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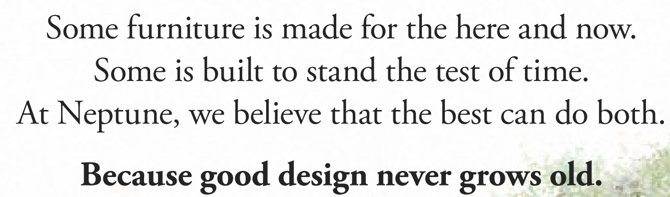

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JOSHUA CHAFFIN

OPENING SHOT

Why commuters won't easily be lured back to the office

The lasting memory of my daily commute is the numb expression of a woman who sat across from me one evening a few years ago, knee-to-knee, because the cramped train cars were apparently built in an era when Americans were half their current size. She withdrew one small bottle of champagne from her bag and downed it. Then another. I don't think she was celebrating.

Each day, before the pandemic, I accepted my commute into Manhattan from suburban New Jersey as deserved punishment for certain life decisions that have resulted in my earning less money than I might have.

I would fast-walk with fellow suburbanites to the train station, then climb aboard a packed car staffed by conductors – some friendly, many gruff – who'd been paid so little heed that no one had apparently bothered to update their uniforms over the past half century or so.

When the train was late or cancelled, which was often, a collective gasp would roll across the platform, then a flurry of phone calls and emails to apologise and reschedule meetings and, of course, curse New Jersey Transit.

At times, I endeavoured to use the ride constructively by reading all those Russian novels I'd neglected or even studying the Torah. It didn't take. Instead, I would consume too much sports news or gaze out the window into the Meadowlands marshes, wondering what it must have been like for those poor souls the mafia disposed of there.

When the train would at last crawl into the bowels of Penn Station, the other commuters and I would enter the city as if climbing up through a giant public restroom, passing slumped bodies of the homeless along the way. Were they dead or just sleeping, I wondered. Did anyone care?

Every commuter has their lament. What is different now is the wider circumstance. For the longest time, commuters have schlepped into the office because they had no choice. The pandemic, at least in New York City, may change that.

Manhattan's developers and politicians are desperate for workers to return to the office to protect the value of all those towers, and the tax revenues and smaller businesses associated with them. So far, only about 17 per cent of New York City workers have done so, according to Kastle Systems, the office security company. This, in spite of the fact that vaccination rates are up, Covid-19 infections are dwindling and the city is reopening at full throttle.

Nervous building owners are responding by rolling out more of the amenities popularised in recent years by tech companies such as Google and Facebook. It has become conventional wisdom in the property industry that a 25-year-old software engineer will not set foot in an office unless they are massaged each day like a Kobe cow and given access to cold-brewed coffee, outdoor space and enriching activities planned by a concierge.

All that is fine. But it overlooks the many other workers who, I suspect, care little about free candy or a ping-pong table at the office. For them – and me – the great disincentive to returning to the office is the commute.

It loomed larger when I discovered, mid-pandemic, how productive I could be working from home, and even more so when my son, 11, told me that he did not feel he really knew me when I was rushing to and from the train each day. Time, once sacrificed to New Jersey Transit, is the amenity I desire.

> **'Why not think bigger: train cars that offer all-you-can-eat sushi on rotating conveyor belts, or are fitted with Peloton bikes?'**

That is not to say that I wish to abandon the city. On a recent visit, I felt the stimulation of interesting people and adult company, and the casual sensuality of sidewalk life that does not exist in suburbs devoted to child-rearing. I missed it.

I suspect part of the reason we have so allowed our transit infrastructure to decay is that most developers and top executives are not of the commuting class. They may understand the problem at a macro level but will never know the despair of the Port Authority bus terminal.

Fixing the commute is more difficult and expensive than jazzing up an office. Any day now, the Biden administration is expected to approve a long-delayed project to dig train tunnels beneath the Hudson River to New Jersey to ease congestion. The current tunnels are 110 years old and were damaged by flooding from Hurricane Sandy. Meanwhile, some New Yorkers are hoping Governor Andrew Cuomo will survive mounting scandals – if only to see his planned renovation of Penn Station become reality.

These are overdue patches on an overburdened system. But why not think bigger, as my children and I did on a recent evening. How about train cars that offer all-you-can-eat sushi on rotating conveyor belts, or are fitted with Peloton bikes? How about restoring the bar car, but updated by someone like restaurateur Danny Meyer?

It sounds fanciful. But in this era New Yorkers have conjured the ingenuity to build impossibly tall, thin apartment towers on Billionaires' Row, overlooking Central Park, largely to serve as safety deposit boxes for foreign wealth. They built an entire luxury neighbourhood, Hudson Yards, atop a platform spanning rusty train storage.

Soon the work-from-home movement may be crushed or co-opted, as most revolutions are. But for now, commuters have the power to demand change. They should use it. FT

Joshua Chaffin is the FT's New York correspondent joshua.chaffin@ft.com. Simon Kuper is away

ILLUSTRATION BY MITCH BLUNT

INVENTORY DAVID CARTER, CHEF AND RESTAURATEUR

'I like to play with things more than look in books and follow measurements'

David Carter, 36, launched Smokestak as a barbecue street-food outlet in 2013 before opening the Smokestak restaurant in Shoreditch in 2016. He is also co-founder of Manteca, which offers nose-to-tail Italian-style food.

What was your childhood or earliest ambition?
To be a designer or an architect. I'm a very rational thinker. Architecture combines the mathematical with the logical and the creative.
Where did you go to school? Where did you train?
School in Barbados, where I grew up, then Ryerson University in Toronto, where I studied hospitality and tourism. I landed a job at the Four Seasons in LA – it's a five-star hotel and I wanted to be the best. I then joined the Gordon Ramsay group in London; then Roka, part of the Azumi group. Then Smokestak happened.
What was the first dish you learnt to cook?
I think it was roast chicken – a hard dish to beat.
Who was or still is your mentor?
Avi Haksar. He was the food and beverage director at the Four Seasons LA. I came straight from university, I knew absolutely nothing, but I had a lot of graft and he brought out the best in me. When I joined Gordon Ramsay at Claridge's, Yishay Malkov was the restaurant director: a phenomenal manager, incredibly calm, a real leader. They both believed in me more than I believed in myself.
How physically fit are you?
Relatively. I go cycling every morning. I used to party more when I was younger, but you're not as sharp if you're hungover.
Breakfast or dinner: which?
Dinner. There's so much more variety, it's more adventurous. Mornings, I want to get to work and crack on.
Which technique did you struggle to perfect?
I'm a better savoury cook than a pastry chef. It's a personality thing. I like to play with things more than look in books and follow measurements.
Which flavour always pleases you?
I've definitely got a salty palate.
Which flavour can't you abide?
I'm not a big fan of kidney – that metallic, ammonia taste. You also find it in skate that's a few days old.
What equipment could you not do without?
My Fingal Ferguson knife.
What would you like to own that you don't currently possess?
A Thermomix.
What's your biggest extravagance?
I spend my money in restaurants. Dining out is my greatest pleasure.
Do you consider food waste?
It's one of our big things. Nothing ends up in the bin.
What is your guilty food pleasure?
I've got loads! Cadbury Fruit & Nut.
In what place are you happiest?
Barbados. It's a complete other world. Or Cornwall. I love Cornwall.
Who or what makes you laugh?
My little boy. He's two and he's a pure joy to be around.
What ambitions do you still have?
From when I was 16, I wanted my own restaurant. We recently launched our sister restaurant Manteca. I don't want to be Pret, I've always wanted to keep small. But I like to be creative: a new site, a new project, a new concept. So if we find a site that's amazing, we'll go for it.
What is the luckiest aspect of your life so far?
My career has all been about being in the right place at the time. When we launched in 2013, I thought we were miles late to the street-food party – in fact, we were catching the top of the wave. We rode it for three summers and raised enough capital to open our own restaurant.
What has been your greatest kitchen disaster?
I've had a few. We cook our briskets for at least 12 hours – you have to refill the smokers with wood every half an hour. I went to a big festival with another guy. All the big fish in the barbecue world were there and I wanted to impress. The other guy was looking after the smokers overnight. I woke up to find him passed out. I could have killed him.
If your 20-year-old self could see you now, what would he think?
"You've done all right." But 36-year-old me says there's still more to do.
Do you see yourself as an artist?
I'm a generalist. A specialist chef like my Manteca partner Chris Leach is more of an artist.
If you had to rate your satisfaction with your life so far, out of 10, what would you score?
Two. I'm content but never satisfied. I always want to do more. FT

Interview by Hester Lacey. smokestak.co.uk

CAROL SACHS

To make a killing in the world of wine investing you need cutting edge tools.

Yes, of course digital technology and real time trading transparency. But before we put down a line of code we walked miles of vineyard with our growers and producers - working the vines so that we would, quite literally, know a vintage like the back of our hand. This desire to know more and see further is entirely in the restless nature of Bordeaux Index.

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ROBERT SHRIMSLEY
THE NATIONAL CONVERSATION

Alas, poor Boris: first the Bard, then Dom

Boris Johnson is being criticised over claims that he was distracted from his duties in the early weeks of the pandemic because he was rushing to complete his long-overdue biography of Shakespeare.

But soft, what light through yonder window breaks? Valiant Boris is at his laptop. The sun is in the east and his manuscript is now four years late. It's time to get Shakespeare done.

Greetings, gentle reader. In fair Chequers, where we lay our scene, our prime minister, blond of hair and short of readies, is racing amid a pandemic to complete his biography of the Bard, for which light scratching he has been advanced £88,000 of a reputed £500,000 deal.

Our hero curses, bashing furiously at a laptop as he works on both versions of his biography: the Shakespeare-was-a-genius argument and the Shakespeare-was-overrated version. The evidence is with the former but the latter makes for more interesting copy. And yet, remember the subliminal messaging. The story of a great Briton told by a great Briton: how's that for brand association? And let's not forget that our writer is no slouch at the old wordsmithery himself.

The blurb for the book asks "whether the Bard is indeed all he's cracked up to be". A very good question. Could Shakespeare have written *Seventy-Two Virgins*? Well maybe, but not with the same élan as Johnson. Shakespeare would never have thought of that letterbox gag and he would have bombed on *Have I Got News for You*.

But on balance the old Bardolino probably has to be all he was cracked up to be or the brand association might not work. And the brand work is faultless. The PM is creating a little library of books on great Britons. First *The Churchill Factor* and now *Shakespeare: The Riddle of Genius*. Winston may have written *A History of the English-Speaking Peoples* but Johnson will write the history of the greatest English speaker.

ILLUSTRATION BY LUCAS VARELA

The only glitch being that now he has to write the damn thing. And the deadline is tight, but then it always is. And then they scheduled the Brexit referendum for the first copy date and a pandemic for the second one.

He's trying to find a few days to knock out 130,000 words in time for the latest deadline but there are all these Covid cabinet meetings. Mind you, old Shakespeare had to cope with a pandemic too – a point worth making in the book.

Still, yond Cummings has a lean and hungry look. Funny chap, Cummings, he keeps banging on about the Manhattan Project. Apparently, we need a Manhattan Project for testing, a Manhattan Project for science and a Manhattan Project to fix the Downing Street photocopier. Actually, we may need one to finish this book.

"Listen," says Cummings, "this pandemic is really serious as I warned you it would be in my 2019 blog which I'm just re-editing to that effect now." Fair Boris stirs; he senses this might be important, but, dammit, he's got a marriage to arrange and someone is going to have to pay for the wallpaper in the flat. "Look, just lock things down for a few days while I finish the chapter on his love life. I'm seeing some interesting parallels." "Who with?" asks Cummings. "Oh, no one in particular."

And now we see him wrestling with the dilemma. Miss another deadline, maybe have to pay back the money and not burnish his reputation with a library of books on great Britons, all of whom turn out, under his skilful pen, to have a great deal in common with him? Or neglect the pandemic and risk mishandling the nation's gravest post-war crisis? It is not an easy decision. Perhaps he can do neither.

And this Cummings chap worries him. Might he turn? "Dom," he says, "I'm just thinking about my next book. What about Britain's greatest political strategist? Cummings: the one-man Manhattan Project."

"I've already written it," Cummings replies. "I'll be publishing it in a thread of 450,000 tweets. Oh, and by the way, it turns out I really was all I was cracked up to be." FT

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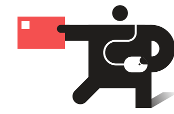
FT Globetrotter has launched a brand-new guide to Singapore, celebrating the joys of the Garden City with expert advice on eating and drinking, exercise, cultural activities and more. We're looking for your best Singapore tips too. Submit them at **ft.com/globetrotter/singapore**



Reply

Michael Hann's "'It's the people, not the football': why fans have missed going to the game" (May 22/23) was a lovely article that catches the essence of being a football fan in a way so distinct from the hyperbolic, money-centric approach that fills much of the media. I've missed very little of note on the pitch at Portman Road over the past season but missed the experience, the pre-match anticipation, the conversations with people in the stands I've kind of known for over a decade but never exchanged names with, heading for the train home after a win and, yes, definitely the pub and the people in there. It'll be good to be back.
SteveM *via FT.com*

@EllinaAstakhova May 21
Robert Wright's 'Life in the shadows' (May 22/23) was a hard read – also affirmation of these individuals' strength of character in the face of injustice, and kindness expressed by those standing up for them.

Re: Simon Kuper's "Why the US is becoming more European" (May 22/23). More and more Americans are realising that the European social model is the best for ordinary people. What good is breakneck economic growth if the profits all go to a small, ever-richer elite? What good is earning money if you don't have the time or energy to enjoy it? What kind of a life is it if you are constantly at risk of losing your job? If becoming ill could bankrupt you?
Claudius Donnelly *via FT.com*

Re: Gillian Tett's column on mask-wearing in New York (May 22/23). People here are very well informed about the subtleties of the current CDC advice, which isn't really that complicated. We are indeed almost all Democrats who adhered to the masking rules; the way to signal our tribal allegiance now is to let a mask dangle around our collars.
NYYankee *via FT.com*

To contribute
Please email magazineletters@ft.com. Include a daytime telephone number and full address (not for publication). Letters may be edited.

Quiz answers The link was *Line of Duty* 1. Hastings 2. *Bent* 3. Mother of God 4. Steve (Ovett and Cram) 5. H Rider Haggard 6. Corbett (Harry and Matthew) 7. *Kiss Me, Kate* 8. Pilkington 9. AC/DC 10. *12 Angry Men* **Picture quiz** Billy Bragg + Joel Garner = Billy Joel

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The ARX has collaborated with leading artists Nadia Forkosh, Gala Mirissa, and MRE to present **MINTED**, the brand's genesis NFT and phygital art collection. To mark its launch, with each purchase of the NFT, **ARX** is offering collectors the chance to opt-in to a free prize draw to win the iconic Defender that is the inspiration for this coveted digital piece.

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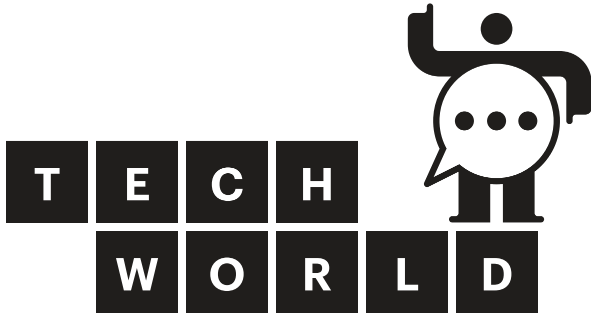

BY YUAN YANG IN BEIJING

When the chips are down, China needs connections

In China, the biggest market for many of the world's smart devices, the global chip shortage has for months been a "chip famine". During the onset of Covid-19 a year ago, Chinese parents with homeschooled children bought up tablets and laptops, causing long waits. Then, as the rest of the world followed suit and factory problems bit, chip demand started far outweighing supply.

As a result, there have been shortages of electric vehicles, washing machines and even toasters. There's bad news for international travellers waiting out Beijing's 21-day quarantine regime too: Nintendo says its Switch gaming consoles could be affected. The founder of Xiaomi, the country's biggest maker of smart home appliances, warned that consumers could be facing higher prices for electronics for as long as two years.

Consumers should, therefore, be relieved that the world's leading chipmaker, Taiwan's TSMC, announced plans last month to expand its production in Nanjing, China, of 28-nanometre chips - the kind that's in short supply. The new lines could take a year to bear fruit and the demand for smart devices using those chips is only going up.

Technology has become a politically sensitive area in China, not least as the country realises that its chip industry needs to develop independent - "de-Americanised", or "de-A" - supply chains in the wake of US sanctions. One naysayer has taken the spotlight in this debate: a nationalist tech analyst with a million Weibo followers and a controversial theory.

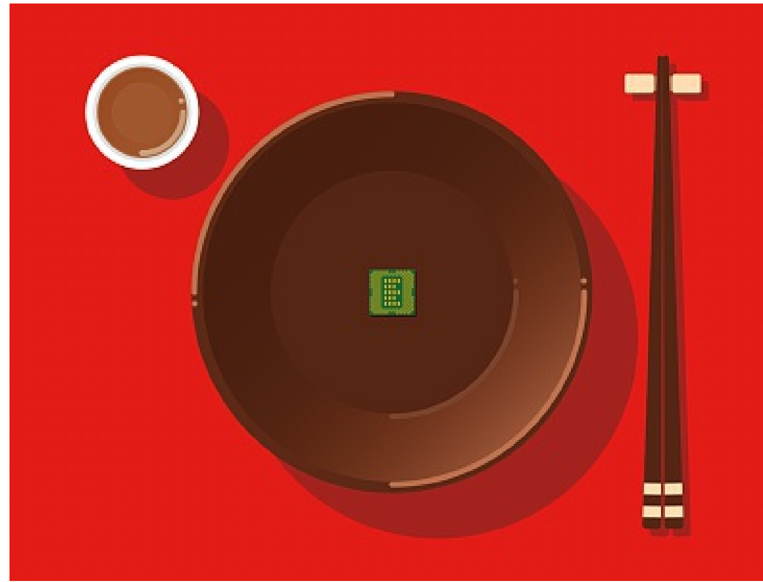

ILLUSTRATION BY PÂTÉ

"The chip shortage is a false proposition," wrote Xiang Ligang, saying that TSMC was using it as an excuse to expand in the mainland and "suck the blood of Chinese firms". (China claims Taiwan as part of its territory and threatens to attack it if Taipei refuses to submit indefinitely.) Xiang's is a classic "infant industry" argument: China needs to develop domestic chipmaking champions. But when experienced foreign foundries such as TSMC expand in China, they're using Chinese land and labour to outcompete domestic companies that need a chance to develop.

The premise that China needs better domestic chipmakers is now widely accepted here. And it is true that the US chokehold on chips has given Chinese people reason to complain that the world's superpower is out to keep their tech sector down. Chips have become a flashpoint for inciting nationalism, and nationalism travels well on Chinese social media. But unlike commentators such as Xiang, China's chip-industry engineers advocate interconnection, not isolation, as a means of achieving independence.

> 'The US chokehold on chips has given Chinese people reason to complain that it is out to keep their tech sector down'

Chinese companies are still far from producing 28nm chips on the same scale as TSMC. As a result, engineers at China's chip foundries generally see its expansion as ultimately a benefit, rather than direct competition.

One mentioned the importance of learning from TSMC. He often came across its staff in industrial exchanges and conferences, where they would share know-how about mature technologies that are no longer commercially important for TSMC but are of great use to Chinese newcomers. Another cited the importance of having high-quality competitors to spur them to do better. And, of course, the best chip engineers hop around: TSMC trained several of China's top chip executives. Overall, China's chip engineers call for cooperation with non-American companies in order to progress towards a de-Americanised industry. No wonder the local government of Nanjing put in a lot of effort to help the expansion, say engineers.

Although state media outlet Xinhua has published an editorial rebutting Xiang's statements, chip engineers worry that nationalistic voices will hurt the industry by cutting off global ties. But since the imposition of US sanctions on Huawei two years ago, they have come to agree on at least one issue: while they may not believe that isolation is the means of achieving it, a previously internationally minded generation of engineers has converged on the goal of de-Americanisation.

The chip industry is globalised, which means it is impossible nowadays for any country to go it alone. Take Qualcomm: the US chip giant licensed its know-how so that Chinese start-ups such as Xiaomi, Oppo and Vivo could make smartphones, which would have been extremely costly to create from scratch. As a result, those brands put internet access in the hands of millions who would not otherwise have afforded it. While we wait for our devices to arrive, it may be worth reflecting on how we came to have them in the first place. FT

Yuan Yang is the FT's deputy Beijing bureau chief

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TIM HARFORD

THE UNDERCOVER ECONOMIST

Normal life, but not as we know it

As more of everyday life returns, we must not forget about the things that quietly, efficiently (perhaps almost without us noticing) offer some of the greatest benefits of all."

Those were the words last week of Lord Sebastian Coe, twice an Olympic gold medallist and current president of World Athletics. Coe was focused on Parkruns, free weekly running events around the UK and indeed the world put on by the Parkrun charity.

Although organised outdoor sports have been legal in England for two months now, Parkruns have not yet been in a position to reopen for adults. But Coe's point holds more broadly: as the widely vaccinated UK continues to open up, there have been some curious discrepancies in what is possible and what is not.

In recent days, for example, I attempted a number of steps towards normality. I went to a library. I went swimming. I went to a book signing. It was great to be out and about, but the overall experience was far from a return to 2019. The book signing was done not at a book festival, but alone in a warehouse in Didcot, after overcoming considerable red tape. The swimming pool, lent out by a local school, had kept changing rooms closed as a precaution. I changed poolside under a towel, which was not a spectacle anyone wanted. The library desk was precious: social distancing means the library can't come close to accommodating all the readers who want to be there.

I welcome these indignities and inconveniences if they help bridge the gap between our tragic winter and a summer of safety and freedom. But there was a striking disparity. While the library, warehouse and pool were in full plague mode, I also visited a bustling London restaurant with colleagues that was so normal as to be disorienting. Had I stepped into a time machine? The only sign that this was 2021 was that the staff wore masks.

So what explains the difference? Critics of economics might offer a simple answer: gross domestic product or GDP, the most common way in which we measure the size of our economy. Restaurants, being a commercial enterprise in which money changes hands, contribute directly to GDP.

The other activities do not. Fully reopening every desk in a library would in principle increase the value of educational services produced, but such a change is unlikely to register in our national accounts. Nor is a book signing, provided free of charge in the hope of drumming up business. And Parkrun is a charity whose financial footprint is minuscule relative to its presence as a national pastime.

In a speech in 1968, presidential hopeful Robert Kennedy pointed to what measures of economic growth leave out: "Too much and for too long, we seemed to have surrendered personal excellence and community values in the mere accumulation of material things. Our gross national product… counts air pollution and cigarette advertising, and ambulances to clear our highways of carnage… Yet the gross national product does not allow for the health of our children… the beauty of our poetry or the strength of our marriages."

Noble sentiments and mostly true. But while Kennedy juxtaposes the loss of "personal excellence and community values" with the fact that GNP does not include "the beauty of our poetry", he stops short of explicitly connecting the two. That is wise. It would be absurd to suggest that the cure for bad poetry and bad marriages is reform of the Office for National Statistics.

It's easy to blame GDP, but this is not about GDP. All over the UK, people are responding to incentives. For a restaurant, reopening is a matter of survival, and (currently modest) Covid-19 risks will be tolerated. In contrast, the local school does not depend on income from amateur swimming clubs; Oxford university's Bodleian Libraries, more than four centuries old, are in no imminent danger if they cannot increase capacity tomorrow. And the local authorities and landowners who provide the land on which Parkruns take place are in no great hurry. If the Office for National Statistics suddenly decided that Parkruns were worth a few billion pounds of GDP, would that alter any of these local decisions? I fail to see how.

Even though some of the best things in life are free, it should hardly be a surprise that people can be cautious when accommodating a voluntary effort while moving mountains when their own jobs are on the line.

Thanks to the UK's successful vaccine rollout, I suspect libraries and swimming clubs and Parkruns will all catch up with restaurants soon. But there is a broader lesson here about the nature of change.

> **'While the library and pool were in full plague mode, I also visited a bustling restaurant that was so normal as to be disorienting'**

Campaigners attack GDP for distorting national priorities. It is indeed an imperfect measure of economic growth and it does not even pretend to be a measure of widespread flourishing. But GDP does not figure as highly in national priorities as people seem to think.

Just think of the UK's three major policy thrusts over the past decade: first austerity, then Brexit, and finally lockdowns. Whatever you think of these policies, none of them ever pretended to be about maximising GDP.

Looking ahead, the next great challenge is climate change. We won't meet it by reformulating GDP. We'll meet it by adopting policies and norms that change the behaviour of businesses, local governments and individuals. Such decisions are not made while poring over national accounts. FT

Tim Harford has been named Wincott Foundation journalist of the year 2020

FRAN MONKS

ILLUSTRATION BY CLAIRE MERCHLINSKY

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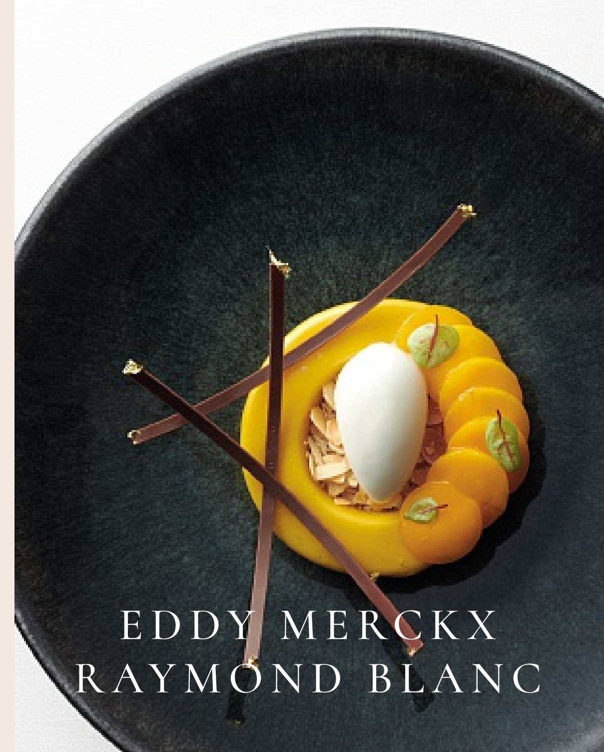

RIDE AND DINE WITH THE GREATEST

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MONSIEUR MICHELIN'S MALAISE

The most influential restaurant guide in the world is accused of elitism and stifling creativity. Not to mention being too French. *Tim Hayward* investigates

ILLUSTRATION BY JACK SACHS

Michelin stars are not just announced. There is, instead, to use the Michelin guide's own marvellously pretentious term, a "revelation". Every year, chefs hold their breath and restaurant critics get out their dip-pens and bile pots, and restaurant-goers look on, a little bewildered. It's hard to find a chef who will say anything bad about the annual awards; it's equally hard to find a restaurant writer or critic, particularly in the UK, who hasn't panned them. One chef who didn't want to be identified pushed back when I asked for her views. "What is it with British journalists? Before about 2000, you guys couldn't get enough of Michelin. Since then, I've never seen anyone do anything but whinge about them."

Michelin, even to its detractors, is the most important and influential restaurant guide on the planet. It's been around since 1900, most of the culinary world regards it as a bible, yet its very existence seems to offend many. I needed to dig a little deeper into what was rubbing so many people up the wrong way.

There are three main accusations levelled at Michelin, which declined to comment for this piece. There is an argument of restriction: that the awards damage restaurants, causing them to narrow their creativity to obtain stars and to stop innovating in order to keep them. There is an argument of mathematical logic: how can a single organisation possibly cover that many restaurants? (This was a particularly tough question in 2021 when most restaurants were actually closed for most of the judging cycle.) And finally, the big one, the cultural attack: that Michelin is too "French" and that its right to pass judgment on the food of other cultures has become questionable.

I spoke to Victor Garvey, chef of SoLa restaurant in London's Soho. He was awarded his first star in the latest "revelation" – after the Financial Times had reviewed his restaurant enthusiastically, I feel proud to disclose – and I was interested to know how it actually happens.

"We didn't know we were up for a star… I got a phone call from Michelin asking if I could attend the virtual ceremony [on January 25] but they didn't say why. It could've been a bib gourmand or a service award or a green star. As far as hoping, I mean… yeah… of course. We are a fine-dining restaurant and it's a huge deal. But it seemed unlikely. I genuinely found out when they announced it live."

Rumours run throughout the industry about what you need to do to please the inspectors. Chefs have told me in all seriousness that cloth hand towels are a deciding factor for the first star. Another chef, admittedly emotional at the time, swore that the absence of those weird little air fresheners in the bathroom that look like sticks of spaghetti in a jar, were the only thing that had screwed his own stellar aspirations. And of course, everyone knows that the thing that marks out a three-star establishment is the little stool they bring out where you can rest your handbag. Every one of these things, though, is a myth.

Michelin, according to its press material, now judges "quality of the ingredients used, mastery of flavour and cooking techniques, the personality of the chef in his [sic] cuisine, value for money and consistency between visits". Five criteria that focus on the food rather than the faffery. Depending on how well the establishment rates, the stars are then awarded on the same scale Michelin has used since 1931; three stars for "exceptional cuisine, worth a special journey", two for "excellent cooking, worth a detour" and one for "a very good restaurant in its category".

And, to clear up one little niggle, no chef wins stars by getting these points right, because chefs don't get stars, the restaurant does. Neither can you hand them back. Stars are an opinion, expressed in a guide, so you can ignore them in your own publicity material but you cannot erase them. The only way to ensure you're not given stars in the next edition is to change your menu or the name of your restaurant.

Chef Elizabeth Haigh was in the kitchens at Pidgin in east London when the restaurant earned its first star; she parted company with it soon after. Her take on the awards is characteristically robust.

"I feel quite indifferent about them at the moment. I know that the recognition from them would mean a lot to people if they got the chance but I remember someone saying to me… that they would never be considered because it's too posh. Food quality and cooking ability has been defined too long by the class system."

Michelin maintains that an inspector visits each restaurant listed in its guides several times and that each restaurant is visited by more than one inspector. This has inspired some critics to do the maths and conclude that the number of potential restaurants covered, the inspectors involved, and the incredible expense of transporting and accommodating them around the world, let alone covering their bills, is impossible for an organisation of Michelin's size.

That is, of course, impossible to verify. As a restaurateur, you can't invite an inspection and it isn't a given that you'll be on Michelin's radar. Garvey certainly had no idea he'd been inspected. "We had a few people in who were asking all the right questions but they could just have been enthusiasts."

When a place gets a new star, we can be sure that inspectors have been in. However, nobody knows if their restaurant was inspected and failed, or if it was inspected before keeping its rating for a further year. Michelin, meanwhile, maintains blanket secrecy over the process, as it probably should. The image of the highly qualified, dispassionate, totally anonymous expert is core to the brand and cannot be open to public scrutiny without destroying the magic.

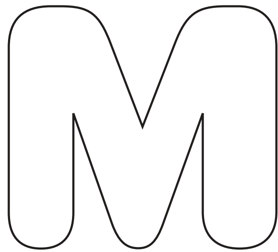
'IT'S HARD TO FIND A CHEF WHO WILL SAY ANYTHING BAD ABOUT THE ANNUAL AWARDS; IT'S EQUALLY HARD TO FIND A CRITIC WHO HASN'T PANNED THEM'

‘AT THE HIGHEST THREE-STAR LEVEL, STARS SEEM MORE ABOUT THE VALUES OF A LUXURY BRAND THAN OF COOKING, FOOD AND JOY’

And as my brutally honest anonymous chef friend put it: “You guys have to write about restaurants to sell papers, but you fancy yourselves as anonymous and expert. Maybe you just don’t like it that there are people out there being paid to be more anonymous and more expert than you.” Ouch.

So what of the accusation that Michelin is a kind of Francophile cultural police? For Garvey, running a proudly American restaurant in London, this is not in question.

“I lived in Tokyo for almost a year, doing stages and apprenticeships, and I can say, hand on heart, that it is the best place to eat on the planet. I’m not surprised it has more stars than New York or London. The Japanese idea of *shokunin* [an obsession with perfecting one particular thing and only that thing] is very in line with what Michelin look for,” he says. “In the past few years, they’ve given out stars in China and South Korea and I’m sure they’ll get around to India at some point. I think the Japanese guides show that there isn’t much cultural bias any more and I think, given enough time, you’ll see as many three-star [awards] in China and Brazil as you do in France and Spain.”



ichelin has expanded to cover a wider scene but many still argue that in doing so it has created a single, homogenous, global pattern. In spite of honouring local ingredients, the food at Michelin restaurants still looks like “Michelin food”. It has matured from the narrow vision of *haute cuisine* but to replace that it has created an idiom – an overarching, wrought and tweezered artistry. In a sense, this is vital to Michelin’s worldview: the strange, very French notion of *gastronomie* as a branch of the *beaux arts* that doesn’t always translate easily to the cuisines of all cultures.

To be fair, most of the one-star restaurants around the world still fit Michelin’s original criteria: “a very good restaurant in its category”. They are affordable by local people and often haven’t had to remodel themselves too much to get their star. Most of the two stars are still “worth a detour”; indeed, many of them have rooms.

Three-star restaurants, though, have, in recent years, evolved into something else. Their prices, locations and impossible waiting lists have put them wildly out of reach for most. Those who can afford them are, often, internationally mobile, “high net worth” individuals, and, in appealing to them, “three-star Michelin” has become an international luxury brand as sure as De Beers, Gulfstream or Ferrari. Affording and being able to organise a booking at a three-star establishment has become a symbol of influence and wealth. Today, you know these restaurants are “worth a special journey” because you can hear visitors landing their helicopters on the pad outside. At this level, the imprimatur is arguably more important than the food; up here, the Michelin brand is becoming more important than the restaurant or the chef.

It is easy to attack Michelin because it won’t engage. It doesn’t really need to justify itself to the media; in fact, it is us who seem to need Michelin more than it needs us. It’s us who like to turn dinner into a competition. We create cooking shows with artificial jeopardy, we lionise our chefs as celebrities with little reference to what they actually cook. It is we, the media, who demand a convenient league system. Yet the critics of Michelin still have one or two very good points.

If you’re a chef-restaurateur, stars can boost your business at the same time as dictating the direction you go in. Being awarded a star can make you rich, while changing your customer base forever. “It’s like the Heisenberg [principle],” says my chef friend, obliquely. “You can’t measure it without fundamentally changing it.”

So does Michelin successfully identify the world’s best restaurants? The value of Michelin probably depends on whether you think food is better considered globally or culture-by-culture. Haigh thinks it is missing something vital. “I wish there was more representation from ethnic minorities and cultures. There’s an incredible number of restaurants that deserve the same attention and recognition as a restaurant… in Mayfair. [In the UK] the fact that we’ve only just celebrated a two-star Chinese restaurant in 2021 is outstandingly poor form, considering how many east and south-east Asian restaurants there are. But it’s a start. It’s up to Michelin if they ever want to move forwards and I hope they will in my generation.”

Is an international standard relevant to anyone except an “international” audience – a literal “jet set”? It’s difficult to avoid the conclusion that when interest in food in restaurants became a worldwide phenomenon and when Michelin followed, the guide could not help creating a set of global standards against which it could judge. It also became comfortably dependent on a type of global travel that’s been called into question by the pandemic, as well as by worries about its sustainability.

On the other hand, it’s impossible to avoid a certain queasiness around some of the meaner judgments that have been expressed by Michelin’s detractors. It feels like there’s a “class thing”, as there inevitably is in Britain. The Michelin brand has succeeded to such an extent that it’s now a very expensive game to play and we on this small island have always had a special way of dealing with privilege that is bought, instead of earned or learnt (or inherited). Critics, and most of their readers in the self-appointed fooderati, have worked hard to attain their experience, their connoisseurship. Michelin isn’t part of that, they argue, if it’s just a club for the moneyed. When you don’t have to be able to “appreciate” starred food, just “afford” it, the response is a collective, defensive sneer.

Yet at the highest three-star level, the standard that defines Michelin as much as Michelin defines it, stars seem more about the values of a luxury brand than of cooking, food and joy; not so much about what is consumed but rather the conspicuousness of consumption. There is undeniably a cohort of the super-rich who like the validation that Michelin provides and will pay for it. And there is the constant danger that Michelin will pursue this and forget more ordinary food lovers. But Michelin can’t die – chefs won’t let it. They need the superleague, even if it does conspire to limit their craft. We, the media, seem to need Michelin too, if only because it’s easier to attach a star score than to explain, in words, why something as simple as a restaurant might deserve an international reputation.

Perhaps though, I should leave the last word to my anonymous truth teller, by now many cocktails into the conversation and warming to her theme. “Truth is, before 2000 a critic going into a three-star could expect to be surrounded by people who looked and sounded just like him (… yes… always “him”) and he could write it up for readers who might conceivably go there. That’s not true any more. It’s not a question of relevance. These days, I reckon you just can’t afford it.” FT

ONCE A PUNNET TIME

Nothing captures the essence of summer like strawberries – and nothing evokes the joy of childhood like strawberry ice cream

By happy coincidence, as I sat down to write this ode to the queen of berries, the first thing I did was wipe strawberry juice off my keyboard. In April, I happened to pick up my first punnet of the year from a local greengrocer – too early, I thought, and unpatriotically Dutch, but they were tempting as forbidden fruit. I bit into one and uttered a joyous expletive. It was unimaginably sweet, fragrant and juicy, better than I remember even at the peak of last summer.

Insatiable demand for these heart-shaped berries means that supermarkets supply them all year round. Being ubiquitous, they can seem humdrum. Indeed, out of season, strawberries are watery, insipid shadows of themselves – I did not deserve to be so richly rewarded for my springtime purchase. But in season, they are divine. Strawberries and cream is synonymous with Wimbledon. The strawberry represents British summer.

My relationship with strawberry gelato was forged on the coast of Ulysses, where the Appian Way runs by the sea on its way south from Rome. My mum grew up there and ate shaved ices, *grattachecca*, on the banks of the Tiber. These treats have ancient ancestry: the Romans gathered ice in winter, stored it in caves insulated with straw and ate it drenched in syrup in summer. Today, you can still find *grattachecca* at riverside kiosks or sold from little handcarts on the beaches of Lazio. Vendors use a hand plane to shave a block of ice, which is then drenched in syrup – almond or sour cherry, coconut or strawberry.

Our family home is in Sperlonga. On one side is Mount Circeo, where the goddess Circe turned Ulysses' men into pigs, on the other, the emperor Tiberius's grotto. It was around here that I first tasted strawberry gelato. It was made by Filippo Fiorelli and I can still recall the clarity of flavour and texture of that first scoop. It tasted somehow more of strawberries than strawberries do – and I remember the insane happiness I felt as a child eating a cone of it in the sunshine by the sea.

Time travel is a particular power of ice creams. Forget botox, antioxidants and regression therapy. If you want to relive your childhood, take a bite of good ice cream – strawberry, if possible. You will smile like a child. FT

WORDS BY JACOB KENEDY
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ALEXANDER COGGIN · STYLING BY LIVIA ABRAHAM

WILD STRAWBERRY SHERBET

You could make this sherbet (dairy sorbet) with any sort of strawberry – or indeed any type of berry – but wild strawberries, *fraises des bois*, are little miracles. Such a heady strawberry aroma makes them much prized; they are the very thing artificial strawberry tries so hard, and fails, to emulate. As a sherbet, this is a tad richer than a sorbet or a tad lighter than an ice cream. And with less milk, there is room for more berries.

Makes about 1 litre or 15 scoops
For real gelato, you need an ice-cream machine

For the sorbet syrup (yields 400ml)
- 125g granulated or caster sugar
- Stabiliser: 1 level tsp locust bean gum powder; or 2 tbs starch (arrowroot or cornflour)
- 225ml water
- 50g glucose (aka dextrose) syrup or powder, or light runny honey

For the wild strawberry sherbet
- 200ml double cream
- 400g wild strawberries (or tame strawberries, or a mixture of both)
- 80g caster sugar

To make the sorbet syrup

1 — In a small bowl, stir the sugar and stabiliser powder together thoroughly.

2 — Put the water and the glucose or runny honey in a saucepan. Heat gently to bring just to the boil.

3 — Pour the contents of the bowl into the saucepan in a steady stream, stirring all the while with a whisk. Bring back to just boiling, then remove from the heat.

4 — Leave the syrup to cool until tepid before using. (It will keep for up to a week in the fridge.)

To make the wild strawberry sherbet

1 — Blend the cream and wild strawberries with the sorbet syrup, then add the sugar.

2 — Churn the mixture in your ice-cream machine until fully firm.

3 — Before serving, put the wild strawberry sherbet in the freezer for half an hour or so to firm up. If it has been stored in the freezer longer and is too firm, allow it to soften in the fridge until scoopable.

Variations
- Try with a different berry – raspberry, mulberry, blackberry or blackcurrant.
- Substitute mascarpone for the double cream.

STRAWBERRY AND PINK PEPPERCORN GELATO

I can't remember when I tried putting strawberries with pink peppercorns, but I do remember I was trying to be clever and had somehow persuaded myself that while strawberries and black pepper was an outdated cliché, my pink peppercorn version was of merit. Well, I shouldn't have knocked black pepper and strawberry until I'd tried the pink. But now I have, so I can.

Word of warning: as the sorbet sits in the freezer, the pink peppercorn taste gets stronger and stronger. If you intend to keep the sorbet for longer than a day or so, start a day ahead and mix the ground pink peppercorns with a little pulped strawberry or orange juice and let the pepper infuse overnight in the fridge, then add this tincture to the sorbet mixture to taste.

This recipe, if you omit the pink pepper, is how I make strawberry sorbet – but in truth, once we went pink at Gelupo, we never looked back.

Makes about 1 litre or 15 scoops

For the sorbet syrup (yields 400ml)

- 125g granulated or caster sugar
- Stabiliser: 1 level tsp locust bean gum powder; or 2 tbs starch (arrowroot or cornflour)
- 225ml water
- 50g glucose (aka dextrose) syrup or powder, or light runny honey

For the strawberry and pink peppercorn gelato

- 600g ripe strawberries, hulled (defrosted frozen strawberries are fine too)
- 60g caster sugar
- 2 tsp pink peppercorns, finely ground (infuse them overnight in a little strawberry pulp or orange juice to stabilise the flavour strength, if you like)

To make the sorbet syrup

1 — In a small bowl, stir the sugar and stabiliser powder together thoroughly.

2 — Put the water and the glucose or runny honey in a saucepan. Heat gently to bring just to the boil.

3 — Pour the contents of the bowl into the saucepan in a steady stream, stirring all the while with a whisk. Bring back to just boiling, then remove from the heat.

4 — Leave to cool until tepid before using. (It will keep for up to a week in the fridge.)

To make the strawberry and pink peppercorn gelato

1 — Blend the strawberries finely with the sugar and sorbet syrup. You can strain out the seeds, if you like (I prefer not to). Add the ground pink peppercorns to taste.

2 — Churn the mixture in your ice-cream machine until fully firm.

3 — Before serving, put the strawberry and pink peppercorn gelato in the freezer for half an hour or so to firm up. If it has been stored in the freezer longer and is too firm, allow it to soften in the fridge until scoopable.

Variation

Omit the peppercorns for strawberry sorbet.

STRAWBERRY SHORTCAKE SEMIFREDDO

Gelupo is an Italian gelateria in London, and for the most part we make uncompromisingly Italian ices – but sometimes we also make Italian ices with a bit of an English twist. This parfait, studded with chunks of strawberries and shortbread, goes a step further: to my mind it's an unabashedly British confection that's simply been made in the manner of an Italian dessert. It's a marvel to serve in springtime.

Serves 12–14

- 3 eggs, separated
- 240g caster sugar
- 90ml Chambord liqueur
- 700g ripe strawberries, hulled
- 60g glucose (aka dextrose) syrup or powder, or light runny honey
- 250g mascarpone
- 200g shortbread biscuits, broken into 1–2cm chunks

1 — Line a 900g loaf tin, 2l terrine mould or 22–24cm cake tin with baking parchment or cling film.

2 — Mix the egg whites with half the sugar in a small saucepan and place over a gentle heat.

3 — Warm the egg whites, whisking all the while, until just steaming hot (70C) and slightly thickened.

4 — Transfer the mixture to a stand mixer and whisk on high speed until you have a completely cool meringue that holds stiff peaks.

5 — Prepare a container of iced water – your mixing bowl should be able to sit on the rim with its base submerged in the water.

6 — Make a zabaione: in a large bowl, mix the egg yolks with the remaining sugar and one tablespoon of the Chambord. Set the bowl over a pan of simmering water and whisk until very thick and lustrous.

7 — Remove the bowl from the pan and sit it in the container of iced water. Whisk until the mixture is completely chilled.

8 — Chop about 100g of the strawberries into smallish chunks and set aside.

9 — Purée the remaining strawberries with the remaining Chambord and the glucose or honey.

10 — Put the mascarpone in a bowl. Slowly at first (to avoid lumps), gradually beat in the strawberry purée.

11 — Fold the zabaione into the meringue, then fold this into the strawberry mixture, then pour the lot into the prepared tin or terrine mould.

12 — Sprinkle over the broken-up shortbread and the reserved chopped strawberry pieces, then tap the tin or mould gently on the work surface so that they sink in.

13 — Cover and freeze for at least four hours, until the semifreddo is pretty solid.

14 — If fully frozen, partly thaw in the fridge before serving – it should be just soft enough to slice (but not too soft or the chunks of biscuit might make it hard to cut neatly).

Recipes extracted from 'Gelupo Gelato: A Delectable Palette of Ice Cream Recipes' by Jacob Kenedy, published by Bloomsbury

SUMMER FOOD & DRINK SPECIAL

GOLDEN

Five years ago, Patrick Tallec decided to abandon a TV career, move back to his native Brittany and concentrate on his passion: nurturing ancient apple varieties. Today, his extraordinary orchard crafts an exceptional cider

**WORDS BY
WENDELL STEAVENSON**

**PHOTOGRAPHY BY
PAUL ROUSTEAU**

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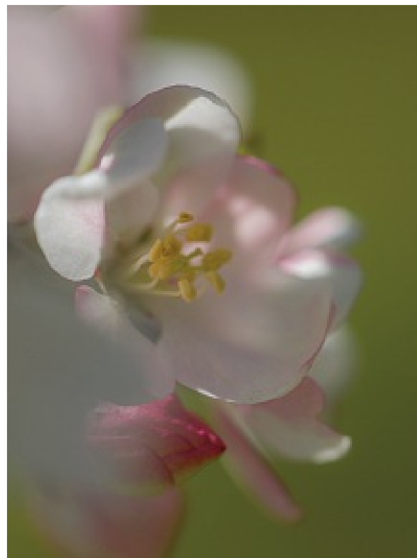


Clockwise from top left: Patrick Tallec in his orchard; organic apples (not Tallec's); checking the pollination on a C'Huero Bris apple tree; grafting an ancient variety called July; blossom on a Prat-Yeod tree

Previous pages: one of Tallec's orange-coloured ciders; alfresco bottles (from left) – a Jeanne Renard cider; a cider made from 50 varieties of apple; a natural wine made from barley

If "apples" was an idiom for a certain kind of crazy, the way "nuts" or "bananas" are, Patrick Tallec would be "apples". Five years ago, in his mid-forties, he gave up a career in TV production and bought a farmhouse near where he grew up in Brittany, with four hectares of meadow sloping down to a trout stream. There he began to establish an orchard of forgotten varieties of apples and set up a cider press in an outbuilding. It was a childhood dream that had become an almost obsessive passion. Having taught himself cider making from books and apprenticeships in his holidays, Tallec's Ar Marc'h Glaz cider ("the blue horse" in Breton) is now being solicited by Michelin-starred chefs and TV food programmes showcasing the best produce in France.

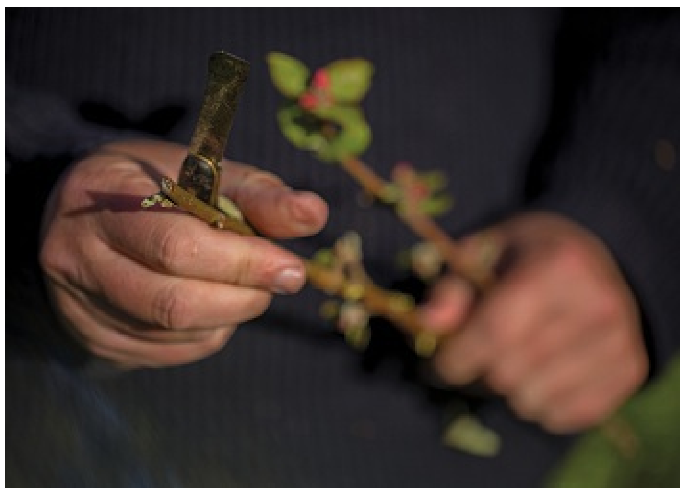
Tallec's story is an example of how farmers and artisans are rediscovering old varietals and using traditional methods as a base for innovation, forging a new movement in agriculture and food production. Along the way, pioneers such as Tallec are also showing how food can reconnect us to lost histories and cultures. His cider is delicious: orange-amber coloured; thickly apple-rich; wet leaves and windfalls, dry velvet on the roof of my mouth. "There must be a balance of sugar and acidity in my cider, but also in our work and our life," Tallec told me. "This is the vertebral column that runs through everything I do."

The apples we know are the love child of the wild apples of the Tian Shan mountains in China and the small, hard, bitter European crab apple. A hardy traveller, domesticated five or six thousand years ago and carried along the silk route, the apple became popular because it was useful; a fruit that could be stored through the winter, fermented into alcohol and vinegar or fed to pigs. Apples are grown all over the world, and in Europe, and places that Europeans colonised, they became a mainstay, part of the landscape, selectively bred through generations for eating or baking or brewing.

Apples, Tallec said, are like people: two parent apple trees produce an offspring that is a genetic individual. Every pip can grow up to be a new variety. In order to propagate a single variety, trees must be grafted, essentially cloned. Through the 19th century, new apple varieties were either bred by enthusiasts (Cox's Orange Pippin, bred by George Cox) or were chance discoveries (Granny Smith, named after Maria Ann Smith, who found green crunchy apples growing in her garden in Australia in the 1860s).

In the 20th century, the globalisation and industrialisation of the food supply chain created a standardisation of produce; apples were often bred not only for taste but for appearance, ease of harvesting or their ability to withstand transportation. Red Delicious, with its shiny scarlet skin and its perfect apple-shouldered silhouette, was America's most-grown variety from 1968 until 2018 despite being tasteless and mealy. Popular modern varieties such as Jazz and Pink Lady were developed to have the perfect balance of crisp and sweet and tart – "they are very good, but they all taste the same" Tallec lamented – and are trademarked and grown in different countries under licensing agreements, much like a fast-food franchise.

'THERE MUST BE A BALANCE OF SUGAR AND ACIDITY IN MY CIDER, BUT ALSO IN WORK AND LIFE. THAT RUNS THROUGH EVERYTHING I DO'



Local apple varieties with woolly flesh or a sour flavour were abandoned. Across 300 years, American farmers bred more than 15,000 different apples; 80 per cent have fallen out of use over the past century. In the UK, 90 per cent of traditional orchards have gone since the second world war (although some have been replaced with modern varieties of apple trees). In Brittany alone, there were an estimated 5,000 varieties before the first world war, of which about half are no longer grown.

As a young boy in the 1970s, Tallec remembers coming back from school one day to see that the orchard across the road from his home had been razed to make way for a housing development. At the time, the French government was subsidising farmers to grub up their apple trees, encouraging a more efficient and specialised agriculture. Small family farms disappeared into large fields of monoculture. For centuries, Brittany had been a poor region, far from Paris; unindustrialised and dirt-floor rural. Cider was the everyday drink; farm workers used to be contractually entitled to a litre of cider a day. While the new intensive agriculture brought welcome prosperity, cider, rough and rustic, fell out of favour and was relegated to a tourist novelty served in seaside crêperies. Even Tallec's grandfather chopped down his apple trees.

'EVERY TIME I SAVE A VARIETY, I AM STRUGGLING AGAINST THE ABSENCE, THIS TERRIBLE FEELING OF SEEING A LAND WITHOUT TREES'

Gabe Cook, Britain's foremost "ciderologist", who has a book and a podcast under that title, told me that it was probably the Normans who taught the English cider making; but then again, he asserted, it was the English who invented the champenoise method to make cider (adding a little sugar to promote a little fizz) decades before Dom Pérignon made his first champagne in the 16th century. Much modern cider is industrially produced, often from apple-juice concentrate with added yeast and sugar to speed and control fermentation; then it is pasteurised to stabilise the brew, filtered for clarity and carbonated. British and French cider have the same root, but in recent times English cider has been brewed to be as crisp and refreshing as lager - essentially "a beerification of cider", Cook said, "lighter, fresher, leaner, an easier drink for the mainstream". French cider tends to retain more of the original sweetness of the fruit.

"I want to build a cider that is a cathedral of taste," Tallec said. "So big and grand that when people drink it they will say, 'Wow.'" In spring, when the trees are flowering, Tallec drives around the countryside, looking out for apple blossom in villages and gardens and fields. "Most people have no idea what they have," he said. "They will say, 'Oh, I don't know why my grandfather planted them.'"

In the autumn he goes back and (with permission) picks a few apples, tastes them, tries to identify them and will often take a branch to graft on to his root stock. "Every time I plant a tree in the ground and I save a variety, I am struggling against the absence, this terrible feeling of seeing a land without trees." He now has more than 260 different varieties of apples growing to experiment with. ▶

‘THERE ARE SOME APPLES THAT TASTE OF NOTHING, BUT WHEN YOU FERMENT THEM INTO CIDER THEY PRODUCE A WONDERFUL FIZZ’

◀ Tallec discovered that, from the Romans to the Middle Ages through to the 19th century, right up until modern industrial processes were applied to brewing, all the difficulties of preservation, of fermentation control, of clarity and taste had been figured out by generations of cider makers before him. “I learnt a lot about ciders from Pliny – how to use seawater in ciders, for example.” (The salt acts as a preservative and helps to clarify the cider.) “I am not inventing anything new. I feel I am part of a continuum.”

As apple varieties have been lost, so too has the knowledge and experience of how to weather floods and famines, apple blights and sour ferments. We will need, Tallec said, the genetic diversity of many apple varieties to adapt to the challenges of climate change and an agriculture that is less chemical dependent.

In the UK and the US, there is a bubbling craft cider movement, much like the craft beer movement, increasingly interested in playing with different apple varieties; fermenting, as Tallec does, using only the natural yeasts present on the apple skins; brewing from single varieties; relearning the art of blending. In France, the trend has yet to catch on (in part because a tradition of small artisanal cider makers has remained.) Farmers and locals often ask Tallec why he is growing all those old apples *de merde*.

Different apples, he explained, have different tastes, and also different properties. “People think an apple tastes bad,” he said, “that it is too mealy or fluffy or woolly, it doesn’t crunch when you bite into it, or it tastes faded or bland or too sweet or too sharp. There are some apples that taste of nothing, but when you ferment them into cider they produce a wonderful fizz.” Some apples store well, some mature over time, some bake to make creamy compotes, some distil into excellent hardcore hooch called Calvados in Normandy, Lambig in Brittany.

Once, for example, Tallec found a tree with apples that were as farinaceous and bitter as chestnuts. He tried to brew cider from them, but even after three months it was horrid and undrinkable. He kept it in the corner, another failed experiment. But when he tasted it again, after two more months, it was transformed, “as sweet as caramel. I bottled it and now I sell a lot of it as a single variety, Jeanne Renard. It was a good lesson.”

In Tallec’s kitchen, we tasted different apples and shooed away errant chickens. A small yellow apple was lemony with a bright edge of mint. “It’s Douce Melen, a typical Breton cider apple used to add sweetness and volume.” Acidity, he explained, lengthens a cider’s taste. He pointed to the interior flesh of one of the apples, already turning brownish – a sign of heavy tannins. “Quick oxidation and tannins are super-good for aging the cider. Modern apples don’t brown so quickly because people don’t want this characteristic.”

Identifying apples is tricky. Tallec pointed out their differentiating characteristics – the contour of an apple’s shoulders, its colour, whether it was streaked with yellow or red and blushed with pink; rougher “rust” patches, the length of the stem (modern varieties are developed to ripen on the tree, with longer and

stronger stems); the architecture of the indented calyx on the bottom; the shape of the "heart", which is the interior membrane around the seed casing. Most of the time, Tallec admitted, he has no idea what apple he is looking at.

He takes these unknown apples to a friend, Jean-Pierre Roullaud, a fellow autodidact apple expert and founder of Arborépom, one of many amateur associations in France dedicated to conserving old varieties. (There are several in the UK too, including the Orchard Project; in the US, apple conservators are known affectionately as apple detectives.) Roullaud is a pretty excellent cider maker himself, but I had a sense that, for him, rediscovering apples was less about taste than about the stories and histories that the apples describe.

"For example, there is a variety called La Galleuse," Roullaud told me, "that is always found in the gardens of former vicarages or near to churches. There are peasant apples and bourgeois apples and aristocratic apples. You will often find certain varieties in the ground of a château that you do not find elsewhere in the village – the peasants wouldn't have dared to grow the same varieties as the gentry."

This year the Hereford Cider Museum (the world's largest cider museum), together with Brightspace Foundation and the National Trust in Herefordshire, is curating an online exhibition, "Apples and People", telling apple stories, from Eve to Snow White, to wassailing and Cézanne and how the apple has now returned to China – enjoyed, ironically, as an exotic import. As David Marshall of the Hereford Cider Museum told me, "There is absolutely a local and cultural connection with apples, history and people and places. They evoke memories, they are part of the embedded history."

Roullaud has found an apple called the Belle de Kerdrezec, descended from a graft brought back from the Crimea in the backpack of a French soldier. Once, he identified a variety called Catshead. "And I said to the lady [who brought it to him], 'You must live between Crozon and Morgat [on a far west peninsula of Brittany].' She was astonished. I was able to tell her that this English variety had been planted by the Peugeot family who settled in that area after the first [world] war."

Roullaud poured us some of his cider, made from a blend of apples grown in a conservancy orchard he first planted 20 years ago. It was four years old, dark marmalade coloured and delicious in the way that complex wine can be. I drank it slowly. Flavour is complexity. Complexity is diversity. And diversity, we are beginning to understand, in our food supply chains and our diets, is resilience.

"People remember the taste of an apple from childhood, an apple that grew in their grandfather's farm or that they used to steal from the neighbours. I call it the *pomme memoire*," said Roullaud. "It's a connection with childhood, with the land, with family and history, to a time lost." FT

Wendell Steavenson writes about food and other things

'I LEARNT A LOT FROM PLINY – HOW TO USE SEAWATER, FOR EXAMPLE. I'M NOT INVENTING ANYTHING NEW. I'M PART OF A CONTINUUM'

Clockwise from left: a view of Tallec's Breton farmhouse and garden; bottles of his cider on a window sill; inspecting young shoots

BITTERSWEET SYMPHONIES

The Italians claim it takes three tries to like Campari.
Alice Lascelles explores the liqueur's legacy of extreme tastes

PHOTOGRAPHY BY THOMAS ALBDORF • SET DESIGN BY TINA HAUSMANN • MIXOLOGY BY REINHARD POHOREC

'ALL OF THE CAMPARI CLASSICS CAN BE THROWN TOGETHER BY EYE AND SERVED IN ANY OLD GLASS'

Everyone remembers their first Campari. Whether they remember it fondly or not is another matter. Sweet as cough medicine and bitter as a malaria pill, it is invariably a shock to the system. I had my first taste of this crimson aperitif at university, in the study of a tutor who took great pleasure in serving us face-puckering Campari sodas while skewering our translations of Flaubert. It sounds quite civilised, doesn't it? It was pure pain at the time – the drinks and the academic exercise designed as a humiliating test.

I never quite got over the trauma of translating *Madame Bovary*. But I did come round to Campari. The Italians, after all, say it takes three tries to like Campari. The drink that did it for me was a Campari and grapefruit. Pressed into my hand by a flatmate one hot summer evening (along with, I suspect, a lit Gitanes cigarette), it was a lightning strike to my tastebuds – and ignited a craving in me for bittersweet drinks that has raged ever since.

Campari was invented in 1860 by Gaspare Campari, in the city of Novara, west of Milan. Its recipe has always been a closely guarded secret but it is said to contain more than 60 different herbs, fruits and spices, with notes of orange (chinotto or blood orange) and a quinine-like bitterness to the fore. To balance the bitterness and give it body, the

recipe also contains lots of sugar – so much, in fact, it qualifies as a liqueur. That's why it goes so well with salty things: crisps, salami, olives (it's not unusual for spritzes in Italy to come with a fat, green olive actually in the drink).

Campari used to be coloured with carmine, a natural red dye made from the crushed shells of cochineal insects. But these days it is 100 per cent insect-free.

It isn't the only Italian bitter on the market, of course – there are lots of others like it. But, to my mind, it's a formula that has never been bettered, a riot of tastes at their most extreme.

I love Campari for the taste and I also love the ritual that surrounds it. Because, as anyone who's ever spent a summer evening in Milan will know, Campari is inextricably linked with the *aperitivo* hour – that magical, liminal moment between work and dinner when the *terrazze* of northern Italy fill up with people drinking and gossiping and table-hopping, when the woes of real life are put aside and the warm air crackles with possibility.

Campari is a drink of anticipation – not just socially, but gastronomically too; the bitter herbs and roots are designed to kick-start the digestion in preparation for food. The word

WATERMELON NEGRONI

by Monica Berg, Tayer + Elementary

The recipe below serves one but it's easier if you make a big batch (and you'd be well advised to as it's a crowd-pleaser).

- 1 handful of peeled, deseeded watermelon chunks
- 25ml gin
- 25ml red vermouth
- 25ml Campari

Put the watermelon chunks in a jug or Kilner jar, pour over the alcohol and leave to steep for two to three hours. Strain off the liquid and either serve over ice, like a traditional Negroni, or bottle and seal for future use. Stored in the fridge, it should keep for a couple of days.

CAMPARI & GRAPEFRUIT

by Alice Lascelles

Sometimes the simplest recipes are the best. You don't have to shake this drink, but it will have much more pizzazz if you do.

- 50ml Campari
- 100ml pink or golden grapefruit juice
- Pinch of salt

Shake and strain into a juice glass over ice.

NEGRONI SBAGLIATO

Literally a "bungled Negroni", this recipe was reputedly invented at the Bar Basso in Milan when a bartender mistook the prosecco for gin.

- 25ml Campari
- 25ml red vermouth
- 50ml prosecco

Build over ice in a rocks or goblet, stir and garnish with an orange wheel.

THE BIG EASY

by Brian Silva, Rules

Lighter than a Boulevardier but darker than a Negroni – this cocktail is proof that Campari can go very well with brown spirits.

- 45ml bourbon
- 15ml Campari
- 15ml Cocchi Americano

Stir in an ice-filled rocks glass and garnish with flips of citrus.

RED & GREEN MARGARITA

by Alice Lascelles

The green/citrus notes of tequila go really well with Campari, which also has herbal notes.

- 50ml blanco or reposado tequila
- 25ml lime juice
- 20ml triple sec
- 10ml Campari

Shake with ice, strain into a coupe and garnish with a lime wheel.

aperitivo, which comes from the Latin for "to open", *aperire*, tells us as much. It is a liquid curtain-raiser.

Campari can be brutal on the tastebuds. Yet as a cocktail ingredient, it's very forgiving. All of the Campari classics – the Americano, the Negroni, the Spritz, the Campari soda – can be thrown together by eye and served in any old glass. Campari plays nice with white wine, sparkling wine and white spirits, and a surprising number of dark spirits too. And counterintuitively, the more you mix it with other massively over-complicated botanical beverages – vermouth, cocktail bitters, gin – the better it seems to get. The Negroni is a case in point.

"Just 5ml [a teaspoon] of Campari can completely transform a drink – that little touch of bitterness, it lifts it, changes it," says Brian Silva, bartender at London's oldest restaurant, Rules, and a longtime champion of the *aperitivo*. "I always say to people who find the taste too strong, try using it more like cocktail bitters, or add a splash to a G&T, and see what a difference it makes. It opens up a whole new realm of possibilities."

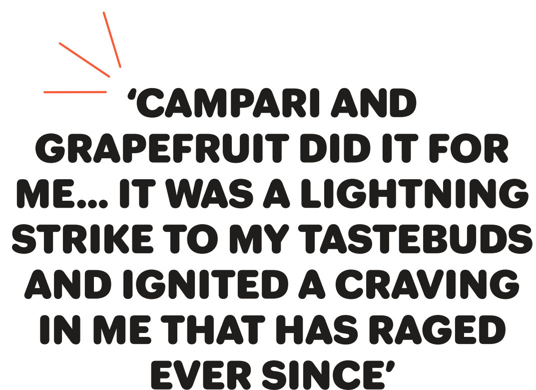
Even those who can't stand the taste of Campari often have a grudging appreciation for its artistic legacy. The brand's advertising back catalogue bristles with work by big names from 20th-century art and design: art nouveau illustrator Marcello Dudovich, pioneering ad designer Leonetto Cappiello, graphic artist Marcello Nizzoli, film-maker Federico Fellini.

It was the Futurists, though, who did the most to define Campari's visual identity. Fortunato Depero immortalised the Campari Seltz ritual so many times during the 1920s and early 1930s it almost became a Futurist meme – the blast of the soda siphon, the strident colours, the strong tastes, capturing the dynamism and even violence of this explosive cultural movement. Depero was also responsible for the design of the cuneate Campari soda bottle, which made its debut in 1932.

Campari is glamorous, it's flamboyant, at times a bit silly. Yet it remains peculiarly anti-snob. You don't get luxury versions of Campari or extra-aged varieties. The Campari served in the world's top cocktail joints is the same as that served in the dog-eared village bar (give or take a few per cent abv, depending on which country you're in). It is a brand without hierarchy, an expression of a culture where good food and drink is regarded as an inviolable human right regardless of wealth or status.

And that is an idea that speaks to me – whatever language it's in. FT

Alice Lascelles is an FT contributing editor and writes the drinks column for How To Spend It magazine. Instagram: @alicelascelles



'CAMPARI AND GRAPEFRUIT DID IT FOR ME… IT WAS A LIGHTNING STRIKE TO MY TASTEBUDS AND IGNITED A CRAVING IN ME THAT HAS RAGED EVER SINCE'

CAMPARI ALTERNATIVES

There will only ever be one Campari. But thanks to a new generation of distillers, there are now some exciting twists on the formula.

Bruto Americano
St George Distillery, California
This Californian aperitif takes the Campari bitterness to an extreme – and splendidly so. Locally grown botanicals in the mix include California-grown Seville oranges, balsam fir and woody buckthorn bark.

Sacred Rosehip Cup
Sacred Spirits Company, London
This British answer to Campari is made with English rhubarb and rosehips, and coloured with red grape skins. Mix it with Sacred gin and spiced vermouth for a capital Negroni.

Bitter Fusetti, ***Milan***
This newcomer from Italy layers up classic Campari zestiness with richer notes of caramelised rhubarb and woodsmoke – if you like Cynar, this will be right up your street.

Lyre's Italian Orange, *UK*
A non-alcoholic riposte to Campari that's amazingly close to the mark. Drinks with soda, tonic or juice.

Recipe 01 - Halo Halo

2 FILIPINO DISHES THAT TASTE OF SUMMER. FROM FATBOY ZINE

Nearby farmland

Trees from the local field

Sky view from our old home

Recipe 02 - Chicken Inasal

Ponds close by

Fishponds I'd walk past

A self-described "greedy attempt" to document identity through food yields recipes for unforgettable dishes.

Art direction, page design and words by Chris O'Leary. Photographs by Emily Leonard

Truth be told, I'm indifferent to the seasonal rhythms of cooking. It's not uncommon for me to suggest going for ramen in 36C heat or having a barbecue in December. Perhaps moving around so often when I was younger has played a part in that.

But contributing to this special issue has made me interrogate my connection with summer. For me, it's the flavours I relive every year – the fats, sours and tangs owned exclusively by summer's warm haze. Nostalgia is a thread between it all.

I grew up in a Filipino-British household and for two years I lived in the city of Dagupan in the Philippines. North of the Manila metropolis and south of mountainous Baguio city, Dagupan sits quietly by the sea. For two lucky summers, I swam, cooked and ran free on its beaches.

When I cook in summer, part of me is cooking under the influence of that intense heat; I want to bring myself closer to those brief, raw moments of my past. These recipes represent that life, recreated as best as I can in my London flat. Take them and create a new summer feeling, one that hopefully you'll be chasing next year and the year after that.

I chose these two dishes because I hope they show some of the variety of Filipino food. I see this food culture as one that expresses itself loudly and in all directions. The mixing of sours, sweets, citrus and earthy tones makes for complicated tastes that never take themselves too seriously.

FatBoy Zine is available from Antenne Books (AntenneBooks.com). Instagram – @fatboyzine and @emilyrleonard

London-based art director Chris O'Leary

Halo Halo

HALO HALO MEANS "MIX MIX". TO ME, IT'S SUMMER IN A CUP: SWEET, FRESH AND ICY. IT'S NOT PRECIOUS WITH ITS FLAVOURS OR COMPOSITION, MAKING IT ADAPTABLE DEPENDING ON YOUR PALATE

INGREDIENTS

- 2 handfuls tapioca pearls (for this recipe I've used small rose-flavoured pearls)
- 1 grapefruit
- 1 kiwi
- 1 mango
- 1 handful nata de coco (or coconut gel available at most east Asian or Filipino stores)
- 2 tbs condensed milk
- Crushed ice
- Ice cream of your choice (I've chosen ube, purple yam, a popular flavour in the Philippines)

RECIPE

First, place the tapioca pearls in a pan, add enough water to cover and boil – this process takes a long time depending on the size of the pearls (large ones have taken up to three to four hours, while small ones take about an hour). You'll need to keep an eye on the water level and ensure it's topped up.

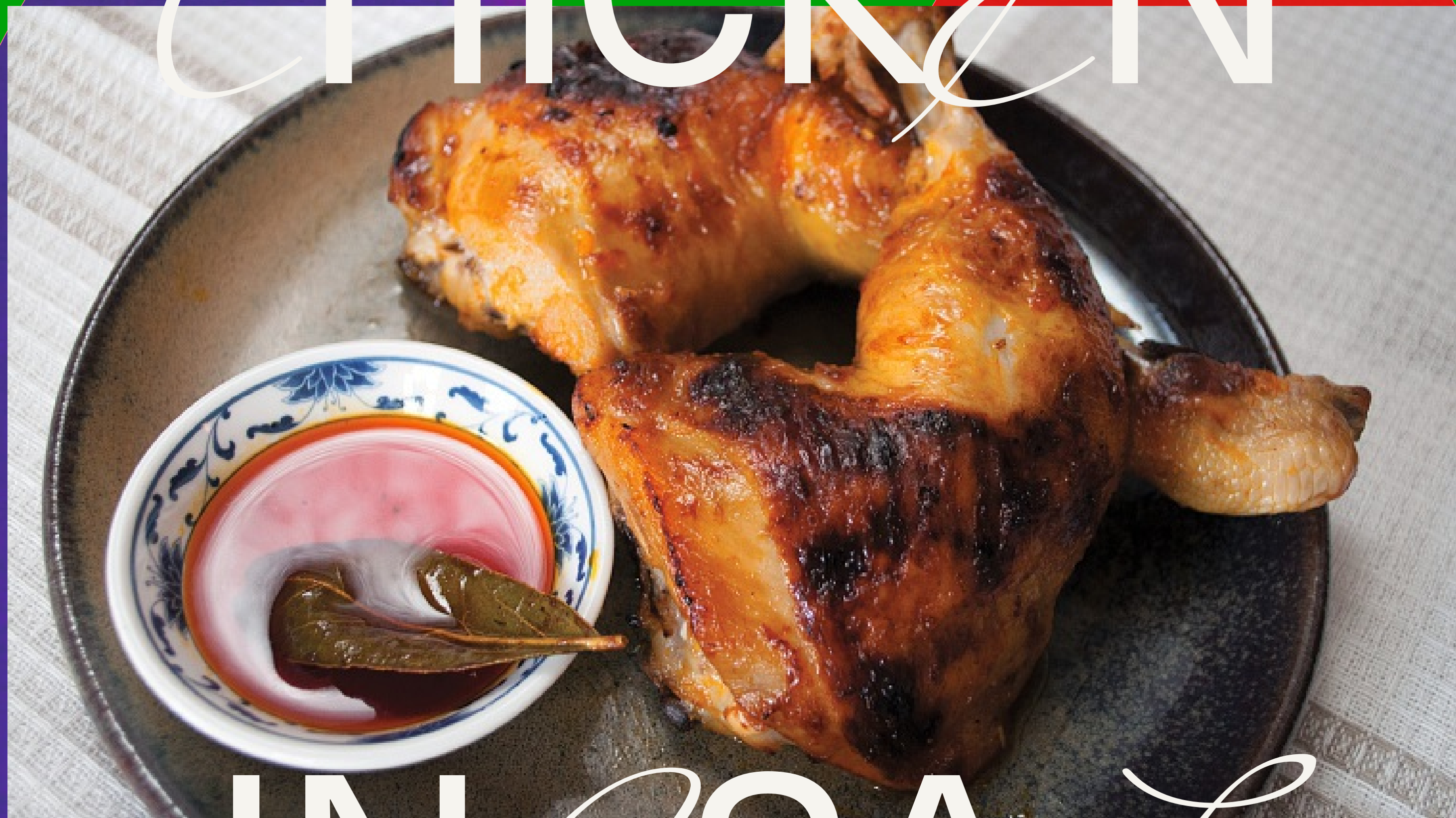
Peel the grapefruit, kiwi and mango, then slice into your chosen shape – I prefer cubes. Set all fruit aside in the fridge until the pearls are finished cooking.

Once the pearls are cooked, drain and set aside. Stir them occasionally in cold water to keep them from sticking.

Take your cup or bowl and start layering the ingredients. I usually start with the pearls and nata de coco on the bottom, followed by ice, fruit, condensed milk and ice cream on top.

Enjoy in the sun.

CHICKEN INASAL



FILIPINO FOOD HAS SO MANY **INCREDIBLE** *DISHES, BUT THIS ONE IS SPECIAL. IT MARRIES* **SOUR,** *TANGY AND SWEET* **FLAVOURS** *WITH AN* **AMAZING** *CHARRED TASTE THAT IS* **DIFFICULT TO PUT INTO WORDS**

MARINADE INGREDIENTS

- 2 chicken legs
- 1 lemongrass stalk
- 6 cloves of garlic
- 4 tbs ginger, minced
- 1 cup cane vinegar (Filipino brands like Datu Puti will work best, but I've also made this dish with rice vinegar)
- ½ cup 7UP or Sprite
- 2 lemons (if you have access to calamansi, a citrus fruit, use six of these instead)

SAUCE INGREDIENTS

- ½ cup chicken fat (alternatively use vegetable oil)
- 2 tbs annatto seeds
- 1 clove garlic
- 3 bay leaves

RECIPE

Find a container large enough to marinate the chicken in.

Finely mince the lemongrass, garlic and ginger. Combine in the container with the vinegar, 7UP and lemon juice.

Add your chicken legs and be sure to coat them as much as possible so that there are no dry spots. Leave ideally overnight, though two to four hours is also fine.

Once you're ready to cook, preheat your oven on grill to 200C.

Remove the chicken from its marinade and discard the mixture. Be sure to shake off any excess. Place it on a clean surface and dab dry with a paper towel to remove any moisture. Leave it on the side to air dry. While the chicken dries, prepare the basting oil. In a small pan, heat the fat carefully on a medium heat. Once it starts to heat up, add in your aromatics.

After five to 10 minutes, or once the fat takes on the rich red colour of the annatto seeds, remove and set aside.

Coat the chicken with the oil and place under the grill. Continue to baste every 10 minutes.

Grill the chicken for 25-35 minutes depending on its size. You want the skin to char slightly.

Serve and enjoy.

SOME LIKE IT HOTTER

From chargrilled squid with tamarind relish to sardines stuffed with raisins and curry-leaf crumbs... add some spice to your seafood and fire up summer

WORDS BY RAVINDER BHOGAL
PHOTOGRAPHS BY AARON GRAUBART

Malindi, a coastal town in Kenya, is the sleepier little sister of Mombasa. In the 1980s, a wave of Italians, lured by its laid-back charm and golden beaches, settled here and brought with them their aptitude for *dolce far niente*, sweet idleness. In 2019, my husband and I snuck in a blissful few weeks of winter sun.

Time in Malindi oozes like spilled honey and the daily scorch, which morphs into spectacular thunderstorms at night, creates a lull. The iridescent curve of the Indian Ocean commands a gentle pace from even the most incorrigible multitaskers, like me. There is little to do except anticipate the uncluttered hours ahead and drowsily contemplate lunch.

I spent mornings sprawled on a lounger, peering over my paperback at beachgoers oblivious to my voyeurism. There, in a prime spot, the American yogi preened herself; a portly Italian septuagenarian, who carried his large, rounded belly with the ease of a beach ball, waddled along the shore; and, in the distance, a young couple, burdened with every inflatable toy imaginable, tried to keep their squealing infant from running into the sea. But it was the fisherman, with his wares spread out on a folding table, who I found completely mesmerising.

Nestled in a sagging canvas chair, surrounded by mewling cats, he exchanged friendly greetings with passers-by while swatting flies off his meticulous display; baskets of gleaming *tafi* – a local delicacy – some fish still wriggling, little silver anchovies and meaty snappers. He would nap, smoke endless cigarettes and, occasionally, sell something. He wore a scavenged sunhat embroidered with the name "Linda" across the brim – it looked ludicrous, yet lent him a certain libertine swagger.

One morning, I looked across at his spot and he wasn't there. And he didn't return. I was disappointed. As a cook, I had hoped to strike up a conversation with him. I had watched him take a gleaming blade to the taut bellies of various fish and slit them open with precision, ripping out the innards with one clean sweep. Just as some people take pleasure in eavesdropping, when I get a good view of someone expertly tending their produce, I am riveted. A fisherman and a chef may only talk shop, but these exchanges can spark friendship based on mutual respect.

Strolling along the coast a few days later, I heard a musical voice. "*Jambo*! I know you. *Habari*?"

I turned around and the fisherman tipped his hat at me. Either my glances had not been quite so furtive or this was a daily campaign to hook passing tourists, a sales tactic. I was swept away regardless. It's hard not to be charmed by a cheerful man with an impish look and the offer of briny oysters.

Back home with my bounty, I lit a barbecue and set about making fiery marinades and pastes. There is something incomparably tantalising about seafood seasoned with a jolt of chilli, plumes of smoke and sea air. Indian food may not seem like the obvious choice in a sweltering blaze but spicy heat brings a sweat to the brow, which helps keep you cool in the same way that sipping a cup of hot tea can do. Spicy food also encourages you to drink more, keeping you well hydrated. My fishy feast was a success. The next day I went to thank the fisherman but his table was bare apart from his hat and a makeshift sign that read: "Gone fishing." FT

Ravinder Bhogal is chef-patron of Jikoni. jikonilondon.com; Follow her on Instagram @cookinboots

CHARGRILLED SQUID WITH TOMATO, PEPPER AND ALMOND & TAMARIND RELISH

Serves four

- 2 tbs rapeseed oil
- juice of half a lemon
- 4 medium sustainably sourced squid (approx 150g each) cleaned with the tentacles reserved
- sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

Relish

- 1 red bell pepper
- 1 large tomato
- 1 long red chilli
- 1 tsp cumin, toasted and ground to a coarse powder
- 15g almonds, toasted
- 1 garlic clove
- 1 tbs tamarind concentrate
- sea salt to taste
- 2 tbs rapeseed oil plus extra to drizzle

1 — Begin by making the relish. Burn down coals on a charcoal barbecue until the embers are ashen all over and reduced to medium-high heat. Then spread them out in an even layer. Alternatively, set a griddle to a medium-high heat just before cooking the squid.

2 — Drizzle the bell pepper, tomato and chilli with a teaspoon of oil and cook on the barbecue (or under a hot grill or directly on a gas burner) until soft and charred all over. Cool, peel and deseed the pepper and chilli. Process almonds in a blender until finely ground. Roughly chop the pepper, tomato, chilli and garlic, and add to the blender along with the tamarind. Blend until smooth then, with the motor running, add rapeseed oil in a thin, steady stream. Season to taste and set aside.

3 — Mix together the rapeseed oil and lemon juice, and season lightly. Using a sharp knife, score the squid with parallel lines, spaced about 1cm apart. Score in the opposite direction to give a crisscross pattern, making sure you don't cut all the way through. Lightly brush the squid with the oil and grill on the barbecue or a griddle pan, turning until almost cooked (90 seconds each side). Brush with more lemon and oil mixture, then grill for another 10-15 seconds each side until just cooked. Serve with the relish.

COCONUT MASALA SEA BREAM COOKED IN BANANA LEAVES

Serves four

- 2 whole sustainably sourced sea bream or bass (around 400g each), scaled and gutted
- 1 tsp coriander seeds, toasted
- 1 tbs sesame seeds, toasted
- 2 shallots, finely chopped
- 100g fresh grated coconut
- 1 tbs jaggery or light brown sugar
- ½ tsp ground turmeric
- 6 hot dried red chillies soaked in 50ml of hot water for an hour
- 65g tamarind paste
- 2 banana leaves (or foil to wrap the fish)
- lime wedges to serve

1 — Using a sharp knife, make three deep gashes on either side of each fish.

2 — To make the coconut masala, begin by toasting the sesame and coriander seeds until they are golden and aromatic. Whizz to a powder in a blender. Next add shallots, coconut, drained chillies, jaggery, turmeric and tamarind and blend, adding a little water if needed to make a fine paste.

3 — Heat a pan and add the oil. Once the oil is hot, fry the paste for between five and eight minutes over a low-medium heat until it is fragrant and has deepened in colour. Let it cool and then smear all over the fish, getting inside the gashes.

4 — Preheat the oven to 200C if cooking indoors, or make sure your barbecue is lit and heated to a medium heat. Wilt the banana leaves over a gas flame or on the barbecue for about 10 seconds and then place your fish on the centre of each leaf and fold over to make a parcel. Secure the seams with toothpicks or wooden skewers.

5 — To barbecue, place the fish directly on coals and cook for eight minutes on each side, turning once. To cook in the oven, place the fish on a wire rack with a tray underneath and roast for 20-25 minutes or until cooked through. Serve immediately with wedges of lime.

SARDINES STUFFED WITH RAISINS AND CURRY-LEAF CRUMBS

Serves four

- 25g butter
- 4 fat cloves of garlic, finely chopped
- 15 fresh curry leaves
- 1-2 red bird's eye chillies, finely chopped
- 50g panko breadcrumbs
- 1 tbs raisins
- 8 sardines, butterflied
- sea salt and pepper
- 2 limes cut in half
- 8 fresh or preserved vine leaves
- wedges of lemon to serve

1 — Place a frying pan over a medium heat and melt the butter. Once it is foaming, add garlic, curry leaves and chilli and fry until fragrant. Next scatter in the breadcrumbs and fry until they go crisp and golden brown. Set aside and then stir in the raisins.

2 — Season the fish with sea salt and pepper. Divide the breadcrumb stuffing into eight portions and place as much as you can into the cavity of each fish. If you are using fresh vine leaves, briefly blanch them until they wilt and become flexible, or wash the preserved leaves under cold running water. Cut the vine leaves down to size and wrap around the centre of each fish to secure the filling, then lightly brush with oil. Barbecue or griddle on each side for three minutes or until charred and cooked through. Serve with wedges of lemon.

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Jancis Robinson
Wine

Top picks for picnics

This summer I hope we can enjoy a new outdoor-eating vibe. Out with the second jumper, restaurant blanket, overhead heater and fingerless gloves. In with lounging on newly mown grass or a vine-shaded terrace, concerned not with keeping the main course warm but with keeping our wine cool.

My preferred way of doing this is to use those cylindrical wine coolers. They involve no ice cubes or drips and are pretty good at maintaining a steady temperature for any bottle of wine. The plastic ones are the lightest and I have a battery of clear ones that allow you to see, at a glance, the contents.

But if you are setting out on a picnic, transporting such hardware might be a bit of a pain, while cool bags can cause inconvenient condensation. There is a new sort of reusable, insulated wine bottle, very like those colourful water bottles so many people carry, designed specifically for wine: £24.99 apiece from supdrinkware.com or £35 in a smart tube from partnerinwine.co.uk.

They both also sell insulated beakers with lids - presumably for really slow sippers - and have a range of colours. (I'm not quite sure about Sup's pale turquoise one for wine, but clearly I need to throw off decades of conditioning.) These insulated bottles are lighter and less breakable than glass and could be added to a picnic bag without any risk of soggy sandwiches.

They wouldn't work for sparkling wine; the wine would lose much of its fizz when decanted into them. Nor would they be suitable for fragile wine that should not be exposed to air before being consumed. So that Montrachet from the 1930s might spoil when decanted into a Sup bottle, but most modern wines shouldn't suffer at all.

As imagined by Leon Edler

For a casual picnic, I'd be all in favour of wine in a can. Cans are light, convenient, recyclable and relatively good for the planet. Cans and connoisseurs are not a match made in heaven but I have come across a few canned wines that I would drink happily in any circumstances and which are cleverly labelled. The Uncommon, Gerald's Bubbly White Wine 2020, is a light young English fizz based on Bacchus, a distinctively English grape with aromas of hedgerow. This current vintage offers a good balance of fruit and refreshment.

> 'Cans and connoisseurs are not a match made in heaven but there are a few canned wines I would drink happily'

Master of Wine Richard Kelley has come up with three wittily packaged South African wines available in cans: Chenin No 5 2019, The Francophile Syrah 2020 and Vasco and the Explorers Alvarinho 2020.

These are delicious by any measure and also available in bottles. South Africa seems to be a particularly rich source of good canned wine, thanks largely to CanCan, a canning company co-founded by talented winemaker Francois Haasbroek.

Drinking wine straight from a single-serve can mean you miss out on most of its all-important aroma; on the upside, it may reduce the risk of infection. Speaking of which, someone ought to design a simple way of distinguishing between wine glasses; I use different coloured rubber bands round the stems but they are not exactly elegant. Another advantage cans have over bottles is that, for impecunious newcomers, they involve less commitment of money and drinking capacity. A wine bottle contains 75cl of wine, three times as much as most cans.

Another package for wine that is becoming more respectable and might be particularly suitable for a barbecue is the "bag in box". The St John wine company, an offshoot of Fergus Henderson's cultish restaurant in Clerkenwell, has long been a particular fan of this format, selecting a red (best value by far), white and rosé each year to retail at £38 for a three-litre box that is the equivalent of £9.50 a bottle.

Private Cellar, a company that seems dedicated to supplying well-heeled, wine-loving country dwellers, has chosen five-litre boxes for its rather superior Provençal rosé Figuière Mediterranée (they have keen thirsts in the shires). ▶

Picnic wines

Recommended for summer drinking

WHITES

- The Uncommon, Gerald's Bubbly White Wine 2020 11.5%
  £4.99 a 25cl can Waitrose, Selfridges
- Vasco and the Explorers Alvarinho 2020 Coastal Region, South Africa 14%
  About £5.50 a 25cl can Harvey Nichols and other independents
- The Liberator, Chenin No 5 2019 Swartland 13%
  About £5 a 25cl can Butlers Wine Cellar of Brighton, Old Bridge Wine Shop of Huntingdon and other independents
- Cape Atlantic Sauvignon Blanc 2020 Western Cape 13.5%
  £10.25 Stone, Vine & Sun
- Piekenierskloof Grenache Blanc 2019 South Africa 13%
  £12.50 Stone, Vine & Sun
- Pandolfi Price, Larkün Chardonnay 2018 Itata, Chile 14%
  £14.25 Stone, Vine & Sun

ROSE

- Clos Ste Magdeleine 2020 Cassis 13%
  £24.50 Yapp Brothers
- Dom de la Source 2018 Bellet 13%
  £27.25 Yapp Brothers

REDS

- The Liberator, The Francophile Syrah 2020 Cape Town 14%
  About £5 a 25cl can Bacchanalia Wine Merchants of Cambridge and The Riddling Rack of Newton-le-Willows
- Mas Bruguière, L'Arbouse 2019 Pic St-Loup
  £18.25 Yapp Brothers
- Chatzivaritis, Carbonic Negoska 2019 Greece 10.8%
  £20.50 Kudos Wine, £23.50 Maltby & Greek, £26 Littlewine
- Jose Zuccardi Malbec 2016 Uco Valley, Argentina 14.5%
  £37.95 Winedirect.co.uk, £312 a dozen Bordeaux Index
- Torres, Mas La Plana 2015 Penedes, Catalunya 14.5%
  £46.55 VINVM

Tasting notes on Purple Pages of JancisRobinson.com. International stockists Wine-searcher.com

◀ This pale, dry, lightly smoky wine is £76 a box, the equivalent of £11.40 a bottle.

I would have thought the challenge when entertaining outside on a hot day might be to keep the box cool enough. Admittedly, because of the volume, it won't warm up as fast as a bottle, but one of those silvered thermal blankets might help. There may be an opportunity for someone to make them tailored to wine boxes with an opening for the tap. The team at Private Cellar suggests chilling the cardboard box beforehand and then opening it at the top and putting an ice pack on the foil bag.

'Serving red wine in high temperatures is quite an art. I always put bottles in the refrigerator for an hour or so'

There is always an ice bucket – or just a bucket of ice and water – to cool non-cardboard wine packages such as bottles and cans. Do remember that contact with icy water is much more effective than with ice cubes alone.

Serving red wine in high temperatures is quite an art. I always put bottles of red wine in the refrigerator for an hour or so before taking them outside and then keep them in one of the cylindrical bottle coolers mentioned earlier. Red wine served too warm, anything much above 24C, is pretty unappetising: the refreshment value that is key to all drinks is lost and much of the complex aroma dissipated. Indeed, even indoors, I increasingly serve reds straight from our cellar, which is a constant 13C, so that they warm up gradually in the glass. The exceptions to this are young reds with masses of the chewy tannins that are emphasised at low temperatures. These I would serve initially closer to 16C or 17C.

There's a certain sort of hearty red that seems a natural partner for the smoky flavours and often chewy meats associated with barbecues. I have suggested a few from the wines I have tasted most recently, along with some wines from quintessential holiday locations such as Cassis, Bandol and Bellet on France's Mediterranean coast.

It seems especially appropriate to choose wine from countries where barbecuing is a national sport: Australia, South Africa and Argentina spring most readily to mind.

And if it rains, or feels unseasonably chilly, one of these full-bodied reds might offer some liquid comfort. FT

More columns at ft.com/jancis-robinson

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CULT WINES

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. In which East Sussex town did John Logie Baird demonstrate the first television image?

2. Which 1979 play by Martin Sherman – starring Ian McKellen in its first West End production – did much to highlight the Nazi persecution of gay men?

3. What's the usual English translation of *Theotokos*, a title given to the Virgin Mary at the Council of Ephesus (above) in 431?

4. Which first name is shared by the runners who won the BBC Sports Personality of the Year in 1978 and 1983?

5. Who wrote the Victorian bestseller *King Solomon's Mines*?

6. What was the surname of the father and son who between them presented *The Sooty Show* (and spin-offs) from 1955 to 1998?

7. "Brush Up Your Shakespeare" is a song from which Cole Porter musical?

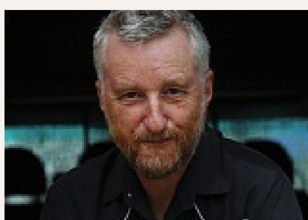
8. What's the name of the glass company founded in St Helens, Lancashire, in 1826?

9. What's the biggest selling Australian band in music history?

10. In 2008 the American Film Institute named *To Kill a Mockingbird* the greatest courtroom drama in movie history – which 1957 film was second?

The Picture Round
by James Walton

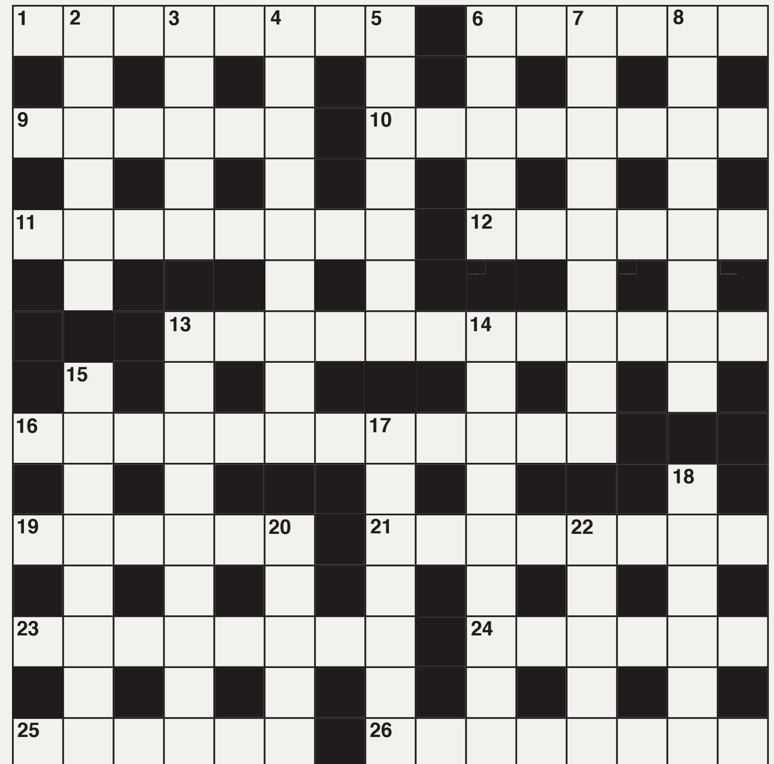
Who or what do these pictures add up to?

 + = ?

Answers page 8

GETTY IMAGES; ALAMY

The Crossword
No 541. Set by Aldhelm



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

ACROSS

1 Likely (8)
6 Part of a sentence (6)
9 Hope, aim (6)
10 Senior female pupil (4, 4)
11 Soaked, imbued (8)
12 Chinese martial art (4, 2)
13 Roughage (7, 5)
16 Soviet system of appointing party members to jobs (12)
19 Art of growing miniature trees (6)
21 Control, direct (8)
23 Answer (8)
24 16th-century Venetian painter (6)
25 Restraining rope (6)
26 Ancient Italian (8)

DOWN

2 Bawdy squire's drunk (6)
3 Barrister passing instructions (5)
4 After arguments, take out meat (9)
5 Creature took cover in wild cane (7)
6 Clap excellent joke (5)
7 Country gentleman in Austria follows artist up (9)
8 Certain ferries get redirected around middle of sound (8)
13 He spouted about Alabama and so on (4, 5)
14 Head of nursery gets moving, hugged by your child (9)
15 Dull voice is unacceptable after second practice, ultimately (8)
17 Marshal put gunners up on firing zone (7)
18 Layers of finest ratatouille (6)
20 Frostier reception, initially, after one covers crime's odd characters (5)
22 Fortune for American flower (5)

Solution to Crossword No 540

GILLIAN TETT

PARTING SHOT

A rebounding economy won't mean a return to the status quo

This summer the phrase "Roaring Twenties" will be bouncing around corporate boards, investment groups and political strategy meetings. As Covid-19 lockdowns are scaled back, economic optimism is rising and investors and advisers are contemplating a boom decade. Judging by Manhattan's packed restaurants, a rebound is in full swing.

However, despite all this sunny chatter, it is worth policymakers taking a cool-headed look at a striking survey that recently emerged from the Pew Research Center in the US. This suggests that economic dissatisfaction, given an outlet in the pandemic, has bred a broad desire for reform.

Late last year, Pew's pollsters asked 4,100 adults in Germany, the US and UK whether they liked the structure of their economy. You might have thought that the development of vaccines and thus the prospect of an exit from fresh lockdowns would have sparked an upbeat mood. Other surveys from groups such as the business think-tank Conference Board suggest that, in the US at least, consumer confidence has recently soared.

But it isn't so. Roughly two-thirds of respondents in France and exactly half of those in the US, UK and Germany said they wanted either a "major overhaul" or "complete reform" of economic structures. Only a tiny minority – as low as 3 per cent in France – said they backed the status quo.

Maybe that discontent has been intensified by the psychological toll of the 2020 lockdowns and will eventually dissipate. Time will tell. But it is leading to some eye-catching demands. The survey suggests that the British – whose ruling Conservative party just had major success in local elections – are even more eager than continental Europeans to see higher levels of government control and redistribution. In fact, 67 per cent of British people strongly support more regulation of business, whereas it is 58 per cent in France, 53 per cent in Germany and 46 per cent in the US.

The British desire a much more expansive role of the state. Sixty-two per cent of Brits deem it "very important" for the government to build more public housing and 53 per cent for it to increase benefits to the poor, higher than other countries. A full 50 per cent want a universal basic income, much higher than elsewhere. Margaret Thatcher might spin in her grave.

Now, like all surveys, these findings need to be examined in context. The fact that the British are expressing higher levels of support for government regulation and redistribution than the French and Germans might reflect the fact that they have had less of this than their peers on the continent in recent decades.

Yet even allowing for caveats, it would be foolish to ignore this survey; if it is only half-right, it implies that we cannot assume that any economic rebound and return to "normal" will automatically lead to voters embracing the status quo. On the contrary, it is possible that the Pew poll is showing a bigger zeitgeist shift, partly driven by the pandemic but with deeper roots, which could reshape policy attitudes for a long time.

I suspect, for example, that one reason there is high demand for government intervention is that Covid has not only exposed inequality but reminded people just how uncertain the future is. There is a search under way for protection.

James Manyika, chairman of McKinsey Global Institute, agrees. "There is this sense of inequality,

'Covid has not reminded people just how uncertain the future is. There is a search under way for protection'

of people, of place – work security has declined for so many," he says. Indeed, a separate survey of 25,000 Americans that McKinsey published this week suggests that "half of Americans reported being on the financial brink and unable to cover more than two months of living expenses in the event of a job loss". Rural respondents reported "feeling that they are at risk of being left behind".

Hilary Cottam, an honorary professor at University College London who works in post-industrial communities in Britain, describes how a similar pattern of insecurity and marginalisation is spurring calls for change. "The [post-pandemic] flourishing we want can't be brought about by postwar institutions," she told a Stanford University seminar this week. Indeed, Jenna Bednar, a political science professor at the University of Michigan, told the same seminar that the social fabric has decayed so far that a complete overhaul of our institutions is needed to create a more collaborative, inclusive system.

However, there is a positive factor that may also be prompting calls for change: the scramble to develop and distribute the vaccine has not only shown people that governments can – sometimes – do good things, including collaborating with the private sector, but that companies can sometimes work together too, instead of just competing. This could lead to more collaborations in other fields, such as climate change.

Either way, the key point is this: if (or when) we do emerge from Covid this summer, do not just look to the economic data to track what is going on (say, how fast the economy is growing); keep an eye on whether a subtler shift in the zeitgeist is also under way.

Returning to "normal" – be that in offices, schools or restaurants – does not necessarily mean re-embracing the old systems. Political and corporate elites should be warned. FT

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ILLUSTRATION BY SHONAGH RAE

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