

MARCH 14/15 2020

FT Weekend Magazine

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**IN AMERICA**

By Edward Luce

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ELISE TOÏDÉ

## 'Can it kill me? Can they put me in jail? No? I can handle it'

Film-maker Marjane Satrapi, p20



## From island hideaways to city resorts: the 10 hottest new beach hotels

Pink Sand, p25



## 'Serve medium rare, with roast onion and caper sauce'

Rowley Leigh's roast rack of hogget, p54

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# SIMON KUPER

OPENING SHOT

## Paris in 2050: from great city to new metropolis



moved to Paris in 2002. When you live in the same place for ever, life comes to seem pleasantly uneventful. But elections serve as a marker of time. This month's elections for mayor are a prompt to realise how much Parisians have been through since Anne Hidalgo was voted into the job in 2014. We've had the Bataclan terrorist attacks, sackings of the city by *gilets jaunes*, Notre Dame in flames, temperatures hitting 42.6C during last summer's record heatwave and the worst floods since 1982. More quietly, a housing boom is pricing out even the upper-middle classes, partly because Paris has more Airbnb listings than any city except London.

This isn't simply a sequence of accidents. Rather, it's a catalogue of the issues from climate to real estate now besetting every big, successful, rich city. London, New York, Berlin and San Francisco are all living through some version of this. But only Paris is remaking itself for the future. It's even building a whole new Paris: 68 metro stations surrounded by housing are now going up in the suburbs. This urban transformation (arguably bigger than Haussmann's in the 1850s) will happen whoever wins the election. Here is a glimpse of what a metropolis of 2050 looks like.

Paris's great design flaw today is the segregation between the chic city of 2.2 million people and the suburbs containing about eight million more. The perennially congested Périphérique ring road divides the two like a moat. "I know of no other major city where the heart is to such a degree detached from the limbs," said the architect Richard Rogers (although it's strangely similar to the Johannesburg-Soweto divide).

Paris's suburbs were mostly built from 1945 until the 1980s, with few services and an inadequate local train system, notes the architect Thomas Richez of Richez Associés. The consequences are commuting misery for car-bound suburbanites, plus pollution and unaffordable housing. The *gilet-jaune* movement was partly "a crisis of failed urbanism", argues Paris's deputy mayor for urbanism, Jean-Louis Missika. Most *gilets jaunes* live in distant suburbs with few services. Their signature revolt was to convert desolate roundabouts into public spaces with impromptu cafés, recreating the charm and togetherness of urban life, says Missika.

Now Grand Paris Express - western Europe's largest infrastructure project - aims to connect the suburbs not only to central Paris but to each other. Wander around almost any suburb, and somewhere near the high street you'll find a billboard saying: "We are preparing the metro site." Some new metro lines will open before the Olympics of 2024, and all (supposedly) by 2030. The majority will run from suburb to suburb, aiming to give Paris multiple centres, just like modern London. "People will enlarge their territory of life," predicts Nicolas Le Goff, author of the guidebook *Another Paris*.

Each new station is meant to be the heart of a new neighbourhood, with homes built on top of and around it. If you add up the 140 sq km of land within 800m of a new station, there's enough housing space for one-and-a-half Parises.

The new metro and bike lines will allow a gradual conversion of the Périphérique into a tree-lined urban boulevard, with express buses shooting along it. Paris and the suburbs may finally blur into a single city. The losers, admits Missika, will be motorists. Hidalgo's attempt to push cars out of the city could cost her re-election.

### "The new metro and bike lines will allow a conversion of the congested Périphérique into a tree-lined urban boulevard"

There are always squabbles over space in Paris, because there is so little of it. But Missika says you can either treat the Paris accords on climate as empty virtue signalling or take them seriously.

The city is serious. Hidalgo promises a bike lane on every street by 2024, and intends to ban all combustion-engine cars from Paris by 2030. Her ideal is the "quarter-of-an-hour city": a person's home, work and regular chores and activities should be within that radius. Paris will also become less "mineral" and more "vegetable", adding urban forests, rooftop gardens and tree groves in courtyards. New architectural projects are already favouring biomaterials such as wood, partly to provide cool spots for future heatwaves.

That's the plan. Much of it will actually happen. "In France, when the politics is effective, it's very dynamic," says Stephen Barrett, architect at Rogers Stirk Harbour, which is involved in the remaking project as well as Richez Associés. Greater Paris is meeting its target of building about 70,000 new homes a year. The problem is that many of them aren't apartments on top of future stations but single-family houses in the car-bound outskirts, whose residents don't want their small town to become Shanghai. The outcome could be an even more sprawling metropolis. And younger people who need affordable homes in well-connected neighbourhoods are being overlooked, either because they aren't living there yet or are still children.

Only Paris's inner suburbs - the "*petite couronne*" or "little crown" - may end up melting into the metropolis, leaving Grand Paris Express a mere half-success. But that's more than most other great cities are even attempting. In the quest for future liveability, Paris leads. **FT**

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**INVENTORY** PAULA WAGNER  
FILM PRODUCER AND EXECUTIVE

**‘As a woman, I have always had to prove I can do things that aren’t expected’**

**Paula Wagner, 73, began her Hollywood career as an actress. She went on to be an agent, managing top names including Sean Penn, Demi Moore, Liam Neeson and Tom Cruise. Cruise/Wagner Productions subsequently made blockbusters including the original *Mission: Impossible* trilogy. She has also helmed a number of Broadway shows including, most recently, *Pretty Woman The Musical*.**

**What was your childhood or earliest ambition?**

To be a classical pianist. I began studying piano when I was six. I started as an actress at the local theatre at 13 years old and went through to my early thirties as a professional actress - I did movies, television, Broadway and all of that.

**Private school or state school?**

**University or straight into work?**

I grew up in a small town in Ohio and rode the school bus to public [state] high school. I went to Carnegie Mellon, one of the top drama schools in the US. I also studied with Sanford Meisner, one of the great acting teachers of all time.

**Who was or still is your mentor?**

I have too many to name, but I want to say my mother, a unique and brilliant woman whose curiosity led her down so many paths, from studying geology to raising fish and raising dogs - and raising children. My father too. He said: “Hold yourself in high regard and make sure everyone else does as well.”

**How physically fit are you?**

Very. I’ve been doing yoga since the early 1970s when it was considered strange. Pilates, cardio - I try to do something at least five times a week.

**Ambition or talent: which matters more to success?**

Ultimately, talent prevails. But ambition lends focus and the framework within which talent can be actualised in a satisfying way.

**How politically committed are you?**

More so than ever.

**What’s your biggest extravagance?**

I’m not wildly materialistic. I really like designer clothes. Maybe that’s not such an extravagance. I take time out for myself.

**In what place are you happiest?**

Wherever my husband and family are.

**What ambitions do you still have?**

Obviously, to make the great movie and the great theatrical piece.

That’s a very specific ambition. I want to create something that’s culturally relevant and has lasting social significance. And I want to redefine ageing. I want to truly make 70 the new 50.

**What drives you on?**

I’m just beginning the age of wisdom and I have a long way to go. I feel like I’m just starting out on this path. I love life, I love its mysteries, I love the fantasies, I love the unexpected adventures and I love taking on challenges. I love inventing and exploring and finding new things. I like getting to the top of various metaphorical mountains. As a woman, I have always had to prove I can do things that aren’t expected.

**What is the greatest achievement of your life so far?**

Being a mother. I have great sons, Zach and Jesse. Careerwise, I’m really proud I came so close to my childhood dream.

**What would you like to own that you don’t currently possess?**

I have simple tastes. I’d like to own a theatre.

**What do you find most irritating in other people?**

Arrogance from ignorance.

**If your 20-year-old self could see you now, what would she think?**

Hopefully she’d be thrilled that I’d finally figured it all out and I’m striving to achieve some wisdom. She’d be surprised that I wasn’t an actress but that I’d produced a lot of big movies.

**Which object that you’ve lost do you wish you still had?**

My baby blanket. I named it my “nuh”. My parents lost it on a vacation in Florida and I wasn’t ready to let it go.

**What is the greatest challenge of our time?**

Human aggression. And global warming.

**Do you believe in an afterlife?**

We all exist in some way, somehow, eternally. Matter can neither be created nor destroyed. I wish we weren’t so primitive, then we’d know the answers better, but I do believe the soul has an afterlife.

**If you had to rate your satisfaction with your life so far, out of 10, what would you score?**

Eleven. And still counting. **BT**

.....  
*Interview by Hester Lacey.*

*“Pretty Woman The Musical”, Paula Wagner’s first West End production, is at the Piccadilly Theatre; [prettywomanthemusical.com](http://prettywomanthemusical.com)*



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OPERATING WORLDWIDE



# TECH WORLD NOTES FROM A DIGITAL BUNKER

BY HANNAH MURPHY IN SAN FRANCISCO

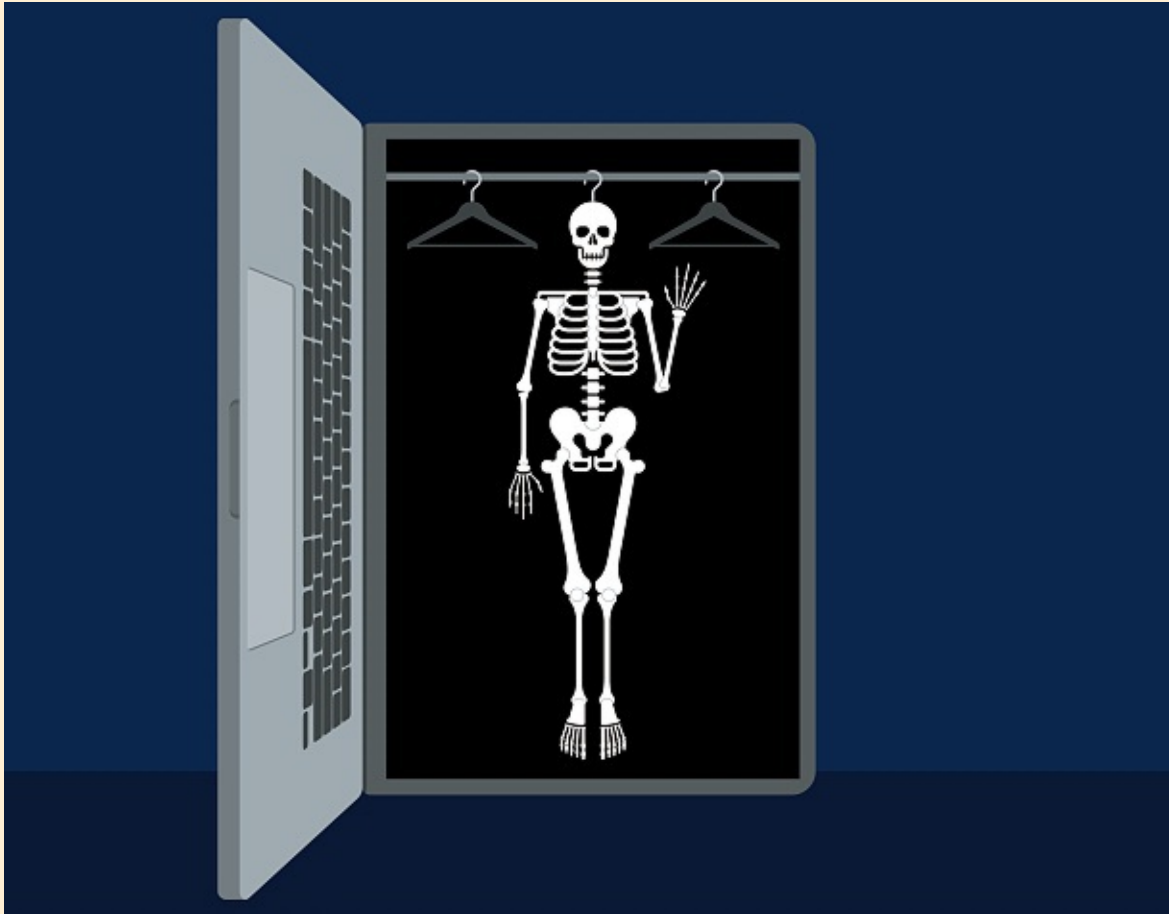


ILLUSTRATION BY PÂTÉ

## The skeletons in our smartphones

Hannah, pleased to meet you. So, you're a writer and a singer," said my interviewee as I sat down to grill him at RSA, Silicon Valley's largest conference for cyber security professionals.

Barry Hensley, chief threat intelligence officer of security group Secureworks, had - I figured - visited my Twitter or LinkedIn profile, where I mention my musical interests. Or perhaps his press officer had pulled the information together into a briefing note, as they often do for clients.

But there was more to come. Who, he asked, was the man I had cropped out of my LinkedIn profile picture? A former boyfriend turned enemy, perhaps? Hensley appeared to have figured out who this person was - but, he said, was still trying to

work out the connection between the two of us.

I was spooked: from the crop of the picture, there was no way to know that the person next to me was a man, let alone his identity. I soon learnt that Hensley's team, either for fun or to give him an edge in the interview, had gathered what is known as open-source intelligence - or Osint - on me.

Osint involves scouring publicly available sources to collect information on a target. This typically means examining social media and the dark web, enabled by some deep Google searching and an array of free, whizzy online tools.

Such sophisticated internet stalking has long been part of the playbook of spy agencies, law enforcement and even jealous lovers. But it is also blossoming as a service offered to corporations by a new crop of cyber start-ups as well as some larger organisations.

To provide "digital risk protection", these IT security

experts will analyse the public digital footprint of companies and their top executives to establish if any of that information could be leveraged by potential hackers - and if so, to lock it down so that it is no longer accessible. According to data by the US market research company Forrester, these services cost an average of about \$45,000 for a small business and \$150,000 for a larger one.

Cyber security is understandably a twitchy, paranoid industry, and covering it as a reporter has rubbed off on me. (Within weeks of starting this role, I found myself standing on my chair in the office inspecting a small white device on the ceiling that turned out to be a smoke detector.) So, naturally, I raced to enlist a trusted cyber security researcher to pull together all the dirt on me, floating there in the ether and waiting to be found.

I had prepared for the worst. But, in the end, it was fairly rudimentary; most notably, she

located my Facebook page, which I thought was hidden, and knew I used an iPhone.

There were other unexpected vulnerabilities, though. In one public tweet, I had posted a screenshot of a conversation with a colleague on WhatsApp. The colleague's WhatsApp profile picture was visible - so an attacker could potentially clone the picture, and message me pretending to be them on a newly bought phone.

It sounds rather inventive, but this is no time for complacency: several governments allegedly used the Pegasus spyware to target journalists using WhatsApp, and more than one source I met during RSA spoke of helping news organisations handle recent hacking attempts by outsiders.

Scariest still is that profiling - pulling together a portrait of


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**'Cyber security is a paranoid industry, and covering it as a reporter has rubbed off on me'**

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someone and their patterns of behaviour through their data - may already be taking place on a far grander scale, albeit with stolen data sets. Recent thinking, common in intelligence circles, is that China in particular is gathering personal information about individuals through big breaches, such as the hack of consumer credit agency Equifax in 2017.

If cross-referenced against each other, these data sets could be used to build detailed profiles, exposing people to blackmail, for example. Our easier-to-access digital footprint is just another set of data that could be added to this melting pot.

So, what of the man in my profile photo? As it turns out he is just a friend. I'm not trying to make a statement of revenge - I just like the photo of myself. If our digital lives are increasingly being used against us, we can at least take hope from the fact that there are some truths that can't be gleaned from our online behaviours alone. 

*Hannah Murphy is FT technology correspondent in San Francisco*

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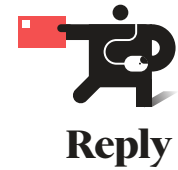
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# ROBERT SHRIMSLEY THE NATIONAL CONVERSATION



## Why coronavirus is making me miss Brexit

The only good thing about coronavirus is that at least people have stopped telling you where they went on holiday. It's not much of a silver lining but we must all draw what consolation we can in these panicked times.

Where once the weeks after half-term were filled with stories of skiing, mini-breaks to Venice, the beaches of Tenerife and even exotic jaunts to Asia, suddenly everyone has got terribly coy about their travels. Facebook pages are notably less full of holiday snaps. One old friend travelled to Vietnam seemingly unaware that each new photo screamed "self-isolation" on his return. Absolutely no one seems keen to mention their trip to Italy lest their children are plucked from school. Thus far, our own mini-break has triggered no alarms but, if anyone asks, we opted for a staycation.

(At this point, it is only fair to warn you that this column will be displaying signs of flippancy. There may also be isolated outbreaks of irreverence, so anyone who thinks that is inappropriate should probably move on. You might also want to wash your hands for 20 seconds.)

Then again, the upsurge of virus conversations has already left me mourning our old arguments over Brexit. In a choice between the WTO and the WHO I'll take the rules-of-origin debate any day. Coronavirus may be moving from the containment to delay stage but the conversations have already reached pandemic level. It is one thing to fret about death rates and vulnerable relatives, to search for accurate information, as opposed to those websites that appear to be edited by *Dad's Army's* Private Frazer. But information exchanges about bog roll? Not so much.

We are, at least, past the stage of conversation in which all



ILLUSTRATION BY LUCAS VARELA

discussions are dominated by the one person who insists the whole thing has been blown out of all proportion, that the world has gone mad and that this is the ideal moment to take advantage of Ryanair's very cheap flights to Wuhan. What we are not beyond, apparently, is the second-guessing of experts by people who, in fact, know nothing. It may well be that the chief medical officer will get some judgments wrong but I'm still going to go with his advice rather than that guy four doors down who has just read an article by Piers Morgan.

After medical concerns, the big debate is on stockpiling, though, of course, only those with a decent disposable income can afford to do this. Those of us fortunate enough to still have supplies in our Brexit panic room have, of course, a head start on others but we cannot afford to be complacent. We had to book our Ocado delivery four days earlier than usual and, even then, they were out of Imperial Leather.

But even in the face of panic buying, people are still maintaining some standards. A colleague reported that his local Tesco had sold out of all pasta except lasagne sheets. Seriously, what kind of panic is this? I mean, come on, I know it's a bit harder to cook but

I wouldn't have thought a choice of starvation or lasagne was an especially difficult call.

I do worry, however, about these emergency food parcels we are going to get to people who are self-isolating. Obviously, survival is the first concern but Parmigiano-Reggiano is a close second. What if they give us goat's cheese instead? Many of us are not partial to it. Health secretary Matt Hancock may be attempting to reassure us that no one will be left without food but, frankly, we want a little better than that.

This is not just a safety-of-life issue; it is a quality-of-life issue too. Bad enough to have a humanity- and economy-threatening pandemic; how much worse to have to get through it on tinned tuna. Forget your toilet paper and Carex, we are heading for the halloumi and we'll empty the shelves if we have to. Meanwhile, over in Barnes, I hear talk of residents from the Richmond Resistance, lying in wait to ambush emergency ricotta deliveries.

Apparently, this is all going to herald the return of the great British stiff upper lip. Perhaps we could shove the uncooked lasagne in our mouths for underpinning? **FT**

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As a person descended from the Green Sahara who has the sickle cell trait, this article ("How unlocking the secrets of African DNA could change the world", March 7/8) feels profoundly important. I have completed a DNA test because I feel it will contribute to improving our global understanding of humanity. My brother has not - he mistrusts those who gain access to his data. The issues are complex, but I will find a way to contribute to the research of African scientists working in Africa.

KSQ via FT.com



@saitonne March 5

This article via @FT is really interesting. Racism and colonialism mean that people have always denigrated us or taken advantage of our people and resources. If our rich were wise, they would fund things like this for the betterment of our people & diaspora

Excellent article ("Keira Knightley on #MeToo, motherhood and *Misbehaviour*", March 7/8).

This impressive woman comes across as credible and authentic. **Surfwatcher** via FT.com

Re Simon Kuper's "Tips for the modern boss" (March 7/8).

The best bosses hire the very best people and keep them happy and productive, removing roadblocks and limitations and letting their people shine. Then the boss looks good, even though they didn't do any real work.

**Butterfly antennae** via FT.com

Re "Bad tech nearly sent me to coronavirus quarantine" (March 7/8).

Yuan Yang has once again illustrated for the rest of us the details that make China a little easier to apprehend.

**Old School Canuck** via FT.com

Full Marx for Robert Shrimsley's column on "Life at Tony Benn University" (March 7/8).

**Confucius** via FT.com

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Quiz answers: The link was five pairs of opposites: 1. James Blunt; 2. Cecil Sharp; 3. Long Island; 4. Nigel Short; 5. East Timor; 6. West Side Story; 7. Little Britain; 8. Big Bang; 9. James Last; 10. First among equals. **Picture quiz:** Nick Cave + Isle of Man = Caveman



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# THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM IN AMERICA

Bernie Sanders seems certain to fail in his second attempt to win the Democratic nomination for president. But his followers are not about to go away – and they have helped move the party to the left, making once marginal policy ideas mainstream. *Edward Luce reports*





“The old is dying and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum a great variety of morbid symptoms appear.” Antonio Gramsci, in his *Prison Notebooks*, on how societies in flux embrace all kinds of radicalism.

Just over a century ago, American socialism hit its high-water mark. Some might consider that combination of words – “American socialism” – to be an oxymoron. But the US allergy to socialism can be exaggerated. In the local elections of 1917, the Socialist Party of America took a third of the council seats in Chicago, a quarter in New York and large chunks across the industrial Midwest. Millions subscribed to socialist newspapers.

The movement then all but vanished from the American landscape. The scissor effect of Russia’s Bolshevik revolution later that year, and the Socialist party’s opposition to America’s entry into the Great War, cut it to shreds. Most of its leaders, including the legendary orator Eugene Debs, who had contested five presidential elections, were imprisoned under the hurriedly passed Espionage Act. Neither the party nor its creed recovered in the 20th century. The very word carried a hint of anti-Americanism during the height of the cold war.

It took 99 years for “socialism” to re-enter mainstream America’s lexicon. In the bitterly contested Democratic primaries of 2016, the self-declared socialist Bernie Sanders came close to wresting the nomination from Hillary Clinton. Their differences poisoned the party. Roughly one in eight of Sanders’ supporters voted for Donald Trump that year. Others went for Jill Stein, the Green party candidate. That leakage alone accounts for Clinton’s defeat.

Older generations may recoil at the younger Sanders’ flirtation with the Soviet Union, which has surfaced in his second attempt at the nomination. But the Berlin Wall has now been down for as long as it was up. Just under half of Americans under the age of 39 have a positive view of socialism, according to Gallup. If, as now seems certain, Sanders fails again to take the crown in 2020, his supporters will be a decisive factor in the contest against Trump. The party’s likelier nominee, former vice-president Joe Biden, would have one big advantage over Hillary Clinton; knowing which mistakes to avoid. Chief of these is winning the support of the anti-establishment left in November, even if that means adopting part of Sanders’ agenda. Backing a wealth tax on America’s super-rich and embracing a “green new deal” are now very much on the cards.

Most Europeans would use the term “social democrat” rather than socialist to describe policies such as paid sick leave, parental rights and basic universal healthcare. Since the cold war, American opponents of such protections have sought to discredit them with the socialist label. Under Trump, almost any Democratic policy, however modest, has been demonised as Venezuelan socialism. As a result, Sanders embraces the word to a fault. Like an itinerant preacher, he has criss-crossed America saying over and over that billionaires and corporations have rigged the system against ordinary people. In spite of Sanders’ crankiness – and partly because of it – he strikes a deep chord with the young, even if many believe elections are also rigged. Other less stubborn – and perhaps more appealing – characters, such as Alexandria Ocasio-



## ‘Our economic system is set up to benefit the wealthy at the top of our system, and crumbs are left for those who are struggling’

Leelee Thomas, Marin County’s elected officer

Clockwise from left: Eugene Debs, leader of the Socialist Party of America, in Ohio in 1918; Al Baylacq, a partner in organic superstore Good Earth Natural Foods and a Sanders supporter; protesters calling for more workers’ rights at a May Day rally in New York in 2018



Cortez, the 30-year-old congresswoman from New York, may now pick up Sanders’ torch. On whatever terms the senator exits his primary battle with Biden, America’s left is in the throes of an unexpected golden age. Should we discount this rebirth of US socialism as a “morbid symptom” – a cry of pain from a society entering a new technological age? Or is Sanders the harbinger of a lasting change – a John the Baptist to a future presidential Jesus?

**I probe that question in one of the least likely places – Marin County in northern California.** Nestled between San Francisco and the vineyards of Sonoma and Napa Valley, Marin is one of the most abundant places on earth. At \$93,000, the median household income is America’s fifth highest. Hollywood producer George Lucas has a gated ranch here. You cannot keep count of the Zen retreats, yoga farms and meditation centres dotted throughout its Pacific coast landscape. Yet what happens in California often predicts the future of America. And what happens in Marin – home to the organic food movement as well as the 1960s cult band, the Grateful Dead – often sets the tone for California.

Sanders won the state on Super Tuesday by a margin of seven percentage points. Biden just beat him in Marin, but only because most of its increasingly Hispanic workforce cannot afford to live there. Most of Marin’s nearby counties, including Sonoma, Alameda and even Silicon Valley’s San Mateo, chose Sanders. Here within San Francisco’s gilded radius lives the soul of liberal America. Perhaps its dirtiest secret is that it is home to the country’s sharpest inequalities. San Francisco boasts more billionaires and more homeless people per capita than any other city in the US.

Marin County, which is just a short drive across the Golden Gate Bridge, is San Francisco’s arcadian backyard. The median home price is \$1.2m, which



is almost quadruple the national average. Yet the county’s “affordable housing” endowment is only \$6.3m, from which it has to leverage an annual budget. “It’s not even small change,” says Leelee Thomas, Marin County’s elected officer, who has the Sisyphean role of creating rentable accommodation for its less plutocratic residents. “Currently, our economic system is set up to benefit the wealthy at the top of our system, and crumbs are left for those who are struggling.” The county hosts far more economically squeezed people than initially meets the eye. Set apart from the roads, you start to glimpse numerous trailer parks, which are mostly manufactured houses. Some of the smaller conventional homes have three or four pick-up trucks outside, an indication that several families are crammed inside.

Soaring housing costs are a constant headache for Marin’s larger employers. One of its biggest is Good Earth Natural Foods, an organic superstore that is the county’s main competitor to Whole Foods. Elsewhere in America, Whole Foods is dubbed “Whole Pay Check” by some, because it is so expensive. Much of it is cheap compared with Good Earth. “People walk out of here with \$400 of produce in their carts,” says Al Baylacq, a partner in Good Earth. “If you’re shopping at Good Earth, budget is not your primary concern.” Baylacq is an avowed Sanders supporter, as are many of his store’s 550 employees, almost half of whom are Hispanic. In contrast to Whole Foods, owned by Amazon, the online behemoth, every one of its products is organic. Good Earth believes in sustaining local small businesses.

There is a hint of the 1960s psychedelic to Baylacq. He sees his business as a soulful alternative to Amazon’s corporate philosophy. As a self-declared “Dead Head” – an ardent fan of the Grateful Dead, and now of Phish, its closest contemporary – Baylacq’s stakeholder values should come as little surprise. He takes pride in the fact that Phish come from Sanders’ home state of Vermont. “Amazon sucks up business and destroys independent producers in the most ruthless way,” Baylacq says. “If your product is not listed on Amazon – on their terms – then you may as well declare bankruptcy. I am happy to own my support for Bernie as my resistance to that America.”

I ask whether Baylacq’s employees can afford to shop in the store where they work. He laughs. “Nowhere close,” he says. Many of them have to commute at least an hour from the endless residential tracts and dormitory towns that serve Marin County and San Francisco. I remind him that Henry Ford famously pledged to pay his workers enough to buy the Model T Fords they were making. That pledge turned into the informal social contract of America’s postwar middle class. Baylacq started work at 13 as a butcher’s assistant. Now 54, he sits on philanthropic boards. Isn’t his success proof that the American dream is alive and well? “Not really,” he says. “I have been blessed with some very lucky breaks.” He sketches the adult lives of his childhood peers, which do not sound too rosy.

Later I go to Paper Mills, which must be the most blue-collar bar in Marin. There is a crooner twanging his tunes. The women wear their hair long. Many of the men are wearing some kind of hat, most of them cowboy. Here I meet Andy Giddens, 68, who, by his own definition, falls between hippie and redneck. Marin born and bred, Giddens made his living painting houses. The wealthier the





◀ person, the likelier they were to shortchange him, he says. “Like Trump, they wait till you’ve done the work, then they tell you, ‘There’s something wrong with your work; we’re going to pay you \$5,000 less than agreed.’” Giddens is wearing what looks at first glance like a Trumpian “Make America Great Again” baseball cap. In fact, it says: “Make Siberia Warm Again.” A lot of Trump supporters, including some of Giddens’ relatives, make the same mistake and greet him as a fellow Trumpian. “Some of them are so goddam dumb,” he says laughing. “I had 200 of these caps made.” I am swigging a bottle of Corona beer, which prompts dark jokes about the coronavirus. Giddens told me that most of his friends were Bernie supporters. Some voted Trump in 2016, but they have now seen enough. “I mean, Trump didn’t even know that normal influenza can kill,” he says. “And he calls himself an expert.” A lot of his friends would only consider voting for Bernie, he says. Other Democrats are “too establishment”.

**Across the Bay Bridge to Berkeley, home to the US’s most liberal campus - and former seat of one of the country’s turn-of-the-century socialist mayors - I visit Robert Reich, who is among America’s leading progressives (“socialism” is not a term he uses). I want to see Reich for two reasons. First, he is an influential supporter of Bernie Sanders. Second, he is one of Bill Clinton’s oldest friends. Almost nobody fits both those descriptions. When I first lived in the US in the late 1990s, I read Reich’s memoir, *Locked in the Cabinet*, about his frustrations as Clinton’s first-term Labor secretary. They got to know each other as young Rhodes scholars on a transatlantic passage to Britain in 1968. Reich once went on a date with Hillary Rodham when they were at Yale law school.**

As a leading “FOB” (friend of Bill), Reich was a chief architect of Clinton’s 1992 campaign, which promised blue-collar Americans a bridge across the “information superhighway” to the 21st century. He quickly grew disenchanted with the Clinton White House. People such as Robert Rubin, a former Goldman Sachs partner, and Harvard scholar Lawrence Summers took the administration in a “neoliberal” direction. Alan Greenspan, chair of the Federal Reserve, held far more sway in Clinton’s Washington than the labour unions. Clinton cut US welfare spending, deregulated finance and expanded tax subsidies for business. “I once said something about ‘corporate welfare’ [a phrase Reich coined] and Rubin said,

“We can’t denigrate captains of industry;” recalls Reich. “I realised we had gone from being a party of the working class to a party of the college class. They were in thrall to Wall Street.”

That shift is often personalised as a victory of the Rubin wing over the Reich one. It was dubbed Rubinomics and marked the end of the party that Franklin D Roosevelt had created in the 1930s. Clinton’s third way Democrats paid lip service to FDR and his New Deal, which created America’s modern safety net. But they danced to a very different tune composed by Ronald Reagan in the 1980s. The Clinton era came amid rapid changes in the US labour market. Median household income had begun to stagnate in the late 1970s. Some of that was cushioned by the rise of two-earner households as women increasingly started work to make up for their husband’s job loss or declining wages.

In contrast to Europe and Canada, America’s female labour force participation rate reached a plateau in the early 2000s. In addition to hiring others to care for their children and working ever-

## ‘We are always David fighting Goliath. We have to take the fight to them’

Kshama Sawant, leader of the Socialist Alternative





longer hours, blue-collar America's third "coping mechanism" was to use their homes as piggy banks, by taking out home equity loans from the banks. All that came crashing to a halt with the 2008 financial crisis. "People woke up to the fact that all their coping mechanisms were exhausted," says Reich. "Wages weren't rising, your contractual relationship with your employer was now totally one-sided and bankruptcy protections existed only for the rich. Is it any surprise people have been turning to anti-establishment politicians?"

Reich's friendship with the Clintons has cooled somewhat after he endorsed Barack Obama over Hillary in 2008. When Obama was president, the populist backlash erupted in the form of the Tea Party movement on the right, which captured the Republican party, and the Occupy Wall Street movement on the left, which stayed on the margins. Sanders picked up the spirit of the Occupy movement a few years later. Reich spent a lot of time with voter focus groups during the 2016 election in Midwestern cities such as Toledo, Dayton and Cleveland, which helped make Trump president. What struck him most was the ubiquity of "cross-over voters" - people who would vote for Trump or for Sanders, but would never contemplate voting for Clinton. This is how Giddens describes himself, using the term "tweener". "What tied them was a rejection of the usual faces," Reich says. "If anything, that sentiment has grown since 2016."

His old friends the Clintons spent a lot of their summers in the Hamptons with the same old crowds of hedge-fund titans and media moguls. "I don't dislike the rich at all - this isn't personal," he says. "But as a group they hang out too much together." He calls today's era the "second gilded age". The first, in the late-19th century, was also a time of great disruption - railways, electricity and the internal combustion engine. Like today, it was a period of mass immigration. Today's version of the Carnegies and Rockefellers mostly live 30 or so miles south of Reich's office in Silicon Valley - and up the west coast in Seattle, home to Microsoft and Amazon. "Monopoly power is less visible today than in the first gilded age but it is just as real," says Reich. "People know they are being shafted but not always exactly by who."

It came as little surprise that Sanders did relatively well this week in Washington State, home to Seattle. Much like in the first gilded age, American socialism is largely a creature of the cities. Immigrants also play a starring role. In the early 20th century, it was largely New York Jewish refugees from Russia, who shared the Bolsheviks' hatred of the tsar. The other wing was German-speaking incomers to the Midwest, particularly Wisconsin. One of today's faces of US socialism is Kshama Sawant, leader of the Socialist Alternative, who is the longest serving member of Seattle's city council. It was Sawant, 46, a self-declared Marxist, who started the movement for a \$15-an-hour minimum wage. After she pushed it through the Seattle council in 2017, it quickly went national. All Democrats, including Biden and Sanders, now back it as a federal law. Sawant's main cause today is to pass a tax on Seattle's big companies, which she has called the Amazon Tax.

I join Sawant on a chilly day in the large tract of downtown Seattle that has been overtaken by

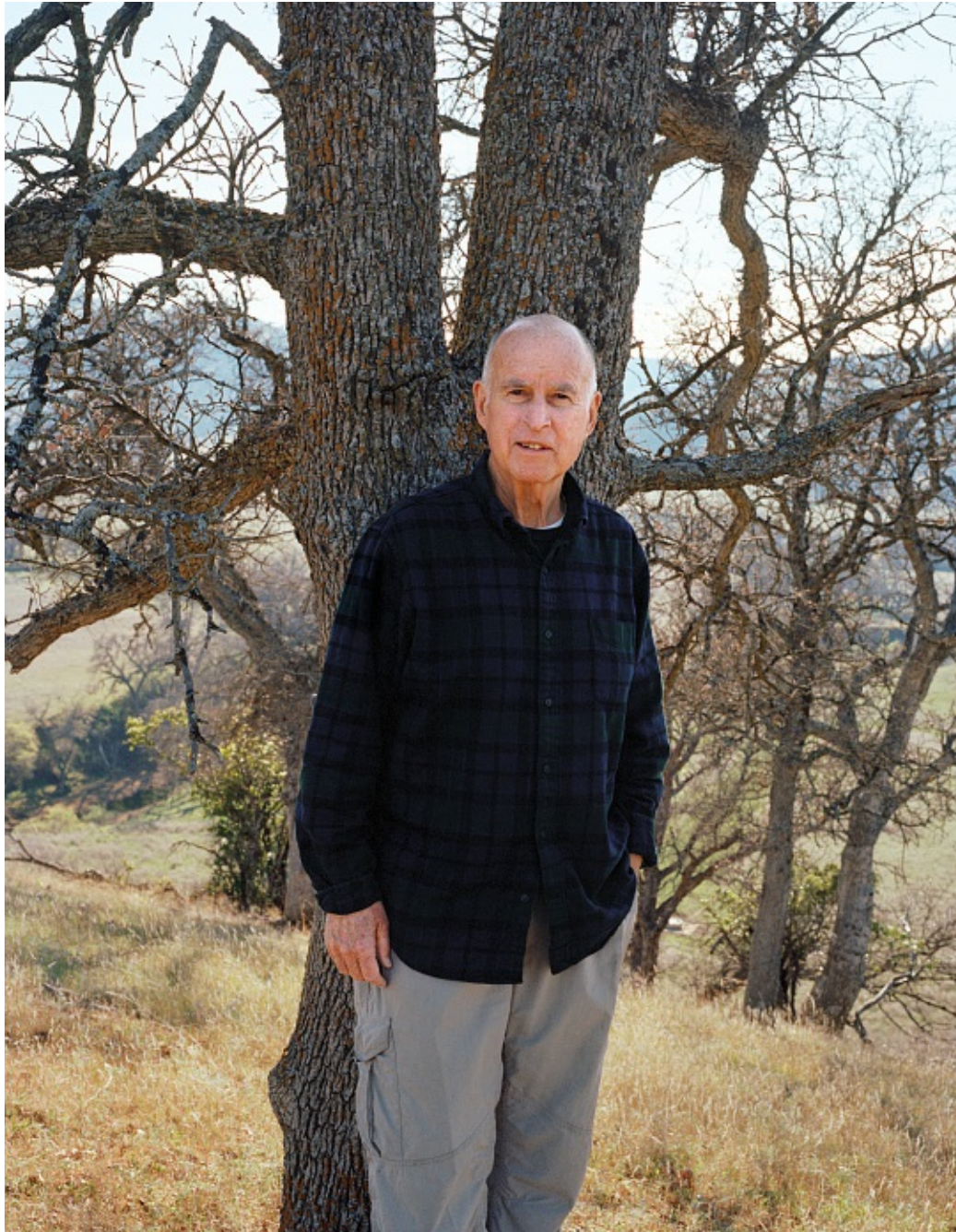


CODY COBB

Amazon, which long since dwarfed Microsoft as the city's largest employer. In a tribute to its huge influence, Amazon is exempt from state and city taxes. In 2019, it paid virtually zero federal taxes either. Depending on the ups and downs of the equity markets, Amazon is valued at more than a trillion dollars. Jeff Bezos, its founder and chief executive, is personally worth upwards of \$120bn. Sawant is leading a rally next to the Amazon biosphere, an indoor hothouse that serves as an incongruous backdrop to the wintry protest. In the previous 72 hours, Seattle had suddenly emerged as America's first venue of home-grown coronavirus infections. In spite of unease over the risk of contagion, Sawant's "Tax Amazon" rally was well attended. The mood could not be described as conciliatory. "Bezos makes \$8.9m an hour. Amazon warehouse workers make \$16.75 an hour," says one relatively informative sign. "No one needs that much f\*\*king money," says another. "The rich hate you," says a third. The most common are "Tax Amazon" and "Housing is a human right." The banner "Normalize shoplifting" hints at an anarchist element. ▶

Clockwise from above: Kshama Sawant, a self-described Marxist who is the longest serving member of Seattle's city council; protesters at a Tax Amazon march this month in Seattle; Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden on the campaign trail in Los Angeles this month; Bernie Sanders at a campaign rally in New Hampshire last month with Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, the young congresswoman from New York





JANET DELANEY

Above: former California governor Jerry Brown: 'In much less disruptive times than today, politics is hard to predict' Facing page: anti-Trump protesters in Pittsburgh in 2017

◀ Sawant, who has been a warm-up speaker at Sanders' rallies, sets out the case for taxing Amazon, a company that spent millions of dollars fruitlessly trying to defeat her in her last election two years ago. Washington's state government, in nearby Olympia, is trying to pass a pre-emption law that would ban Seattle from imposing the tax. The Democrats are the party of billionaires, Sawant says. Socialists are the opposition. Much like in San Francisco, New York and other Democratic strongholds, the cost of housing in Seattle is prohibitive. A poll of unions showed that rent took up 70 per cent of most members' income - about twice the level considered to be rent-poor. Proceeds from the Amazon Tax would go on social housing.

Sawant has tried without success to persuade Bezos to hold a public debate with her. "We are always David fighting Goliath," she tells me after the rally in a nearby Starbucks - another of Seattle's corporate champions. The coffee chain's billionaire founder Howard Schultz briefly flirted last year with running as a self-funded independent for the White House. A fourth corporate native, Boeing,

has received \$8.7bn in direct subsidies from Washington State. It pays no state tax either. I am reminded of Reich's talk about corporate welfare.

I want to know what drove Sawant to become America's most visible elected Marxist. Born in Pune, India, and raised in Mumbai, Sawant studied economics in North Carolina before becoming a software engineer at Nortel, the Canadian telecoms company. Then she moved to Seattle where she found religion in the form of Karl Marx. One to one, Sawant is polite and gently spoken in contrast to her tone from the podium. I am told her ubiquitous gallery of supporters often helps cajole Seattle's nine-person council into doing her bidding.

Apart from the minimum wage, she has passed paid and sick leave rights, structured work hours and other rights that in the past would have been negotiated by unions. Amazon, like almost all of America's tech economy, is a union-free company. "As a socialist I find it quite difficult to talk about my history," says Sawant. "We don't like to dwell too much on personal stuff." She retains \$40,000 of her \$140,000 councillor's salary and gives the rest to a strike fund.

Sawant becomes animated when I raise Sanders' battle with Biden. In 2016, she refused to vote for Clinton. Would she do the same this year if Sanders failed to take the nomination? "I would hope Bernie would run as an independent," she replies. Either way, Sawant is planning to lead a big demonstration in Milwaukee, where the Democratic convention will be held in July. Regardless of circumstance, they will agitate for Sanders to be the nominee. She calls it "#million2milwaukee". After New York, Milwaukee was the leading hotbed of American socialism in the early 1900s. I find it hard to believe she could attract anywhere near a million. What, I ask, if you called a revolution and nobody showed up, in paraphrase of the 1960s anti-war slogan? "We have to take the fight to them," she says. "If we thought like that we would never have passed the minimum wage." Sawant puts great faith in the role of young voters, who are not "burdened with the baggage of history".

**A** few days after I met Sawant, Sanders hit what in retrospect was clearly his Waterloo in the Super Tuesday primary. Biden won 10 of the 14 states and took what could quite rapidly turn into a prohibitive lead in the delegate count. Sanders has argued that he, and he alone, can bring out the young in droves to defeat Trump in November. In addition, only he can appeal to Reich's crossover Trump voters.

His first theory was badly dented by the voter surge in states that Biden won heavily, such as Virginia, and the anaemic millennial showing in Sanders strongholds, including his own state of Vermont. I had caught a foretaste of this in Seattle when I spoke to Stephen Nicholson, a student at Evergreen State College in Washington State. Nicholson is a strong Bernie supporter. Most of his student peers are too. Are they all planning to vote? "A lot of my friends are cynical and probably won't bother," he admits. "They think the system is rigged whatever they do." That mindset is rife among "Bernie bros" in the days after Super Tuesday. "The fix is in" trended on Twitter. So, too, is the idea that the Democratic elites had somehow finagled the Biden

GETTY IMAGES; BETTMANN/GETTY IMAGES; REUTERS





**‘A lot of my friends are cynical and probably won’t bother to vote. They think the system is rigged whatever they do’**

Stephen Nicholson, student and Sanders supporter

campaign’s recovery from the near dead. In reality, it was African-American voters who turned the tide in South Carolina on the weekend before Super Tuesday. The establishment did not choose Biden – though it rushed to join his bandwagon; he was saved by the southern black voter.

**The hip Berkeley restaurant Chez Panisse, which** gave birth to the “slow-food” movement in 1971, is not an obvious place to shoot the breeze about the future of American socialism. The venue is not my idea. Jerry Brown, the sprightly 81-year-old former four-time governor of California, thought it was an ideal location to discuss the subject. We are briefly joined by Alice Waters, who founded Chez Panisse and is feted as the inventor of modern American cuisine. Brown and Waters – two legends of 20th-century California – embrace like siblings.

I ask Waters, now 75, whether a new social revolution is afoot. This is shortly before Sanders’ California win. “America is suffering from two great problems,” says Waters. “The first is the meaninglessness of work. So many people have soul-destroying jobs. The other is loneliness. You see it everywhere you look. Communities have broken down.” Brown nods in agreement. “Didn’t you promise me a communal housing experiment for old people when you were governor?” Waters asks Brown. “Something like that,” he replies. “We’re still waiting,” she says.

In an interview many years ago, Brown was the first American politician I have met – and so far the last – to have quoted Antonio Gramsci, the Italian Marxist. Having talked bleakly about America’s future, California’s then governor said he followed the Italian’s dictum: “Pessimism of the intellect: optimism of the will.” Gramsci wrote the line about morbid symptoms surfacing when a society is in flux. It struck me that the combination of Trump

and a coronavirus epidemic would be a fairly compelling sign of that. Brown agrees. But he hesitates to pronounce a verdict on Sanders. The two are about the same age. Brown’s views have evolved over the decades. He made the time-honoured journey from idealism to pragmatism. Sanders’ views have barely shifted. Has history caught up with Sanders? Or is it passing him by? Brown, who in his younger days was known as Governor Moonbeam – a hippie-era term – hedges his bets. Socialism is not his thing. “In much less disruptive times than today, politics is hard to predict,” Brown says. “Very unusual things can happen.” His pessimism is hard to miss.

Given his very different style of politics, Brown’s reluctance to predict is striking. I think about what Reich had told me. He said centrist Democrats were panicking that their party was drifting into “another 1972” – the year George McGovern, the leftwing Democratic nominee, lost in a landslide to Richard Nixon. Sanders was the new McGovern, in their view. What haunted Reich was 1968, not 1972. That was the year Democrats nominated Hubert Humphrey, the vice-president and pillar of the establishment. He was also defeated by Nixon. In Reich’s view, Biden is the new Humphrey. It is a tribute to Brown’s ambivalence that both those years are imaginable in today’s America – and neither.

With or without Sanders, Democrats are moving steadily to the left. Even before any putative deal with Sanders to unite the party, Biden’s platform is considerably to the left of his days in the Obama administration. The party of Clinton and even Obama is fading. Among others, Robert Rubin – the man who lent his name to Rubinomics – no longer objects to a wealth tax. Few would have predicted that. Even when Sanders is losing, he is winning. **FT**

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Edward Luce is the FT’s US national editor



'CAN IT KILL ME?  
CAN THEY PUT  
ME IN JAIL? NO?  
I CAN HANDLE IT'

The celebrated graphic novelist and film-maker Marjane Satrapi talks to *Leila Abboud* about her new Marie Curie biopic, her childhood in Iran and her 'secret weapon' for tackling life's impossible choices. Portraits by *Elise Toïdé*



12.4



Barely 10 minutes into our interview at her paint-strewn studio in eastern Paris, Marjane Satrapi has already dropped the F-bomb and lit up her first cigarette.

The expletive comes as the Iran-born cartoonist, painter and film-maker, who is clad in her trademark black clothing punctuated by bright red lipstick, laments how women are depicted in cinema.

"We are half of the f\*\*king population in numbers, so it would be very normal that our stories would be half of the stories," she exclaims in rapid-fire accented English. "But not only are we not half of the stories, each time you represent us, we always have to find our justification in somebody else. We are somebody's wife, we are somebody's mother, we are somebody's grandmother, we are somebody's lover."

Correcting that imbalance was part of what made her want to direct *Radioactive*, which tells the story of Marie Curie, the Nobel Prize-winning scientist whose discovery of two elements shaped modern life by giving the world cancer treatments and the atomic bomb. It is Satrapi's fifth film and the one with the biggest budget, of roughly \$20m, because of its special effects and marquee star Rosamund Pike.

But she remains best known for her earliest work, the graphic novel *Persepolis*, which vaulted her to fame in 2000 when she was only 30 years old. Drawn in stark black and white, the two volumes depict her childhood in Iran both before and after the revolution when her rebellious streak spooked her parents into sending her to Europe. Created shortly after she finished her arts studies in Strasbourg, the books were a major success, selling two million copies in the original French and half a dozen other languages. Satrapi later turned *Persepolis* into an Academy Award-nominated animated film.

Her irritation with the gender imbalance in film appears to spark the need for a cigarette. "It doesn't bother you that I smoke, I hope?" she says, interrupting herself. "I'm not going to smoke again, just this one."

I laugh nervously and tell her she doesn't need to ask since we are in her space, a fifth-floor apartment overlooking grey Parisian rooftops, which she has converted into her painting studio. The floor of the double salon is covered in plastic sheeting and a work in progress painted in a moody blue sits on an easel. She shoots back at me: "Well, I do ask, because I am polite."

It is a brusque reply, bordering on rude, and delivered in a style similar to how Marie Curie is depicted in the movie. A brilliant woman in a rush to make her mark, who does not suffer fools and is never plagued by self-doubt. Satrapi says she was drawn to the character at the centre of *Radioactive* because of her fierceness.

"She is odd because she's a genius. She's very concentrated, and when you're a genius, and you're very concentrated, you are odd. But this oddity, we accept very easily in men, and in women, we always have to be smooth and sweet, and we are supposed to be kind," she says. "Me, or I don't know, any female friend that I have, I don't think that the sweetness would be at all quality number one or 10 or 15 [that we would want to have]. I don't know these kinds of women myself."



Sam Riley and Rosamund Pike as Pierre and Marie Curie in 'Radioactive', 2020



'Persepolis', 2007



ALAMY: STUDIOCANAL

'ONE DAY I WAS LIKE, WHAT DO THESE PEOPLE DO FOR US? WHO ARE THEY ANYWAY?'



Satrapi on set directing 'Radioactive'

In her own life, Satrapi cares very little about what other people think, a trait that has come in handy in a life lived mostly in exile. It has allowed her to be guided by her own interests rather than career plans or social pressures. Although she is married to the Swedish actor Mattias Ripa, she chose not to have children because she wanted to focus on her work and did not want her life to change.

"I remember when I was a child, in my family, my parents would say, 'Don't do this or that, you know what people will think,'" she recalls. "And one day I was like, what do these people do for us? Do they give us money? Do they give me presents? Do they buy me hamburgers? So, why should I take care so much of these people that don't even give me a hamburger? Who are these people, anyway? They don't do anything for us [but] we have to be very careful for these people... F\*\*k these people. That's it."

As depicted in *Persepolis*, Satrapi grew up in a bourgeois family in Tehran, with parents who, despite their wealth, were quite leftwing and often discussed how they wanted a more democratic Iran. From a young age, she heard tales of political dissidents being tortured. She developed an obsession as a child with becoming God's new prophet and decreed that her father's Cadillac be banned. While her parents demonstrated against the shah, Satrapi would play in the backyard with her friends, pretending to be Che Guevara.

Later, she developed a taste for Iron Maiden, American movies and wearing trainers; her parents worried she would fall foul of Iran's increasingly repressive Islamic Revolutionary Guard. When she was 14, they sent her to live with friends in Vienna, where she attended a French high school and struggled with loneliness for the first time.

Those formative experiences left scars but also liberated her. Satrapi developed the uncanny ability to cut through to the essentials whenever she had a big decision to make. When a friend proposed to her that they turn *Persepolis* into ▶





Satrapa in her Paris studio

'I VERY MUCH LIKE THE COMPANY OF PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY WHEN I DON'T HAVE TO SEE THEM ALL THE TIME'

◀ a movie, she initially thought it was a bad idea since she'd already spent years on the books and wanted to move on to new projects. But then, what she describes to me as a "little voice of Jiminy Cricket" popped into her brain, saying: "Wait, they're going to f\*\*king pay you, so you can learn something new? Normally, you have to pay to learn something new."

She then runs through a trick she has learnt to help make decisions: "I always have two questions in my life, frankly, for any situation: can it kill me? No. Can they put me in jail? No. So, if I am free and I'm not dead, OK, I can handle it. So even if I fail and I make a bad movie, no one really cares and everyone will soon forget... So, I try."

I confess to her that I often overthink things and that I may try her method the next time I face a big life choice. She leans over the dark wooden table that separates us, and says conspiratorially: "I will give you my secret weapon - the third question. I always ask myself if I had only 48 hours to live, would this thing matter at all in my life? This is the meaning of wisdom, just to understand what is the priority in your life."

**Even with the clarity the three questions give her, sometimes Satrapa needs to decompress.**

She has a guilty pleasure: watching true crime on television. "In France, they have this TV channel called Crime District... I can watch that for hours. It's channel 117, and it's 24 hours of crime.

And I'm like, how much murder and mayhem have happened? When do they have the time to dub all of that in French? Every time I'm stressed, I put on Crime District and I'm like, OK, a nice tea, Crime District, me under my little blanket and then I'm very, very happy to watch that."

The affection for crime stories is part of what led her to direct *The Voices*, a darkly comic 2014 film starring the Hollywood actor Ryan Reynolds as an oddly sympathetic serial killer plagued by schizophrenia. She had always harboured an obsession with serial killers - "it's the only thing that really makes me scared because they actually do exist" - and saw it as a challenge to put a kind-seeming one on the screen. "The project was so crazy, it was so fun," she smiles. "This guy, he basically killed women and put their heads in his fridge. He talks to them because he sees them alive and he talks with his cat and his dog. So, I thought it was interesting to put myself in the head of a serial killer because he's a sweet serial killer, that is what I liked about him. He's really nice. He just kills because he's sick."

Such exposure to new worlds and new stories is part of what she has come to love about directing movies. She has never returned to the cartoon format since *Persepolis*, preferring to "progress in my life and to do other things". But she continues to paint regularly, and enjoys alternating between the solitude of that type of creation and the more team-oriented experience of making movies.

She has also grown to like the serendipity of waiting to see what projects her American agent will send her. "The thing is, I have written my stories, my scripts, but my world is limited to my own person. It's a small world, my world." It never would have occurred to her to write a movie about a serial killer but she found it "extremely satisfying" to dive into a world ▶

*Continued on page 41*



SUMMER 2020

FT Weekend Magazine

A 16-PAGE  
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SPECIAL

# PINK SAND



THE DATA: LANGKAWI

The 10 hottest seaside hotel openings for 2020 • [Graydon Carter](#) on 150 years of the Hotel du Cap  
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# New horizons

This summer's hottest new seaside hotels – from Mykonos to Mozambique. By *Claire Wrathall*



## 1 – Kalesma, Mykonos, Greece

During nearly four decades in the fashion industry – a career that took him from the French silk-shirt specialist Equipment to Vilebrequin beachwear – Thessaloniki-born, New York-based Aby Saltiel stayed in a lot of hotels and found fault with most of them. So he decided to create one of his own.

First, he found an 8ha site facing Ornos Bay on western Mykonos, where he has had a holiday home for 25 years, then he set about designing the new property in collaboration with Makis Kousathanas, with whom he already owns the fashionable Athens restaurants Pere Ubu and Sea Spice. The resulting hotel, Kalesma, opens on June 1.

All 25 suites have the same layout and décor, an essay in neutrals, local materials and textiles. And all have secluded, private, 90 sq m terraces with pools facing the Aegean, so no guest need feel aggrieved at being palmed off with second best. The hotel's double-aspect peninsular setting, 4.5km south of the main town, means it can offer yoga with a view of the sunrise as well as the sunset.

*Suites for two from €1,280 per night; [kalesmamykonos.com](http://kalesmamykonos.com)*

## 2 – The Legian Sire, Lombok, Indonesia

When it comes to five-star resort hotels, lesser-developed Lombok has long been Bali's poor relation, but the opening, on May 19, of the Legian Sire, next to the island's 18-hole championship golf course, stands to raise its game. Located at the northern tip of the 3.8km beach Tanjung Sire, the hotel faces the Gili Islands (to which it runs a boat shuttle) and is within sight of Bali's Mount Agung. Its 46 suites, all at least 100 sq m with sea-view terraces, have interiors that are designed by Singapore-based Studio Affandy & Yeo and are rich in ikats from Sumba island and teak latticework from Sumbawa.

*Suites from \$347 per night; [lhm-hotels.com](http://lhm-hotels.com)*

## 3 – Elang, Anambas Islands, Indonesia

Most easily accessed by seaplane, the largely uninhabited Anambas Islands lie 300km north-east of Singapore, in the remote Riau Archipelago. They are home to the 35-room Bawa Reserve resort on Bawa Island, which in May is due to open an offshoot on another nearby islet, Elang. There, architect Sim Boon Yang has built six sustainable cliffside lodges, as well as a restaurant, bar and spa. There's a tidal saltwater pool in a natural hollow, and a beach, but for a change of scene guests can take a boat to the main island where the resort offers water sports, nature trails, a larger wellness centre, three waterfront restaurants and an open-air cinema. *From \$3,280 all-inclusive; [bawahreserve.com](http://bawahreserve.com)*





#### 4 — Kisawa Sanctuary, Benguerra Island, Mozambique

With a dozen thatched bungalows strung along an idyllic stretch of palm-fringed white sand lapped by the Indian Ocean, Kisawa looks to be the stuff of dreams. But the hotel, on the second-largest island of the Bazaruto Archipelago National Park, is a technological marvel too.

Kisawa is the work of Nina Flohr, former creative director at the Swiss private-aviation company Vistajet, which was founded by her father, Thomas. The hotel has emerged - almost literally - from an investment the family made in 3D printing. In order to minimise the environmental impact of its construction, the bricks, tiles, flooring and other components have been “printed” from a mortar that is essentially made from sand and seawater found on site. The technique will also be used to make furniture and even artificial reefs that will support marine life in areas where it has been depleted.

The resort, which should open towards the end of the year, covers only a fraction of the 300ha estate, mostly sand, dunes and jungle. Even so, every bungalow is completely secluded within an acre of land, and there’s sufficient space for each one to have its own pool, outdoor kitchen, massage hut, e-bike and electric buggy, and a minimum 80m of private, pristine beach.

*Bungalows for two from €5,500 per night all-inclusive; kisawasanctuary.com*

#### 5 — The Pig at Harlyn Bay, Cornwall, UK

When Harlyn House, then a wreck, came up for sale in 2017 for only the third time in 400 years, the estate agent, Savills, described it as “a serious long-term restoration project [suitable for] those for whom authenticity is of the essence”. Enter Home Grown Hotels, the group owned by Jim Ratcliffe, the billionaire chairman of chemicals giant Ineos, and hotelier Robin Hutson, creator of the popular Pig brand of informal English country-house hotels.

Three years on, the 15th-century mansion, which was extended in the Jacobean and Georgian periods, has been restored, and the hotel opens, to much expectation, on April 28. Indeed, when bookings opened a month ago, 1,000 nights were sold within three hours.

Of its 26 rooms, those in the main house have the best views, across its five-acre gardens to the headland and the great arc of sand that is Harlyn Bay. For guests who are happy to look out over fields and crave privacy, however, there are also four “shepherd’s huts”, which nevertheless run to kingsize beds, freestanding roll top baths and monsoon showers, indoors and out, so lavish, in fact, that they command the most expensive rates.

*Double rooms from £150 per night; thepighotel.com*

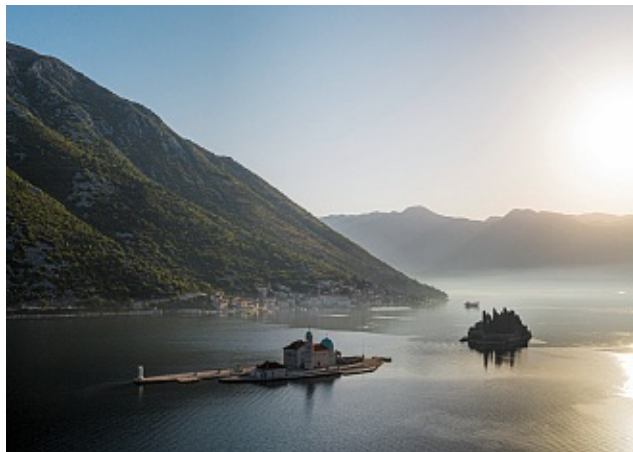




## 6 — Villa Igeia, Palermo, Sicily, Italy

Latterly a Sofitel and before that a Hilton, the grand waterfront Villa Igeia, which first opened in 1899, is reborn on June 1 as a Rocco Forte Hotel. Its 66 elegant rooms and suites have been designed by Olga Polizzi in collaboration with Paolo Moschino of Nicholas Haslam Studio. It's not technically on a beach (though it does sit right beside the sea) but there'll be a shuttle to ferry guests 10km north to and from Mondello, an arc of soft white sand that shelves gently into clear water, where there is a handful of reliable seafood restaurants (the concierge can advise) and sunloungers to rent.

*Doubles from €416 per night; roccofortehotels.com*



## 7 — One & Only Portonovi, Montenegro

When Lord Byron described the Montenegrin coast as “the most beautiful encounter between the land and the sea”, it probably wasn't the beaches he was thinking of. There may be 117 of them, but most are shingle or pebble (those around Becici are the sandiest). So when the new One&Only Portonovi talks about its Beach Club, it's actually referring to a sequence of terraces, furnished with cabañas and “multiple dining options”, that descend to the Adriatic. Designed by Jean-Michel Gathy of Denniston Architects (who was also responsible for Aman Sveti Stefan, 45km by road down the coast), the hotel is the group's first European outpost and opens on July 1. There will be 140 rooms, residences and villas, an Espace Chenot spa and three restaurants, one overseen by Giorgio Locatelli. *From €1,525, oneandonlyresorts.com*

## 8 — Greystone, Miami Beach, US

Diagonally opposite The Setai and Shore Club in the Miami Beach neighbourhood of Collins Park, Greystone was built in 1939, a classic of Atlantic-facing Miami Modernism by Henry Hohauser. Having fallen into disrepair, its interior has been stripped out and reconfigured as a 91-room hotel. Opened last month, it is so modernised that access to rooms is by smartphone app. Its 500 sq m roof terrace with pool promises quite a scene, and includes one of the property's five bars and restaurants (its French food and beverage chief, Sebastian Dumonet, was latterly Joël Robuchon's director of operations). There's a speakeasy in the basement too. *Doubles from \$290 per night, greystonemiami.com*

## 9 — The Sense, Tuscany, Italy

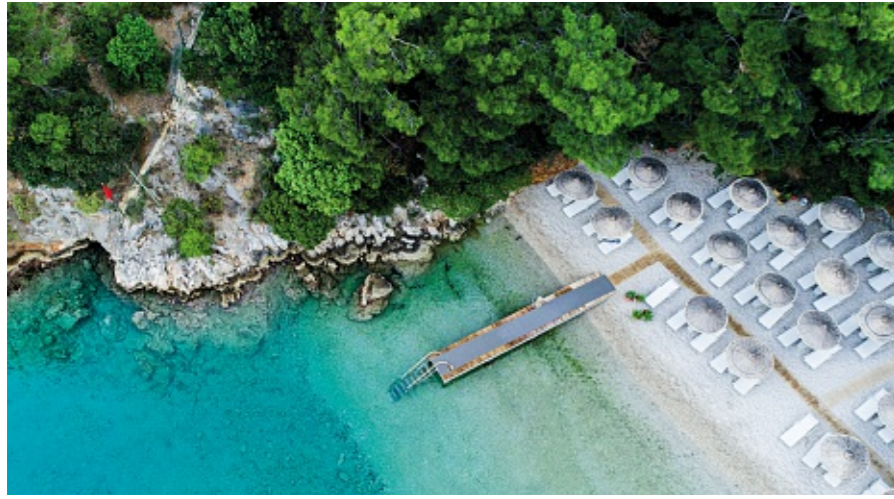
Looking out on the Gulf of Follonica towards Elba and close to some of Italy's best beaches (Cala Violina, Torre Mozza and Cala Civette), The Sense, which opens on March 28, styles itself an “experience resort” in view of the number of activities on offer. It has 112 rooms, the best facing the beach, a 250m stretch of sand, while others look out on 5ha of private pine forest. There are bikes to explore on, and the concierge can arrange a variety of excursions from riding to kite surfing and scuba diving. An hour south at Talamone, for example, the sculptor

Emily Young has submerged a 12-tonne Carrara marble sculpture, the first of a group of 25 massive works, to prevent trawlers destroying the ecosystem with dragnets, thus encouraging corals to reseed, and starfish and lobsters to return to the area. *Doubles from €119 per night; theensesort.it*

## 10 — Ikos Andalusia, Estepona, Spain

The Ikos group, which specialises in big five-star all-inclusives, opens its first resort outside Greece on May 14 on Playa de Guadalmanza, 10km along the coast from Estepona and 20km from Marbella. The room rate includes three meals a day as well as various offers to get you to explore the surroundings: a day's use of a Mini, green fees at a local golf club, tickets to Málaga's major museums and two massages at the Anne Sémonin spa. Partnerships with local restaurants mean you can eat out as well as in the hotel's seven restaurants, without paying extra. But there's plenty to do on site as well: eight swimming pools (indoor and out), classes in every sort of exercise including Tabata high-intensity and TRX suspension training. And though your children may not thank you for leaving them there, there's a kids' club that promises to be “operated according to strict British Ofsted standards”. *Doubles from €392 per night, minimum five-night stay; ikosresorts.com* **FTI**





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# The thousand-star hotel

When it opens for the season next month, the Hotel du Cap-Eden-Roc will celebrate 150 years of drawing the great and the glamorous to the French Riviera.

By Graydon Carter



For 150 years now, the Hotel du Cap has been the home away from home for the iconic figures of many of the passing eras, from the belle époque, through the Jazz Age, the jet age, the 1960s and 1970s, right up to the present. And thanks to the largesse of the Condé Nast magazine empire, I was fortunate to have experienced the wonders of the hotel for a sixth of its life and more than a third of my own. The age of the hotel is something of a marvel. It's almost 20 years older than Raffles in Singapore and the Savoy in London, and nearly 30 years older than the Ritz in Paris. Many of the grand hotels built at the end of the 19th century look like 19th-century hotels. In the case of the Hotel du Cap, with the addition of Eden-Roc overlooking the sea, it looks as fresh as when Slim Aarons took that iconic photograph (overleaf) of the pool area in 1976. This modernity may have something to do with the fact that, in its 150 years, the hotel really has only had three proprietors - which not only results in consistency of purpose, but long-range planning. In addition to the continuity in ownership, there is an enduring respect for the continuity of the staff of the hotel. There are 500 employees for 118 rooms and many members of staff have been there for 20 years or more - you can spot them by the badge in their lapels. The ones with the small diamond in the centre indicate two decades of service. If you look, you will see a lot of them.

Eric Grac, a concierge at Eden-Roc, has been there 30 years and he can handle a difficult situation in six languages. Not so long ago, he was summoned to the Grill down by the pool to sort out a problem. A diner had requested a *tarte tropézienne*, an inexplicably popular brioche bun

that is sliced in half and layered with a creamy centre. As you can guess from the name, it was concocted in Saint-Tropez, which is 60 miles to the west of Antibes. And it is not on the Hotel du Cap menu. The diner was adamant: he wanted a *tarte tropézienne*! Eric's solution? He chartered a helicopter and sent a staff member to Saint-Tropez. He had a *tropézienne* on the customer's table by the time coffee was served. The *tarte* was €5. The helicopter was €2,000. The diner's bill reflected all of this. But he was happy.

In the early days, the season along the Côte d'Azur went from September through April. The major hotels, including the du Cap, closed for the summer. The Mediterranean, it was thought, was just too warm during the summer months. The smart set preferred to spend July and August in towns along the west coast where the ocean-fed waters were cooler - places such as Cap Ferret and Biarritz. In time, the actual months of the Hotel du Cap's season began to change. Today, it is almost reversed from its earliest days. The hotel opens in April and closes at the end of October.

The change began in the 1920s, when the Americans and the English discovered the Riviera. They were led by Gerald and Sara Murphy, who rented a good part of the hotel for the summer of 1923. From then on, the Hotel du Cap and the area around it attracted any number of writers, composers and artists. The artists came for the light and the cheap accommodation. The writers and composers came for those same reasons, but also for the liquor - Prohibition was still the law in America. During those heady years between the wars, everyone who was anyone spent time at the Hotel du Cap: ▶

From left: the Hotel du Cap-Eden-Roc in Antibes; French actress Annabella at the hotel in 1933; Hollywood star Kirk Douglas prepares to go water-skiing in 1969

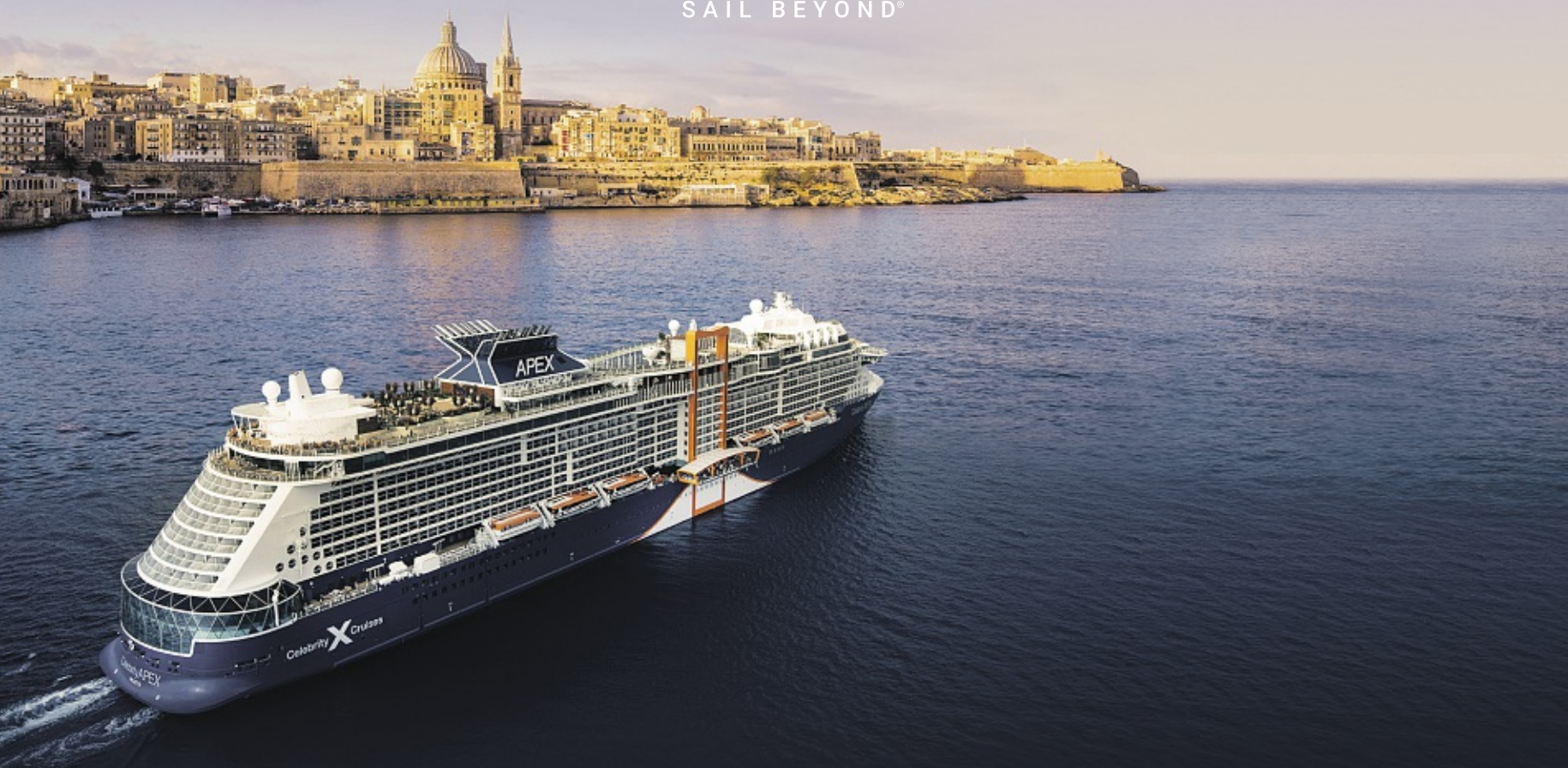


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Right: Slim Aarons' 1976 photograph of guests around the hotel's swimming pool  
 Below: Graydon Carter with Martin Scorsese at a Vanity Fair party at the hotel in 2010



◀ Cole Porter, Ernest Hemingway, Noël Coward, George Bernard Shaw, Isadora Duncan, Rudolph Valentino, John Dos Passos, Erich Maria Remarque, Marlene Dietrich, Archibald MacLeish, Donald Ogden Stewart, Beatrice Lillie, James Baldwin, Ella Fitzgerald, Picasso and, most prominently, Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald.

The postwar years brought their own brand of glamour: Peter Sellers, John and Yoko, Romy Schneider, Serge Gainsbourg and Jane Birkin, Michael Caine, Robert Evans, Rock Hudson and Doris Day. Marc Chagall was a regular customer, both of the cabanas overlooking the sea and of the dining room. Chagall would paint outside during the day and then lug all his paints and brushes and the like to the dining room, where he would often sketch the other diners. James Bond is a familiar theme in the staff's memories of the hotel, its past, and its present. Sean Connery was a regular guest; as was Pierce Brosnan. Roger Moore used to live nearby in Valbonne and, when he wasn't working, would come every day to play tennis.

My own experiences with the hotel began in the mid-1990s. I was about four years into my 25 years as the editor of *Vanity Fair*. Wendy Stark, the magazine's West Coast chief (and the daughter of producer Ray Stark) had been attending the Cannes Film Festival since childhood. She urged me to have a dinner during the film festival, similar to the one we were then doing in Los Angeles on the night of the Oscars. I thought if I was going to do this, I wanted to do it at a hotel I had read about but never been to. From the beginning, our dinners at the hotel during the film festival were for 150 people. The evening then decanted to the pool



area, where a further 300 guests had arrived. We had princes and princesses, billionaires and Bond girls, comtesses and crooks, rock stars and a reprobate or two. Indeed, the only people we ever banned for ever from the party were film producer Harvey Weinstein and British retailer Philip Green. (The former for being rude to the staff; the latter for being rude to the other guests.)

One year, our London editor Henry Porter got stuck in the bathroom down near the Grill when the party following dinner was in full swing. The door handle had jammed. He banged and shouted but, with the noise and the music, no one could hear him. He was about to give up when a man's voice said: "Stand back from the door!" Henry hopped up on to the seat. There was a loud sound as the man on the other side kicked in the door. It was Jean-Claude Van Damme. **FT**

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*Graydon Carter is the founder and co-editor of the digital weekly AIR MAIL and was the editor of Vanity Fair from 1992 to 2017. He is the author of an introduction to a book about the hotel, to be published by Flammarion in April*

Double rooms at the Hotel du Cap-Eden-Roc cost from €650; oetkercollection.com



# Homeward bound

For travel writer *Sophy Roberts*, the still point of her constantly turning world is a small stretch of West Dorset coastline



We first moved to West Dorset 20 years ago, into a cottage at the head of the Marshwood Vale, where the county rubs up against the Devon border. It's a scoop of English farmland that falls away from Dorset's two highest hills - Lewesdon and Pilsdon Pen - towards the South West Coast Path, originally built for coastguards to keep an eye out for smugglers. Here on the Jurassic Coast, high cliffs shelter rims of sand and pebble strands. Landslides aren't uncommon, opening up seams in geological time to reveal 185 million years of history, including little ammonites that children collect off Charmouth Beach with buckets and hammers.

I loved that cottage. Sometimes the view from our kitchen made it feel like we were living in the castle at the top of the beanstalk. Above us, in a sky that was clear and silent, you could hear the mew of buzzards. Beneath us the fog would settle in for hours, hugging the valley bowl, the creamy sea fret pricked by a line of pylons. I came to think of them as beautiful, like giant daddy-long-legs walking across the land. Then 10 years ago, we moved lower down the valley, into the mist and closer to the sea. We bought a dilapidated farmhouse at the end of a sunken lane on the banks of the Winniford river.

From where I work, I can see a thin "V" in the hills leading to the beach at Seatown. We walk to it often, meeting friends for summer swims and barbecues, or for fish and chips at The Anchor Inn. On the way, I like to pop into the Catholic church in Chideock; hidden inside a dark corridor of trees, it contains a fragment of the hair shirt belonging to Thomas More, the 16th-century author of *Utopia*. We walk

back home via Golden Cap, a celebrated promontory once used as a lookout for Seatown's 18th-century smugglers, who, under the cover of night, would haul their kegs inland on horses with muffled hooves.

This is still a valley full of secrets, hidden in sunken lanes, or holloways as they're known, with one of the most bewitching reaching up out of Chideock, which Robert Macfarlane went hunting for in his brilliant 2007 book *The Wild Places*. Macfarlane got very close to where our geese like to scare people off at the bottom of a mile-long holloway leading to our house. Trees and ferns block out the light to create a tunnel, as dark in summer as it is in winter. These ancient paths wind between the sea and the valley's Iron Age hill forts - Lewesdon, Pilsdon Pen, Lambert's Castle, Coney Castle - with each thread a weft in the vale's rich historic tapestry.

In 1797, William Wordsworth met Samuel Taylor Coleridge at a house called Racedown Lodge, which sits at one end of the valley. "He did not keep to the high road," observed Wordsworth of the arrival of his friend, "but leapt over a gate." In the 1970s, Paul Theroux also used to live nearby; he wrote a novel called *The Black House*, about Four Ashes, a little-known crossroads on the edge of the vale. It was Theroux who told me about his friend buried in the local churchyard of Whitchurch Canonicorum. The grave belongs to Georgi Markov, the Bulgarian writer and dissident, who was poked in the leg with a poisoned umbrella as he walked over London's Waterloo Bridge in 1978.

I always recommend that people go and visit, including a Russian friend who has been coming to this part of Dorset to help me with a book.

## This is still a valley full of secrets, hidden in sunken lanes that wind between the sea and the Iron Age hill forts

Above (from left): Roberts' children walk along the South West Coast Path after school; Langdon Wood in summer; the view from Roberts' front door looking out towards Golden Cap; a path leading through Marshwood Vale to the Shave Cross Inn

But she doesn't like to walk inland, she says; she wants the ocean. She was brought up in the Urals, then settled in Novosibirsk in Siberia, which is about as far from any seascape you can get. Whenever she comes, we take the coast path to the valley's eastern limit - looping back via a copse of pine trees on the top of cone-shaped Colmer's Hill, which overlooks the market town of Bridport.

On sunny Saturdays, Bridport's main street is humming with a lively market; local traders include potter Tim Hurn, showcasing his "chicken bricks" and T Snook, a hat shop from another time and place, selling everything from "ferret catchers" to bowlers. There are several wonderful bookshops and a very good restaurant, Dorshi, for warming bowls of spelt noodles filled with Dorset crab, lamb and pork. Dorshi serves a better meal than you will find in the nearby harbour of West Bay - except for the local ice cream (look out for the Baboo Gelato kiosk), the fish curry at Rise and the coffee at Sladers Yard (a wonderful gallery where I look out for work by two local-based artists: Marzia Colonna and Alex Lowery, who paints the cliffs, estuaries and tidal waters nearby).

As for the valley's western edge, it more or less finishes at the seaside town of Lyme Regis. Here the tone is more refined, evident in the neat, candy-coloured houses and the smarter shops and restaurants. Lyme's poshest hotel is The Alexandra. There are two good places to eat: HIX Oyster & Fish House for seafood (the British celebrity chef Mark Hix is from the town of Charmouth next door) and Swim, which is the place to go for brunch. This is where I read the

newspapers while my children capsize dinghies. Every summer, they attend the Lyme Regis Sea School, based out of the horseshoe harbour.

At the other end of the promenade, there is the Marine Theatre, where events are well attended. This was not the case for the 19th-century virtuoso pianist, Franz Liszt. In Europe, his celebrity was like a rock star's, with women picking up the cherry stones he spat out in order to wear them as amulets. In Berlin, his carriage was drawn by six white horses, followed by a cavalcade of 30 carriages. In Lyme Regis, he played at the town's Assembly Rooms in 1840. It didn't go well. During his West Country tour, the audience was thin, the tickets were too expensive, his music largely misunderstood.

Liszt's genius may have fallen on deaf ears, but then this is a community that isn't easily impressed. Film-makers come and go, and briefly make the region famous. In 2015, Thomas Vinterberg shot an adaptation of Thomas Hardy's story, *Far from the Madding Crowd*, the hype evident in the sudden ubiquity of Bridport beards (hirsute locals were looking to get cast as extras). Last year, Kate Winslet and Saoirse Ronan were making *Ammonite*, a film due out this year that remembers the life of Mary Anning; in the early 1800s, she chipped away at these cliffs to reveal the first complete ichthyosaur and plesiosaur skeletons ever found.

The image of Anning slowly carving out the limestone is a good metaphor for the thoughtful, rural pace that characterises the valley. It is the still centre of my turning world, a counterpoint to the long absences that come from travel writing - in Africa, Russia, the 'Stans - which is how I make my living. I was married in the church beneath

my father's former sheep farm. My children were both born here and, in summer, they walk over the hill to catch the school bus. On spring days, when Lewesdon is streaked with bluebells, we walk to my parents' house. In May, we cut through paths frothing with cow parsley. On hot summer days, when the beach gets too busy, we venture inland for a pint or two at the Shave Cross Inn. It's a slow landscape, a place to experience on two feet. Above all, this pocket of West Dorset serves as a reminder in troubled times that maybe there's some satisfying travel to be shared in one's own backyard. **FT**

*Sophy Roberts is author of "The Lost Planos of Siberia" (Doubleday)*

Houses for rent in the area include Mangerton House (sleeps 20; mangertonhouse.com); the Cottage (Sophy Roberts' first home in the area, now let by new owners via Airbnb, sleeps eight; Airbnb.co.uk/rooms/6626275); Wellhayes (three properties, sleeping between two and six; wellhayes.com) and Buddlewall farmhouse (sleeps 12; classic.co.uk).

The Anchor in Seatown has three smart rooms above the pub (from £190 a night; theanchorinseatown.co.uk). The Alexandra in Lyme Regis (hotelalexandra.co.uk) has doubles from £180. For more on the area see jurassiccoast.org and visit-dorset.com





## ***A writer's retreat***

Every year, the journalist and historian *Max Hastings* returns to the place he works best – a villa by the sea on the Malaysian island of Langkawi

Sunset is, perhaps, the best time here. As a milky moon creeps up in the east, between our island and Thailand across the bay, the rainforested mountains on our side become silhouetted against a soft red glow, where the sun is vanishing in the west. We walk then, to the extremity of the almost-empty mile-long beach, amid scuttling tribes of crabs and sand that begs to be built into castles by small hands.

Some travellers never revisit. There are so many exciting places in the world, they say, and only a lifetime in which to see them. Why repeat an experience? It can end up like the *Groundhog Day* movie only in reverse: not as good as last time.

The Hastingses aspire to one new-destination holiday every year. But for our serious winter stay, year after year, we return to the Datai resort on Langkawi, a Malaysian island just off the country's north-west coast.

For three weeks, we revel in the comforts of a beach villa with its own pool; delicious Asian food; the lush green beauty of the steep hills behind. Every summer, I ask my wife Penny whether next February she would like to go somewhere different. She always responds: "Where else is better?"

Others must see something similar, because a large proportion of its British visitors – who make up a majority of guests – have been returning for years. I justify taking a beach villa, which, by our standards, costs plenty, because every day in its living room I write 3,000 words of a book. But the smaller rainforest villas, almost invisible from the sea, set beneath dense trees and vegetation that extend to the summit of the 400ft hill, are pretty wonderful too.

Friends sometimes ask: why shell out to work on the far side of the world, when you can do that at home? The answer is that, like many writers, I focus best without distractions. It may sound odd to create chapters about a 1942 naval battle in the Mediterranean, which I am doing now, while mangroves and palms nod gently in the breeze beyond the loungers, but it works for me.

I swim, write from 7am to 1pm; swim, lunch, sleep; work again until 6pm, then walk the beach, swim and dine. Penny finds masses to do, not all of it pilates and massages. Every year, we fly home feeling wonderfully healthy and rested, and I have written maybe 50,000 words.

Even when 200-plus guests are staying at the Datai, we marvel at the relative emptiness of the sands, all day except at lunchtime. There is almost



Opposite: the Datai resort has a private footpath that leads to the white-sand beach. Below: the resort's Thai restaurant, The Pavilion

always wildlife within sight: yesterday, a black and red giant squirrel; the day before, a boar on the beach; occasionally, a sea otter; monkeys, maybe too often. The birds are breathtaking: drongos, hornbills, sunbirds, kingfishers, herons.

We often ask each other what pulls so many of us back – especially the oldies – again and again. The Datai's European food is good, but no better than similar fare in top-class hotels the world over. The sea-swimming is great, but Penny thought that it was better in Antigua last spring. Internet connections can be flaky. Service at the Beach Club is never better than so-so.

Yet I know nowhere in the world with quite the same pervasive aura of peace and beauty. An architectural triumph, created by the late Kerry Hill, the resort opened in 1993. It was relaunched in 2019 after a year-long closure and \$60m make-over, which upgraded much of the accommodation. The open lobby and bar are breathtaking, dominated by two giant painted wooden horses; behind them a lily pond full of fish and green frogs; beyond both, an incredible view to the sea.

A couple of times a week, we dine on the balcony of the resort's Thai restaurant, The Pavilion, set on stilts above the hill, looking down from its terrace in darkness onto pinpoint lights and a few floodlit trees. Afterwards, we walk the half-mile back to our villa, in a silence broken only by insects and the odd electric buggy, such as provides resort transport.

The Datai has won prizes for its sustainability – forswearing plastic, bottling its own water, recycling materials, minimising waste and saving energy. The hotel also contributes generously to local conservation programmes, though – let us be frank – it's impossible to have big tourism such as Malaysia hosts without some damage to the rainforest and marine environment.

But the Langkawi setting offers natural marvels literally on the doorstep. On our latest trip, we did an early morning walk with the resort's veteran naturalist, Irshad Mobarak. We set out expecting that he would take us into the forest, for an outing like we have had in the past. Instead, he merely walked us around the hotel, pointing out enchanting flora and fauna that we felt embarrassed to have passed so often, oblivious. Irshad talked about the 300 million microscopic hairs on the feet of the geckos, which enable them to dart up walls and cling to ceilings.

He showed us the multiple dreys built by squirrels – in this case, around the pool – most of them decoys to fool the brahminy kites and goshawks overhead. He pointed out swiftlets, which remain almost continuously airborne for

## It may sound odd to create chapters about a 1942 naval battle while mangroves and palms nod gently in the breeze beyond the loungers, but it works for me

The Datai has doubles from £465, a week in a rainforest villa from £4,130 and a week in a beach villa from £8,260; [thedatai.com](http://thedatai.com). Tour operators often have discounted offers

the two or three years of their lifespan, save to lay eggs: their wingspan overburdens their legs, if they perch unwisely. They achieve repose by tranquillising one part of their brain while the other takes the strain.

We gazed up at a sea-eagle's nest and its proprietors, which have raised chicks there for the past 19 years. We discussed the green pigeons, a species threatened by trapping on limed branches – the practice is illegal, but enforcement is lax and the birds are deemed culinary delicacies. We gazed on strangling figs, trees that start life in a crevice of a host then, over half a century or so, soar above and eventually kill unwilling foster parents.

The Datai's boat lies in the bay just offshore, as if anchored by a Hollywood set designer to enhance the view for a remake of Conrad's *Lord Jim*. The Naga Pelangi is a 100ft junk schooner, which is a joy to the eye, and even more to the senses, on an excursion out to sea. It was built locally a decade ago, and is owned by Christoph Swoboda, a 67-year-old German who has lived on it ever since, with a seasonal contract to take Datai guests on charter or for a sunset cruise, which we always do at least once. Christoph loves the sea, loves his boat: Conrad would have found him a soulmate.

This time, when we boarded in a flat calm, he said: "I think it is time to scratch the backstay." This was an in-joke – we are both devotees of Patrick O'Brian's novels of the sea. In a calm, O'Brian's Captain Jack Aubrey scratched a backstay superstitiously, as an alternative to whistling for a wind.

For us, it worked. In open water, we found ourselves pitching so beautifully that Penny spilt her champagne, making six knots under sail, sharing the illusion of adventure with – to paraphrase Jorrock's remark about fox hunting and war – rather less than 25 per cent of its danger. At our relatively advanced age, there is something delightful about watching strong young men – Christoph's crew – hauling mightily on ropes, while suffering absolutely no compulsion to do likewise oneself.

The temperature on Langkawi from January to March is near-perfect – always hot, seldom sticky, the sun rarely eclipsed by a passing shower. It is a long hike from London – almost 12 hours to Kuala Lumpur, then a hop of just over an hour to the island. By the time the hotel car delivers us to our villa, we have been travelling for a good 19 hours. Yet each time we unpack, the darkness lit both inside and around the pool by countless candles, Penny and I agree: sure, it is a tough journey; but forever worth it, to reach our deep green heaven, on the margin of a tropical shore. **FT**





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◀ that was not hers. “Basically, anything in the world can interest me. If it’s said in the right way, anything. Any subject in the world. It can be from facial cream to the wings of a certain kind of fly in South Africa; no matter. Anything can be interesting if set under the right angle.”

For *Radioactive*, part of what drew her to the script was that it was not a simple retelling of Marie Curie’s life and deep love for her husband and research partner Pierre. Instead, the script uses flash-forwards to show how their discoveries would be used by others both for good and ill. The first shows a young child in a wheelchair in a Cleveland hospital in 1957, who is about to undergo radiation treatment for cancer. Later, we see the flight of the Enola Gay, which dropped the first atomic bomb. The audacious structure came from the movie’s source material, a graphic novel by Lauren Redniss, and was not easy to translate to the screen.

“It’s very challenging to make a biopic and then to destroy this biopic,” says Satrapi. But this approach allows *Radioactive* to explore the ethics of scientific discovery, which gives the film resonance in an era of artificial intelligence and genomics. “It is important not to blame the scientists. The usage of their discoveries is down to our ethics - what do we as human beings do with the discoveries that we make? It has nothing to do with the scientist or the science itself. It’s how we use the thing that makes them good or not good.”

As she prepared for filming, Satrapi immersed herself in Curie’s life, reading her letters and diaries and using them to make changes to the script. One of the most important encounters was with Curie’s granddaughter, a 92-year-old physicist, who implored her not to reduce her grandmother to a feminist symbol despite it being in keeping with the zeitgeist.

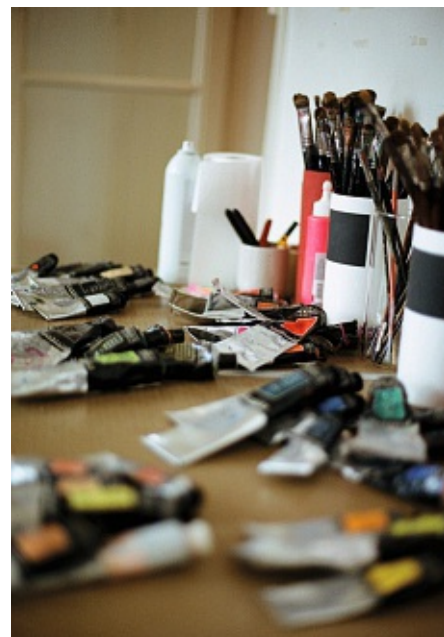
“She tells me, ‘Please, don’t forget to put something in the film... my grandmother [Curie] wrote a letter to my mother in which she said that she suffered much more from the lack of resources than from the fact of being a woman,’” she recalls. “Now, they want to use her as a feminist figure, but this was not the case. She would actually support women if they asked for help, but she was not part of the suffragette movement [under way at the time]. She was too focused on her scientific work so she didn’t have time to think about anything else.”

Now that *Radioactive* is done, Satrapi has settled into a quieter period in her beloved adopted city of Paris. “I very much like the company of people, especially when I don’t have to see them all the time,” she cracks. She is working on paintings for an upcoming exhibition in Paris titled *Femmes ou Rien* set for October.

“My gallerist was asking me, ‘Why do you always paint women?’ I was like, ‘You know, like Modigliani, like Gauguin, everybody paints women...’ And she was like, ‘Yes, but they wanted to f\*\*k them; what about you?’”

She was forced to admit this was a good question that she had not considered. “Maybe it’s our hidden feminism; I don’t know what it is. But I love the figure. I always paint women with long black hair, and I love red lipstick, so yes, it must be a presentation of myself. But it is not me.” **FT**

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 “Radioactive” is released in the UK on March 20.  
 Leila Abboud is an FT correspondent in Paris



Satrapi’s paints, brushes and artwork





Detail from the 16th-century Carta Marina identifying the whereabouts of sea monsters

# What lies beneath

From the three 'not so beautiful' mermaids seen by Christopher Columbus in 1493 to the monster Morgawr spotted off the coast of Falmouth in 1975, creatures that lurk under the ocean waves have always stirred our imagination. As a new exhibition of sea beasts opens at Cornwall's National Maritime Museum, *Simon Ings* charts their rich and varied history.

Photographs by Jamie E Murray





Installing a whale skeleton at the 'Monsters of the Deep' exhibition, National Maritime Museum, Cornwall





The exhibition displays a replica of the HMS Challenger, which discovered 4,700 new species of marine life between 1872 and 1876

In February this year, even as Stuart Slade was in Falmouth assembling the exhibits for a new museum show on sea creatures, a 60ft fin whale was washed up and died on a nearby beach. “Nothing compares to seeing such an animal up close,” he says. “You come away awed, and full of wonder, and just a little bit afraid.”

The objects filling Slade’s gallery for the mysterious *Monsters of the Deep* exhibition are by turns terrifying, wonderful and funny – sometimes all three. Some are real, some reconstructed, some, like the worrisomely convincing corpse of a mermaid, are assembled out of parts to entertain or gull the public. The show, at the National Maritime Museum Cornwall, marks the moment Falmouth’s “local” museum learns to punch well above its weight, embracing global phenomena and potentially difficult themes, such as the discomfitingly large role imagination plays in how we see the real world.

Hoaxes, which you might think would be something of an embarrassment here, prove central to the exhibition’s vision. In any event, they can’t be ignored, not while Falmouth’s very own sea monster, Morgawr (first sighted in 1975), could be prowling the bay. According to a report from around

the time in the Falmouth Packet: “Mrs Scott said she would ‘never forget the face on that thing’ as long as she lived.”

It transpired that Morgawr was mischievously fabricated from coordinated fictional “sightings”, but the lines between fact and fiction tend to be blurred whenever sea monsters are involved. On September 25 1808, on Stronsay in the Orkney Islands, a large carcass was washed ashore. Edinburgh’s leading natural history society, the Wernerian, decided it was a new species, probably a sea serpent. By the time the London anatomist Sir Everard Home realised it was more likely a decayed basking shark, the Beast’s reputation had firmly rooted itself in local folklore. Google (if you dare) pictures of dead basking sharks. Their jaws, dorsal and caudal fins disappear first, leaving them with tiny heads and long necks, like ancient reptiles transported from some deep corner of the Mesozoic.

Most sea monsters are real animals, misidentified under extreme circumstances. In 1493, Christopher Columbus “quite distinctly saw three mermaids” off the coast of Haiti. “They are not so beautiful as they are said to be,” he remarked in his journal, “for their faces had some masculine traits.” They were in fact manatees: four-metre long marine mammals with prehensile upper lips and



A copperplate engraving from 1815 detailing the attack of a trading ship by a ‘colossal polypus’

## According to a report from the time: ‘Mrs Scott said she would “never forget the face on that thing” as long as she lived’

widely spaced eyes (it had been a long voyage).

Most useful to the Falmouth show are the depictions of sea monsters in art, because it’s here that we get to grips with the key question: why have creatures that do not exist persisted in our imaginations since we first put pigment to cave wall?

Some believe sea monsters are a folk memory of creatures long extinct. Native Australian legends of the fearsome Bunyip (head of an emu, body of a dog, tail of a horse) might just scrape by as descriptions of extinct Australian marsupials such as the diprotodon or Palorchestes. But what are we to make of Mishipeshu, which terrified generations of Anishinaabe in the Great Lakes region of Canada? This was an *underwater panther*, for whom, needless to say, no fossil records exist.

These forms of wonder and fear change across time. The Kraken is supposed to be an octopus, at least according to the Victorian

poet Alfred Lord Tennyson. But in 13th-century Greenland, the Kraken was more like a giant crab. Slade, who has been head of public programming in Falmouth for 15 years, says: “The conversations I’ve had about this exhibition tend all to go the same way. People point out that only 5 per cent of the oceans has been explored. From there, it’s just a hop, skip and a jump to saying, “There must be something else out there that hasn’t yet been discovered.”

**The inference is mistaken but** not obviously so. Back in 1893, the biologist Thomas Henry Huxley wrote in *The Times*: “There is not an a priori reason that I know of why snake-bodied reptiles, from fifty feet long and upwards, should not disport themselves in our seas as they did in those of the cretaceous epoch which, geologically speaking, is a mere yesterday.”

Palaeontologist Darren Naish, who is lead curator of the Falmouth exhibition, is willing to entertain ▶



A Feejee mermaid, constructed by attaching a monkey head and torso to a fish carcass





Theatrical release poster for Roger Corman's 'Attack of the Crab Monsters' (1957)

◀ Huxley's theory: "His was the right attitude to take at the time, because the life of the deep oceans was only just being discovered." (*Monsters of the Deep* makes much of the groundbreaking research expedition led by HMS Challenger, which between 1872 and 1876 discovered a staggering 4,700 new species of marine life.) "Large fossil dinosaurs and early whales, and some amazing gigantic living animals, had been discovered only relatively recently," Naish points out. "The whale shark, the world's biggest fish, was a mid-19th-century discovery."

In an effort to make the new findings comprehensible, folkloric sea monsters were associated with ancient reptiles. Accounts invariably began with the observation that, for years and years, people have talked about giant serpents in the oceans and long-bodied monsters, then go on to point to the actual fossil evidence that such things were a reality. The earliest artists' impressions have the plesiosaur (50ft long; extended neck; four oar-shaped flippers on a broad, flat body) as a giant, coiling serpent.

How, then, can we be certain that such beasts aren't out there? In 1998, Charles Paxton, an aquatic ecologist at the Animal Behaviour Research Group at Oxford University, used a statistical technique to estimate the current diversity of large marine animals, based on their rate of discovery. Extrapolating on data from 1830 to 1995, Paxton produced a graph showing the rate at which these animals are coming to light. He estimated that at most there are around 50 new large species still waiting to be discovered and, according to his graph, we're likely

to come across one every five-and-a-half years or so.

What will they look like? Cryptozoologists - researchers who aspire to the scientific study of undiscovered animals - have for years held out for the existence of radically novel animals, "living plesiosaurs" that have somehow survived from the time of the dinosaurs. These "cryptid" animals come with brilliant names like the super-otter and the father of all turtles (names invented by Bernard Heuvelmans, whose 1968 book *In the Wake of the Sea-Serpents* kick-started marine cryptozoology). They are meant to be gargantuan, more than 15 metres long, and unlike any creature known to science.

However, as Naish observes, "Of all the animals that have been discovered in recent decades, none has been radically novel." Recent discoveries have included the Megamouth Shark and a couple of new types of beaked whale (the most recent was spotted by local whalers in Hokkaido, Japan last September). And as each new whale or shark is discovered, the chances of there still being a complete outlier in hiding - something really out there in terms of what's possible - grow infinitesimally small.

**So where did they all go, those writhing sea serpents, gargantuan crabs and city-block-sized squid?** An article in an 1875 edition of the *West Briton* (a local Cornish weekly, still in print) offers clues. It tells the tale of two fishermen, setting nets in Gerrans Bay near Truro, who discovered a serpent "coiled about their floating cork. Upon their near approach, it lifted its head and showed signs of



Specimens from the Discovery Collection at the National Oceanographic Centre



# Cryptozoologists have long held out for ‘living plesiosaurs’, animals that have survived from the time of the dinosaurs

defiance, upon which they struck it forcibly with an oar”. Later, they pursued it and dragged it ashore for a look-see, “after which, it was killed on the rocks and most inconsiderably cast out to sea”.

Which is to say, if sea monsters existed, we must already have killed them. It’s something we’re worryingly good at. “It’s difficult to be tremendously optimistic about the persistence of ecosystems and many animal species,” says Naish, looking to the future of the oceans. “I find it hard to think that marine mammals and ray-finned fishes and sharks will persist into the future.” Instead, the sea monsters of tomorrow are going to be small and numerous, as the oceans, ever warmer and more acidic, fill with cephalopods, jellies, nematode worms and algae.

We can, however, look forward to some new invasions from the deep before that. With whole ecosystems shifting poleward as the planet warms, lionfish, sea snakes, crown-of-thorns starfish and at least three species of shark (hammerhead, ragged tooth and blacktip) are already heading for UK beaches.

Meanwhile, octopuses and squid will fill the niches vacated by over-harvested fish. Their life cycles are so short that they’ll be able to adapt faster than anything with a backbone. Right now, squid are multiplying crazily in British waters, although they’ll eventually lose out to the true inheritors of the oceans: the jellyfish.

In 2009, in the Sea of Japan, the giant Nomura jellyfish (up to two metres in diameter and weighing 200kg) began clogging and bursting fishing nets. This was deemed worthy of headlines at the time, but the jellyfish - most little more than gelatinous bags containing digestive organs and gonads - had barely begun their campaign of conquest. These days,

they’re just as likely to be found blocking the sea-water intake valves of British nuclear power plants.

For the future, Naish envisions a massively simplified food chain dominated by fast-growing things that can survive in warm seas where there’s very little oxygen. “You’re talking about a vast biomass but made of small detritus feeders living on algae,” he says. Given a few billion years of natural selection, some jellies may evolve into colonial super-organisms quite big enough to stride about on. “I like the idea of giant colonial jellies - like enormous but squishy islands,” he muses, “or big serpentine things that move slowly, drifting along on the weaker, less oxygenated currents of the future.”

That’s not all. A new surface fauna may evolve from mid-water and deep-water plankton, says Naish, “in which case your large surface-dwelling animals would be weird, spiny and translucent. A sea full of translucent, floating crustaceans; I see some merit in that idea.”

Mind reeling, I walk out of the exhibition past a Jenny Haniver. That’s the carcass of a ray or a skate that someone has cut and folded and dried, so that it ends up looking like a fairy, or a mermaid, demon, or dragon. No one really knows what they’re for. In some places, they’re said to have magic powers; most often they were simply made as curios for sailors. You find these sorts of things all over the world, from Mexico to Japan.

Morgawr may be a fake, and the Stronsay Beast just a hillock of rotten fish meat. Still, the monsters of the deep live. And for as long as human beings tread the earth, they cannot die. **71**

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 “Monsters of the Deep” is at the National Maritime Museum, Cornwall, From March 20 to January 3 2021; [nmmc.co.uk](http://nmmc.co.uk)



Sea monsters, including Fig III ‘Sea man in the dress of a bishop’, from Gaspar Schott’s ‘Physica Curiosa, sive mirabilia naturae’ (1662)



A Jenny Haniver fairy, wings made from the carcass of a ray or skate





## Selfie reliant

Why does social media seem to perpetuate antiquated gender stereotypes? Because that's where the money is.  
By *Hattie Garlick*

**The realisation that, for the past six years,** I had been leading a double life came on a crowded commuter train. Looking down at the phone squashed close to my chest, I noticed a sticky smear of strawberry jam on the lapel of my jacket. A neat symbol for what happens when you literally “lean in” to both parenthood and career.

My gaze travelled from phone to smudge, smudge to phone. On Instagram, an influencer's family appeared, breakfasting. They were not gulping down jammy toast while hopping to the door in one school shoe. They were sipping oat milk and eating organic cereal around a perfectly laid table. In the next post on my feed, a different family took a wholesome walk through woodland. Even their wellies were smudge-free. Who pedals these pernicious lies about women's lives? I checked my own account.

Ruddy cheeks, World Book Day costumes, children baking... Oh God. In real life, I was a feminist in the modern, messy model: juggling work and jam-smearing. Online, I seemed to inhabit a perky, pristine world more closely resembling a 1950s edition of *Women's Own*.

I decided to retire my personal Instagram account and step back from posting on Facebook. Not, like many, because of concerns about data protection and privacy. Instead, the deeper I dug, the clearer it became that in the strange world of social media, new pressures are perpetuating antiquated gender stereotypes.

It began with a detailed review of my own Instagram account. I worked out that more than 80 per cent of the photos I had posted featured my children. In some ways this seemed natural. If Instagram is a simple game of showing off, these two are clearly my trump cards.

Next, however, I examined my husband's posts for comparison. In real life, he is no less gooey about the kids than I am. Yet between his two Instagram accounts, they featured in only about 25 per cent of his photos. The remainder was split between a) kitchens

he had designed and b) vinyl records he had purchased (the former being his job, the latter his addiction). We carve up our time between work and childcare in comparable ratios. Yet the balance suggested by our online selves was quite different.

In 2013, Facebook analysed half a million status updates and found that while men used the feature to discuss public events such as politics or sporting news, women were more likely to post about issues personal to them – family or relationships.

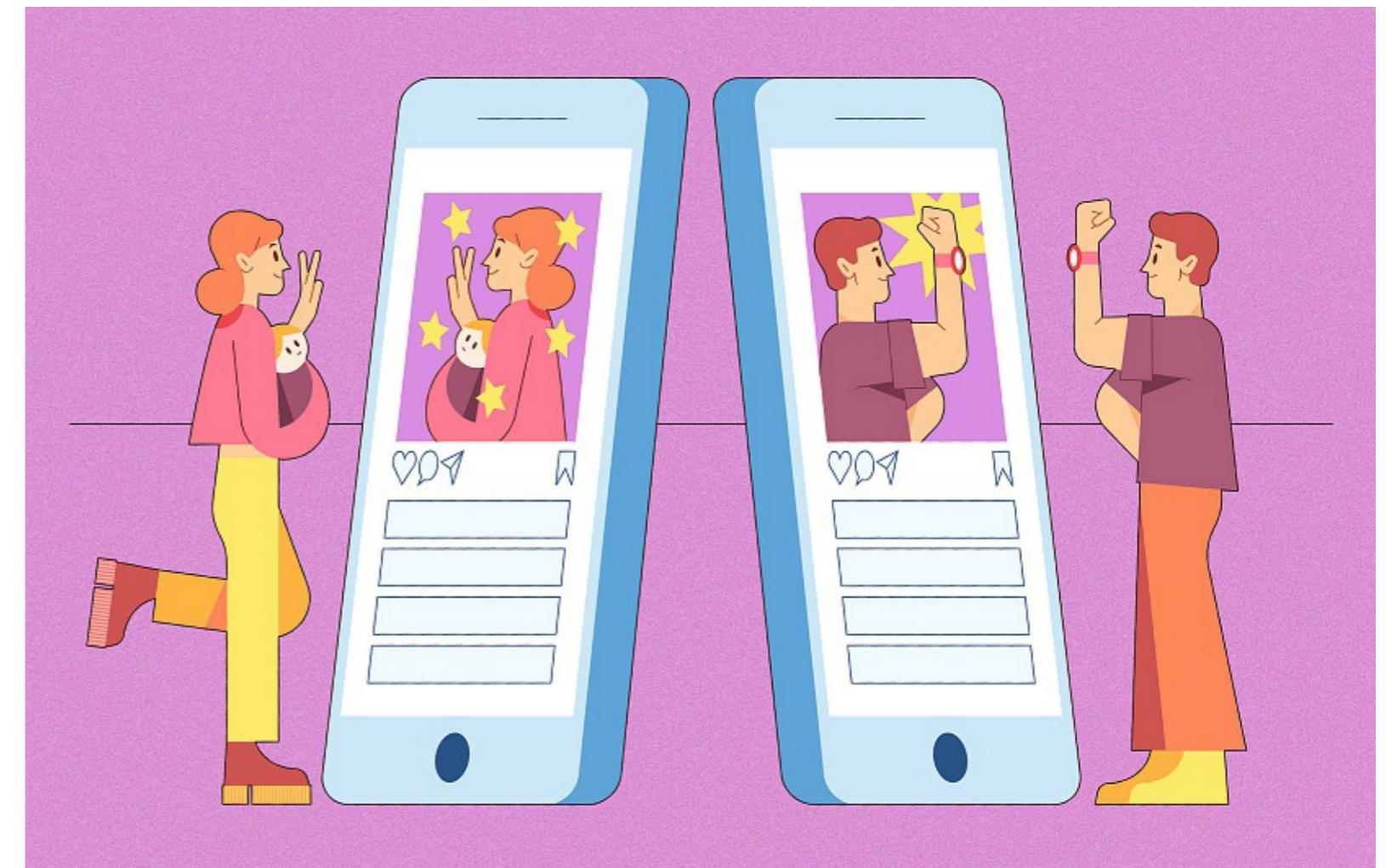
According to Katrin Tiidenberg, associate professor of social media and visual culture at Tallinn University, who is publishing a forthcoming book called *Sex and Social Media*, this is because men and women often have different motivations for sharing information on social media.

When my husband posted a photo of Bruce Springsteen's *Nebraska* on vinyl, his aim was simple, my conversation with Tiidenberg implied. As the caption on his post suggested, he mainly wanted the world to know that the 1982 album is: “so good”.

When I posted a photo of our daughter eating fish fingers in fancy dress, however, something slightly more subtle was going on. Sure, I was showing off. She looked fabulous, like a mucky Marie Antoinette. I was hoping that her star quality might reflect, just a little, on me. But according to Tiidenberg: “Women tend to use social media as a tool to maintain their social ties. They take those into account when they post and when deciding how they post.”

A photo of a five-year-old in fancy-dress, in other words, doesn't just say: “so good”. It can simultaneously say: “Hello granny, whose day I know could use brightening”, “Hello godmother, who we feel guilty for cancelling on the other day”, “Hello cousins, who emigrated to Australia and feel a little disconnected...”

Tiidenberg is careful to stress that she's “not making any essentialist argument” about ►



Illustrations by Kiki Ljung





**Female influencers are routinely slammed by people irked that their portrayal of their home life is too 'fake'. Or if not too fake, then too 'real'**

◀ women and men's innate preferences for either type of content. Instead, she argues, women have always been trained to take responsibility for cultivating and curating social networks: "They're told it's what they're good at."

In the distant pre-digital past, women were typically guardians of the family photo album. And even today, says Tiidenberg, an asymmetric division of emotional labour endures within many families in our offline worlds: "Who remembers people's birthdays, sends your mother a card and buys the Christmas presents?" To borrow a popular social media meme: it me. The knowledge that I had also assumed responsibility for the online equivalent, albeit inadvertently and without pressure, rankled.

With my own enthusiasm for posting photos now dampened, I turned my lens on the other people's pictures through which I was scrolling instead. Like Barbies, the female influencers I followed on Instagram appeared to come in several different looks.

In Stockholm, children in organic merino wool played with wooden toys (the irony of a smartphone simultaneously being thrust in their face apparently lost). In LA and Byron Bay, stringy moms surf alongside shaggy-haired offspring. In London, home-renovation shots showcase the precise alchemical blend of bleached and buffed surfaces with vintage and macramé accessories ("I am whimsical and artistic but also extremely hygienic," they seemed to whisper).

In 2017, researchers Brooke Erin Duffy and Urszula Pruchniewska published a paper called *Gender and self-enterprise in the social media age: a digital double bind*. Having interviewed women who were using social media to fuel "self-starter" careers - as Instagram influencers, for instance - they concluded that: "Many... were compelled to develop and present online personae that conformed to traditional prescriptions for femininity."

These influencers may chant mantras such as "follow your dreams". But in practice, "If you're trying to make a living in this space, you're going to follow the dollars and the dollars tend to essentialise gender differences," says Duffy, an associate professor of communication at Cornell University. "The companies that tend to reach out to [female influencers] are in fashion and beauty. The brands more likely to reach out to men are based in tech and sports."

**There is a lot of money available for the right kind of influencer.** Last year, for example, Estée Lauder chief executive Fabrizio Freda said the beauty company was spending more of its marketing budget on digital, with "75 per cent of our investment now... in digital social media influencers - and they're revealing to be highly productive".

Yet the rewards can be unevenly spread. In January, a survey of 1,600 influencers from more than 40 countries found that male influencers on Instagram earn more per post than women, at an average of \$1,411 compared with \$1,315. Most female influencers can't be too picky about the brands they partner with, and beauty, fashion or homeware brands are more likely to reach out to them. Whether they like it or not, showing off these products requires them to put their faces, homes and families into the frame. It is an ethical dilemma less frequently faced by a male influencer creating sponsored posts about smartphones or video games.

A female influencer may have joined Instagram with ideas about promoting body positivity, but before long her feed starts to resemble a souped-up *Stepford Wives* set. Brand partners don't want to see the reality of a busy home life: the laundry in a crumpled heap, the pile of utility bills and unfinished homework that she intends to sort out just as soon as she's wormed the cat and published this sponsored post, which will then pay the

bill... All this must be pushed firmly out of shot.

If money is the carrot that tempts female influencers towards these micro-managed depictions of home life, then online discussion forums are the stick. Last year, Duffy co-authored another study, this time highlighting the "authenticity bind" in which female Instagram influencers find themselves. Compelled to share more of themselves than their male counterparts, they are then routinely slammed by people irked that their portrayal of that home life is too "fake". Or if not too fake, then too "real".

I followed Duffy's advice and spent an unsettling afternoon scrolling through venomous attacks posted to the American gossip forum Get Off My Internets (GOMI) - in Duffy's words, "an entire website devoted to hating on influencers and YouTubers, almost all of them women".

A fitness influencer's posts were slammed for the supposed crime of over-curation: "No wonder she doesn't show any actual results. She's too busy hyping herself to push herself." A yoga influencer, on the other hand, was shamed for not being perfect enough. Her choice of tattoo was "like something you get in prison. Or as a gang initiation." Little wonder that the influencer posts on my feed look so stage-managed. One misstep and it is open season on your parenting ("Why did she sleep train a three-month-old?!"), partner ("He's physically very unattractive") or existence ("Her entire life is a waste of time").

The British equivalent of GOMI is a website called Tattle Life. Here, two of the "popular topics" highlighted for discussion on the home page were male influencers (Joe Sugg and Alfie Deyes). Two were entire YouTube families (the Inghams and Sacconejolys), another was a couple - the Instagrammer "Father of Daughters" and his wife, whose own Instagram career imploded after a bullying row that played out on Tattle Life itself. Twelve of

the 17 most popular subjects for dissection, however, were women.

Tattle Life describes itself as "a commentary website on public business social media accounts. We allow commentary and critiques of people that choose to monetise their personal life as a business and release it into the public domain." Perhaps I too might agree that making money by publicising your private life on Instagram makes you fair game for endless public scrutiny and ridicule - but only if women had equal opportunity to build careers on social media without doing so.

Having felt bored by my own posts, and then alienated by those of the influencers I followed, I was now becoming unnerved by the misogyny they had spawned, and not only, it should be said, from male commentators. I decided to embark on a wholesale Instagram reincarnation. Turning my back on my old account, I set up a new one instead. I followed museums, galleries, chefs and - of course - newspapers but crucially, no influencers. In turn, I posted only things related to my work. I made this new profile public last September. Today it is... not a roaring success.

My last profile, though private, had attracted an underwhelming 537 followers. This new one, though public and occasionally even ambitiously hashtagged, has attracted an even less magnificent 103. Each time I post a photo of an article I've written, or a place I'm soon to write about, I get just a fraction of the likes I used to win so effortlessly with snaps of the kids.

Last month, I caved in, posted a single picture of half-term on a Storm Dennis-swept beach, and found myself shamefully and pathetically buoyed by the pinprick of endorphins as tiny waves of approval arrived from the ether. For the most part, however, life on the other side feels a little less crowded, a lot less *Stepford Wives* and maybe even, perhaps, just a bit more #blessed. **FT**



# Rules of engagement

I don't visit restaurants to be fed sales messages or disclaimers by officious waiters, says *Tim Hayward*. I just want to feel welcome – and to savour the miracle of food. Illustration by *Mitch Blunt*

There is something unbearably twee about a grown man quoting Winnie the Pooh, and I do so only because, in this particular case, AA Milne's observation is so incontrovertibly correct: "Although Eating Honey was a very good thing to do, there was a moment just before you began to eat it which was better than when you were, but he didn't know what it was called."

The moments before we eat are sacred, so how do we spend them?

In a restaurant, this is seldom a problem these days because, though you may wish to contemplate the menu or consult the wine list quietly, a server will approach to "Mirandize" you.

If you've never been arrested, you might not be aware of the significance of *Miranda v Arizona*, 384 US 436 (1966), the Supreme Court case that enshrined the importance of a formal "reading of rights" at the point of arrest. But if you've ever found yourself with your arm twisted up your back, your cheek pushed into the side of a white van and someone yelling it at you at some volume, you'll be aware that its declaration signifies a very real change in the power dynamic of any situation. Not, one might imagine, an act that has any place in the transactions of the hospitality industry, and yet...

It began a while ago, when servers in chain restaurants were given operating scripts for their tableside behaviour. These usually comprised an informal introduction and an offer of assistance: "Hi, I'm Brad, I'll be your server for this evening. How can I help you?"

It was OK – a bit cringe-inducing if you were British – worse if they sat next to you on the banquette, and maybe a bit over-familiar. I always felt compelled by politeness to respond: "Hi, I'm Tim. I'll be your customer this evening. Now, can you please get me a martini?"

Soon the scripts developed to include sales messages, informing you of the specials, perhaps pushing the half-a-dozen crabs that needed to be shifted that night if they weren't to be heaved, mingling and unsold, into the dumpster at the end of service.

Then things went a bit Brechtian. Somehow unaware that we diners need to suspend disbelief when we go out to eat, they began demanding that we dropped the diner/host relationship evolved over centuries, removed the fourth wall and somehow "engaged" with their business model. Sometimes it was a simple "Have you eaten here before?" but more often the unadorned "let me explain our Concept". This was the point where the friendly welcome somehow tipped into an urgent delivery of disclaimers and legal boilerplate.

"We are a small-plates restaurant. We suggest several dishes per person. They will arrive in the order that pleases the kitchen. We will require your table back in 90 minutes. Do you have any food allergies or intolerances?"

And the power dynamic is reversed. The cuffs have been firmly snapped on.

This is surely not the way to make a guest feel welcome, to invite them to eat, to begin a sensory and emotional transaction

that you hope they will remember with pleasure. Perhaps we as diners should think of something better to fill the space.

The truth is that we have a bit of an issue with this in the UK. You might be wished "*Itadakimasu*" as you reach for your sashimi, a Māori can bid you "*Kia mākona*", I'm told you can say "*yISop!*" in Klingon and even the Americans, who share our language, can heartily enjoin each other to "Enjoy". We though, in the birthplace of Milton and Shakespeare, have had to nick "*Bon appétit*" from the French.

Perhaps, pace Pooh, we still just don't get how important these moments are.

I haven't got a religious bone in my body but I envy those who say grace before a meal. I suffer no want, and I have no god to thank, but it doesn't stop me being grateful. I can eat marvellous things whenever I choose but I never, for a second, lose touch with the joy of eating, so to dive in, without marking the moment seems embarrassingly crass.

I lived for several years in the American South where grace is commonly said at most meals. Sometimes, if one of the family tub-thumpers was present, it was larded with guilt, apocalyptic threat and frothing chunks of *The Apocrypha*, but usually it was much more homely and informal, often spoken by the youngest person at the table and biased toward the "dig in and enjoy" part.

In one particularly raucous house in New Orleans that I shared with hospitality professionals of dubious moral character, there was




**'I'm not religious but I envy those who say grace before a meal. I suffer no want, and I have no god to thank, but it doesn't stop me being grateful'**

a three-word grace: a shouted "Yo!" as a call to prayer, a rare second of silence and then a resounding "Yay, God!"

Institutions do grace well. We had it at most of my schools, varying from the happy and clappy to the full Latin, depending on the pretensions of the establishment – the formality handily in inverse proportion to the quality of the lunch. Where I live today, in Cambridge, it's de rigeur for each college to chant some kind of spell before and often after the meal – but to be fair, in this place I think the local Burger King does a sung mass with every order of fries.

The UK today is populated by a barbarous, harried people who fear public expressions of emotion and often seem to regard food as fuel. We have so much that our major problems are fair distribution and epidemic overindulgence. We have greater plenty than we've ever experienced, variety and quality undreamed of by our far more demonstratively grateful forebears. We consult the quacks and loons of the media in our search for spiritual fulfilment, yet we can't pause to acknowledge the miracle that happens three times in most of our days.

Perhaps that is the only answer: a simple pause. Perhaps that is the modern secular grace. In a world where we seemingly can't take a moment away from our media "feeds", maybe we should just stop, no matter for how short a fragment of a second, to consider how fortunate we are to be fed. 

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# Rowley Leigh Recipes



## On the rack

Photographs by Andy Sewell

There was a time - a long time ago, mind - when rack of lamb was not especially expensive. It was a great favourite in restaurants, usually served for two and possibly preceded by an avocado with prawns, a chicken liver pâté, an artichoke vinaigrette or even scallops in the shell, with a nice border of mashed potato. This was “French” cooking of a sort, which means it was what you got in a London restaurant with a French name that was operated by enthusiastic English people.

Chez Moi was one such, in a discreet Holland Park street - next to the vet’s surgery in Addison Avenue. The vet is still there but Chez Moi has gone, just like the worthy La Pomme D’amour around the corner, driven out by rising rents. There is nothing especially sad about this: restaurant years are like dog years and when our own Kensington Place folded last year at the grand old age of 30, it was, like its founders, qualifying for its old age pension.

But the rack of lamb at Chez Moi was especially good. It was always on the menu and always perfectly executed, the covering fat well-rendered and crisp and the eye of the meat a beautiful even pink, with none of the flabby rawness that afflicted the practice of some more authentically French establishments. A discreet little garlic flavoured jus, a neat pile of bright green French beans and a little gratin dauphinoise on the side ensured its constant popularity.

The lamb itself would be sweet and tender, meat from young animals and usually from Southdown or similar lowland breeds. Whereas there is plenty of such meat about, the emphasis has moved away to the more richly flavoured (and better subsidised) hill lamb, a little leaner, a little older and a little darker. I have always wavered between the two although I have definitely given up taking part in the race to get the first new season’s meat on the table by Easter. What you see here is hogget - not easily defined, but at least eight months old and still well short of mutton - and all the better for it.

More columns at [ft.com/leigh](http://ft.com/leigh)

## Roast rack of hogget with roast onions and caper sauce

**A rack is perfect for two. Double up if you are entertaining**

- 2 large sweet onions
- 30g butter
- 1 rack of mature lamb or hogget, French, trimmed and at room temperature
- 2 cloves garlic
- 3 tbs fresh breadcrumbs
- 2 tsp Dijon mustard
- 1 shallot
- 150ml white wine
- 150ml chicken stock, if available
- 150ml double cream
- 1 tbs large capers (not superfine)

1 — Peel the onions, keeping the base firmly attached. Run a knife down through the middle but only a little (say 1cm) below the middle and repeat so as to quarter it. Force the segments very slightly apart and add the butter and a generous seasoning of salt and pepper. Place on a little mound of coarse salt and bake in a hottish oven (200C) for 30-40 minutes. The segments will open out like petals of a flower and the heart of the onions will be perfectly tender.

2 — Season the rack very well with salt on all sides and with black pepper on the exposed meat parts. Place fat side down in a hot, heavy pan and let this render for a few minutes to release the fat and colour very well. Turn the rack over and roast in the same oven for 15 minutes. Remove from the oven and rest for 10 minutes.

3 — Chop the garlic finely, mix with the breadcrumbs and season generously with salt. Mix the mustard with a teaspoon of cream and coat the top of the rack. Dip this into the breadcrumbs, pressing them down on the meat. Sprinkle a few drops of olive oil on the crumbs and return to the oven for five minutes. A skewer should emerge tepid in the middle (around 52C if using a meat thermometer) before resting. Leave in a warm place with a protective sheet of foil loosely placed over the top.

4 — To make the sauce, soften a finely chopped shallot in a teaspoon of butter before adding the wine. Reduce by half, add the stock and reduce again. Add the cream and reduce gently, seasoning with salt and a few drops of wine vinegar. Just before serving add the well-drained capers. Carve the rack - which should be a juicy medium rare - and serve with the onion and the caper sauce. A brassica is the best green accompaniment (purple sprouting broccoli, perhaps).

**Wine**  
The rich and slightly fatty meat needs a red with a good level of acidity. Despite Tuscany being steak country, I always think a good Chianti Classico (or Brunello if you have it) is the very best accompaniment for mature lamb.







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# Jancis Robinson Wine

## Spain's bullish new wave

“This couldn't possibly happen in Spain,” leading Spanish wine writer Luis Gutiérrez assured me at the end of last month as he looked round one of the Royal Horticultural Halls in London packed with Spanish wine producers.

We were at a tasting billed as “*Viñateros* – a Spanish Wine Revolution”. Most unusually, it had a real buzz about it. Indeed, it had a feeling of excitement, energising the blasé British wine trade attendees, that I have not felt since the biennial “New Wave South Africa” tastings in September. Simon Farr, one of London's most thoughtful wine merchants, came up to me, surveyed the scene and observed: “I just wish I were starting up *Bibendum* Wine again. There are so many great wines to choose from nowadays.”

Fernando Mora, a Master of Wine and Aragón wine producer, echoed Gutiérrez, explaining that in Spain rival wine distributors wouldn't dream of co-operating in an event at which the best wines of their competitors were shown to their best customers. Yet here were the crème de la crème of Spanish wines, brought into the UK by no fewer than 14 different importers. And, crucially, strict criteria were imposed on the sort of wines that were poured at the tables ranged around the hall.

We had none of the big-volume brands (and actually relatively few wines from the flagship red wine regions Rioja and Ribera del Duero). To be shown at the event, wines had to be made by the outfit that grew the grapes (much less common than you might think), and preference was given to indigenous grape varieties. Producers had to be committed to the health of their vineyards by following, at the very least, sustainable farming practices and preferably organic or biodynamic protocols. There were also rules for how the wine was made. The winemaker had to



As imagined by Leon Edler

### Some great new-wave Spanish wines

#### WHITES

- Borja Pérez Viticultor, Vidueños, Artifice, 2017 Canary Islands £18.08 J&B
- Dominio do Bibei, Lapola 2017 Ribeira Sacra £24.50 *Vincognito.com*
- Barco del Corneta, Parajes del Infierno La Silleria 2017 Vino de la Tierra Castilla y León £34.10 *Indigo Wine*
- Dominio del Águila Blanco 2015 Vino de España (White) £59.80 *Hedonism, Bottle Apostle*

#### REDS

- 4 Monos Viticultores, Tierra de Luna, 2017 Vinos de Madrid £19.18 J&B
- Bodegas Bernabeveva, Navaherreros Garnacha 2017 Vinos de Madrid £19.49 *Hay Wines, Herefordshire*
- Guimaro, Camino Real 2017 Ribeira Sacra £21.90 *Les Caves de Pyrene*
- Domaines Lupier, El Terroir 2015 Navarra £22.95 *Berry Bros & Rudd*
- Daniel Landi, Las Uvas de la Ira 2018 Métrida £26 *The Laughing Heart, The Sampler Islington*

- Dominio del Águila, Picaro del Águila Clarete 2016 Ribera del Duero £27.50 *Hedonism, Vagabond*
- Remelluri Reserva 2012 Rioja About £35 *Noble Green, Forest Wines, Bottle Apostle, Hedonism*
- Casa Castillo, Las Gravas 2017 Jumilla £37.60 *Indigo Wine*
- Castro Ventosa, Valtuille Rapalao 2015 Bierzo £41 *Indigo Wine*

Tasting notes on [JancisRobinson.com](http://JancisRobinson.com). International stockists on [Wine-searcher.com](http://Wine-searcher.com)



be more interested in expressing the vineyard than applying fancy, intrusive winemaking techniques (there was very little new oak on show). Fermentations had to be initiated by yeasts that were local rather than bought in, and only “judicious” use of additives – typically minimal additions of the preservative sulphur dioxide – was allowed.

UK wine importer Indigo had the initial idea and approached other importers. These companies then proposed the growers they would like to see included in *Viñateros*. Their names were submitted for approval to Madrid-based Amaya Cervera of the bilingual website

**‘The tasting had a real buzz about it – a feeling of excitement that energised the blasé British wine trade’**

SpanishWineLover and she had the power to decide whether they qualified as one of the best of their region. Some were rejected but 76 growers made the grade and brought themselves and their wines to London.

Many a generic wine tasting is held in the RHS's Lindley Hall but this one looked rather different. There were no large banners or flashy point-of-sale accoutrements. Instead, it all looked rather rustic. There was not a suit in sight. This was a very different snapshot of Spanish wine, largely about local terroir and, often, unfamiliar but indigenous grapes. Official statistics show a country that is disproportionately dependent on Tempranillo, the dominant grape of Rioja and Ribera del Duero. But in Lindley Hall, we were presented with evidence of a new wave of producers, often pretty small-scale, who are unearthing forgotten local varieties and returning to ▶



◀ the ways of those who grew and made wine before the late-20th-century advent of agrochemicals and embrace of technology. Tasters were heard describing wines as “elegant”, “pretty”, “fine-grained” – words that would have been unthinkable a decade ago.

There is a new-found confidence in what Spain, and Spain alone, can offer today’s wine lover. Introducing a masterclass devoted to wines emblematic of this movement – including a stunning, age-worthy pale red *clarete* from Ribera del Duero – Gutiérrez explained: “We used to look to France. The hardest thing to overcome was our old inferiority complex.”

Unsurprisingly for such a large country, there is huge variation between different regions. The damp, green north-west can offer wines that least conform to the image of Spain as a hot, dry country. The Albariño grape, responsible for so many of the coastal Rías Baixas region’s breezy Atlantic whites, is the best-known wine emissary of Galicia. But, as *Viñateros* showed, that is only part of the story. The grapes responsible for Vinho Verde – chiefly Loureira, Treixadura and Caiño Blanco – over the Miño river are grown in Rías Baixas too. Whites made from the Godello grape can be even more serious and long-lived than Albariño, especially the best from the Valdeorras region.

There are also fascinating, generally aromatic, appetising reds from this corner of Spain, from grapes such as Mouratón (also known as Juan García), Merenzao

(called Trousseau in the Jura) and, especially, Mencía. The latter is the signature grape of the Bierzo region, just outside Galicia, which is on a roll, thanks to a rich heritage of really old vines, some particularly propitious terrains and a group of dedicated, small-scale producers.

The excitement of the Spanish wine scene is more about terroir than grape varieties. It’s about presenting the unique qualities of a particular combination of land and plant. This means adapting what happens in the cellar to individual requirements, which often involves ignoring those of the official denominations – particularly the ones that demand prolonged oak ageing. (Spain is still living with the legacy of a belief that the best wines are those that spend longest in barrel.) A considerable proportion of the wines on show at *Viñateros* was therefore sold simply as *vino de España* without any more geographically specific clues.

I tasted my first wine from the Canary Islands as recently as 2004, but there were four tip-top producers of them at *Viñateros*. There were also three presenting evidence of the revolution that is at last affecting sherry country in Andalucía, where stasis is being replaced by single-vineyard wines and some lighter whites made, unlike sherry, without the addition of alcohol.

The future looks bright indeed for new-wave Spain. **FT**

More columns at [ft.com/jancis-robinson](http://ft.com/jancis-robinson)

## MY ADDRESSES — BIRMINGHAM

AKTAR ISLAM, CHEF/RESTAURATEUR



As a Brummie, I love meeting people who have moved to Birmingham and find the city exceeds their expectations. In the past 10 years, the food and drink scene has become very special. Five Michelin stars, the country’s best street food market and a plethora of exciting bars: what’s not to love?

— I can’t start the day without coffee. **Java Lounge**, in the trendy Moseley Village, is a cool, modern café that isn’t too pretentious.

— For Monday lunch, I sneak out to **Tiger Bites Pig** for some bao (above left). It’s about the size of a living room, with an open kitchen that can smash out a Taiwanese bao bun better than anywhere else I know.

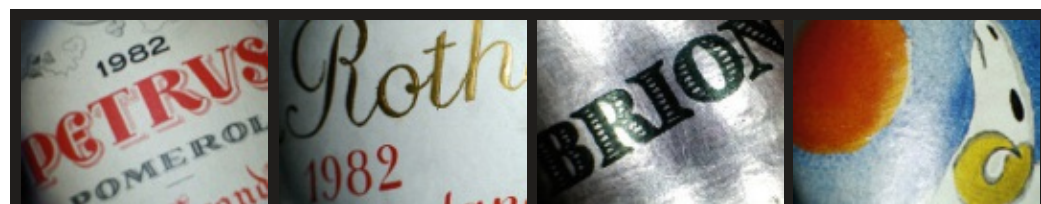
— Every city thinks it has the best independent burger place. They’re all wrong. **Original Patty Men** (OPM) takes the crown hands down.

— **Craft Dining Rooms** (above right) is an innovative addition to the city’s dining scene. The menu features a strong selection of dishes from the UK and the wine list is also mainly British. Think about the last time you had a proper – I mean *proper* – beef wellington.

— Phil Innes is my man for wine in the city. He opened **Loki Wines** nearly 10 years ago and it came as a breath of fresh air to Birmingham.

— Lunch at **Purnell’s** is fantastic. It’s a showcase of local influences. For Sunday lunch, absolutely nothing beats **The Butchers Social**. Great produce, great cooking – the owners keep it simple and do it well.

Aktar Islam is chef-restaurateur of the Michelin-starred *Opheem* and *Pulperia* in Birmingham; [opheem.com](http://opheem.com); [pulperia.co.uk](http://pulperia.co.uk)



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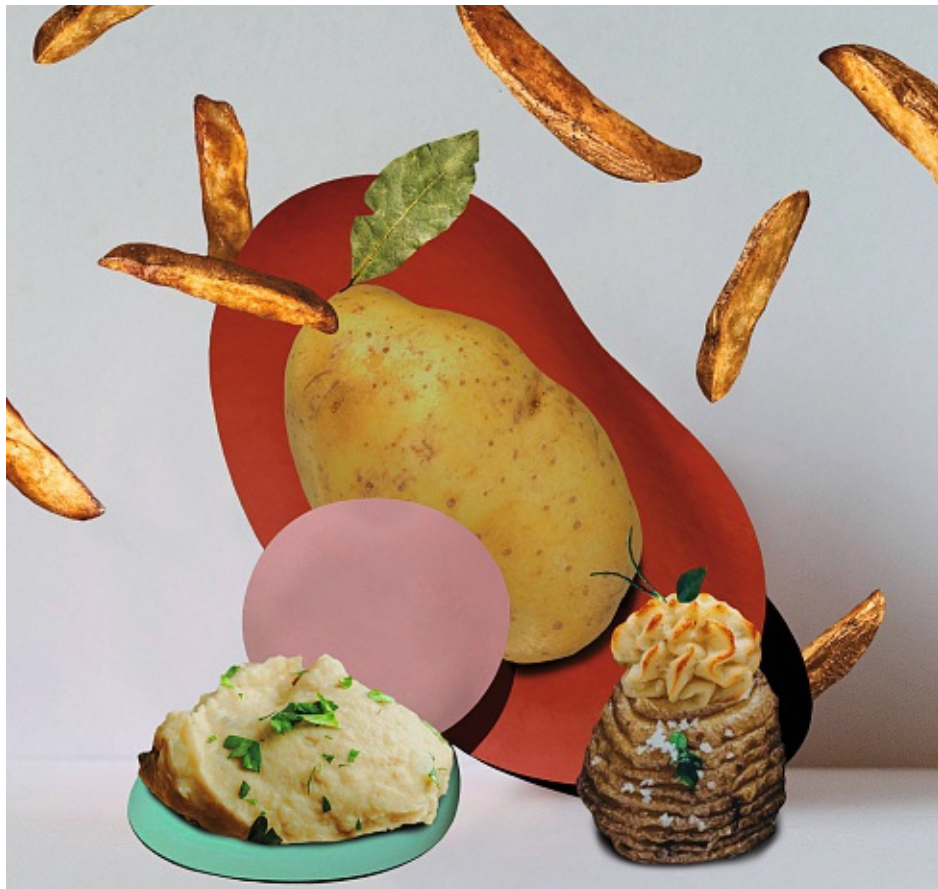


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**FT Weekend**





I'D BE LOST WITHOUT...

## Potatoes

From pommes frites to Dauphinois, this humble tuber is endlessly versatile, writes chef *Pierre Koffmann*. Illustration by *Anna Bu Kliewer*

I have always been amazed that Europeans only started eating potatoes in the 19th century. Today, it's difficult to think of anything more European than a potato.

Growing up in Gascony in the 1950s, we ate them almost every day. On Mondays, we'd have pommes frites with a steak haché, made from horse meat because the horse butcher was the only butcher open on Mondays. It was our version of burger and chips.


On other days, my mother would serve mash (with plenty of butter, of course) and calves' liver or sausages, or sautéed potatoes with duck confit. Goose fat gave my grandmother's frites extra richness and crunch. This humble tuber is so very versatile.

When I went to catering school - armed with skills I had learnt as sous-chef to my grandmother - I was taught the full repertoire of French potato preparations. Each dish required a precise shape, perfected to minute detail by generations of chefs: the baton of the frites, the lengthways julienned slice of the dauphinois, or the skin-on medallion of the *pommes Lyonnaise*.

Early on, I had a remarkable gastronomic experience at a restaurant in Paris called

Ambassade d'Auvergne, which is still open in Le Marais. I tried *pommes aligot* for the very first time. Gradually, the chef adds fresh Tomme d'Auvergne - a semi-hard cheese similar to a fresh cheddar - to mashed potato. The result is halfway between fondue and purée, almost a dough. I was entranced to see how two simple ingredients could combine to become such a remarkable substance.

When we opened La Tante Claire in the 1970s, our British guests often came with a particular image of what they imagined French food was like. Mostly, they pictured rich dishes packed with cream and butter. Dauphinois was a favourite. We also introduced Chelsea to *pommes Savoyarde*, a delicious type of potato gratin.

My most vivid potato memory is of a foggy morning on a farm in Norfolk. Leaning over the muddy jaws of a potato harvester, I met Claire, who became my wife. She was working for a fruit and vegetable supplier at the time, and we spoke about produce and seasons. And 16 years on we are in business together, growing potatoes for chefs. 

*Pierre Koffmann is a chef and owner of Koffmann's Foods; koffmannsfoods.co.uk*

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# Restaurants

## Tim Hayward



BEEF TARTARE, CHERRY CLAM, OYSTER. HEREFORD PRIME SIRLOIN. PHOTOGRAPHS BY LATEEF PHOTOGRAPHY

### Daffodil Mulligan, London

**D**affodil Mulligan is the latest from Richard Corrigan, the man behind the Lindsay House, Corrigans and Bentley's. He's talked about creating something different, something more rooted in the pubs, music and performance venues that he enjoys. He's taken over Nuala, the Irish restaurant just off the Old Street roundabout, which recently went under, and transformed it with an eye to those personal enthusiasms.

The room is still a bit cavernous, with an open, fire-fuelled kitchen and an extensive bar that should attract City business. There's going to be a music venue in the basement, but until it opens they're making do with a carefully curated playlist and atmospheric darkness.

From the specials board, I ordered a skewer of duck hearts, which arrived on a dark basin varnished with a soy-weighted glaze resting in a pool of sweet black jus. With the moody lighting at my table, I was flying blind, but this

did enable me to concentrate on the cuisson - perfectly crisp exterior with what felt like a gloriously rare middle; the flavours, robust and nicely balanced.

As a lighter counterpoint, I was drawn to the "crab, lovage, pickled pear", an unwise choice in hindsight. The crab was fresh, and the lovage added some light clarity but the gem leaves on which it was scooped were too bitterly assertive. The slice of pear draped on top was tasteless, it had only the briefest and most unsatisfactory relationship with any pickle, and the thick dusting of smoked paprika was just brutal. There was something delicate and beautiful in there, but it had turned up to dinner wearing a heavy duffel coat and combat boots.

Also on the specials board was a homemade smoked sausage with beer mustard and tomato pickle. It came to the table so nakedly lewd that I had to spark up the torch on my phone to check. The fat little banger was almost black with the smoke, glossy and absurdly self-satisfied looking, recumbent on the plate with a cocky little curl. It looked indecent, but tasted



**'There was something delicate and beautiful in there, but it had turned up to dinner wearing a heavy duffel coat and combat boots'**

**Daffodil Mulligan**  
70-74 City Road  
Old Street  
London, EC1Y 2BJ  
daffodilmulligan.com  
Starters £3-£10.75  
Main courses £23-£50

excellent. A good crack on biting through the natural skin, a fine ground filling with some of the taste and texture of a good Bierwurst but with some fennel. It made me want to drink a colossal quantity of beer and I mean that in a good way.

The "bass ceviche, blood orange and pickle" was again, a promising and well-chosen basic ingredient, and the citrus did its job, but the pickle, which manifested itself in tiny, piped bloblets, lurked between the subtle elements like landmines loaded with cloves. A powerful and polarising spice, cloves don't combine well with many flavours and have a tendency to shout a lot louder than their neighbours. When they're applied with this level of spirited abundance, you need to reword the menu... something like "CLOVES!!, fish, orange". Half of the mouthfuls I took had me wanting more, the rest were like waking up on Boxing Day with my tongue stuck in the plug-in air freshener.

I don't know what they're doing when they "wood-oven roast" a lobster but it was as transformative for me as it was for the poor crustacean. It wasn't swimming in butter but it was as rich as if it had been. Creamy mouthfeel, with a muscular resistance to the tooth and plenty of sea flavours. The "Cavan kimchi" was a lovely excursion into carrot pickling and, unlike most of the fermented nonsense besmearing London's plates this month, brilliantly appropriate to the dish it accompanied.

I'd love to give Daffodil Mulligan a clear round because Corrigan is a phenomenal talent and I've loved everything he's done so far. I appreciate that this is an attempt to step away from his fine-dining roots, to create something that is about a broader definition of hospitality, and usually I'd be delighted. Surprisingly few restaurateurs understand this wider approach and vanishingly few chefs - so Corrigan's intent is laudable. But the truth is that there were a couple of pretty average, unusually heavy-handed dishes that night and Corrigan's name is, metaphorically, over the door.

The fact that parts of the menu were of such a very high standard just makes the issue more pronounced. **FT**

.....  
tim.hayward@ft.com;  
@TimHayward



# Games



## A Round on the Links

by James Walton



All the answers here are linked in some way. Once you've spotted the link, any you didn't know the first time around should become easier.

**1.** Which future pop star stood guard over the Queen Mother's coffin while in the Household Cavalry (above)?

**2.** The headquarters of the English Folk Dance and Song Society are named after which folk-song collector?

**3.** What's the most populous island in the United States?

**4.** Who did Garry Kasparov beat in 1993 to remain the world chess champion?

**5.** What became the 21st century's first new sovereign state on its independence from Indonesia?

**6.** "I Feel Pretty", "America" and "Maria" are songs from which musical?

**7.** Daffyd Thomas, Marjorie Dawes and

Vicky Pollard were characters in which TV sketch show?

**8.** The "primeval atom hypothesis" was an earlier version of which scientific theory?

**9.** Which German bandleader had 65 hit albums in Britain?

**10.** What's the English translation of the Latin term *primus inter pares*?

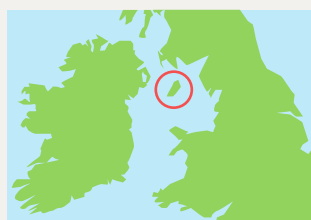
## The Picture Round

by James Walton

Who or what do these pictures add up to?



+

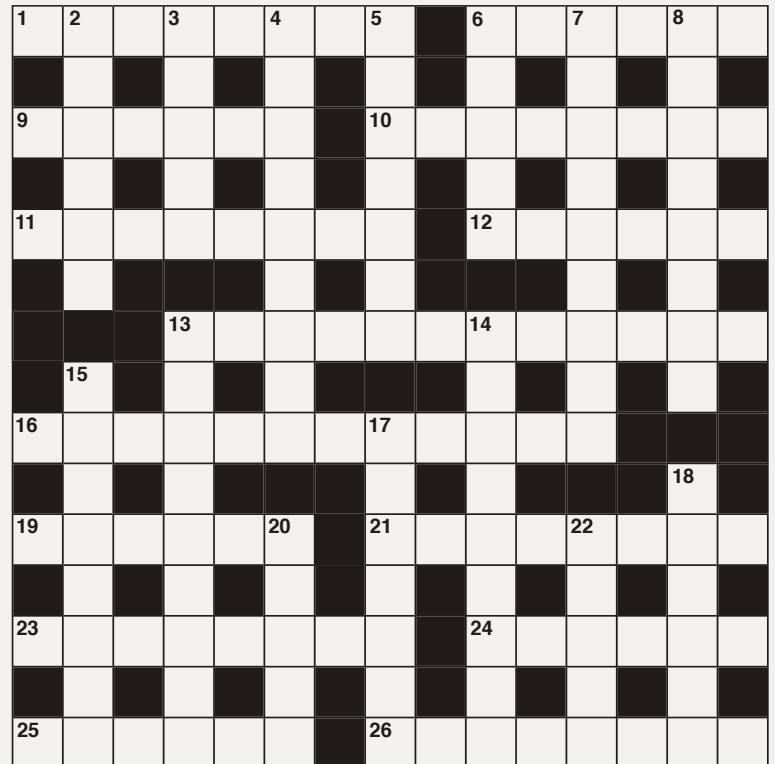


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Answers page 10

## The Crossword

No 479. Set by Aldhelm



The Across clues are straightforward, while the Down clues are cryptic.

### ACROSS

- 1** Political troublemaker (8)
- 6** Evolve into (6)
- 9** Spirit, confidence (6)
- 10** Facetious (8)
- 11** Art lover (8)
- 12** Interwoven lengths of hair (6)
- 13** Favourites (5-7)
- 16** Deviousness, deceit (12)
- 19** Colouring pencil (6)
- 21** Parsnip, carrot, for example (4, 4)
- 23** Start again (8)
- 24** Sullen, moody (6)
- 25** Detail (6)
- 26** Idler (8)

### DOWN

- 2** Shopkeeper is more distasteful to his audience (6)
- 3** Translator getting part of a play for an essay (5)
- 4** Those people have gone mad about second TV tune (5, 4)
- 5** Think about fluid etc flowing (7)
- 6** Business leader relaxed on aircraft (5)
- 7** Leadership of TA pay C-in-C poorly (9)
- 8** Threatening a Conservative after a short time (8)
- 13** Fathom a reality being altered for story (5-4)
- 14** Costume, perhaps, lay empty in an even manner (9)

- 15** Diaries edited embracing Liberal statesman of old (8)
- 17** Creature dashed up with Shakespeare's prince (7)
- 18** Tokyo's location for marathon shutdown, in part (6)
- 20** Goat to fuss over (5)
- 22** Edible pod for one right in corn item (5)

Solution to Crossword No 478



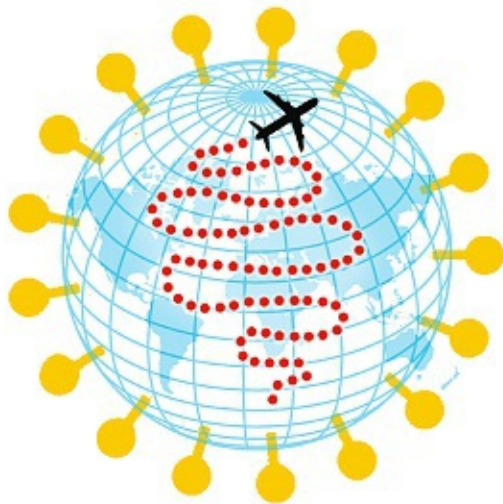




# GILLIAN TETT

PARTING SHOT

## A deadly disease, globalisation and me



**W**hen I got on the plane on Tuesday to fly from Tokyo to Singapore I felt healthy: I had just spent the weekend skiing in deep powder in Japan and was still glowing with joy and adrenalin.

A few hours into the flight, however, a fever spread across my body and my head started to hurt.

I took a couple of paracetamol, checked into the hotel when I landed and went to sleep, complacently assuming I had a heavy cold.

Wrong. The next morning, I was delirious. A few hours later, my fever was sky-high and I slipped into a coma. Indeed, were it not for the fact that a colleague later discovered me and rushed me to a doctor, I might have died that night.

The year was 2001, so this incident had nothing to do with coronavirus; the culprit was a rare strain of bacterial meningococcal meningitis, known as W135 (which has a dramatically higher mortality rate compared with coronavirus). But, when I think about what is unfolding today with Covid-19 - as it is officially known - I cannot help feeling a sense of déjà vu, for the coronavirus is making some of the painful lessons that I learnt nearly 20 years ago seem newly relevant.

One of these is the degree to which we live in a hyper-globalised world where disease can mutate and spread in utterly unpredictable ways. In my case, for example, there was no obvious reason why I should have succumbed to W135 on a flight to Singapore. As the World Health Organization later observed, this strain, or mutation, of meningitis had appeared a few months earlier in Saudi Arabia during the pilgrimage season for Hajj and Umrah. But I had never been to Saudi Arabia, and W135 had never been reported in Tokyo before.

However, just before my illness, I had visited the Mediterranean - and it seems that I probably encountered W135 there and took it to Asia, unwittingly, in my body on a plane.

Call this random bad luck, if you like, or the dark side of a hyper-connected world. However, there is a brighter side to such globalisation: information flows. Fortunately, the doctor who treated me, tropical medicine specialist Oon Chong Teik, had just read online about the obscure W135 mutation in Saudi Arabia. So when the hospital tests failed to identify my illness, he searched global databases - and chose the right treatment. Today, his database would be even more impressive, due to the rise of big data. This can be seen in the frenetic medical information-sharing around coronavirus.

But there is another lesson too: the gross inequalities in who benefits from these information flows. I survived meningitis because I was immediately whisked to a hospital in a country with an

excellent healthcare system, and never worried about the bill because I had insurance.

That was not the case in Burkina Faso the next year, where an outbreak of W135 caused a mini epidemic, killing 1,400 (out of 13,000 cases). Nor might it have been true if I was poor in America, where 27 million Americans currently lack health insurance.

This is a morally repugnant situation, especially given the amount of wealth there is in the US. It is also dangerous as the coronavirus spreads: if low-income Americans fail to

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**‘We live in a hyper-globalised world where disease can mutate and spread in utterly unpredictable ways’**

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get tested or treated for the coronavirus, it can put everyone at risk. As I learnt with W135, germs do not respect social, national or economic hierarchies.

I learnt one more lesson in Singapore: westerners tend to be far too complacent about the future. If you live in professional circles in the more comfortable corners of America, Europe and modernised Asia, it feels normal to extrapolate what will happen in the coming years based on the recent past. Hence the fact that bankers sell 10-, 20- or 100-year bonds, and we tell our children to plan long-term careers. Being rich confers a confidence to our prediction-making.

**B**ut illness of any sort reminds us just how unpredictable life really is, and how it can change at any time. Yes, that sounds obvious. But it is easy to forget when we wrap ourselves in the luxuries of modern life, and become so addicted to the benefits of hyper-globalisation that we rarely notice the costs or risks.

I am guilty of this myself. When I emerged from my brush with meningitis in Singapore, I felt so giddy to be alive that I declared I would try to feel grateful each day - and never “sweat the small stuff” again. Sadly, that pious resolution probably lasted about a month; humans are hard-wired to lose perspective amid the daily grind.

But every so often, something sparks my memories again. As I read those headlines about the coronavirus, I will try to remember to keep counting my extra blessings and luck. Health is often very easy to take for granted in the 21st-century world - at least, until we are confronted with losing it in a manner that is out of our control. **FT**

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