angeles collector's brutalist-style apartment – its doors (front and reverse) are inlaid with a bold, geometric motif in polished aluminium. Inside is a sliding door in intricate black bolivar and nickel marquetry; below this is a flap that opens to become a bar top decorated with a black and silver arabesque pattern. "The piece reflects the owner's sensibilities as art collector and practical city dweller," says co-founder Susan Zelouf. "She prefers her artworks to be functional and to earn their place in her home."

Zelouf notes an increasing demand for creative cabinetry among her discerning clients, many of whom are art collectors. "They are discovering a new medium – artful cabinets with a purpose," she says, adding that her peers are responding in kind with evermore imaginative concepts. Rupert Senior, the recipient of 16 coveted Guild Marks from The Furniture Makers' Company, is one such designer/maker. His spherical Moon cabinet (£45,000, pictured on final page), launched at Chelsea Harbour Design Centre's *Evolution of Tradition* show last October, is

an artistic interpretation of the moon inspired by the work of artist Ben Nicholson – and a rare piece of burr-ash timber that serendipitously came into his possession. When the cabinet doors are closed, the swirls of the burr ash, pitted with craters hand-covered in 24ct yellow

Above and right: Jean-Luc Le Mounier's black and gold straw marquetry and bronze Papillon cabinet, from £100,000, from Todd Merrill Gallery



PHOTOGRAPHS: PASCAL LEOPOLD (3)

gold, palladium and “moon” gold leaf, resemble the surface of the moon. But the piece then opens, revealing these “craters” to be a part of larger spheres representing the planets of the solar system. At the centre of the arrangement lies a black hole. “I’ve always been intrigued by Ben Nicholson’s artwork, especially the way he layers ideas into one abstract composition by combining a still-life foreground with a landscape background,” says Senior. “It’s this layering of composition that I’m exploring with the Moon cabinet, only in a three-dimensional form.”

His design is a tour de force. The door construction uses carbon fibre to create its curve, with the ash then bent and laminated to it, a complex process that required numerous mock-ups before the technique was perfected. The piece fulfils its purpose as a functional key cabinet beautifully – even if the polished, stainless-steel key-hangers, which are hidden behind the craters, evoke mini-satellites spinning off into space.

The idea of the high-concept wall cabinet is also being explored by furniture-designer Jake Phipps. His Urchin cabinet (£62,640, pictured bottom) is a response to his memories of collecting seashells as a child, and what he calls “the bilateral symmetry of the urchin shell”. The doors are adorned with 70 curved and faceted polished-brass panels that surround a central convex mirror.

Pushing the key-latch pops open this centrepiece, which pulls back a full 90 degrees to become a polished-marble worksurface. And the cabinet’s glamorous wood interior has a series of glass shelves with a mirrored compartment at the epicentre. “I focused on the idea of encapsulation,” says Phipps. “As a boy, we’d take family holidays along the Dalmatian coast, where I’d dive for urchin shells. I’d sit and study them, my eye always drawn to the void at their centre. I replicated this in the cabinet by fragmenting the reflections of the space around the piece, so the viewer’s eye gravitates to the central mirror. It’s the heart of the cabinet – not just visually but also physically, as a means of opening the cabinet doors.” Phipps’ focus echoes the symbolism used by the 15th-century artist Jan van Eyck in his famous *The Arnolfini Portrait*. “The painting also features a mirror, which expands the space beyond the immediate scene,” he explains.

As this piece shows, the fine line between art and design is becoming ever more blurred and, like artists, furniture designers are finding new ways to explore with a palette of mixed materials. Vincenzo de Cotiis, a Milan-based architect/artist, excels in this respect. His limited edition wall cabinets (prices on request, example pictured overleaf) combine such materials as stone, polished brass, silvered brass, smoked glass, recycled wood and resin to create a patina that appears as though weathered over time. “My work recalls nature in the abstract. It’s an aesthetic infused with ‘perfect imperfection,’” he says.

“Vincenzo starts from an idea, then embarks on an artistic journey before function comes into play,” says Loïc



Le Gaillard, co-founder of Carpenters Workshop Gallery, which staged a solo show of de Cotiis’s handmade designs in London last September. The exhibition, entitled *En Plein Air*, recalled the moment in art history when 19th-century French artists abandoned their studios to paint outdoors. The work, says Le Gaillard, references this through the pigments and composition. “Vincenzo expresses himself through texture and patina. There’s an incredible chemistry with the materials – you want to touch the surfaces. It makes the work so addictive, like the weathering of sculpture over time.”

Bespoke furniture maker Kent Townsend also references momentous moments in art through his expertise with wood. Based in Salida, Colorado, Townsend employs traditional cabinetmaking techniques and hand skills to create complex forms. In the past, he has drawn on the beauty of nature and Asian art, but his current muse is art deco, which is given a “modern twist” to create strikingly sophisticated designs such as his fluted rosewood wall cabinet with sterling-silver pulls (\$29,000 for the five-drawer version; \$19,000 for the two-drawer version).



Clockwise from above:
Zelouf & Bell koto, bolivar, oak, ebony, birch and wenge Scullied bar cabinet, £19,700. Jorge Pardo’s steel and tzalam Meretricious Untitled 6, price on request, from David Gill Gallery. Jake Phipps’ brass, oak and marble Urchin cabinet, £62,640





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New York gallerist Cristina Grajales believes the impact of high-design cabinets is elevated by hanging them on the wall. “They are so graceful to the eye because they appear to float,” she says. “I’ve commissioned simple designs in wood from Mira Nakashima [daughter of the legendary furniture maker George Nakashima] that are just magical when they are placed in certain settings.” Currently, Grajales’ gallery has a miniature (26.6cm x 22.8cm) handcrafted maple wall cabinet (price on request, pictured below right) by woodworker Gael Appler with slatted sliding doors. “I was immediately struck by the beauty of its movement,” she says. “It reminds me of ocean waves and the many secrets held by the sea.”

French cabinetmaker Jean-Luc Le Mounier’s Papillon (from £100,000, pictured on opening pages) – a standout at Design Miami/Basel in 2018 – takes the idea of “floating” and “secrets” to a new level. Crafted in black and gold straw marquetry, it takes the form of a butterfly whose wings disguise two cleverly hinged doors. Inside, the doors open to reveal a delicate, lacy bronze “gate”, recalling the shape of the exterior, that encloses two shelves and hidden compartments. “I continually explore new ways of woodworking elevated to an art level,” says Le Mounier, who is represented by New York’s Todd Merrill Studio. “I design to surprise and seduce.”

For Zelouf & Bell, there is no better way to add an element of the unexpected than to fuse art, design and sculpture into one statement piece, from its Scullied bar cabinet (€19,700, pictured on previous page),



“There’s an incredible chemistry with the materials – you want to touch the surfaces. It makes the work addictive”



referencing Dublin-born artist Sean Scully’s *Wall of Light* series and inspired by a talk by Scully on the relationship between artists and alcohol; to Riley’s (€18,120) in which marquetry creates a simple optical illusion in homage to Bridget Riley’s 1961 painting *Kiss*; to its collaboration with contemporary Irish artist Peadar Lamb, who made the monochrome stained-glass panel for its backlit *Nighttown* wall cabinet (€22,890) – a nod to *Ulysses in Nighttown*, a play based on James Joyce’s *Ulysses* described by a critic as “weird, sexy and a little dangerous”. “One might say,” jests Zelouf, “that the writing is on the wall.” ♦

CABINETS OF CURIOSITY

Carpenters Workshop Gallery, carpentersworkshopgallery.com. **Cristina Grajales Gallery**, cristinagrajalesinc.com. **David Gill Gallery**, davidgillgallery.com. **Gael Appler**, see Cristina Grajales Gallery. **Jake Phipps**, jakehipps.com. **Jean-Luc Le Mounier**, lemounier.fr and see Todd Merrill Studio. **Jorge Pardo** jorgepardo.com and see David Gill Gallery. **Kent Townsend** kenttownsend.com. **Rupert Senior**, rupertsenior.co.uk. **Todd Merrill Studio**, toddmerrillstudio.com. **Vincenzo de Cotiis**, decotiis.it and see Carpenters Workshop Gallery. **Zelouf & Bell**, zeloufandbell.com.

Clockwise from above:
Gael Appler maple **Milton Box**, price on request, from **Cristina Grajales Gallery**.
Rupert Senior’s burr-ash, stainless-steel, gold- and palladium-leaf **Moon cabinet**, £45,000.
Vincenzo de Cotiis’ silvered-brass, smoked-glass and Murano-glass cabinet, price on request, from **Carpenters Workshop Gallery**



PHOTOGRAPHS: RUPERT SENIOR/ALEX WRIGHT, VINCENZO DE COTIIS

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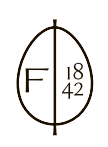


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A car air filter that refreshes the parts in-built filters cannot reach

In a world full of real or perceived health risks, I am hesitant to make you worry about another one. But have you thought seriously about the air you breathe in your car? Yes, even your fancy new car that has HEPA filters to sift out diesel particulates from the traffic around you. Airbubbl, a new in-car air cleaner from Denmark, doesn't only remove particulates; it also deals with the odourless but dangerous NOX gases and ozone that even luxury cars generally don't filter. Its maker, a Copenhagen startup called Airlabs, claims that even those built-in filtering systems miss a lot of pollutants they are supposed to trap. It has conducted tests it says demonstrate that its device removes more than 95 per cent of invisible toxic gases from a car interior within 12 minutes.

It would be easy to dismiss Airbubbl as a palliative for the worried well, were it not for the company's development team,

which includes atmospheric chemists and airflow engineers from recognised research institutes in Denmark and the UK. Airlabs has also impressed partners such as BNP Paribas, Chiltern Railways and JC Decaux, who have collaborated with projects to show off the Danes' air-cleaning expertise. You have to take a certain amount on trust and instinct with a device like Airbubbl, but I will say that in the weeks of using it during winter in London traffic, I was pretty sure the air I was breathing was fresher.

Installation is easy: the device straps behind the passenger headrest. There's an accompanying app you don't necessarily need that shows how much pollution your Airbubbl has scrubbed. The device can also be used upright in, say, an asthmatic child's bedroom.

Airbubbl, £249.99, from airbubbl.com.



technopolis

Cruise the highways and rat runs of Gizmo City with **Jonathan Margolis**, the grand wizard of gadgetology

Classic radio looks with a thoroughly modern mindset

This retro-style radio from i-box, based in Bedford, draws on the classic looks and solid audio performance of an old-style Roberts radio and adds modern functionality - hence its description as a "classic smart speaker with Amazon Alexa". It's quirky, original and works well. The i-box Century could just be used to play Radio 4 all day like a vintage Roberts. But you can also use it as an Alexa-powered smart speaker to answer questions and turn on all the smart home devices you will never want. You can even connect up to eight i-boxes to form a multiroom system. Again, in defiance of its 1950s look, it will work with Amazon Music, Spotify, Apple Music and internet radio.

Functionality is clever but a bit forbidding, and the thin manual not much help as it's so poorly done. Also, while it appears to be portable, it has to be mains connected. Yet there's something charming about the Century that I warmed to. It's not just an Amazon Echo in a retro box - it sounds better than Echo, and while you can daisy-chain the Amazon product as a multiroom system, you might find a house full of Centurys more stylish. If it were portable, the Century would be a king among gadgets. As it is, it's a prince, with a dash of frog.

i-box Century, £129.99, from iboxstyle.com.



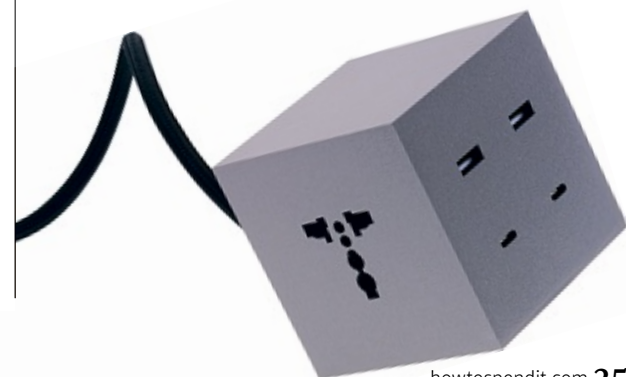
A multi-device supercharging multi-plug

I've had another foray into Selfridges' Smartech concession, which is like a mini Consumer Electronics Show for me - it saves me going to Vegas by selecting all the best new stuff on show and getting exclusives on products before I can even get press review samples from the makers. Anyway, chatting with its switched-on staff, I discovered that the Icon high-speed charging cube is currently one of its fastest moving lines. I would have put it in my travel-tech selection next month, but it's not great for hotel rooms - it deals with a lot of power so comes, in the UK version, with a hefty lead and plug. I wouldn't want to use it abroad with an adaptor.

But the Icon is a superb power hub for home or office, especially if plug sockets are in short supply. It offers two USB-A outlets, two USB-C (for MacBooks, iPad Pros, Google Pixel phones, Samsung, etc) and two mains sockets. And it charges at up to 54 watts, so you get three times the normal speed simultaneously for up to six devices. The Icon also detects the optimal rate for charging a device, so no risk of overcharging. Practical and, being from Paris, not un-stylish.

USBpower Icon, £84.99, from usbpower.com and selfridges.com.

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A rocking rock-like garden speaker

If you have a reasonable-size (but not huge) garden and either very friendly neighbours or, preferably, no neighbours at all, this Fred Flintstone-esque 60-watt Bluetooth garden speaker disguised as a rock could make your summer, er, rock. Sussex maker Lithe Audio sells the speaker separately or as a pair for an extra £100, but it's not a stereo pair - you really don't need or want stereo from garden speakers that can be placed up to 10m apart. But having tried out a single unit indoors in the winter, the speaker's 6.5in polypropylene cones and Mylar tweeters sounded surprisingly hifi-ish for a garden ornament.

My only slight bone to pick with Lithe is that the Rock Speaker doesn't look like a rock so much as a failed (but delicious) frosted chocolate cake. An unexpected benefit to this charming piece of electronic eccentricity is that it is well future-proofed so far as global warming is concerned. I see from the label that it will work at up to 85°C, at which point we will all be dead, but it's nice to know there could still be music in the charred remains of an English country garden.

Lithe Audio Rock Speaker, £199, from litheaudio.com.





This page: Dolce & Gabbana silk bra and matching briefs, price on request. Emilio Pucci silk La Villa scarf (worn as headscarf), £200. Cult Gaia acrylic Geneva earring, \$88 for pair

Opposite page: Dior silk dress, £6,100. Gucci silk shawl (worn as headscarf), £270. Oscar de la Renta bead and metal Petal earrings, £340, and bead and metal Navette Petal earring, £410 for pair

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Michael Kors Collection silk Daisy shirt, £790. Blumarine silk dress, £2,045, and viscose jumpsuit, £575. Hermès silk The Savana Dance scarf (worn as headscarf), £225. Kenneth Jay Lane paper and bead earrings, £55





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oman's land

As Oman continues to open up to the culturally curious, **Alice B-B** embarks on a singular adventure – stretched to bursting with thought-provoking encounters – across empty sands and along pristine coasts

Somehow, despite being in the geographical thick of the Middle East, Oman has managed to stay on the geopolitical fringes. Whether this is due to the country's topography (protected by desert on one side, sea on the other); or being the world's only majority Ibadi Muslim country (combining elements of both Sunni and Shia and championing respect for the beliefs of others); or the standpoint of diplomacy propagated by its leader Sultan Qaboos bin Said al Said, who, since overthrowing his father Said bin Taimur in 1970, has encouraged modernisation and delivered education, healthcare, social reform and economic prosperity is difficult to say.

What's clear is that a combination of this and more makes Oman the dream landscape for what former British army captain Geordie Mackay-Lewis, co-founder of experiential-travel and yacht-expedition specialist Pelorus, describes as an "asymmetric adventure". "Oman is a multifarious environment, with tourism still in its infancy," he notes. "You can have five different experiences a day, often in undiscovered places, in a more authentic and immediate way than in, say, Egypt or Morocco." Using a unique reworked army operations format that, Mackay-Lewis says, "forces us to think outside the travel-industry norm", Pelorus has curated a multilayered Oman immersion, packing in as many experiences on as many social and physical latitudes as possible – in my case, in just four brief days.

We start in Salalah, the country's second-largest city, beside the sea in the southern Dhofar region. My guide, Mussallem Al Mahri (pictured overleaf), lived as a nomad until the age of 10 (he was actually born in a cave). He's from the Mahri tribe, traditionally frankincense farmers who produced the resin that was traded along the Arabian Peninsula for over 6,000 years and at times was worth more than gold. Today the trees that once grew so abundantly in this perfect coastal-desert climate have been overharvested or ravaged by camels. At Unesco-listed Wadi Dawkah, he shows me a protected plantation whose 12,000 gnarled frankincense trees stretch far into the distance. "The strange thing is," he says, "they don't produce resin. And no one can understand why."

PHOTOGRAPH: PELORUS

We're invited to lunch at Al Mahri's home, a great honour in Omani culture: shoes off, past the frankincense burning in the hall and into the sofa-lined living room to find his wife, daughters and a gaggle of tiny grandchildren. But the true privilege is meeting Al Mahri's father Hassan – more than 100 years old, lives on dates and milk and is perhaps the last man alive to have met Bertram Thomas, the first European to cross the Empty Quarter (Rub al Khali). Al Mahri translates: "Word went round that this crazy English guy was paying for desert animals" – this was likely research for Thomas' *Arabia Felix*, a chronicle of the desert's wildlife, inhabitants and culture – "so of course everyone brought their animals to him." After a lunch of rice and

This page: the author spent a night at the sumptuous Hud Hud camp in Wahiba Sands

chicken, eaten cross-legged on the floral carpet, it's time to head for those very sands and my own adventure.

It's a long old drive to the Empty Quarter (pictured overleaf). And for the impatient, bad news: there's no getting dropped in by helicopter. Only the military has access to choppers, and while some camps skirt the edges, we are venturing well beyond the perimeter. The journey in the Toyota Land Cruiser – "the modern camel," jokes Al Mahri at the wheel – is peppered with tales of his nomadic days. "Life in a cave is beautiful; it's cool in the day, and at night the goats' breath keeps you warm," he says, before describing the first time he met an Englishman: "I was nine, and I thought he was so white because he drank alcohol."

Suddenly, he hangs a right. No road, no signpost, no 3G, but the man chosen by Ben Fogle and James Cracknell to lead them across the Empty Quarter knows these sands like the back of his weatherworn hand. For miles it's nothing but scrubby bushes and the odd long-lashed camel. As the sun begins to sink, Al Mahri navigates by counting the dunes. They all look identical to me; I'm quietly relieved that Mackay-Lewis has a satellite phone in his bag. We speed over a final hill, and it's there like a mirage: our beautiful private camp for the night, in one of the most remote places I've ever been. A Bedouin tent with a bathroom, long-drop lavatory and pump shower is pitched before an open-air sitting room, its kilims and cosy sofas scattered with cushions.



From top: the author explores the dunes in Oman's vast Empty Quarter. The country's arid landscape is punctuated by oases like Wadi Bani Khalid, near Ibra. Local Bedu guide Mussallem Al Mahri



But first, sundowners. We tear up a massive dune angled at 45 degrees. From its vantage point, 250m up, the sense of awe is almost violently overwhelming. I had no idea that I could fall for the desert until I visited the Wadi Rum in Jordan on assignment for *How To Spend It* two years ago. But the Empty Quarter is the next level of romance and hostility, a place that's like being stroked and slapped at the same time. And of such size: the largest sand sea in the world – bigger even than France, Germany and Spain combined. Not a holiday destination for agoraphobics, but a dream for anthropophobics; besides our tiny, merry gang, there's no trace of human life as far as the eye can see. Yet I know that these grains defy borders, stretching into the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Yemen; that two of this country's neighbours are involved in a war of immense horror. Guilt and gratitude mix as I sip my icy G&T.

The sands turn from millennial pink to classical umber, and we head back to camp. Flickering candles and head torches illuminate a dinner of flatbreads, hummus, salads and chicken. And then it's lights out, to enjoy a sky

Besides our gang, there's no trace of human life as far as the eye can see

unblemished by light pollution, just a beaming Milky Way tantalising with the odd shooting star.

I lie in bed considering the silence. It's so intense I can hear my eyelashes when I blink. I sniff the wind, but it's odourless, as clean and pure as alpine water. And I realise that what matters here in this oxymoronic place, stripped of all familiar crutches, is spirit – that is what the desert would really test were I to attempt anything longer than a night's stay; potentially the rewards could be great. As the officer-explorer Wilfred Thesiger wrote in *Arabian Sands*: "I believed... that in those empty wastes I could find the peace that comes with solitude, and, among the Bedu, comradeship in a hostile world."

Over a breakfast of yoghurt, wild Omani honey and an "everything" omelette, we break camp. I'm jolted from my unexpected melancholy at leaving the dunes when Al Mahri grinds the Land Cruiser to a sudden halt. He leaps out and scoops up a knobbly rock, like a huge white truffle, then bashes it until it splits in two – a geode. As I peer into the hollow of this desert treasure, I'm dazzled by curves lined with crystals twinkling as bright as any diamonds.

It's the smell of water that hits first as we approach Wadi Darbat (pictured overleaf), east of Salalah. I greedily inhale the scents of sodden earth and tamarind trees and their promise of bounty. We picnic overlooking pools fed by gushing waterfalls; a farmer waters his camels. It's the Bible, via Disney. Over dates and coffee, Mackay-Lewis springs a

surprise: back in London, when we discussed what I hoped to experience, I'd mentioned that conservation is my thing. The Pelorus team has come up trumps, leaping through bureaucratic hoops to arrange a private meeting with Khaled Al Hikmani, who has dedicated his life to protecting the endangered Arabian leopard, of which there are thought to be fewer than 250 left in the wild.

We meet on a cliff edge near the 2,100m-high Jebel Samhan mountains, overlooking Salalah and the Arabian Sea beyond. Al Hikmani opens: "In 14 years I've only seen three leopards. But just hearing the roar makes my heart beat faster." Like a mountain goat in flip-flops, he skips across the jagged peaks and down precarious passes, along a route well pawed by local leopards, where he has set up camera traps. Despite my sturdy hiking shoes and (so I thought) head for heights, I crawl slowly, gripping



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From top: the vast infinity pool at Anantara's Al Baleed Resort Salalah. The author prepares for her microlight flight in Wahiba Sands. The waterfalls of Wadi Darbat, east of Salalah



the rock face. Not surprisingly, having been a target of humans for so long, the leopard is shy. But Mackay-Lewis is formulating plans with Al Hikmani for future tours: this naturalists' hide and seek, similar to that played by conservationists and big-cat enthusiasts with snow leopards in the Himalayas, could have significant conservation potential here.

A massage and a dip in the vast infinity pool at the Anantara in Salalah (pictured top) – the area's swankest

hotel, until a new Alila opens next year – sets me up for an early morning. I'm met by dive master Rabie Ali and we off-road through empty dunes to a deserted beach, with talcum sand and rocky outcrops sheltering otherworldly blue water. We dive the coast: pretty fish, colourful coral, massive eels. It's nice, if not terribly testing. But the post-dive chat tantalises with tales of whale pods and the Al Hallaniyat islands, where the underwater world is said to be sublime. There's no time this trip, but X marks the spot.

The following daybreak, moon still bright in an inky sky, we fly to Muscat and immediately hop into another Land Cruiser, passing through Ibra (near to Wadi Bani Khalid oasis, pictured on previous page) to admire its famed racing camels being exercised, before ascending over the Al Hajar mountain range. And suddenly, another world of sand stretches before us: the Wahiba desert. Its marmalade-coloured dunes, smaller than those in the Empty Quarter, are dotted with fixed Bedouin camps, desert hotels and fleets of 4x4s bearing thrillseekers to off-road adventures. Having started in Rub al Khali, this definitely feels rather suburban. But I'm distracted by another Pelorus-arranged surprise: a microlight (pictured left), a contraption that isn't far off da Vinci's drawings

We picnic near pools fed by waterfalls; a farmer waters his camels. It's the Bible, via Disney

of a flying machine, to take me high above the dunes. I hop in just behind the pilot and off we roar. Tiny camels cast long shadows; the sand extends beyond the horizon, the odd turbulence bump adding to the thrill. It's yet another unexpected perspective. Marvelling at its beauty from the silence up high, I'm filled with an almost sacred sense of humility, mind and ego silenced.

My final night closes the adventure with an especially pleasing asymmetry. My first supper was with a nomad born in a cave and my last is with His Highness Taimur Al Said, the sultan's nephew, who hosts a candlelit dinner for me at a sumptuous tented camp (pictured on opening pages), my home for a night. Over lamb shwar, slow-cooked for 24 hours in glowing embers, he speaks about his favourite spots still to be discovered by the world: shimmering salt pans, white-sugar dunes, secret wadis and the Seventh Hole, a cave accessed by abseiling 120m below the Salmah Plateau.

We plot future adventures, until my host bids me goodnight. "Desert sleep is the best," he says with a smile. After the ultimate shower – piping hot, beneath the stars – I slip between linen sheets, delighted to discover a hot-water bottle sharing my bed. I reflect on how time expands when you're immersed in the new, a multitude of first-time encounters and viewpoints. My asymmetrical adventure didn't just give me a super-dimensional picture of Oman; it stretched the very seconds of all four of my days. And that was my last thought before what was, indeed, probably the best night's sleep of my life. ♦

DESERT REBOOT

Alice B-B travelled as a guest of **Pelorus** (020-3848 5424; pelorusx.com), which offers the eight-night Ultimate Desert Adventure in Oman, including all activities, two nights in authentic Bedouin tents in the Empty Quarter, two nights in Hud Hud Bedouin tents on Salmah Plateau, two at Al Baleed Resort Salalah by Anantara and two in the Jebel Akhdar mountains, from £15,950 per person; and of **Oman Air** (0113-396 8888; omanair.com), which flies from Heathrow to Salalah via Muscat twice a day, from £890 per person.



PHOTOGRAPHS: PAUL THUYSAERT, PELORUS, PELORUS (2)

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bookends

Crafted from metal tubing or Murano glass, the vintage bookend is making a collective comeback, says **Ming Liu**

Shelfed or stacked? Ordered alphabetically or by colour? In our Kindle culture, books continue to be an eminent element of modern-day life, with their display a focal point within the home. “People often want to celebrate their book collections,” says Jodi Pollack, Sotheby’s co-worldwide head of 20th-century design. “There’s also a move towards layering in interiors, with eclectic eye-catching objects. Bookends are perfect for this – embellishing spaces with something artistic on a small scale.”

The choice of style and theme for this decorative punctuation mark is vast. One starting point is blue-chip names. Take Tiffany Studios, for example: a c1915 pair of brass and favrile-glass bookends sold for \$3,250, against an estimate of \$800-\$1,200, at Sotheby’s in 2017. The auction house also sold a pair of c1910 sculptural, patinated-bronze arching cats; more unusual in style for the storied American studio, they fetched \$21,250 in 2016, when four years earlier a near-identical pair had sold for just half that at Christie’s.

“Animal-motif bookends are among the most popular with collectors,” says Pollack, who cites French ironworker Edgar Brandt as a name to look out for – online dealer Pamono is offering an art deco pair of Brandt pelicans for £7,173. Another is the French sculptor Ary Bitter, whose bronze elephants often fetch five figures (an early-20th-century pair with horn tusks is available from 1stdibs for £30,739). In the hands of German industrial designer Walter von Nessen, however, animal forms are given a witty art deco twist, with horses (£1,705 from 1stdibs) and cats (\$1,250 from New York dealer Hamel20) fashioned from plumbing-like tubes in nickel-plated brass. Other abstract curvy and circular forms by the designer for the Chase Brass & Copper Company are also desirable, with examples available from NYC Modern (\$2,500) and Art Deco Collection (\$1,000).



Clockwise from top right: c1960-1970 Murano-glass apple and pear, \$600 from 1stdibs. 1932 Walter von Nessen nickel-plated-brass cats, \$1,250, and c1950s Carl Auböck brass chevrons, \$1,875, both from Hamel20. Below: c1920s Edgar Brandt iron pelicans, £7,173 from Pamono

Bookends really came into their own in the art deco era, notes Sussex-based dealer Jeroen Markies. “They were popular gifts and were usually displayed on a desk or

sideboard to showcase just a small selection of special books,” he explains. “French and Austrian examples tend to do well.” Markies recently sold a striking c1930 French set of stylised dolphins in turquoise- and green-hued pâte de verre by Auguste Houillon for £4,650.

One Austrian maker with a cult following is the modernist Carl Auböck, whose pared-back midcentury designs are still produced in his original Viennese workshop (and available on Matchesfashion.com; brass triangle bookends, £475). Chic c1950s chevrons

(£1,875 from Hamel20) and Barbara Hepworth-esque curved forms or T-shapes (£616 from 1stdibs) are wrought in patinated and polished brass – some coiled with cane. Another Austrian name to note is Karl Hagenauer, whose rare c1928-1930 nickel-plated-brass bookends (\$1,100 from Hamel20) depict jumping fish in high art deco style.

Art deco examples also prevail at London’s Pullman Gallery, whose top-drawer 1930s stock ranges from patinated-bronze cats (£4,500) – “they’re very heavy, very useful and humorous too,” says owner Simon Khachadourian –

to a stylish depiction of a racing-car hill climb (£2,800), mounted on ebonised wood. A similar model was recently bought by a motoring enthusiast. “I love the theme,” he says. “They sit on my desk, guarding each end of my collection of vintage car travel and touring books.”

Another, more unusual Pullman offering (£5,500) combines oak plinths with glass panels graphically engraved with black and red enamel signs of the zodiac; it is signed Paul Dupré-Lafon, an eminent French designer and famed Hermès collaborator. An identical design sits in the London office of jewellery designer Carolina Bucci. “I have never counted my bookends, but must have 20 or 30 sets scattered around,” she says, adding that most adorn the library of her home in upstate New York. “There are rock and stone ones, and a series that belonged to my great uncle, most of which are made from a turquoise stone. They are quite decadent.” Bucci’s collection has also inspired her to create her own bookends: smart spherical Carrara marble forms that can be engraved with personal text.

For cocktail connoisseurs, a pair of 1968 glass ice-cube bookends, with an ice tong on one end (sold at the Pullman Gallery for an undisclosed price), evince a cool Studio 54 vibe. Bookends feature prominently in the collection of Italian glass works belonging to the graphic designer and photographer Javier Laracuente, an aficionado of Murano glass. “I love the colours, shapes and variety of the designs,” he says. It’s a passion he has turned into a business, Svazzo Arts, which sells mainly 1940s to 1960s pieces on 1stdibs. His current stock ranges from voluptuous apples and pears (\$600 per pair) and abstract “blobs” (\$565) to pop-art-style blocks encasing rainbow ribbons (£950) and bottle-like forms (\$1,200) made with uranium glass, which glows neon green. These last are, says Laracuente, “very sculptural, so I display them on their own, just back to back.” In the age of the e-book, it seems, there’s still space for a beautiful bibliophile object or two. ♦

“They are perfect for embellishing space on a small scale”



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net gains

Mesh is this season's coolest fabric - in more ways than one, says **Tom Stubbs**

Designers are mashing it up with mesh this season, deploying the fabric in many guises and gauges well beyond its technical and sporty associations. Much of its new appeal is as a subtle under-layer, adding an interesting edge to shirting.

Take the round-neck mesh tops on Salvatore Ferragamo's runway, which were styled under contrasting solid shirts. The house has a long history of using mesh - founder Salvatore used it during material shortages either side of the second world war - and this season it appears in black, white and "rye" woven mesh tees (£415, pictured bottom centre), and a natty cotton-mesh shirt (£415).

Elsewhere, mesh adds subtle texture to classic styles, such as Dunhill's four-button placket polo shirt (£250, pictured top far right) in wool/silk in blue, black and white. "Contrasting mesh with luxury materials delivers classic formality with a sense of nonchalance," says creative director Mark Weston.

Mesh is also at the centre of Sunspel x Lemaire's new capsule collection. "Sunspel has a history of using mesh for undergarments," says Lemaire creative director Christophe Lemaire, "so we visited its archives for inspiration. Henley T-shirts and tanks in amazing vintage mesh were our starting point." Oversized T-shirts (£130, pictured right) come in cinnamon, light grey and midnight blue. There's also an oversized tank top (£120), perfect for layering under open shirts, with knitwear and even tailoring.

This method of layering takes its cue from Jamaica, where loose, mesh marinas - knitted tank tops resembling fishnets - are worn, often under shirting. Katharine Hamnett uses organic-cotton mesh for her T-shirts (£98, pictured top near right) and breathable linings in sportswear jackets. "I think of it as fishnet for men," says Hamnett. "Cool for you, cool for the planet." There are sporty ideas from What We Wear, too, including mesh vests (£200) with detachable sleeves cut with a football-style profile.

Speaking of sportswear influences, I rate Missoni's spring motocross-themed collection highly. "It's inspired by a passion that runs in my family - rallies," Angela Missoni tells me. "We envisioned dressing my nephews for '70s Paris-Dakar rallies." An army-green nylon mesh round neck (£680) with house multicolour "space-dyed" stitching is styled over patterned shirts. A short-sleeve shirt (£690) in a

"Contrasting mesh with luxury materials delivers a nonchalant formality"



Clockwise from left: Katharine Hamnett cotton T-shirt, £98. Ermenegildo Zegna mesh-knit jumper, £950. Missoni nylon field jacket, £970. Dunhill wool/silk-mix polo shirt, £250. Ten C nylon anorak, £750. Stone Island polyester jacket, £350. Salvatore Ferragamo mesh T-shirt, £415. Dior Homme technical-jersey tank top, £730. Sunspel x Lemaire mesh T-shirt, £130



still has a vintage tennis-jacket feel. "I love this technical fabric and its performance, which adds lightness and breathability to tailoring," says Ermenegildo Zegna artistic director Alessandro Sartori, who uses the fabric for jumpers (£950, main picture), parkas, shorts and jackets, including a single-breasted one (£2,400) in loganberry red, made from technical square mesh. He has also used perforated calfskin for drawstring trousers (£4,760) in pistachio and a leather crewneck T-shirt (£3,800) in taupe.

As with Ferragamo and Zegna, Dior's mesh was used as a layering tool, this time rendered in technical jersey (£730, pictured bottom far left) and worn underneath tailoring and casual jackets. These pieces occupy the very fine end of mesh's spectrum and prove just how versatile a fabric it is. ♦ @styleanderror

A FINE MESH
18montrose, Unit 6-8, Stable St, London N1 (020-3805 5451; 18montrose.com). **Dior**, 160-162 New Bond St, London W1 (020-7355 5930; dior.com). **Dunhill**, 48 Jermyn St, London SW1 (020-3429 3380; dunhill.com). **Ermenegildo Zegna**, 37-38 New Bond St, London W1 (020-7518 2700; zegna.co.uk). **Katharine Hamnett**, katharinehamnett.com. **Missoni**, 193 Sloane St, London SW1 (020-7823 1910; missoni.com). **Salvatore Ferragamo**, 24 Old Bond St, London W1 (020-7629 5007; ferragamo.com). **Stone Island**, 79 Brewer St, London W1 (020-7287 7734; stoneisland.co.uk). **Sunspel**, 40 Old Compton St, London W1 (020-7734 4491; sunspel.com). **Ten C**, see 18montrose. **What We Wear**, whatwewear.com.



RM Williams was taught the leatherworking skills he based his business on by bushmen in the Australian Outback during the Great Depression. Although the brand is now most famous for its elastic-sided boots, its plaited leather belts (pictured left), still handwoven, are equally fine. The belts are available pre-made or bespoke to match newly purchased boots. Made from strands of supple kangaroo leather, they come in 1.5in (£160) and 1.25in (£145) widths, the latter, in my opinion, being the coolest (worn with high, wide pleat trousers). They are available in tan, black and chestnut with a polished brass double-O buckle. **102 New Bond St, London W1 (020-7629 6222; rdwilliams.com).**

Luxury boutique and outfitter **Connolly** has created a new piece of knitwear using the ultra-fine fibres from farmed deer fur. Cervelt is extremely soft, elastic and hardwearing, and only 20g is recoverable from each animal. Connolly's V-neck cervelt jumper (£1,980, pictured right) is designed for a relaxed fit and comes in rich taupe. "It's the perfect golf sweater as it doesn't pill," says Connolly owner Isabel Etedgui. **4 Clifford St, London W1 (020-7952 6708; connollyengland.com).**



Paul Smith's No 9 Albemarle Street shop is my favourite, with its good atmosphere, sophisticated edit of clothes and occasional sighting of Sir Paul himself bounding about the place. This month he's launched a new made-to-measure service, available at No 9 (and the Floral Street flagship), offering two- and three-piece suits (from £1,300, example pictured left), eveningwear and separates. Smith's clipped Soho-style suit is offered in 30 of the house's cloths from premium mills, including eight travel cloths. There are also eight lining options and three types of horn buttons to choose from, as well as the option of personalised labels. Orders arrive in a swift four-to-six weeks. **9 Albemarle St, London W1 (020-7493 4565; paulsmith.com).**



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Edible artworks for Easter

This year's clutch of Easter eggs takes edible artistry to new heights, from oeufs befitting the French Riviera to a Venezuelan Carupano chocolate teacup worthy of The Ritz to an elegant Fabergé-inspired egg in a gold-trimmed chocolate case. At the Hôtel de Crillon, pastry chef

Pablo Gicquel has created a contemporary artwork worthy of the newly renovated palace hotel. His egg (€125) is formed from sleek slabs of chocolate, which are stacked from rich dark varieties to white chocolate and the creamiest milk flavours, and has a gold Crillon insignia at its heart.

CHRISTINA OHLY EVANS
For more tasteful temptation, visit [Food & Drink](https://www.howtospendit.com/food-drink)



An Umbrian idyll for picture-perfect seclusion

The hills north of Perugia, dense with woods, are in some places nearly as impenetrable today as they were in Renaissance times - which is when the Carabba Tettamanti family began to acquire vast tracts of unspoiled forest land here, collectively an estate known today as Tenuta di Murlo. The estate covers several thousand hectares of unsullied land - it's crisscrossed by only a handful of *strade bianche* - and is home to some 75 or 80 ruins, some of which Carlotta Carabba Tettamanti Radziwill, Murlo's chatelaine, has restored. These can be taken as self-catered holiday houses or provisioned and partially staffed to offer chefs, spa treatments, yoga - the works. Throughout, the design and palette recall a bit of Flamant here, a bit of Kit Kemp there; easy, chic, ideal.

Santa Croce, which sleeps eight, sits atop one of the highest points for miles around. While you wouldn't want to forget to buy milk while staying there (the closest shop is several miles away, and at least half the route is steep and unpaved), the payoff of its views - and solitude - are virtually unparalleled in the area. If you've got a week in July and want a truly rustic escape, go for Santa Croce - if I haven't got there first.

MARIA SHOLLENBARGER
Feed your wanderlust at [Howtospendit.com/travel](https://www.howtospendit.com/travel)



The workwear trend that has it covered

"The boiler suit encapsulates one side of what's going on in fashion," says Daisy Bridgewater, founder of Spry Workwear. "It's almost a reaction against the amount of choice we have online. It's about buying one piece that's flattering and practical."

Her label started out when she moved to the East Anglian countryside. "I wear a boiler suit most days; I like the sturdiness of it," she says. "I want to just get dressed and get on with things." There's also the matter of the boiler suit's empowerment, says Bridgewater, who launched her label with a classic boiler suit (£160) by reworking a vintage mechanic's overall in a traditional navy cotton twill before adding new editions in needlecord (an olive-green corduroy boiler suit costs £220) and denim. "The idea of a woman squeezed into a pencil skirt and heels feels quite dated. A boiler suit says, 'I'm in charge'." **ALYSON WALSH**

For more easy wardrobe wins, go to [Women's Style](https://www.howtospendit.com/womens-style)



A bespoke shoemaker's solo performance

"Typically, I concentrate on classic English styling, but I have also made crepe-soled desert boots, walking boots, even a pair of ghillies for Scottish dancing," says revered bespoke shoemaker Dominic Casey, showing me round his new atelier in Mayfair men's tailoring house Byrne & Burge.

Casey, who has over 35 years' experience in bespoke shoemaking and helped establish the MA in Footwear Design at the Royal College of Art, has spent the past 10 years working for George Cleverley. "While there are four well-established bespoke shoemaking firms in London, individual makers are rarer; there's just myself and Sebastian Tarek in London," he says. And this is what sets his atelier apart. Casey takes the measurements before personally handcrafting each pair of shoes (from £3,500); he makes the patterns, carves the last, "cuts" and "closes" the shoe, and delivers the finished article.

"One client asked for deck shoes," he recalls. "I told him that he could go to a shop and buy a very good pair for about £200. He looked at me in disgust and said, 'But Dominic, you are my shoemaker.' So I made them for him." **ELISA ANNISS**

For more footwear with finesse, click [Accessories](https://www.howtospendit.com/accessories)



A smart online showcase for sustainable brands

What do Miller Harris perfumes, Dom Pérignon champagne and Cambodia's Song Saa Private Island resort have in common? They all have the seal of approval from Positive Luxury, a site dedicated to sustainable consumption. Its roll call of brands is subjected to a vetting process from a "council of experts" before being awarded the Butterfly Mark. The site showcases the likes of Chaumet and Dior alongside smaller offerings such as Alexandra Mor's unique jewellery (Wild Tagua-Seed Sphere ring, pictured, \$29,500). It gives extensive brand information, highlighting areas like "Uses Renewable Energy" or "Cruelty-free Materials".

Positive Luxury links shoppers to each brand's own website or another e-store to make a purchase. "We're a pioneer in sustainable luxury," says co-founder Verde Nieto, "but we want to focus on the stories." **AVRIL GROOM**

For more do-it-right sites, go to [Howtospendit.com/e-quisitions](https://www.howtospendit.com/e-quisitions)



“

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I spotted the gold
Ina Beissner ear cuff
its stylish wearer
disappeared into a crowd
before I could enquire
about it

”

Jessica Saltz on a romantic treasure hunt - find more jewellers worth tracking down at [Howtospendit.com/watches-jewellery](https://www.howtospendit.com/watches-jewellery)



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Julian had suffered with relative equanimity through hygge

She accompanied this one decipherable word with a game attempt to thrust a jar of Fortnum's Sultry Smoky Nuts his way, resulting in a substantial spillage over (he winced to remember) their £15,000 rug.

Having established that there wasn't a suitor in the cocktail cabinet and that she had been drinking champagne from the bottle alone and nibbling on her own Sultry Smoky Nuts, Julian in his stoical way set about putting Valerie safely to bed. She snored like a horse.

When she awoke the following afternoon, he was able to get a bit more sense out of her. She directed him blearily to the "lifestyle" pages of one of those ghastly magazines she was so obsessed with. Julian had suffered with relative equanimity through hygge, when she'd bought a whole new wardrobe of 1970s-style woollens, refitted the house at huge expense so every room was full of bloody pine cones, and he'd even been forced to drink hot chocolate at night instead of Lagavulin. He'd suffered through lagom, which was something to do with throwing half the pine cones and woollens away. He'd even suffered the phase mari-kwon-do – which sounded like a martial art – when she'd chucked everything away and insisted they both sleep on a futon.

But this? The hot new trend from Finland, apparently. He sounded out the word – kalsarikännit – and read its definition: "To get drunk at home in your underwear, with no intention of doing anything else." Where did they get this stuff? "Pantsdrunk" they were calling it in English. Still, where was the harm? "This too shall pass," he was saying to himself – when he remembered that if she was obsessed with one thing more than those bloody magazines, it was her Instagram feed. It was just as bad as he'd imagined.

It was worse on Monday morning, when he was able to pinpoint from the sniggers exactly how many of his employees followed Valerie on Instagram. And he didn't like at all the tone of the MD's "And how's your lovely wife?" at their lunchtime meeting. But remonstrate with her as he would – he'd come home early to catch her coherent – she flatly refused to promise to stop oversharing.

So on Tuesday, when Valerie went to see her mother, Julian went into action and was all ready to greet her when she arrived back shortly after six. She looked startled, but he didn't wait for her to speak.

"Look!" he said, taking care to enunciate. "We're both on fleek now!"

Then, presenting his phone to her with a smile of triumph: "Look at my new Instagram feed!"

There was a long moment while she took it in.

"But..." she said. "But..." and tears of betrayal brimmed in her eyes. "Those are Marks & Spencer Y-Fronts."

"And Carling Black Label," he added.

"Truce," she said shakily.

"Truce," he agreed. ♦

WRY SOCIETY

the pantsdrunk wife

She's embraced hygge, gone lagom, but what happens when a spouse surrenders her honour to the latest Scandi fad. Words by **Sam Leith**. Illustration by **Phil Disley**

Julian was taken aback when he got home that night. Some evenings, sure, he'd arrive home having forgotten it was Valerie's book group and find their Bulthaupt kitchen island ringed with young women in various states of chablis, waving around the latest Sally Rooney. But this was something different. He climbed out of the Jag as usual, said goodnight to Collins, and let himself in through the front door.

All was quiet, except for a muffled sound of giggling coming from the

half-open double doors to the drawing room. He put down his briefcase in the hall and walked through to find his much younger wife by herself, clearly in a good mood, and dressed only in a set of burgundy underwear from Rigby & Peller.

"What the...?" he said. In any other circumstances – in any other marriage – he might have taken this as a sign that his wife was feeling frisky. But it was not that. Valerie – icy, stylish Valerie, who could strike a chill into a shop assistant at 20 paces – was sitting on the floor in front of

the sofa with her long legs splayed like a collapsed giraffe, head lolling and tall hair in disarray. There was a three-quarter-empty bottle of vintage Bollinger on the coffee table next to her iPhone and an empty one on its side on the rug.

"Valerie?" he said. With an effort, she focused on him before breaking into a smeary smile and giggling. "What the hell is going on?"

"All ellooo whass goinon," she said. "'s kalskari... kalsika... Summing Ffinnish. 'ns BRILLIANT. Ahmon FLEEK! Peanut?"



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CULT SHOP

choosing keeping

This standout London stationers lends contemporary cachet to traditional Osaka-made fountain pens and leather-bound notebooks

I want visitors to be amazed, full of wonder, when they walk in," says Julia Jevell of Choosing Keeping, her eminently elegant London emporium. It's quite a goal for a shopkeeper whose stock in trade is stationery, but her collection of writing equipment and art supplies is more than the sum of its parts, with desk accessories elevated to *objets d'art* in a captivating gallery-like presentation.

Jevell (pictured above) has a keen eye for disposition: pencils (from £1.50) are displayed in patterned mochaware pots (from £65) atop an opulent burr-oak table with gilt legs, commissioned from north London craftsman Steve Harrison, while other stock, from tape dispensers to staplers, lines impressive glass cabinets. It's unsurprising that Jevell worked in a contemporary art gallery prior to setting up shop in 2012 – first in east London, then, after outgrowing the original site last year, in Covent Garden, where an airy interior promotes unrushed browsing.

The front of the shop is dominated by rare and beautiful silk-screen-printed papers (from £16 per sheet) sourced in Kyoto, while marbled British papers (£20) are hung further back. The exquisite fountain pens (£145) by Japanese master Onishi Seisakusho – in Jevell's words, "the last man standing in what was once a booming industry in Osaka" – are hand-turned in marbled, flecked or tortoiseshell celluloid. Less rare but equally appealing are writing instruments by German company Kaweco, ranging from a 1934-designed, heavily weighted brass



AL Sport mechanical pencil (£58) to a retro-look Student rollerball (£62) in ivory- and coral-coloured acrylic. Nearby, a cabinet contains stunning Caran d'Ache sharpening machines (from £145); even the staplers are stylish, with the hand-held version (from £26.50) by 95-year-old Italian brand Zenith available in a range of colourways.

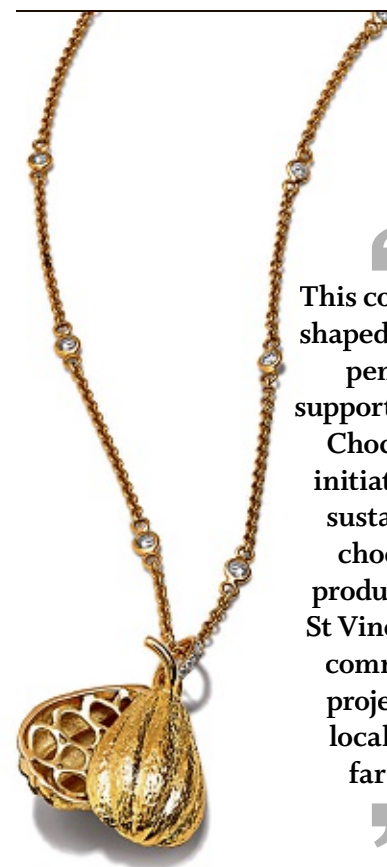
More purely aesthetic offerings include colourful hourglasses (£65) – "to focus your mind on a creative occupation for one hour" – that sit above charming St Clement desk companion ceramic birds (£45). And art supplies abound, ranging from Terrages pastels (£75 for 12) to a remarkable collection of mineral-rock pigment paints (£85, pictured below) sourced from the same Kyoto shop that was frequented by David Bowie.

Jevell won't divulge the names of her well-known clients from the worlds of acting, fashion, music and art, preferring to note some of the items that are stars in their own right: a range of stationery that featured in the 2014 film *Paddington*, for example, or the Choosing Keeping notebook used by John Paul Getty (as played by Donald Sutherland) in the US TV drama *Trust*. These handmade books (from £5) in a range of sizes, with plain or lined paper and accompanying leather covers (from £30), are a much-loved addition to the well-thought-out mix. "I wouldn't say it's curated; curation is for museums," says Jevell. "Instead I like to think of Choosing Keeping as an archive." **MARC ABBOTT** 21 Tower Street, London WC2 (020-7613 3842; choosingkeeping.com).

FOR GOODNESS' SAKE

a trinity of charitable channels

SINCE ITS LAUNCH in 2016, Carolina Guedes Cruz's fashion brand Kleed has been synonymous with chic African wildlife patterned kimonos and loungewear. Guedes Cruz's family once farmed cotton and jute in Angola, and on her first visit to Africa in her early 20s she fell in love with the continent. Since then, the one-time fashion executive for Gucci and Dunhill has returned again and again to volunteer on conservation projects in Namibia, Botswana and South Africa. Kleed now donates five per cent of its proceeds to support the work of the anti-poaching charity Saving the Survivors, a leader in rhino conservation based in South Africa and Mozambique. Among the standout pieces in her latest collection are the geometric-motif cotton Leo pyjamas (€130) and the exuberantly coloured Perrot robe in silk and cotton ikat (€300). kleedkimonos.com.



“ This cocoa pod-shaped 9ct-gold pendant supports Islands Chocolate's initiatives for sustainable chocolate production in St Vincent and community projects for local cocoa farmers ”

Cassandra Goad, designer

Gold cocoa-pod pendant, £1,890 not including chain, from cassandragoad.com; 10 per cent of proceeds goes to Islands Chocolate's St Vincent project

IN THE EARLY 20th century the population of the Sapara people, who live in the Amazon rainforest on the border of Ecuador and Peru, was about 200,000. That number has since dwindled to around 350. The demand for rubber led to the subjugation of the Sapara and the destruction of much of their land – and they face a further threat from proposals to expand oil drilling in the jungle. Specialist travel designer Plan South America has joined up with local conservation charity the Naku Foundation to offer 130 travellers the chance to immerse themselves with the Sapara, learning their traditional ways of life – from hunting with blow darts to taking part in healing rituals. The four-night trip costs \$2,330 full board, and over 50 per cent of proceeds will support the Naku Foundation's aim to provide the community with medical treatment and education. plansouthamerica.com. **MARIANNA GIUSTI**

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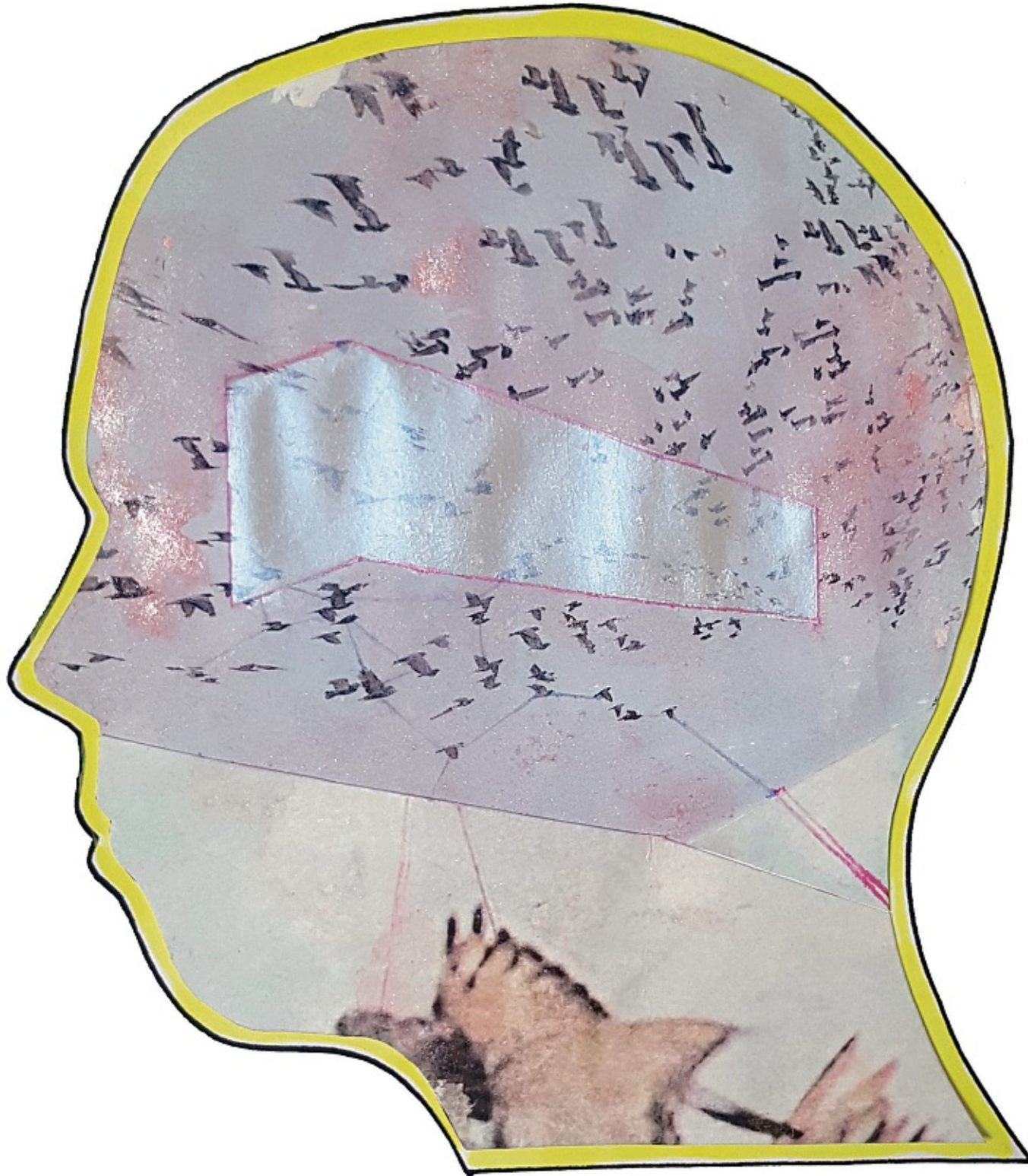
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Oyster shells filled with prawns were daubed with seaweed purée

traditionally made with unsaleable fish from the nets. It demanded a full set of fighting irons but – after a memorable struggle – the beast eventually relented.

Els Pescadors also has a fine wine list, showcasing, in particular, the excellent, underrated wines from the local Empordà DO. They were a highlight, too, of dinner at Casamar, a Michelin-starred restaurant with rooms in Llafranc, an hour's drive east of Girona. Its lofty terrace and smart, modern dining room overlook the bay, a fine spot for Catalan chef Quim Casellas' terrific food. My dinner featured a succession of finely judged dishes both technically adept and bursting with flavour, including lacquered, gently smoky eel with richly indulgent *mi-cuit* foie gras – a blissful expression of *mar i muntanya*, or “sea and mountain” in Catalan – and a chocoholic's dream of a dessert: warm, cold, smooth, nutty and crunchy.

But it was, again, a rustic fish broth – the suquet this time used to cook risotto rice – that stood out. On top of the rice sat a perfectly cooked langoustine and a tangle of cuttlefish ribbons: Casellas emerged from his open kitchen to plate it himself. The recipe for great food on the Costa Brava? Suquet and sea. **BILL KNOTT**

Casamar, Carrer del Nero 3, Llafranc (+34972-300 104; hotelcasamar.net). **Els Pescadors**, Carrer Castellar 41, Llançà (+34972-380 125; restaurantelspescadors.com).

THE GANNET

langosta brava

Lobster lolling in intense fish broth, eel bursting with smoky flavour – the waters of the Mediterranean are a teeming larder for two outstanding Costa Brava chefs

My first memorable meal on the Costa Brava was in 2003, at Ferran Adrià's legendary elBulli, a dinner that ran to 42 courses of extraordinarily witty avant-garde cuisine: one of them was a box of smoke. Just as beguiling was the restaurant's setting among the fishing villages, sandy coves and rocky promontories.

elBulli has gone, but the region's gastronomy is flourishing, as I discovered at Els Pescadors, a superb seafood

restaurant in a picturesque corner of Llançà's harbour. Owners Lluís Fernández Soler and Anna Maria Punset took over this old fishermen's tavern in the 1980s: they still preside over the dining room, but the kitchen is in the hands of one of the next generation, chef Lluís Fernández-Punset, whose menus neatly straddle the modern and the traditional.

There were echoes of elBulli in the spherified “olives” that started the meal, and modernist precision in crisp seaweed

crackers, tempura slivers of lemon rind and pretty oyster shells filled with raw prawns and mussels, daubed with an emerald-bright seaweed purée [pictured]. Cubes of tuna tartare sat atop a Mexican-inflected salsa; ceviche of monkfish was daringly dressed with raspberry, red onion and caviar. The next two courses were more classic in nature: joyously sweet, salt-baked red prawns, then local lobster, lolling in a bowl of deep, dark, soupy suquet, an intense Catalan fish broth

THE GOBLET

grapes under fire

An ambitious young Lebanese winemaker is defying tradition and conflict to create sensational Cinsault

“I am the emperor of the Bekaa Valley.” Faouzi Issa, the boss of Lebanon's oldest commercial winery, Domaine des Tourelles, likes making provocative statements like this. But, as he sweeps his arm theatrically across the vast plateau before us, I get the sense he's only half joking. Because this charismatic 34-year-old has big ambitions – not just for his 150-year-old winery but for the whole of this wine-growing region, which was first planted with vines more than 5,000 years ago.

Most wine lovers will be familiar with the Cabernet blends of Chateau Musar, often dubbed the “Lafite of Lebanon”. But Issa has chosen to make his calling card the more workaday Cinsault – a red grape with echoes of Pinot Noir that's seeing a revival among new-wave winemakers. “The French call it *pisse en vin!*” he says gleefully as we speed down the

Damascus Highway. “They think it's only good for blending. But I forgive them, because here it is proving that the Bekaa Valley is diamond terroir.” That terroir looks unforgiving: so arid and stony you half expect Jesus himself to emerge from behind a rock. But Issa's 70-year-old bush vines love it – they sprawl luxuriantly across the ground like unkempt octopi. “Their fruit has fantastic acidity – you taste so much more of the place.”

The more recent vintages of its top wine, the 100 per cent Cinsault Domaine des Tourelles Vieilles Vignes, are particularly exciting: the 2015 marries broad tannins with zippy notes of orange peel, crunchy red fruits and a hint of rosewater. The slightly more mineral 2016 is on the list at City restaurant Sushisamba. “It's vibrant, fresh and silky,” says head of wine Filippo Pastorini.

As I sit under a pomegranate tree sipping wine with Issa and his team – a glamorous lot



who chat among themselves in a fluent mix of Arabic, French and English – the conflict of the Middle East seems far away. But for Tourelles, a few miles west of the Syrian border, instability is part of everyday life. Issa takes me to Heliopolis, a co-op he's involved in that encourages local farmers to switch from illegally growing marijuana to farming grapes.

I visit five wineries in Lebanon: Tourelles, Kefraya, Ksara, Marsyas and the modernist IXSIR. I meet some visionary winemakers, encounter

intriguing grape varieties and taste fantastic wines. I hear shocking stories too – of raids, kidnappings and harvests under fire. But Issa remains bullish about Lebanon's future. “The war sent all the brains out of this country – we lost our confidence,” he says. “Now it's time for us to start putting back the rich and beautiful history of this land.” **ALICE LASCELLES**

@alichelascelles

domainedestourelles.com.

Jamie Ritchie

The British-born head of Sotheby's global wine business oversaw a record \$100m-worth of wine sales last year at auctions in London, New York and Hong Kong. He has lived in New York with his family since 1995

I'd love to be the sort of person who has a lie-in at the weekend, but I'm usually up by 7am whether I like it or not. I'll check my emails and then go for a run in Central Park. I often listen to a podcast – *Desert Island Discs* or *FT Start-Up Stories*, programmes about engaging people doing interesting things.

On the way back I'll buy breakfast from Miss Madeleine, a little family-run place around the corner from our apartment. My wife Manou loves a pain au chocolat, my daughter Ella likes a baguette, my son Archie has chouquettes – puffed pastry balls with sugar on top – and I have the standard croissant.

Then we'll all go for a bike ride – I take my Brompton [pictured] – down the West Side Highway, which runs right along the Hudson River. It feels like all of New York is hanging out there. One of my favourite spots for lunch is Grand Banks, a seafood bar on an old wooden schooner. I'll have something simple, like a lobster roll and a glass of sancerre. I'm often running an auction on Saturday afternoon. Ella – who does a lot of acting, like I did when I was young – will sometimes come and do a lot. Being an auctioneer is a performance.

It's not a very "American" thing to do, but Manou and I love having dinner parties and I'll go to Di Palo's deli in Little Italy for cheese, olive oil and prosciutto. It's run by two brothers and a sister who insist that you sample everything. It can be tough to get good fruit and veg in Manhattan, so I'll make the effort to go to the Greenmarket on Union Square.

I get my wine from Sotheby's wine store at our HQ on the Upper East Side, or Chambers Street Wines – it's run by smart people with interesting stuff. I'll serve champagne to start – either Krug or Louis Roederer. Then it's two wines per course, served blind initially – it's such a great way to find out what you actually like. I'll finish with dessert wine and a Partagás Serie D No 4 cigar, so it's late by the time we go to bed.

On Sunday morning, we might all play tennis in Central Park, or I'll play Real Tennis at the Racquet & Tennis Club on Park Avenue. Real Tennis courts are smaller, with sloping roofs, and you play with a heavier ball and racket. It's one of the few games where you get better the older you get – it's all about strategy.



I often eat at extraordinary places for work, so I like simple food at the weekend. We'll go to Pasquale Jones for wood-fired pizzas and a glass from its inspired wine list. Then maybe we'll go to an exhibition – we love the American art collection at the Whitney – then walk the nearby High Line to the end. You always see something that's quirky or makes you smile.

My memories of Sunday nights in England are all about feeling sad and eating miserable things like scrambled eggs. So for me it's important that Sunday night is enjoyable. If Manou and I are

going to a restaurant, we like to be a bit more casual and sit at the bar. The best place for that is Michael White's Italian restaurant Marea on Central Park South, which does fantastic crudo and pasta.

After dinner, I'll watch sport on TV. I was a tennis and cricket scholar at Millfield School, so I love the tennis but I'll watch NFL, golf – whatever's going. I'll check in with the markets in Hong Kong. I might read for a bit – I'm currently reading AA Gill, who makes me cry with laughter. When my head hits the pillow, I'm gone. **ALICE LASCELLES**

We'll all go for a bike ride down the West Side Highway, right along the Hudson River

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